

Report to: Cabinet Meeting – 9 December 2025

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Paul Peacock, Strategy, Performance & Finance
Councillor Paul Taylor, Public Protection & Community Relations

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director - Housing Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Cara Clarkson, Business Manager - Regeneration & Housing Strategy, Ext. 5923

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Non-Key Decision
Report Title	Community Grant Scheme Update
Purpose of Report	Annual report presenting an update on the Community Grant scheme delivery for 2025-26 and budget setting proposals for 2026-27
Recommendation	It is recommended that Cabinet: a) notes the delivery of the Community Grant Scheme in 2025-26 to date; b) approves an increase to the current budget of £43,610 up to £150,000 for the 2026-2027 Community Grant Scheme; and c) approves the changes to the Community Grant Scheme eligibility criteria as detailed in section 3.3 of the report.
Alternative Options Considered	To withdraw the community grant scheme. This alternative has been discounted due to the demonstrable positive impact the scheme has on the local community – empowering local groups and developing community capacity and resilience.
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure that funding can be allocated to community groups – supporting communities to be sustainable and thrive.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In 2022/23 the Council offered, for the first time, a combined community grant scheme, consolidating several previous grant allocations with the intention of providing a simpler and more efficient offer of support to community groups.

- 1.2 During 2023/24, a review of the grant scheme criteria led to a range of changes in eligibility, grant value and prioritisation. These changes were approved by Cabinet on 31st October 2023.
- 1.3 In 2025/26 a budget of £100,000 was allocated by Cabinet to the Community Grant Scheme with a further £29,500 of unclaimed grant taking the available budget for allocation to £129,500 in the year.
- 1.5 In March 2025, a Portfolio Holder decision was made jointly by the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance and Portfolio Holder for Public Protection & Community Relations, to amend the eligibility criteria of the Community Grant Scheme to include smaller Parishes (less than 100 homes) and Parish Meetings as eligible for grant funding.

2.0 Community Grant delivery 2025-26

- 2.1 The first round of the community grant scheme for 2025-26 received 44 applications of which 20 were successfully allocated a grant. The grant scheme was heavily oversubscribed with request for support totalling over £370k, over three times the amount available for allocation.
- 2.2 When considering the spread of awards across the district, fourteen awards were made to Newark based group/ activities, four for Sherwood based groups/ activity and two that covers both areas. The success rate is reflective of the application numbers in each area.

Area	Number of applications
Newark	30
Sherwood	10
Newark and Sherwood	4

- 2.4 All successful applications met one of the schemes 'priority areas' for funding including
- Nine demonstrating match funding
 - One that met the climate change agenda
 - Five that support a reduction in anti-social behaviour
 - Five that will support residents managing the cost-of-living crisis.
- 2.5 Following Round 1, only £6,086.71 remained, which was insufficient to open another full round of applications therefore it was agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance and Finance that this underspend would be carried forward to 2026-27.
- 2.2 The successful applications in 2025-26 were as follows:

Awarded				
Group Name	Award	Amount	Priority Area	Locality
Newark Nationals Baseball	Full	£469.00	ASB	Newark
Blidworth on the Move	Full	£3,000.00	Cost of Living	Sherwood
SOS – Nesbitt's Community Cafe	Full	£5,091.71	Cost of Living	Newark
1 st Bilsthorpe Scout Group	Full	£12,300.00	Match Funded	Sherwood

7 th Newark Scout Group	Full	£15,000.00	Match Funded	Newark
Newark Sea Cadets	Full	£6,171.91	ASB	Newark
Poor Close Allotment Association	Full	£3,395.00	Climate Change	Newark
Mending Lines	Full	£4,910.00	ASB	Newark
Newark & Sherwood Concert Band	Full	£3,142.16	Cost of Living	Newark and Sherwood
St Andrew's Mission Hall	Full	£1,685.00	Cost of Living	Sherwood
Nottinghamshire County Scouts Council	Full	£20,000.00	Match Funded	Newark
Ollerton Town FC	Full	£4,982.00	ASB	Sherwood
Caythorpe War Memorial Hall	Full	£7,730.00	Match Funded	Newark
Lion's Den	Full	£7,339.00	Match Funded	Newark
Newark Community First Aid	Full	£5,270.73	Match Funded	Newark and Sherwood
Newark Food and Well-being Hub	Full	£2,777.92	Cost of Living	Newark
Millgate Community Centre	Partial	£8,149.00	Match Funded	Newark
Hoveringham Cricket Club	Partial	£2,500.00	Match Funded	Newark
Newark Swimming Club	Partial	£3,999.86	ASB	Newark
YMCA	Partial	£5,000.00	Match Funded	Newark
Total		£122,913.29		

3.0 Proposed Community Grant delivery 2026-27

- 3.1 Due to the demand on the scheme, it is proposed that Cabinet increase the budget for 2026-27 to £150,000 to continue the community grant scheme (inclusive of the £6086.71 underspend for 2025-26).
- 3.2 It is proposed that the existing prioritisation criteria is carried forward into 2026-27. Given that all successful applications continue to meet one of the priority criteria, it has been demonstrated that the funding is being directed towards those projects that align with the council's community plan objectives.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the eligibility criteria for grants (at Appendix 1), is amended to reflect the following:
- Applicants can only secure grant once in a three-year period
 - Where there are applications from multiple branches of an umbrella organisation, only one allocation will be made in any three-year period
 - That where elected councillors are members of/ affiliated with groups receiving grant, the grant will be conditioned to ensure that there is no political gain through grant/ associated publicity.

