

Community Chest Scheme

GUIDANCE & CONDITIONS



Northumberland County Council

The aim of the Community Chest Scheme is to support community groups and organisations to deliver activities which contribute to achieving the Council's ambition for Northumberland.

High priority will be given to projects that enhance the environment, strengthen communities, and which promote health and wellbeing. Particular emphasis is given to initiatives that will help groups to be sustainable in the longer term, are of value to a local area, and are not able to secure mainstream funding from the Council or other sources.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to any voluntary, community or not for profit group or organisation (including charities and faith groups) that is based in or serves the communities of Northumberland.

Who cannot apply?

- Town and Parish Councils
- Schools (constituted PTAs, Friends groups, and school charities can apply)
- Businesses and other for-profit organisations

What can be applied for?

The Scheme largely funds capital items, such as the purchase of equipment, materials, building refurbishment, and one-off hire costs. Applications should be for a single project. Multiple projects on the same form may be rejected in whole or in part. Only one application per organisation may be supported in any one financial year.

What cannot be applied for?

The scheme will not fund the following:

- Core running costs, including premises
- Wages, salaries, expenses or professional fees
- Goods and services already purchased
- Personal attire, such as sports kits, uniforms
- Feasibility studies or pre project costs
- Advertising and marketing
- Fundraising and prize-giving
- Tourism/visitors
- Social excursions
- Websites
- Religious or political activity
- Food and hospitality
- Loan repayments
- Annual or repeat funding
- Funding for other grant schemes
- Consumables
- Transport
- Parish Allotment Sites

How much can be applied for?

The Scheme can provide grants of up to 75% of eligible costs up to a maximum of £5,000; however, the average grant is £2,250. The grant is paid up front and must be spent within 12 months of notification of award. Costs that are not eligible for funding will not be included in calculating the 75%. Where other sources of funding from the Council have been awarded to the project, this will be taken into consideration by the grant panels.

When can applications be made?

Applications can be made at any time when the scheme is open. There are three deadlines each year and the grant panels will meet within 6 weeks of each deadline. In 2023/24, applications will be considered by Grants Panels in 3 Rounds or until all funds are allocated:

	Deadline	Panel Meeting by
Round 1	7th June 2024	19th July 2024
Round 2	27th September 2024	8th November 2024
Round 3	10th January 2025	21st February 2025

All applications are considered in chronological order of receipt date. Once all funds are allocated in an Area, the Scheme will cease in that Area.

How are decisions made?

The Scheme is divided into five geographical areas based on the Council's Local Area Committees (LACs), namely:

- Ashington & Blyth
- Castle Morpeth
- Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley
- North Northumberland
- Tynedale

Each LAC appoints a subcommittee of elected members to act as a Grant Panel to decide the allocation of the grants. Each has a core budget which equals £0.84 per head of population, plus an additional top up from the Northumberland Lottery that varies each year.

Applications that seek to deliver across the County are considered separately by the Area Chair's Briefing which sits more regularly throughout the year. For countywide projects, there is an upper limit of £10,000.00, but 75% of eligible costs remains the maximum award.

Administration and advice to applicants is provided by the Town Regeneration Team, who will comment on applications and provide additional support if requested.

Applications must be submitted on the approved forms and must be accompanied by a constitution or Articles of Association (governance document), recent bank statements from all accounts, and most recent annual accounts. If your constitution does not include a commitment to equality of opportunity, you will need to submit an equality statement approved by your organisation. Additional information should be provided to support the application if appropriate, e.g. business plan, child safeguarding policy, photographs, quotes, etc. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all necessary documentation is submitted with their application. All permissions, licences, etc, must be in place when you apply.

What is the process for assessing applications?

Once we have received your application, it will be appraised to determine if it is an eligible application, i.e. submitted by an eligible organisation and supported by all necessary documentation. Applicants may be contacted if important supporting documents or information is missing, or if the

request is ineligible in whole or in part. It remains the responsibility of the applicant to seek advice on eligibility before applying. Your application will then be considered by the grant panel. They are solely responsible for the decision to support your application and to determine the level of any offer of financial support. Their decision is final.

What do the grant panels look for in an application?

- A clear rationale and evidence of need.
- Clear benefits for the community
- All funding is accounted for, including match funding.
- Value for money has been considered (quotes, screenshots, etc)

How will the decision be notified?

All successful applicants will be informed in writing by email, which will include a returnable form for bank details, a set of standard conditions, and a completion report form that must be returned once the project has completed (no later than 12 months after award). Payments will be made in advance via BACS transfer. Where a completion form for a previous grant has not been submitted, no further grants will be awarded until it has been received. Grant panels routinely reject or defer applications where previous grants remain unaccounted for. Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted and provided with feedback.

Applications that do not succeed may be resubmitted at a subsequent round but must use a new application form. Applications will only be carried over from one round to the next at the discretion of the grant panel. All issues raised in respect of a rejected application must be addressed in resubmission.

How do I get an application form?

Application forms are available on the Council's website:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Councillors/Community-Chest.aspx>

or by emailing communitychest@northumberland.gov.uk

If you require further advice, please contact:

Iain Hedley
Senior Programme Officer (Town Regeneration)
iain.hedley@northumberland.gov.uk
07747 473 687

Conditions

1. The project must not start, or be contractually committed, before the grant offer date.
2. All projects, or expenditure, must be completed within 12 months of notification of award. In exceptional circumstances, an extension may be granted.
3. Best value must always be demonstrated by the Grant Recipient when purchasing items. The Council may ask for this evidence to be supplied, e.g. competitive quotations, screenshots from websites, etc.
4. The Grant Recipient must submit a monitoring form when the project is completed. Copies of invoices and receipts must be submitted with this form. Failure to do so may prevent further funding from the Council.
5. The applicant must have security of tenure on any facility to be grant aided either by ownership of the freehold or by means of a lease that has at least five years duration when the application is made.
6. Unless otherwise agreed, any unspent grant must be returned to the Council.
7. If the grant-aided project is disposed of or ceases to be used for the purpose the grant is given, the Council reserves the right to reclaim all or part of the grant.
8. Grant Recipients must ensure all relevant permissions and licences are obtained before they apply.
9. All liabilities for the project remain with the Grant Recipient and are not the responsibility of the Council, its partners, agents or employees.
10. The Grant Recipient must ensure that all publicity relating to the project fully acknowledges the Council.
11. If the Grant Recipient can recover VAT, then VAT must not be included in the project costs.
12. The Grant Recipient must demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity.
13. Any equipment purchased with the grant must remain the property of the organisation and must be available for more than one member to use.
14. The Council is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). The Grant Recipient shall provide all necessary assistance and cooperation which is reasonably requested by the Council for the purposes of complying with their obligations under the FOIA and EIR.
15. The Grant Recipient shall comply with all relevant UK and EU data protection legislation in delivering their obligations under this Agreement. The Council may use any information or data provided by the Grant Recipient or collected during the course of the Agreement for the purposes of management, control and evaluation and may share this with other UK and EU public bodies (or their authorised representatives or auditors) for the purposes of monitoring, evaluation and administering State Funds and monitoring EU Regulations.