



Leicestershire County Council SHIRE Community Grants 2022-23 Guidance Notes for Applicants

Introduction and Strategic Background

Leicestershire County Council recognises the valuable role played by voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations, in terms of providing services which improve the wellbeing and quality of life of people who live in Leicestershire. In particular, there is clear recognition around the VCSE sector's ability to deliver essential services, which help to complement the services delivered (and commissioned) by local authorities and other statutory partner agencies.

The SHIRE Grants programme is therefore a way for the Council to demonstrate its continued commitment and support to the VCSE sector, thus enabling the delivery of important, locally based services, which help to improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our local communities.

Leicestershire County Council's Communities Strategy 2022-26

The [Communities Strategy](#) recognises that every community has a tremendous supply of assets including people, skills, land and buildings and networks that can be used to build the community and solve the challenges that require a shared commitment and a willingness to come together. The Strategy also recognises the role of civil society (including the VCSE sector), and is based on three core principles:

1. Prevention
Supporting and enabling citizens to help themselves and others.
2. Participation
The Council will work across services, departments and with partners but will be led by our work with our citizens and communities.
3. Catalysts
Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, Social Enterprises and Parish & Town Councils are supported and empowered to collaborate and provide a range of effective services and activities for individuals and communities.

The Communities Strategy is further underpinned by the principles of social action. The Council is committed to promoting and enabling social action because it encourages people to come together to provide local solutions which improve the lives of people in communities.

Utilising the existing strengths within local communities is also fundamental to the Strategy. Rather than starting from the perspective of the problems in a community (a 'deficit-based' approach), the 'asset-based' approach aims to recognise the strengths that exist within communities, which can help to mobilise social action.

Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan

The Council's [Strategic Plan](#) outlines the Council's key strategic priorities for the county and the organisation, by focusing on the strategic outcomes that will make life better for people in Leicestershire. The strategic outcomes are based on the following five themes:

1. **Clean, green future** – The environment is protected and enhanced and we tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource usage
2. **Great communities** – Leicestershire has thriving, inclusive communities in which people support each other and take responsibility for their local area
3. **Improving opportunities** – All children get the best start for life and have access to a good quality education, and everyone has the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.
4. **Strong economy, transport and infrastructure** – Leicestershire has a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy and infrastructure meets the demands of a growing population and economy.
5. **Keeping people safe and well** – The people of Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm, and have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.

VCSE sector organisations in Leicestershire are regarded as key stakeholders who can work in partnership to help us to ensure we achieve the objectives of the Communities Strategy and the Strategic Plan as effectively as possible.

SHIRE Community Grants are therefore a key mechanism for helping to achieve the Council's aspirations for happy, healthy and resilient communities, along with a strong and thriving VCSE sector. The Council wishes to empower and enable communities to support themselves and rely less on Council and other public services. One of the ways we can achieve this is through investment into the VCSE sector, which will enable the continued delivery of preventive services which focus on supporting those most in need. The Council aims to support VCSE sector organisations in the most appropriate ways possible, and SHIRE Grants are an example of our continued financial investment, to help the VCSE sector to deliver vital services, which improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and disadvantaged local people.

Objectives of the SHIRE Community Grants Programme 2022-23

To help deliver the strategic priorities of the Council, £600,000 is available for the SHIRE Community Grants programme in 2022-23. Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations will be able to apply for small or large grants, for community-based projects and activities that improve the lives of vulnerable/disadvantaged people and communities.

The Council therefore welcomes applications from VCSE sector organisations, for grant funding to deliver community-based projects, services and activities which help to achieve the outcomes described on Page 4 of this document and respond to identified priorities and areas of need/demand for County residents.

VCSE organisations can apply for small grants and large grants, to support the delivery of projects, activities and services which are specifically targeted to improving the lives of vulnerable/disadvantaged people and communities. This can include costs to run and deliver projects, as well as funding for core organisational running costs. Organisations can also apply for capital funding, for items of equipment which help to deliver the key aims of the SHIRE Grants programme.

SHIRE Community Grants Criteria and Definitions of Vulnerability

We are seeking to fund activities which fulfil all or most of the following criteria.

