SHIRE Environment Grant Scheme Guidelines 20 / 21

1. INTRODUCTION

Leicestershire County Council is committed to improving the local environment through waste prevention and reuse to minimise the amount thrown away, reducing carbon emissions and improving biodiversity. To help eligible community-based organisations achieve this, the Council is offering SHIRE Environment Grants to fund innovative projects around the county that meet one or more of the outcomes below.

We have a separate application for small grants fund up to £300. Please see section 10 for more information. Applicants are still required to follow all the sections in this guidance. Exceptions can be found in section 10.3.

Please note that organisations applying for funding must consider social distancing and other relevant government guidance relating to Covid 19. This may mean that projects will need to be adapted. An explanation on how organisations will go about this will be asked for within the application form (If your project does not require you to follow this guidance then you must explain why). Further advice can be found here https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19.

Please be aware that applicants may have to further adapt their projects in the light of changing guidance. If you have any concerns about how your project might meet any new guidance please contact the project team.

2. PRIMARY OUTCOMES

The primary outcomes we are seeking to achieve through the SHIRE Environment Grant are:

2.1 **To reduce the amount of household waste produced in Leicestershire.**
Projects must follow the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle). This could be achieved through various waste activities such as engaging communities in recycling, food waste reduction and composting as well as reuse activities which encourage resourcefulness through repairing, refurbishing, repurposing, sharing and swapping. Please be aware that we cannot fund litter picks as a standalone activity as they do not meet the primary outcome of reducing household waste.

2.2 **To reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions within communities.**
This could be achieved by increasing the efficiency of community buildings, encouraging

resource efficiency as well as low carbon and energy projects and projects that reduce emissions from travel and transport.

2.3 **To improve biodiversity and support the creation, protection, enhancement and management of sustainable green spaces.**
Projects can support important specific species such as types of mammal, birds, plants, fish, reptiles, insects and amphibians and / or improve and support habitats such as ponds, woodlands, grasslands and hedgerows.

2.4 **To raise awareness and understanding of the above outcomes as well as providing the necessary training and skills to manage and support projects.**
These projects should enable residents and communities to utilise their training to support permanent changes in individual behaviours within their community.

2.5 While all projects must meet at least one primary outcome, we appreciate that some projects will have additional secondary benefits such as improved health and wellbeing, reducing litter, improving community cohesion etc. These secondary benefits, where they exist, should be highlighted in the application form.

2.6 If you are unsure if your project meets the primary outcomes, especially if it is of an innovative nature, please email us your project idea and we will respond / discuss it with you.

Please contact the SHIRE Environment Grant Team at environmentgrant@leics.gov.uk or call 0116 305 7005.

We are keen to support projects that can maintain or build on some of the positive environmental benefits that have arisen from the current Covid 19 situation, such as; reduced carbon emissions, increased biodiversity, improved air quality, greater appreciation of nature and green spaces etc.

Such projects could help support the Council in providing a 'green recovery' from Covid 19.

3. GENERAL CRITERIA

3.1 Grants will be available for any constituted 'not for profit' village/community groups, community enterprises, registered charities, town/parish councils.

3.2 Community managed libraries, schools and colleges and places of worship will also be considered. Please note that projects submitted by schools, colleges and places of worship must be open for use by the wider community.

3.3 The grant will only be available for projects where the main beneficiaries are residents of Leicestershire, excluding Leicester City and Rutland.

3.4 Applications from a partnership of organisations are welcomed. In such cases, one of the organisations would need to act as 'lead applicant' to which any grant monies would be paid.

3.5 As a general rule existing projects will not be considered. However, consideration will be given to existing projects where it can be demonstrated that the application is for the further development, expansion or enhancement of the project.

3.6 All relevant permissions and consents necessary to enable the project to go ahead must have been obtained from the relevant authorities before a grant can be offered. This list is not exhaustive, but examples of these are:

- Planning permission
- Location plans (scale 1:2500 for biodiversity projects and 1:500 for building energy projects)
- Buildings regulations approval
- Conservation area consent
- Listed building consent
- Appropriate ecclesiastical permission
- Compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or species legislation (applicants should seek advice before designing and implementing their project. For example, from architects, landscape advisors, etc.)
- Consent of landlord where the applicant is a tenant or leases the building / land
- Waste carrier's licence
- Relevant health and safety and insurance requirements including risk assessments where relevant
- Informing your local Parish, Town or District Council about the project prior to submission and ask for a written confirmation of support.
- Other consents - flood risk consents, consents to move species, etc.
- Photo permission forms

3.7 Applicants must seek evidence of support, such as a letter or email, from their local Leicestershire County Councillor (not required for small grants applications). The SHIRE Environment Grants Team can supply contact details if requested or see http://politics.leics.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=WARD&VW=LIST&PIC=0

4. BUILDING ENERGY PROJECT CRITERIA

4.1 Building energy projects with a payback period of 10 years or more will not be accepted.

(Please note that payback period will be calculated using the following method: Total project costs / annual saving. All payback periods will be checked and validated by the grants panel).

