POLICY FOR THE
ALLOCATION OF
EARLY HELP AND ASSET BASED
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

2019 – 2022

September 2019
1. **BACKGROUND**

1.1. Cheshire East Council operates an Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants Scheme within the boundaries of Cheshire East as we believe that a vibrant voluntary, community and faith sector is vital to our communities. Funding awarded to local people and the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) can generate a significant amount of community activity and positive impact. This Policy addresses the governance arrangements, procedures and monitoring process to facilitate the scheme.

1.2. The Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants Scheme is a key enabler to the delivery of our Connected Communities Strategy which aims to connect communities across Cheshire East, where people and community organisations are embedded within local networks, providing mutual help and support.

1.3. The Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants Scheme align to the Council’s Commissioning Framework – People live well for longer which has been developed to achieve improved outcomes for local people. This means anticipating and responding to health and wellbeing needs as early as possible to ensure that local people are helped to ‘live well and for longer’ building resilience, so that people are empowered to recognise and address their own health and wellbeing needs and to make the most of assets within communities (such as by connecting people with local groups / voluntary services), which is a core part of this approach.

1.4. The aim of the Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants Scheme is to support not for profit organisations (which for the purposes of this Policy shall include voluntary and community groups and registered charities) and inspire local people through social innovation to develop or enhance local projects that will improve the quality of life for local communities. Grants will be awarded which meet the Council’s Corporate Outcomes (see “3.10 Expected outcomes and proposed projects”)

1.5. Funding will only be allocated where organisations and local people can demonstrate a required need, and demonstrate that a defined impact will be made through their project or activity and that clear outcomes can be achieved.

1.6. When using the term grants in this Policy it refers to the giving of a fixed amount of Council funds to organisations through an application and assessment process which takes place 4 times each financial year.

2. **LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

2.1. The Executive Director - People has responsibility for Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants Scheme and has delegated authority to approve grant applications from local people and organisations to assist in developing community based activities and projects.

2.2. The Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants Scheme budget is fixed each year and so there is a limited amount of money from which to pay grants under this policy.
2.3. All grant decisions will be made based on the set of principles, set out in this Policy, and within the agreed budget approved by Council each year. The budget for the grants is managed carefully and flexibly to ensure that the Council has money available throughout the year.

2.4. Given the fixed budget and the Council’s aim to benefit as many organisations as possible, the Council cannot guarantee to fund the maximum amount applied for; therefore organisations must ensure that they have procedures in place to cover the balance of funding required. The Council will not pay a grant unless the organisation can demonstrate that the balance of the funding is available.

2.5. The Executive Director for People will be responsible for setting aside a proportion of the available budget for promotion and publicity purposes, as required.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1. The Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants Scheme operates within set criteria, which is approved by Cabinet, the final decision making on approving each round of grants will be delegated to the Executive Director of People and the relevant Council Officers in line with the Council’s Corporate Outcomes:

**How to apply**

3.2. Applications for Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants Scheme must be made using the Council’s Early Help Community and Asset Based Community Development Grant Application Form (See Appendix 1) and associated guidance notes that are available online on the Council’s website and as a paper version on request.

3.3. The application form must be completed in full. Incomplete application forms will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant, which could cause a delay or deferral of the application. Supporting documentation (listed under section 8 of the application form) may also be requested prior to the application being fully considered. Failure to supply all requested documentation will result in the application being treated as incomplete.

3.4. Applicants can only apply for funding for one project per financial year.

3.5. The closing dates for receipt and acceptance of complete applications are the last Friday of March, June, September and December each year.

3.6. Grants cannot be paid retrospectively therefore any work commenced prior to acceptance of the grant offer will not be eligible for funding.

3.7. All successful applicants will be required to complete a post grant monitoring report as per section 5.0 of this Policy, this will be proportionate to the amount of funding allocated.
Who can apply?

3.8. **Asset Based Community Development Grants** – up to a maximum award of £250

The Council wishes to provide an opportunity for local residents of Cheshire East who wish to share their skills, interest and passions through volunteering to promote or deliver projects or events that will improve the health and wellbeing of their community. Residents will be able to apply for up to £250 for projects which will be delivered **BY** local people, be locally owned, and be locally attended.

To apply for this you must:
- Achieve one or more of the expected outcomes outlined in 3.10 of this document
- Live within the Cheshire East area
- Be passionate to make a difference within your local community
- Complete the application form in full, providing all required information
- Have not already received an Asset Based Community Development Grant within the current financial year

3.9. **Early Help Community Development Grants** – up to a maximum award of £10,000

The Council wishes to support the continuation and development of not-for-profit organisations and local projects that are created **WITH** the local community, this will target grant money to ensure that a greater impact is made on local communities **WITH** local communities.