- Activities that improve the lives, health and wellbeing of vulnerable or disadvantaged people in Leicestershire, based on identified need/demand
- Grants will only be available for services/activities where the beneficiaries are residents of Leicestershire County (excluding the City of Leicester).
- Activities that provide community-based early intervention and prevention solutions
- Activities that will help to reduce demand on Council and other public services
- Activities which complement existing services which are already being delivered
- New, innovative ways of working and/or models of service delivery
- Projects which utilise the existing strengths and assets within a community
- Projects that will develop the capacity to be sustained independently, beyond the period of funding
- Projects which demonstrate evidence of partnership working and/or engagement with other relevant services, projects and stakeholders
- Capital works which will enable delivery of essential services and activities specifically for vulnerable and disadvantaged people/groups. This could include new buildings; building alterations; equipment; tools; materials or vehicles.

Potential beneficiaries/target client groups we expect to be supported through SHIRE Grant funding will include (but will not necessarily be limited to) the following:

- Vulnerable and disadvantaged young people
- Older people, particularly those who are frail and/or socially isolated
- People with long-term health conditions, or those at risk of developing health conditions, including people living unhealthy or inactive lifestyles
- Carers/people with caring responsibilities
- People who are experiencing financial hardship or are economically disadvantaged due to socio-economic or welfare status
- People who are physically disabled
- People with learning disabilities and/or other special educational needs
- People who currently or have previously experienced mental health difficulties
- People who have a history of misusing drugs/alcohol
- People experiencing homelessness or other adverse housing related issues
- People from the Gypsy and Traveller community
- People with refugee or asylum seeker status
- People who have been the victim of crime or abuse
- Vulnerable people from the above groups who are NEET (not in employment, education or training) and/or face significant challenges accessing employment, education or training
- People who are socially isolated (including rurally isolated) who experience challenges or a lack of opportunities with regards to accessing services or support
- Residents of communities in areas of (multiple) deprivation

Examples of Outcomes to be achieved for SHIRE Grant funded projects

The following are examples of outcomes which SHIRE Grant-funded projects are expected to achieve:

- Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations are enabled to provide solutions and responses to local issues, based on identified need/demand
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged people are healthier, safer, less isolated, and have access to appropriate information and services
- There is a reduction in the numbers of vulnerable and disadvantaged people who need high cost, specialist support from statutory/public services
- There are more opportunities for vulnerable/disadvantaged people and communities to develop positive lifestyle choices, to equip them with skills, confidence and self-esteem
- Individuals who are NEET, including disadvantaged young people, have improved opportunities to access education, training and employment
- There is a reduction in crime, offending and anti-social behaviour in communities
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged people are empowered to become more independent and resilient; and are enabled to manage their lives more effectively
- Social inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged people, enabling them to participate fully in society, is actively promoted in communities
- Community projects which complement existing services (included those currently delivered or commissioned by the Council and its partners) are delivered effectively, in order to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of people
- There is a reduction in inequality within local communities, with people from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds supported to improve and enhance their opportunities in life
- New, innovative and previously untested models of service delivery are piloted, including collaborative/partnership approaches between different community organisations, in order to achieve common goals
- VCSE organisations are able to strengthen their future organisational sustainability and financial viability through grant investment and associated support
- The VCSE sector in Leicestershire is strengthened

What activities can't be supported?

You **cannot** apply for a SHIRE Grant for any of the following:

- projects or activities which are led by or benefit only an individual person
- funds to build up reserves or a surplus
- costs for any activities which have already taken place, before acceptance of any offer (i.e. no retrospective funding will be allowed)
- projects/services which are already/currently being commissioned/funded by other Leicestershire County Council departments will not be eligible for additional 'top up' funding (for the same project/activities within the scope of the existing contract) from SHIRE Community Grant funding
- repairs, new buildings or extensions to community buildings which are **not** focussed/targeted towards directly delivering services for vulnerable/disadvantaged groups, or where planning or building regulations approval have not been obtained
- creation of or upgrades to toilets/disabled toilet facilities, for community buildings, **unless** these are part of a wider capital project which is focussed on providing (or increasing) access to services for vulnerable/disadvantaged groups
- maintenance or repairs of equipment, fixtures or fittings (including accessibility improvements) which are otherwise deemed to be the ongoing responsibility of the organisation
- creation or resurfacing of car parking areas, or costs associated with roof repairs
- costs for one-off events which are not targeted specifically for the benefit of vulnerable/disadvantaged people, or where the longer-term benefits for participants are unclear

