SHIRE COMMUNITY GRANTS 2018-19
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) **How much funding is available through the SHIRE Grant Programme in 2018-19?**

   There is a budget of £350,000 available in 2018-19 and the funding will be allocated over 4 rounds of funding, with deadlines in May, July, September and December 2018. Eligible organisations can apply for small grants of up to £3,000 or larger grants of up to £10,000.

2) **Who can apply for a SHIRE Grant?**

   To apply for a grant, you need to be a not-for-profit organisation, such as a registered charity or community group. You need to have a constitution, a board of trustees and a bank account. Social Enterprises and Community Interest Companies can also apply, and Town and Parish Councils are also eligible. Schools or other educational institutions can also apply for non-curricular projects which provide health and wellbeing benefits to disadvantaged students and also to wider community members.

3) **What types of projects can be funded/supported through SHIRE Grants?**

   We are mainly seeking to fund projects which:

   - improve the lives, health and wellbeing of vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and communities in Leicestershire
   - provide community-based early intervention and prevention solutions which help to reduce demand on Council services
   - complement existing services already being delivered

   We can offer funding towards the costs of delivering projects, such as staffing costs, room/venue hire, equipment and materials. We can also consider awarding funding for larger capital costs such as vehicles and even towards new buildings or refurbishments. The key thing to consider is that we generally want to fund <u>new projects</u>, rather than existing projects. The other key issue is that we can only support projects which are developed <u>specifically to improve the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities.</u>

4) **Why are repeat/ongoing projects not supported?**

   In some cases the Council has disinvested from certain types of services, projects or activities. It therefore wouldn't be appropriate for SHIRE Grants to fund these types of projects, as the Council needs to be consistent in what we choose to invest in. Furthermore, we want to encourage innovation and creativity – if you've identified the need for a new type of project or service for a cohort of vulnerable/disadvantaged people, then it's worth enquiring to see if the project could be funded.

5) **What other types of projects can't be funded?**
SHIRE Grants can't be accessed to fund the following projects:
- General upgrades to community buildings (e.g. village halls, church buildings, community centres) unless the upgrades are focussed specifically on providing new services for vulnerable/disadvantaged individuals or groups
- New roofs, resurfacing of parking areas, or new disabled toilets
- Sports activities or equipment which are utilised by the general community (i.e. not focussed on vulnerable/disadvantaged groups)
- Feasibility studies, research/consultation activity or development of business plans
- Costs for any activities which have already taken place (i.e. we cannot offer retrospective funding for costs already incurred)

6) **The Guidance Notes state that you can offer £1,000 for repeat/existing projects. Does that mean groups can apply for funding for existing costs?**
This is correct. We have decided that we will offer a smaller amount of funding (up to a maximum of £1,000) for repeat/existing projects, but no more than this. We can also offer grants (of more than £1,000) to expand existing projects to new/different areas of the County or to new/different cohorts of beneficiaries. So for example, if you currently deliver a project which is operating successfully and benefitting people from one area of the County, you can apply for funding to expand the project to other areas of the County, or to meet the needs (based on clearly identified demand) of other groups of beneficiaries, as long as they are residents of Leicestershire County.

7) **Does an application need to provide evidence of 'match funding'?**
No, there is no specific requirement for you to provide evidence of 'match funding', i.e. it is possible to obtain a SHIRE Grant to fund your project in full. However, your application will be viewed more favourably if you can show that you have identified/secured a range of sources of funding for your project, rather than just relying on the SHIRE Grants alone.

8) **The application form includes a section with questions about outcomes. What is meant by outcomes and why are these so important?**
Outcomes are basically the impacts of your project, i.e. the difference your project makes to the lives of the people who participate in and benefit from the project. It is really important that applying organisations are clear about the difference the project is going to make. In your application, you will also need to tell us clearly how you intend to record your project's outcomes, and use this as evidence to tell us that your project achieved its aims, after the project has finished. Having a focus on outcomes throughout your project will help you to demonstrate what your project has achieved in terms of improving the wellbeing of vulnerable and disadvantaged people. It will also help to demonstrate what the SHIRE Community Grants are achieving for local communities.