4.2 The project / proposed works must not be required as part of a condition of planning permission, or as a legal agreement associated with planning permission which is otherwise required by law. All relevant permissions and consents necessary to enable the work to go ahead must have been obtained from the relevant authorities before a grant can be offered. See list in 3.6.

4.3 Schools and colleges cannot apply for community building energy projects.

4.4 Copies of energy audits, EPC or DEC must be provided for your application to be considered.

4.5 Copies of energy bills for the previous 12 months must be provided.

5. BIODIVERSITY PROJECT CRITERIA

5.1 In designing the project, we would expect applicants to think about the long-term impacts on the environment such as sustainability of raw materials. Such as the purchase of timber, ensuring where possible to use recycled products and reducing carbon emissions from travel and transport e.g. if purchasing materials consider buying in bulk as and when ready and reducing the number of deliveries to site or using sustainable modes of travel to site.

5.2 With capital investment we would expect the project to have a clear maintenance plan that demonstrates a commitment to managing the improvements that have been delivered. E.g. if planting a woodland do you have a plan that covers maintenance of the ongoing Health & Safety of trees. Maintenance of sites will also impact on the biodiversity, such as grassland diversity or the condition of bug hotels and bird boxes. For instance, without management bug hotels can be attacked by birds and or parasites.

5.3 During project design undertake an investigation into the need of the site you are improving and the demand or benefit of the intervention you may consider implementing. This should involve contacting the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/leicestershire-and-rutland-environment-records-centre-lrerc and Heritage Environment Records Centre https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/history-and-heritage/historic-environment-record & others to identify whether there are records of protected species or designated habitats. There is a charge for this service. It will be important when submitting your application that you present the data you have found.

5.4 Projects will be given priority if they are addressing issues on or adjacent to a candidate or designated Local Wildlife Site, Site of Scientific Special Interest, Special Area of Conservation or supporting a Protected Species. The following links provide information on where details of what are designated protected species and sites.

https://www.gov.uk/topic/planning-development/protected-sites-species

Any projects that are on protected sites or involve protected species and their habitats must provide the relevant evidence that the legal regulations for these have been complied with.

5.5 We would welcome projects in urban & rural areas that deliver improvements to breeding and feeding sites for pollinators (such as bees, hoverflies, butterflies and moths) particularly in areas of social and economic deprivation.

5.6 We prefer to consider innovative and exciting projects which involve partners and / or communities. Projects which are large enough to attract wider resources such as in-kind support, other funding and change ways of managing sites for long term biodiversity protection, creation or enhancement will be favoured.

5.7 Projects that are improving the richness of species (number of wild animals and plants within a site or sites) would be welcomed. This could also involve projects that tackle the removal of non-native species whereby this would allow native species to thrive such as eradicating Japanese Knotweed or Signal Crayfish.

5.8 In project design, during delivery and after, please record any data on species you have found in relation to your site to the following website https://www.naturespot.org.uk/. We will want to see evidence of records as part of the monitoring of the project.

5.9 We want to measure the impact of the project interventions and wish to maintain contact with you and your group so that we can undertake relevant monitoring. We would like the group to join our project network.

5.10 A basic project risk assessment should be undertaken to identify any risks to the project, this should be undertaken during the design. It includes hazards such as land-use change, timing of delivery, land owner constraints, vandalism, public relations, health & safety.

5.11 If considering applying for funding for Rural Skills Training please contact the SHIRE Environment Grant Team to discuss.

6. SITE INSPECTIONS

6.1 Permission for the project to be inspected at all reasonable times, prior to, during, and after completion of the grant-aided works should be deemed given. Alternatively,

applicants may be asked to provide photographs of the finished work and/or of the activity/event carried out.

7. PROJECT COMPLETION TIMINGS

7.1 We would expect most projects to be completed within 12 months of the agreed commencement date, however reasonable extensions will be considered in some circumstances. Applicants should state the expected commencement and completion date in the application form.

8. EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

8.1 The following are examples of activities which may be eligible for funding. You can also find case studies of successful projects on our Leicestershire Communities website by following this link http://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/all-case-studies.html

8.2 **Household waste prevention, reduction, recycling and composting**

- Community give or take event
- Community composting
- Furniture reuse classes
- Repair cafes
- Reuse library
- Zero waste projects
- Community fridge or food share

Community Kitchens

If you are interested in applying to fund a community kitchen, please see our separate guidance and application at http://www.lesswaste.org.uk/reduce/love-food-hate-waste/leicestershire-community-kitchens-grant-funding-available/

8.3 **Carbon reduction and climate change**

- Modifications listed in an energy audit such as:
    - Draught-proofing
    - New boiler tank jackets
    - Hot pipe insulation
    - Roof or cavity wall insulation
    - Wall insulation either internally or externally applied
    - LED lighting
    - Solar panels
    - Photovoltaic technology
    - New heating system
    - Micro generation systems projects (must have payback period of less than 10 years)

  Note: Projects will only be funded in the priority order listed in the energy audit.

- Community pedal bike
- Electric pool bike for the community

8.4 **Biodiversity, habitats and local environment**

- Creation of wild-flower and semi-natural grassland areas
- Community gardens that integrate organic principles and wildlife in planting.
- Rainwater harvesting
- Local Wildlife Site management-cost associated with professional management such as tree works.
- Pond and wetland management
- Purchase of equipment to help with sustainable management such as hand tools, hay-balers, identification equipment and personal protective equipment such as safety boots, hard hats, gloves.
- Purchase of materials for creation of habitat
- Bird / bat boxes
- Green roofs

- Living walls
- Improving understanding of wildlife sites through the installation of information boards or other forms of interpretation

8.5 **Awareness raising and training**

- Series of workshops that meet one or more primary outcomes
- Education and training projects

9. FINANCE

9.1 All projects should provide a breakdown of project costs. We will ask you to provide accounts for the last year plus bank and financial statements covering the last 3 months before being given approval to carry out the project. Without this your application can only be processed in exceptional circumstances. Once funding has been awarded, we would require details of spending projections.

9.2 The maximum amount that can be awarded to a project is £3,000

9.3 Organisations can only receive one award in any financial year from this grant scheme.

9.4 Organisations can only apply for 75% of the total project cost up to the maximum grant awarded of £3,000.

9.5 At least 25% of the total project cost must be match funded independently by the organisation, including from other sources (note: grants from other Leicestershire County Council grant schemes cannot be used as match funding towards an application for a grant award from the SHIRE Environment Grant)

9.6 In kind contributions cannot be used for match funding.

Note that any In - kind contributions are non-cash contributions to a project, typically donated goods and services, which are necessary for and specific to the project and would otherwise have to be purchased for the project to go ahead.

9.7 Grants can be spent on both capital and revenue items, as long as the costs associated with the project/activity meet the grant outcomes and criteria.

9.8 If approved, any equipment/capital items purchased through the grant will be kept solely for the use of the project and must not be disposed of or sold without prior written approval from Leicestershire County Council.

9.9 Payment will normally be made on completion of the project. When the work is complete, project costs will be reimbursed. An 'End of Project' report (depending on

the type of project), along with details and evidence of incurred costs is also required e.g. receipts, invoices, payslips, etc. The grant award is paid in arrears once the project has been completed. Some community groups may require a proportion of funding in advance to enable their project/activity to take place. Under exceptional circumstances it may be possible to facilitate advance payments of up to 50% of the grant award. Please contact the SHIRE Environment Grant Team for enquiries regarding advance payments.

9.10 If the final project cost is less than the original estimated cost, the final amount of grant paid will be adjusted accordingly. If the final project cost is greater than originally estimated, the grant paid will not exceed the amount agreed in the grant offer letter. Where VAT can be reclaimed, the grant offer is based on the eligible scheme costs excluding VAT.

9.11 It may be possible to claim for goods and services not detailed in the original application but only with approval in advance. It will not be possible to increase the value of the grant award.

9.12 The total amount of funding available for each financial year is limited to £40,000. There are three funding rounds each financial year. If funding is unavailable due to the budget being spent, then organisations will be asked to resubmit in the next financial year providing funding is available.

9.13 Three quotes will be required for any items with a cost greater than £500.

10. SMALL GRANTS FUND UP TO £300

10.1 A simplified application process is available for small grants up to £300. Please see link to application www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/grants/environment-grant.html

10.2 Please note that evidence of support from your local Leicestershire County Councillor is not required for the small grants fund up to £300.

