



Mansfield Community Grant Fund Guidance Notes

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HM Government

**LEVELLING
UP**

Mansfield Community Grant Fund Guidance Notes and Application Form

Introduction

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. It provides up to three years funding for local investment, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation between 2022/23 and 2024/25. All funds must be spent by March 2025.

The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. In August 2022, Mansfield District Council submitted a UKSPF Investment Plan setting out the area's priorities for spending the city's allocation of £2.955m. The Investment Plan covers the three priorities of:

- Communities and Place
- Supporting Local Business
- People and Skills

The Council has now secured approval for its Investment Plan which enables funding to be progressed towards the Communities and Place priority, and some of this funding is to be available through the Mansfield Community Grant Fund.

Mansfield Community Grant Fund

Mansfield District Council recognises the important and valuable contribution that Mansfield Voluntary and Community Sector (MVCS) has made to the lives of residents across the district and the Community Grant Fund aims to build on this to deliver the aims and objective of the Investment Plan.

Through the Fund, the Council wants to make it easier for community and voluntary groups to access smaller amounts of funding for projects that will make a difference in their local neighbourhoods. The Mansfield Community Grant Fund will therefore support community-based activity with grants of up to £15,000 for community groups across the district of Mansfield.

Projects will need to align with the following priorities:

- Pride in place – improving people's satisfaction with where they live
- Enhancing engagement with culture and community activity
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Tackles issues related to the cost of living crisis

The Community Grant Fund is managed by Mansfield District Council in collaboration with Mansfield Community Voluntary Service (MCVS). The aim is to make the application process as straight forward as possible and provide support through MCVS to help groups through the process. It will also look to build capacity within local community groups and their projects. The funding will represent an opportunity to facilitate the sustainability of community-based activity and potentially enable groups and organisations to attract funding and support from other sources.

What types of Communities and Place projects do you expect to see?

The priority types of projects for the Communities and Place theme and specifically the Community Grant Fund may include those which:

- Impact on the most disadvantaged communities of place or communities of interest within Mansfield and which clearly address local needs enhancing community capacity building and the development of community assets and infrastructure.
- Develop local responses to local social and environmental challenges, enabling community champions and practical responses, driving local solutions and an engagement with service delivery.
- Respond to cost of living issues facing communities through enhanced support to advisory services and projects which support increased resilience through innovative projects increasing access to food, financial support and community safety.
- Develop local cultural heritage and offer outreach to support inclusion across the community.
- Expand and support activity driving health and wellbeing, including support to those facing mental and physical health challenges and those requiring access to work and training, both practically and through advisory and support services.

What type of projects can be funded?

The Community Grant Fund can fund both capital and revenue projects although there are limited amounts of each kind of funding.

Capital funding can be used to purchase assets, either new or the significant refurbishment of existing assets. These are expected to have wider community benefit and to have an expected lifespan of at least 5 years.

Revenue funding can be used where there is no lasting asset. Revenue funding can be used to put on events, performances and run activities, pay for training sessions, provide practical advice and guidance etc.

The aim is to not be too prescriptive of the type of projects which can be funded but they must contribute to the themes set out in the Mansfield UKSPF Investment Plan, the Community and Place theme and therefore, projects must be able to show how they will:

- Be community-based
- Improve your neighbourhood
- Improve people's satisfaction with where they live
- Increase the number of people engaging with community or cultural activity in your neighbourhood
- Help improve the health and / or wellbeing of people living in your neighbourhood
- Help improve the quality of life of people particularly effected by the cost of living crisis.

What type of activity cannot be funded?

We **cannot** consider applications for:

- any activity that does not clearly benefit local residents. Clearly means being able to demonstrate who will benefit and how this will be measured;
- activities primarily aimed at promoting religious or political beliefs;

- activities which do not fit in with the Fund priorities
- activities for which there is no clear evidence of need or demand;
- costs which have already been incurred before the grant has been awarded;
- ongoing running costs for existing projects for example wages (although extensions to existing projects will be considered);
- general running costs of existing activities for example tea and coffee, stationery, printer consumables;
- any activity that is normally the responsibility of statutory bodies;
- loans, debts or endowments;
- flat rate volunteer expenses (as opposed to actual out of pocket expenses);
- anything that might bring the Council or MCVS into disrepute;
- costs that you would reasonably expect to fund yourself;
- costs for the benefit of individuals;
- activities that target groups or activity outside of Mansfield district.

Who can apply?

You can apply for a grant provided that:

- you are a not-for-profit organisation;
- you have a constitution/written set of rules for the organisation;
- you have a bank account in your group's name and at least two people (not related to one another) are required to sign any cheque or withdrawal from the account;
- you have a set of accounts and make these available for inspection;
- your group can run the activity and complete the form, even if you get some help with this. The contact for the grant and the person signing the form must be a member of the group or its management committee;
- your activities begin and costs are incurred after receipt of the grant. You must also spend the entire grant and complete activities we have funded within 12 months of receipt of the grant. If you are successful with an application to the Grant Fund, you may apply again at a later stage but for different additional reasons. You should apply to the main call for projects if your applications is for support over a 12 month period.
- your group or activity is open to everyone. If your activity is not open to everyone, you need to tell us why and the Assessment Panel will decide if your application is eligible;
- your group and proposal activity are based in Mansfield district, are locally-based with local people involved in the Management Committee.

