

Charnwood Community Grants

Background

At its meeting on 18th March 2010, the CBC Cabinet agreed revised arrangements for the assessment and awarding of community grants following a service review. The arrangements split the previous general fund revenue funding to the community and voluntary sector through Charnwood Grants into four streams:

- Funding for Voluntary Action Charnwood through the Council's contribution to the countywide voluntary sector infrastructure arrangements
- Strategic Partner funding for selected partner organisations covering a three year period which was agreed by Cabinet
- Community Development Grants for substantial projects, up to a maximum of £15,000, that would be awarded by Cabinet in three rounds
- Community Engagement Grants for small community groups and individuals, up to a maximum of £500, that would be awarded by the Charnwood Grants Panel.

In addition a specific scheme of Loughborough grants was established in the Council's 2011/12 budget funded out of the Loughborough Special Rate. Loughborough Community Grants are available up to a maximum of £2,000.

All applications are assessed against two measures of need:

- How the project meets the Council's aims and objectives in meeting identified community needs and
- The need for grant funding from the Council to enable the project to succeed.

Both measures seek to demonstrate the value for money to be obtained in providing grant funding.

Nine criteria are used to assess community need based on the aims and objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan:

- How does the project promote stronger, cohesive and balanced communities (in particular encouraging people from different backgrounds to get along together)?
- How does the project promote well-supported volunteering opportunities?
- How does the project promote health and well-being (in particular promoting healthy eating, physical activity, sexual health and mental health)?
- How does the project reduce smoking and the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse)?
- How does the project reduce the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour?
- How does the project improve the quality of life of people living in priority neighbourhoods?
- How does the project improve the well-being of residents through acknowledging their diverse needs?

- How does the project enable children, young people and older people to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live?
- How does the project enable older people to live independent lives?

Five criteria are used to assess the need for the Council to provide grant funding. Organisations must demonstrate that their projects are prepared and managed well and will be encouraged to explore other funding sources where appropriate.

- Has a realistic total cost and timetable for the project been identified after being researched, for example through obtaining quotes or using reliable information from previous years?
- Have efforts been made to obtain other funding to enable the project to begin and is the amount sought from the Council necessary to secure match funding or because other sources of funding are not available?
- What balances and reserves are available and has using these to fund the activity been considered?
- Is the proportion of the cost of the project the Council is being asked to fund justified?
- No specific geographically based conditions or targets are applied to grant awards but the geographical distribution of grants across the Borough is taken into account.

Applications are assessed qualitatively against these criteria and rated high, medium or low. These ratings are converted to a score on the following basis which rewards those applications which rate highly in meeting community need and provide a maximum possible score of 79.

Table 1 – Conversion of rankings into scores

Ranking	Community Need Score	Organisation Need Score
HIGH	6	5
MEDIUM	2	3
LOW	1	1
Maximum Score	54	25

Experience of operating the scoring system has resulted in the following guideline scores.

Score below 25	No grant awarded
Score between 25 and 29	Some of grant sought awarded (up to 25%)
Score between 30 and 34	Some of grant sought awarded (up to 50%) or all if small grant applied for
Score of 35 or more	All of grant awarded