To apply for this you must:
Achieve one or more of the expected outcomes outlined in 3.10 of this document
Be a voluntary or community organisation, registered charity or other not for profit organisation
Have a set of audited accounts, or as a minimum an organisation bank statement, and are able to provide such information as the Council reasonably requires in order to satisfy the Council as to the organisations financial position and its need for the assistance requested
Have a management committee with an up-to-date Governing Document which must be signed by at least two members of the committee who are unrelated to each other;
Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their organisation, which must include a requirement that staff / volunteers are cleared with the Disclosure and Barring Service where appropriate;
Have a bank or building society account in the name of the organisation applying with at least two signatories who are unrelated to each other;
Provide value for money
Be passionate to make a difference within your local community
Complete the application form in full, providing all required information
Have not already received an Early Help Community Development Grant within the current financial year
Be based in Cheshire East

3.10. Expected outcomes and proposed projects

The list below highlights Cheshire East Corporate Outcomes, with a number of key outcomes that the Early Help and Asset Based Community Development Grants will be expected to achieve. These outcomes are inline with Cheshire East Corporate Outcomes also using the nationally recognised Themes, Outcomes and Measures created by the Sustainable Development Unit as part of the Social Value work. A number of proposed projects have set alongside those outcomes to provide the applicants additional information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Proposed Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Our local communities are strong and supportive</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health literacy is improved and community health services are promoted</td>
<td>Initiatives to connect communities through projects around health awareness (including wider determinants of health), promoting community safety (workshops, training)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community asset building</td>
<td>Initiatives to connect communities through building community networks by providing space and opportunities to bring people together reducing loneliness and isolation and enhancing community cohesion (community transport schemes, enhancing community facilities, community events)</td>
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<td><strong>2. Cheshire East has a strong &amp; resilient economy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>More local people in employment</td>
<td>Initiatives to support people in to employment with disabilities, who have been long term unemployed, young offenders (job clubs, training programmes, volunteer opportunities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage businesses to play an active role within their communities</td>
<td>Initiatives that attract businesses to use Social Corporate Responsibility to benefit local communities (volunteering, local apprenticeship schemes, sharing community knowledge)</td>
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3. People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive

| Children are given the best start in life | Initiatives to promote positive behavior change in young people (anti bullying, change4-life, start for life projects) |
| Young people are given the best opportunities | Initiatives around summer play schemes, youth projects in particular considering young people in vulnerable groups and initiatives that reduce anti-social or disruptive behaviors |

4. Cheshire East is a green & sustainable place

| Environmental Impacts are reduced | Initiatives to provide advice to local residents to reduce energy consumption, reduce or replace the use of single use plastics, promote recycling and minimising waste (love food hate waste). |
| Sustainable travel is promoted | Initiatives to promote walking and cycling routes alternative to car journeys |
| Creating better places to live | Maximising the use of the natural built environment such as open green spaces developing initiatives that will connect people to these areas. Protecting and sustaining the natural built environment such as open green spaces developing initiatives such as friends of the park schemes and planting schemes. |

5. People Live well for Longer

| People are supported to have control over their lives | Initiatives to promote independent living (money advice, befriending schemes, practical healthy lifestyles advice, digital inclusion support) |
| The role and impact of ill-health prevention is strengthened | Initiatives that tackle homelessness, alcohol abuse, drug misuse, smoking, promote healthy eating, drinking and exercise (projects that will engage target audiences) |
| Mental health is promoted | Initiatives to promote good mental health or increase access to mental health support (peer support groups, dementia friendly communities, mental health first aid) |
| Non clinical treatment promoted | Initiatives that offer social prescribing schemes as treatment |
| Carers’ quality of life is improved | Initiatives to support carers to feel less isolated and develop new social and peer support networks |

3.11. What this grant will fund

- Capital costs (equipment, building repairs)
- Revenue costs (staffing, expenses)
- Events (refreshments, advertisement etc.)
- Project start up/short term ongoing costs (volunteers expenses, room hire, insurances etc.)

3.12. What this grant will not fund
- Organisations which hold substantial free reserves, including local branches of national or regional organisations which hold free reserves that could be utilised
- Applications from Town and Parish Councils or departments within Cheshire East Council
- Applications made by an individual below the age of 18.
- Work which has already taken place and been paid for.
- Sponsorship for individuals taking part in foreign trips or sporting/musical programmes
- Activities that are for the sole relief or benefit of animals
- Activities that are of sole benefit to an individual
- General appeals, sponsorship or fundraising for your own organisation or others
- Activities of a mainly political or religious nature
- Refurbishments or equipment where there is no considerable benefit to individuals attending the facility
- Projects taking place abroad
- Projects that do not meet the intended outcomes
- Projects from schools or colleges that do not take place outside of normal school hours or in the holidays or do not include a wide proportion of the community who do not attend that establishment
- Events which do not involve members of the local community participating
- Repair costs where deterioration is due to neglect
- Loan against loss or repaying debt;
- Paying someone to write your application or applications to other grant funders
- Land purchase
- Items that are purchased on behalf of another organisation
- Disabled facilities where there is no proven need for the work to be carried out or where upgrading is required for an existing facility to meet the statutory requirements of the DDA;
- Organisations which are not based in Cheshire East, unless they can demonstrate significant community benefits within Cheshire East.