Please also note the following:

- Faith-based organisations (including places of worship) can apply for funding to support the delivery of (non-religious) activities for vulnerable/disadvantaged people. SHIRE Grants cannot however be used for the purposes of delivering organised religious activities, including prayer and worship, or for any costs associated with the promotion of religion.
- Sports-based organisations can only apply for SHIRE Grants for sports activities which are specifically targeted at enabling the participation of vulnerable/disadvantaged groups in sports/physical activity. SHIRE Grants cannot however be used to fund any costs related to delivering sports activities which are for general community benefit.
- Applications for the general running costs of community radio stations will not be accepted. SHIRE Grants can only be awarded to community radio stations for costs specifically related to delivering a project targeted at vulnerable/disadvantaged people, but not for general costs related to running the station.
- If your organisation is based in Leicester City, your application will need to clearly explain how SHIRE Grant funding will be used to provide activities for vulnerable/disadvantaged people who are residents of Leicestershire County. SHIRE Grants cannot be used to fund activities where the primary beneficiaries are residents of Leicester City.
- National charities/social enterprises are eligible to apply for a SHIRE Grant. However, the application will need to clearly explain how SHIRE Grant funding will be used to deliver a local service which is available, accessible and specifically targeted to vulnerable/disadvantaged people living in Leicestershire.
- If your SHIRE Grant application/proposal includes a request for funding for evaluation costs (i.e. costs related to evaluating the impact of your project/service), please note that we may not be able to agree to award funding for such costs. Due to the limited grants budget available, we are likely to prioritise funding for core delivery/running costs for a project, service or activity, but not costs related to the evaluation of the project/service/activity.

Grants Available through the SHIRE Grant Programme 2022-23

VCSE organisations, that deliver services and activities to vulnerable and disadvantaged people who live in Leicestershire, can apply for a small grant (max £3,000) or a large grant (max £10,000) in 2022-23. As part of your grant application, you can apply for either (or a combination of both) revenue and capital funding. Eligible capital costs can include purchase of equipment; appropriate building works; ICT equipment; vehicles; or any other large capital items, to enable delivery of activities and services which meet the grant criteria.

Small Grants

Small Grants (up to a maximum of £3,000) are available, primarily to support the delivery of smaller scale project activities. This can include funding for core organisational running costs, such as venue hire, staffing costs, utilities, etc. as well as any costs associated with delivering activities (including capital costs) which meet the SHIRE Grants criteria.

Large Grants

Large Grants (minimum £3,001, maximum £10,000) are available to support the delivery of medium to larger scale project activities. Again, this can include funding for core organisational running costs, such as venue hire, staffing costs, management costs, back-office costs, utilities, and general organisational running costs, as well as any costs associated with delivering activities (including capital costs) which meet the SHIRE Grants criteria.

Previous Grants Awarded

If your organisation has been awarded a SHIRE Grant (or a grant from the Leicestershire Communities Fund 2020-21) for core organisational running costs in the previous two years (2020-21 and 2021-22), please contact the Grants Officers prior to applying. The Grants Officers will advise whether a grant for core organisational running costs will be accepted for a third consecutive year. Please note, should your organisation apply for repeat funding for core organisational running costs for consecutive years, there is no guarantee that a SHIRE Grant for these costs will be automatically approved in 2022-23.

Full Cost Recovery

We can consider approving funding for overheads in relation to the delivery of eligible projects/activities which use a full cost recovery model. However, if a SHIRE Grant is awarded on a full cost recovery basis, the Grants Officers will liaise with you to ensure we are able to obtain sufficient evidence of expenditure for costs not directly related to service delivery (e.g. percentage contributions to overheads, management costs, utilities etc.)

Who can apply for a SHIRE Community Grant?