- 3.4 In proposing the grant scheme for 2026-27, consideration has also been given to the emergence of Newark's "Pride of Place Programme" grant scheme as part of funding secured from central government in March 2025. Care has been given to ensure that the council's community grant scheme continues to complement other funds and to target grass-roots community groups.

4.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding, Sustainability, and Crime and Disorder and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

4.1 Financial Implications – FIN25-26/2314

- 4.1.1 There is an inherent allocation of £106,390 for 2026/27 that has been requested in the usual budget setting process (inflated from the previous year), however as stated paragraph 3.1 £150,000 is recommended in this report. Therefore, an additional £43,610 is requested to be added to the budget for 2026/27, this can be added to the base budget in the budget setting process.

- 4.1.2 It is also proposed that any funds from the current year's budget be carried over to fulfil commitments made to groups in the current year where grant may not yet be expended. The current year has a revised budget of £189,215.85 after also carrying forward budget from the previous year.

4.2 Equalities Implications

- 4.2.1 The community grant scheme has been designed to be run in a transparent and open manner with opportunity for all elected members to input to the process. The scheme does not discriminate based on any protected characteristic and has had a positive impact on several groups with protected characteristics including groups supporting young people, older people, and those with mental illness. Additional support is available to any applicant who may require this e.g. through this provision of applications in large print or braille, or support in completing an application if required. For additional support, applicants should contact: communityengagement@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

4.3 Legal Implications - LEG2526/7915

- 4.3.1 Cabinet is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

Newark and Sherwood Community Grant Scheme

Guidance

Overview

Newark and Sherwood Community Grant Scheme aims to support district based registered charities, unincorporated associations, trust or charitable/ not-for-profit companies limited by guarantee/ community interest companies (where these are not-for-profit), constituted voluntary and community groups, societies or clubs with projects or initiatives that align to the [Council's Community Plan objectives](#).

The scheme recognises the important contribution that local organisations make to improving peoples' quality of life and that small amounts of funding can often help to get a project off the ground or enhance its impact.

Grants will be available up to £20,000. Any grant awarded over £5,000 will need to demonstrate match funding at 50% above the £5,000 threshold.

Applications will be assessed a minimum of twice a year, unless all funding has been allocated.

Approvals will generally be via the councils Cabinet following consideration by a cross party panel. For expediency and where necessary, following the panel process, applications can be approved by the relevant Portfolio Holder and referred to Cabinet for information to ensure that key timeframes are adhered to.

To be successful, applicants will need to demonstrate:

- A local need for the project
- How the project contributes to one or more of the council's community plan objectives
- That the project takes place within the district
- Financial information to support application (this includes considering the level of reserves the group has access to and evidence to support the need for council funding, including that the funding is not being applied for retrospectively).

Additional weighting will be given to those projects that meet the following criteria:

- Projects that contribute to overcoming the cost-of-living crisis
- Projects that contribute to public protection by reducing crime or anti-social behaviour
- Projects that improve bio-diversity or contribute to reducing climate change
- Projects that can demonstrate match funding (above £5k)

Funding Criteria

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- The scheme is unable to support the following:
 - Projects that are delivered outside of Newark and Sherwood.
 - Applications submitted by profit making and/or private businesses.
 - Curriculum based activities in schools

- Retrospective applications for project/initiatives that have already commenced or been completed.
- Ongoing revenue support for existing projects, initiatives or services

Eligibility

Applications may be submitted by the following:

- Charities registered with the Charity Commission* (e.g. Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs))
- Unincorporated associations, trust or charitable / not-for-profit companies limited by guarantee).
- Constituted voluntary and community groups, societies and clubs.
- Smaller Parishes with less than 100 homes within the Parish.

Applications may not be submitted/ will not be accepted where:

- *The applicant has previously secured grant from the scheme within the last three years*
- *Where the applicant represents a branch of an umbrella organisation and another branch of the organisation has received grant within the last three years*
- *The grant is being submitted by a Councillor of someone acting directly on their behalf*

Application Process

All applications should be returned to communityengagement@nsdc.info by the relevant deadline. A member of the Community Development Team will contact you to confirm receipt of your application and may request any outstanding documentation or supporting information to ensure your application can be submitted to Cabinet.

The Panel reserves the right to use a level of discretion in exceptional circumstances where deemed appropriate when considering requests for grant support to ensure opportunities are not missed.

Equal opportunities

Newark and Sherwood District Council always welcome applications from all sections of the community.

All groups and individuals who receive support will be expected to follow current equal opportunity policy and practice in relation to management, employment practices, service delivery and training provision, and not to engage in any discriminatory activity.

Conditions of grants

- The applicant must obtain approval for any changes to the original project outline.
- In the event of a grant aided asset becoming surplus to requirements, this should be returned for reallocation or disposal.
- The applicant will agree to submit progress reports, as deemed appropriate, and a post event/project evaluation report. The frequency of the progress reports will be agreed between the applicant and the council.

- By accepting the award, the applicant agrees to comply with all statutory laws such as Town and Country Planning Legislation, Licensing Law etc as deemed necessary.
- The grant must be spent within 12 months of receipt, otherwise we may request any under spend to be returned or reallocated. Any requests for an extension to the grant period must be submitted in writing to us
- Applications will only be considered when submitted via email, duly completed and signed and with any supporting documentation.
- If the project involves young people, the applicant may be required to attend additional training such as 'Safeguarding Children and Young People' as deemed appropriate and to comply with any reasonable requests to attend on-going training opportunities.
- Recipients agree to provide us with monitoring and evaluation information on request in order to measure the value and impact of the scheme.
- Publicity for funded projects will include the Council's logo.
- The district council and will be able to use details of the funded project for publicity on their websites and via their social media channels.