10.3 **Table 1**

The guidance criteria set out in sections 9 and 11 apply to the small grants fund with the following exceptions.	
9.1	We do not require accounts for the last year plus bank and financial statements covering the last 3 months.
9.2	The maximum that can be awarded from the smaller grants fund is £300.
9.4	Organisations can apply for 100% of the total project costs up to £300.

9.5	No match funding is required.
9.9	We do not offer advance payments.
11.2	We do not require you to provide details of match funding within the application as this is not required for smaller grants under £300.

11. APPLICATION PROCESS

11.1 Applications for SHIRE Environment Grant can be completed by downloading an application form from the website www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/grants/environment-grant.html

11.2 In your application, you will be required to include the following details:

- An outline of the project – what you intend to do
- The outcomes your project is expected to achieve – what will have changed
- An explanation of how you meet the primary outcomes of the SHIRE Environment Grant
- Details of any secondary benefits of the project
- Estimated/proposed timescales for implementation of the project
- A detailed breakdown of project costs and match funding
- The level of funding required to carry out the project and details of how the additional 25% match funding will be secured

11.3 Where relevant, all necessary consents, permissions and approvals should have been obtained for any work proposed prior to funding being awarded

11.4 Once you have completed the application, please send it with supporting documents to the contact details provided at the end of this guidance document. Please do not hesitate to contact the team if you have any queries you wish to discuss.

11.5 Paper copies of the Environment Grant application form are available upon request by contacting the SHIRE Environment Grant Team.

12. CHECKLIST

12.1 Please refer to the checklist at the back of the application form and ensure that you include the required supporting documents within your application. If the required documentation is not received, then the application cannot be processed.

13. WHAT HAPPENS WITH MY APPLICATION?

13.1 Once we have received your application, we will acknowledge receipt and advise you of any initial clarifications / additional information required.

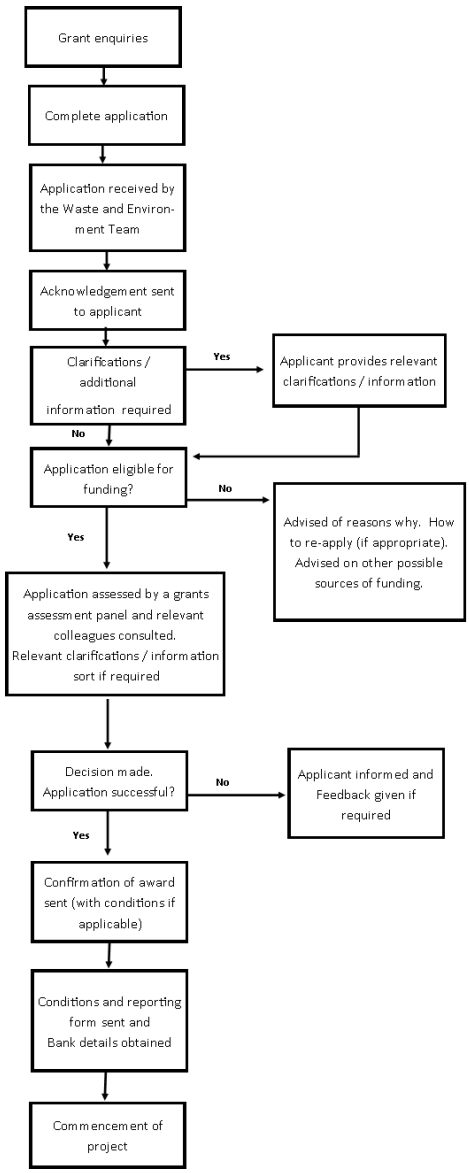
13.2 If your application is not eligible for SHIRE Environment Grant funding, you will be advised of the reasons for this, how you can re-apply (if this is appropriate) and, if applicable, any other potential sources of funding.

13.3 We may share 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:

- 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

13.4 Following consultation with colleagues, the SHIRE Environment Grant Team will provide feedback to you, which could include requests for clarification around certain elements of your project proposal. The SHIRE Environment Grant Team will remain in contact with you to ensure all queries are resolved before the application is referred for a final decision. In some cases, you may be required to submit a revised or updated version of your application.