9) **Does the online application need to be completed in one sitting or can applicants save it as they go along and return to it later?**

Unfortunately, the online form doesn't allow you to 'save your work as you go along'. It needs to be completed all in one go. However, we have created a Word template which you can download from the website and use this to draft your application. We're also happy for applicants to send us an initial draft of their application (using the Word template) well in advance of the application deadline, and we will offer comments/feedback on this before you submit the final version of your application using the online form.

10) **What happens after an application is submitted?**

Once an application is received, the Grants Officers will have an initial look at the application, to decide whether your project is technically eligible for funding or not. If your project has the potential to be funded, we will get in touch with you to discuss any areas of your proposal which need clarifying. Once we are satisfied with the information you have provided, we will then approach colleagues from relevant Council departments (or other relevant partners/stakeholders), to get their expert advice and feedback regarding your proposal, including how it fits with the strategic priorities and objectives of their particular service area. For applications requesting funding of over £3,000, we will also approach the relevant Cabinet Lead Member, to get their views on your project.

11) **How are decisions on applications made?**

Once we have all the required information regarding your project, we then put together a summary of your project, along with a set of recommendations for final approval. Applications for small grants (under £3,000) are taken to the Head of Communities, Policy & Resilience for consideration and applications for large grants (up to £10,000) are taken to the Cabinet Lead Member for Communities for consideration. You should receive a final decision between 4-6 weeks after submitting your application.

12) **How do you decide to reject an application?**

The Grants Officers generally aim to screen out any ineligible or weak applications prior to decision stage. If your application is deemed ineligible, you will be informed of this quite soon after submitting your application. Only those applications which have been screened, and deemed to have the potential to be awarded funding are progressed for a decision.

13) **What are the common reasons why applications get rejected?**

Some of the main reasons why applications are rejected are as follows:
- The project does not focus on improving the lives of vulnerable/disadvantaged people in the County
- The target cohort of participants/beneficiaries haven't been clearly defined or identified
- The information in the application is poorly explained and lacks the required detail
- Unclear information around the outcomes which are going to be achieved by the project

14) How does a project receive a grant payment?

We don't normally release the funding straight away. We will ask you to provide evidence of expenditure (i.e. the costs you have incurred) using evidence such as copies of receipts, invoices, orders, etc. Once we are satisfied with the information/evidence you have supplied, we can release a payment quite quickly. In some cases, we can make a grant payment to you 'up front', but only a maximum of 50% of your total grant award. In such cases, again, we will need to see clear evidence of what the grant is going to be spent on, before we release the funding. We may also agree, in certain cases, to release the grant in smaller amounts throughout the duration of the project, e.g. to help with cash flow. If we agree to do this for your project, we will request interim updates on progress with the project and details of expenditure (planned or incurred) prior to releasing payments.

15) What monitoring information do you ask for after a project is completed?

We like to know what your project has achieved, in terms of outcomes, impacts and benefits for the project participants. It's also good to hear what lessons have been learned through delivering the project; what worked well and what didn't, and how this will help you to design and deliver projects in future. Sometimes we go out and visit projects and create case studies to show on our website.

16) What help/support is available for community groups wanting to apply?

Ring or email the Grants Officers to discuss your project, before applying online. It's best to make sure that your project is potentially eligible for funding, before submitting your application. The Grants Officers will advise you accordingly and will give you suggestions about the types of information you need to include in your application. We are also happy to receive an initial draft of your application and offer feedback on this before you submit the final version. The website also has detailed Guidance Notes, and our advice to all applicants is to make sure you read the guidance notes carefully before applying! The Project Proposal document on the website also summarises the Grant criteria and contains helpful advice around the key issues for you to consider in relation to your grant application.

More information about the SHIRE Community Grant programme can be seen at: www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/grants