How much can we apply for?

- The minimum grant award is £500.
- The maximum grant per application is £15,000, but this is in exceptional circumstances - we expect the majority of applications to be below this level.
- For smaller scale grants of between £500 and £2,500, a simpler Grant Conditions Form (see below) will be facilitated, though all applications should be submitted on the same application form below.

How and when can we apply?

A copy of the application form alongside these guidance notes can be downloaded <https://www.mansfieldcvs.org/communitygrantfund/> from the MCVS website. Applications should be submitted electronically to info@mansfieldcvs.org

The Community Grant Fund is a rolling programme of funding, with calls for projects made throughout the duration of the UKSPF Investment Plan or until the funding is exhausted. If an application misses a deadline date, then it will be included for consideration in the next round of funding, provided that funds are still available.

What is the deadline for applications?

This call represents the first opportunity to make an application to the Community Grant Fund and the call opens 9th January 2023 and **closes initially on 3rd February 2023**. There are limited resources in this first financial year of operation and this deadline allows us to take stock. Further resources will be made available in the next two financial years up to 31st March 2025. You may bid for activity across financial years. It is possible that this call will exhaust the overall funding available.

What happens after sending in our application form?

Once your application has been submitted, you will receive an acknowledgement and reference number via email.

Your application will initially be assessed by the MCVS to ensure it meets the grant eligibility criteria. Please note if an application is incomplete or does not provide sufficient information, it will generally be considered as **NOT** meeting the eligibility criteria. However in the spirit of the Grant Fund seeking to enhance capacity, you may be contacted to request any additional information or clarification if this is deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

If your application is not accepted as being eligible for 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.

Who will decide whether our application is successful?

Projects will be scored against the assessment framework below by representatives of Mansfield District Council and MCVS and independent external assessors. The scoring and recommendations for funding will be presented to a Grants Panel, made up of representatives of Mansfield District Council, the CVS and representatives drawn from the Place Board.

The Community Grant Fund Panel will meet as and when required but aim to provide you with a decision within 6 weeks of submission at the latest.

How will application be assessed?

If your application is deemed eligible for the fund, the following criteria will be used to score the applications and for the Panel to formally assess the application:

Assessment criteria		4 – strongly meets the criteria			
		1- no / very little evidence of meeting the criteria			
a	Strong link to the themes of the fund	4	3	2	1
b	Demonstrates a genuine community need	4	3	2	1
c	Will the proposal generate benefits for residents in the targeted neighbourhood?	4	3	2	1
d	The project will deliver the type of benefits and outcomes expected from the fund?	4	3	2	1
e	Does the application demonstrate proper planning and appear feasible?	4	3	2	1
f	Does the proposal take into account the diversity of the community?	4	3	2	1

Applicants will be required to score 18 or more points in order to be considered for a grant. The applications scoring the highest points will then be prioritised for the available grant funding. Feedback will be given to unsuccessful bidders with advice on how you can re-apply (if this is appropriate) and, if applicable, any other potential sources of funding.

What happens if we are successful?

If your application is successful, you will receive a letter from MCVS confirming the funding offer, along with an Agreement / Grant Conditions Form and associated paperwork.

You will need to sign and return the Grant Conditions Form and also complete and return a form giving your organisation's bank details, along with a copy of your bank account paying in slip, or a bank statement clearly showing the organisation's bank details.

Depending on the nature of the project and the organisation, payment will be made in arrears, part in advance or fully up-front. This will only be processed once the signed and completed Grant Conditions form has been received, along with details of your organisation's bank account.

Please note that it will take approximately 3 weeks to process your grant payment, following receipt of your signed Grant Conditions form. You will then be required to provide documentary evidence of the costs you have incurred, within 12 months of the date of the grant offer letter.

If your final costs are less than originally estimated, or the activities are not delivered as agreed in the Grant Award letter, or any of the Grant conditions are not met, MCVS and Mansfield District Council reserve the right to request full repayment or any unspent/unused grant monies to be returned.

Where the applicant has stated on the application form that they can reclaim VAT, the grant offer is based on the net value of the eligible scheme costs.

Publicity and Promotion

If applicable, successful applicants will acknowledge the Mansfield Community Grant Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund in any publicity material and press releases about the project. The precise wording and images to be used will be provided to successful applicants being dependent upon the scale and nature of the award but will include the Government's own and Levelling-Up logo as well as those of the Council and MCVS. Full guidance is referenced here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-branding-and-publicity-6>

Monitoring and Evaluation – Demonstrating the Outcomes of your Project

Within 12 months of the date of the grant offer letter, successful applicants will be asked to submit a Grant Outcomes Report, detailing the activities which have taken place and the outcomes achieved as a result of the funding. Additional evidence such as letters of support, testimonials and photographs may also be submitted along with the Grant Outcomes Report.

Further Information

If you have any questions in relation to the Mansfield Community Grant Fund, please contact the MCVS at: info@mansfieldcvs.org email address or call 01623 392444