- Grants are available for registered charities, constituted 'not-for-profit' community groups, and social businesses/enterprises or Community Interest Companies, who operate a 'not for private profit' business model, i.e. where any income generated is re-invested back into the social aims of the group/community.
- Grants cannot be awarded to non-constituted groups
- Leicestershire based Town and Parish Councils can also apply for SHIRE Grants. However, funding for Town and Parish Councils can only be used towards activities which specifically benefit vulnerable and disadvantaged people within the Parish area.
- Organisations that apply for funding will need to demonstrate why the funding is essential to enable them to deliver the project (i.e. demonstrate that they are unable to undertake the project activity with existing resources)
- Applicants need to have a bank account, with at least two unrelated signatories
- Applications will not be accepted from the following:
 - Private, profit-making businesses/companies/commercial enterprises
 - Individuals (unless it can be clearly evidenced that the individual is running a social enterprise where any income generated is re-invested into achieving social aims)
 - Local Authorities (other than parish and town councils) or other statutory/public sector agencies, e.g. District Councils, NHS, Police, Blue Light Services, etc.
 - Schools, academies, colleges, universities or other academic institutions
- If you are an individual representing a VCSE organisation (e.g. manager, staff member, director of a CIC), and you are applying for funding towards wages, which will be paid to yourself (i.e. to run/deliver/lead particular activities), ideally the named applicant should be someone from the organisation other than yourself, e.g. a trustee, board/committee member; senior manager or another named individual from your organisation
- Your organisation can be awarded one SHIRE Grant in 2022-23, i.e. one small grant or one large grant only.
- Please note, organisations who have demonstrated unsatisfactory management of previous SHIRE Grant awards (or grants from the Leicestershire Communities Fund 2020-21) may be considered ineligible to apply for a SHIRE Grant in 2022-23

Applications from Social Enterprises and Community Interest Companies

Social enterprises and CICs are eligible to apply for a SHIRE Grant. However, if your organisation is a social enterprise or CIC and you wish to apply for a SHIRE Grant, please note the following conditions:

- SHIRE Grants can only be awarded to social enterprises/CICs which have two or more directors
- SHIRE Grants cannot be awarded to social enterprises/CICs where there are only two directors, both of whom are related to each other (i.e. married or living in the same household)
- It is expected that social enterprises/CICs can demonstrate that they are generating income through sources other than solely grants, and it is expected that a proportion of the income generated should come via trading/selling, or charging for delivery of a service or product
- When assessing SHIRE Grant applications from social enterprises/CICs, the Grants Officers may ask for information about other sources of income generated by the organisation.

Application Process

Applications for the SHIRE Community Grants will be completed through an online application form, via the [Leicestershire Communities website](#).

A Microsoft Word version (blank template) of the application form is also available to download from the website. This is mainly for the purpose of initially drafting your application, prior to completing the online form. Electronic or paper applications can be accepted in exceptional circumstances. It is generally expected that applications are submitted via the online form.

You will be required to include the following details in your application:

- Details about your organisation, including your track record and experience
- The type of grant and amount of funding you are applying for
- A description of what you intend to use the funding for, with a breakdown of the specific costs/items of expenditure related to the activities you intend to use the grant funding towards
- The vulnerable/disadvantaged groups/communities (in Leicestershire) your project will benefit, including the target number of beneficiaries
- An explanation of why the project is needed, including evidence of need/demand
- The outcomes, impacts and benefits your project is expected to achieve
- Information about your organisation's future financial position (in terms of your organisational viability/sustainability)

You will also need to read and agree to the information contained in a Data Protection Declaration document on the website.

What happens with my application?

- 1) Once your online application form has been submitted, you will receive an electronic copy of the application form via email, along with a reference number for your application.
- 2) Your application will then be assessed by the Grants Officers, to ensure it meets the grant eligibility criteria. Where required, the Grant Officers will contact you to request any additional information as necessary, regarding your grant application. The Grant Officers will remain in contact with you to ensure all queries are resolved before the application is referred for a final decision.
- 3) If your application is not accepted as being eligible for funding, you will be advised of the reasons for this, how you can re-apply (if this is appropriate) and, if applicable, any other potential sources of funding.
- 4) Where required, we will share the details of your application with relevant colleagues from across the Council or from other partner agencies, to get their professional views on your proposed project/activity. We will be asking colleagues to comment on the following:
 - How your project proposal fits with strategic priorities
 - Clarification around how your project complements existing services
 - Aspects of your project considered to be particularly positive
 - How your project could be further improved or enhanced
 - Issues that would need to be resolved before funding could be awarded
 - Alternative / additional sources of funding that may be available for your project
- 5) Applications received and assessed in each round of funding will then be taken to a Decision Meeting (one for each round of funding) with the Head of Service (Communities, Policy & Resilience) and Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations for final approval.