3.13. **General Conditions**

3.13.1. Grants are classed as one-off and should not be seen as repeat funding;

3.13.2. The funding allocated must be spent to benefit the residents of Cheshire East:

3.13.3. Annual applications from the same people or organisation for the same purpose will not be considered;

3.13.4. Grants of £1,000 and under are valid for a period of 6 months from the date of the offer letter and will be paid in advance. Monitoring information and invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Cheshire East Council within 6 months of the date of offer letter;

3.13.5. Grants over £1,000 are valid for a period of 12 months from the date of the offer letter and will be paid upon completion of the project. Monitoring information and invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Cheshire East Council within 12 months of the date of offer letter to allow the grant to be paid;

3.13.6. If successful applicants are unable to meet the timescales stated within this Policy, they must contact the Council in order to provide an updated project timeline and to request an extension to the validity period of the grant awarded;
3.13.7. If an organisation's financial position means that they are unable to begin the project without payment of the grant first they may be entitled to request payment prior to the project commencing. Monitoring information will still need to be submitted 12 months after the date of the offer letter;

3.13.8. Organisations who are in receipt of other funding from the Council may apply to this grant scheme if the grant is required for a one-off project which is considered additional to the service already funded;

3.13.9. Any profits from projects must be used to further develop the organisation/community activity or for any future projects and not used to support other organisations or different projects;

3.13.10. If the project involves work on land or a building, including refurbishment, the applicant must own the freehold of the land or building, or hold a lease that cannot be brought to an end by the landlord for at least 5 years;

3.13.11. If planning permission is required this must be in place before the grant application is made. The Council may ask for confirmation that planning permission is not required, or that it is required and has been granted. Grant applications without planning permission in place will be considered if the application is for a feasibility study or architects fees in order to establish the viability of the project;

3.13.12. Organisations must be committed to and have policies on equalities and inclusion and in delivering the services or activity the organisation must not unlawfully discriminate, directly or indirectly against any of the nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The organisation can direct some or all of its activities at specific groups where the intention is to address discrimination or disadvantage;

3.13.13. Successful applicants must be able to participate in a monitoring process and provide monitoring information to evidence how the grant money has been spent and adherence to the conditions of the grant. This must include receipts or invoices and the completed monitoring form, plus photographs, once the project has finished. This in some cases may also include in site visits and quarterly updates;

3.13.14. Successful applicants must acknowledge the support of Cheshire East Council in press releases, publicity and advertising etc. Electronic copies of the Council’s logo will be sent with grant offers;

3.13.15. Successful applicants will be expected to adhere to all grant agreements including how the Council's branding should be used to promote the project

3.13.16. Successful applicants will allow Cheshire East Council to use details of the grant award, together with any relevant photographs supplied, in newsletters and on the Council’s website;

3.13.17. Expenditure must not be incurred on the project prior to the grant decision being given. In these circumstances the Council will withdraw the grant offer/rescind the grant decision;

3.13.18. Successful applicants must notify the Council of any changes in circumstances which affect their financial position throughout the period in which the grant monies are being used;
3.13.19. The grant must only be used for the purposes specifically stated in the application form, should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the individual or Organisation may be asked to return some or all of the monies paid;

3.13.20. If the project is cancelled or only partially achieved, or if the organisation is wound up, any unused grant money must be returned to the Council;

3.13.21. All conditions, under which the grant has been awarded, including any Special Conditions, must be met. Failure to do so could result in the individual or Organisation being asked to repay the grant monies to the Council.

4. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

4.1. The Early Help Community and Asset Based Community Development Grant applications will be considered at quarterly intervals as set out at section 3.5.

4.2. All Applications will be assessed by a multi agency evaluation panel of professionals who will have various expertise about the proposed outcomes.

4.3. Having assessed all applications a Recommendations Report is prepared for consideration and approval by the Executive Director for People.

4.4. Applicants will be notified to inform them of whether they have been successful or not within 6 weeks after the closing date for each round of applications.

4.5. Complaints about any aspect of the Early Help and Asset Based Community Development process will be dealt with under the Council’s Corporate Complaints Procedure. A copy of the Council’s Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy is available from the Council’s website.

5. MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

5.1. Following a successful application and in order to ensure that monies are used in an appropriate manner, as set out in this Policy, a monitoring report will be required following project completion. This report shall include, but shall not be limited to, how many people benefitted from the project, if a profit was made and how it was used, how the grant money was used and what difference the project made to the organisation and/or local people.

5.2. For Grants of £1,000 and under the completed monitoring form, invoices or receipts and photographs must be forwarded to the Council within 6 months of the date of offer letter.

5.3. For Grants over £1,000 the completed monitoring form, invoices or receipts and photographs must be forwarded to the Council within 12 months of the date of offer letter to allow the grant to be paid.

5.4. Invoices or receipts dated prior to the date of the offer letter will not be accepted or reimbursed

5.5. The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support an application.

5.6. Successful applicants must allow reasonable access to premises/accounts/activities upon request from the Council.
5.7. Successful applicants must retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be advised depending on the grant).

5.8. If successful applicants do not supply satisfactory monitoring reports and supporting information in full and within the set time scale they may be asked to repay the grant funding to the Council. Failure to comply with the conditions of this grant may be taken into account when considering any further applications for grant funding made by the same person or organisation in the future.