Figure 1: Flowchart of application process



13.5 Although applications can be received at any time, the SHIRE Environment Grants scheme will operate a series of application deadlines and grants panel meetings. The deadlines for 2020-21 are provided below:

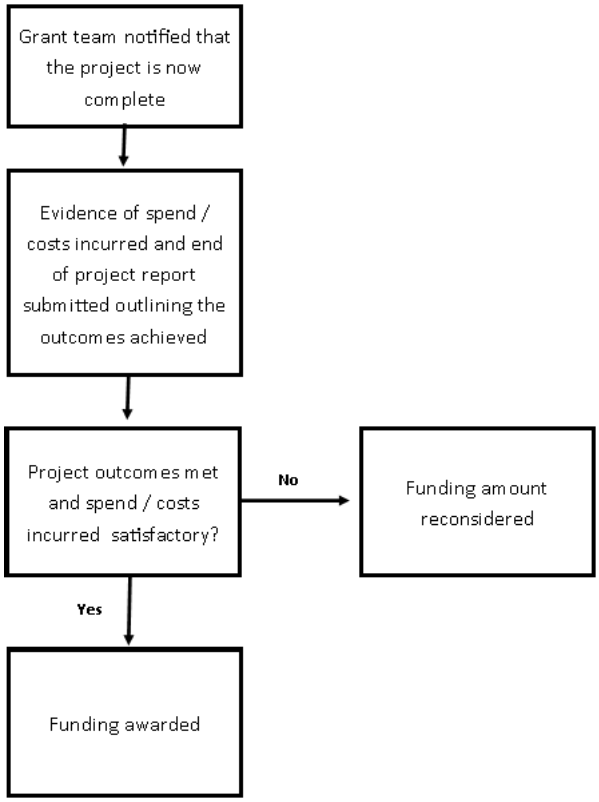
Deadlines for applications	**Decisions to be communicated to applicants by:**
Friday 31st July 2020	Friday 28th August 2020

Friday 30th October 2020	Friday 27th November 2020
Friday 26th February 2021	Friday 26th March 2021

14. CLAIMING GRANT AT PROJECT END

14.1 Once the project has been completed the process below will be followed for awarding funding.

Figure 2: Flowchart of grant claiming process



14.2 If the outcomes have not been achieved to the satisfaction of the grants team, the Council reserves the right to re-consider the final amount of funding to be awarded, based on the outcomes achieved by the project.

14.3 The SHIRE Environment Grant Team will request evidence of spend / costs incurred (using an expenditure template), along with clarification around the next steps for the project.

15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

15.1 At the end of the funding period, successful applicants will need to submit an End of Project Report, detailing the activities which have taken place and the outcomes the project has achieved, including relevant case study examples. Additional evidence such as letters of support, testimonials and photographs can be submitted with the End of Project Report.

15.2 Successful applicants will further be expected to take up opportunities to network with other relevant organisations to share learning and may also be requested to present details of their project to relevant meetings and forums from time to time.

16. PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

16.1 All projects should include some publicity and promotion. This should be outlined within the application form when applying for funding. Where possible, any publicity should include the supported by LCC logo.

17. OTHER SOURCES OF GRANT FUNDING

17.1 In some cases, projects may be more eligible for other sources of grant funding available from Leicestershire County Council and applicants will be directed to the most appropriate funding opportunities.

17.2 Further information on grants, funding and other related support for community organisations can be accessed via:

Leicestershire Communities: www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/grants

Leicestershire Funding Toolkit: www.fundingtoolkit.org

Voluntary Action Leicestershire: www.valonline.org.uk/group-support

18. EU STATE AID

18.1 The Grant may be subject to the European Union State Aid rules and if so the Council will offer the grant on the basis that the De Minimis exemption will apply pursuant to EC Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 18th December 2013 as published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 24th December 2013. The Council will require the applicant to disclose any financial contributions or benefits it has received in the last three fiscal years from any source which were given as De Minimus state aid and the Council will not award a sum in grant funding that would mean the applicant would exceed the De Minimus limit.

18.2 For further information about state aid, a Basic State Aid Guide is available on the Department for Business Innovation and Skills website, which you may find helpful: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-aid

19. ACCESS TO ALL

19.1 Where appropriate, schemes should comply with the Equality Act 2010. Further information about the Equality Act can be found at: www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

20. DISCLAIMER

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

FAO: SHIRE Environment Grant Team
Environment & Waste Management
Leicestershire County Council
Room 700, County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire
LE3 8RJ
Tel: 0116 305 7005
Email: environmentgrant@leics.gov.uk

DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018 and FREEDOM of INFORMATION ACT 2000

Personal data supplied on the **SHIRE Environment Grant** application form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 for statistical analysis, management, planning and in the provision of services by the County Council and its partners. The information will be held in accordance with the Council's records management and retention policy.

You can learn more about how, why and what information we use to support or provide our service by reviewing our Fair Processing Notice available on the County Council website here https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/data-protection-and-privacy/fair-processing-notices