The final decision will be one of the following:

- a) Offer the full grant amount applied for
 - b) Offer a lower level of grant funding, i.e. a contribution towards the grant requested
 - c) Offer a grant subject to conditions (e.g. upon receipt of further information/clarification as requested by the Grant Officers)
 - d) Defer the decision pending further information/clarification being submitted, or request the application to be re-submitted with more information at a later date
 - e) Refuse to fund the application
- 6) The SHIRE Grant programme for 2022-23 will be administered over 3 rounds of funding, with the following timescales and deadlines:

	Grant Round Opens	Grant Round Closes	Decisions Made
Round 1	Weds 6 th April 2022	Weds 8 th June 2022	June 2022
Round 2	Weds 6 th July 2022	Weds 7 th Sept 2022	September 2022
Round 3	Weds 5 th Oct 2022	Weds 30 th Nov 2022	December 2022

- 7) Organisations who are successful in being awarded a SHIRE Grant will need to be provide evidence of how the grant was spent within 12 months of the grant being awarded, along with submitting an online Grant Outcomes Report.

How will the grant be paid?

If your application is successful, you will receive a letter from Leicestershire County Council confirming the funding offer, along with a Grant Conditions Form and associated paperwork.

You will need to sign and return the Grant Conditions Form and also complete and return a form giving your organisation's bank details, along with a copy of your bank account paying in slip, or a bank statement clearly showing the organisation's bank details.

Payment will normally be made up-front, once the Grant Officers have received your signed and completed Grant Conditions form, along with details of your organisation's bank account.

Please note that it will take approximately four weeks to process your grant payment, following receipt of your signed Grant Conditions form.

You will then be required to provide documentary evidence of the costs you have incurred, within 12 months of the date of the grant offer letter. A grant expenditure template document will also need to be completed.

If your final costs are less than originally estimated, or the activities are not delivered as agreed in the Grant Award letter, or any of the Grant conditions are not met, the Council reserves the right to request any unspent/unused grant monies to be returned.

Where the applicant has stated on the application form that they can reclaim VAT, the grant offer is based on the net value of the eligible scheme costs.

Other Sources of Grant Funding

In some cases, projects may be more eligible for other sources of grant funding and applicants will be directed to the most appropriate funding opportunities. Further information around grants, funding and other related support for community organisations can be accessed via the [Leicestershire Communities website](#).

Access for All

Where appropriate, schemes should comply with the Equality Act 2010. Further information about the Equality Act can be found on the [Government's website](#)

Monitoring & Evaluation – Demonstrating the Outcomes of your Project

At the end of the funding period, successful applicants will be asked to submit an online Grant Outcomes Report, detailing the activities which have taken place and the outcomes achieved as a result of the funding, including relevant case study examples. Additional evidence such as letters of support, testimonials and photographs may also be submitted along with the Grant Outcomes Report.

The Grant Outcomes Report will also ask for feedback around the key issues and challenges experienced by your organisation, to help the Council to understand how we can ensure our grant programmes reflect the needs of the VCSE sector and the issues faced in local communities.

Publicity and Promotion

- If applicable, successful applicants will acknowledge Leicestershire County Council in any publicity material and press releases about the project
- Permission shall be deemed given for the project details to be included in appropriate publicity materials, such as press releases, websites and other communications/publications issued by Leicestershire County Council
- Where possible, successful applicants should promote and publicise their project (e.g. via press releases, an opening event etc.), and notify Leicestershire County Council of such events. A 'Supported by Leicestershire County Council' image will be made available to grant recipients upon request, for usage in any relevant publicity or promotional material.

Disclaimer

Leicestershire County Council reserves the right to vary the terms of the grant programme.

For further information contact:

Andy Hayes
Grants & Funding Officer
Communities, Policy & Resilience
Room 300 B, County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire
LE3 8RA
Tel: (0116) 305 7269
Email: andy.hayes@leics.gov.uk

Noel Singh
Funding Manager
Communities, Policy & Resilience
Room 300 B, County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire
LE3 8RA
Tel: (0116) 305 7020
Email: noel.singh@leics.gov.uk

Website: www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/shiregrants
Email: shiregrants@leics.gov.uk