

North West Leicestershire District Council Legacy Grants – Application and Assessment Framework

1. Purpose and scope of the programme

The Council recognises the critical role that voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, parish and town councils, and community groups play in improving quality of life, strengthening social cohesion, and sustaining vibrant local places across the district. Many of the outcomes that matter most to residents such as reduced loneliness, better wellbeing, inclusive community facilities and stronger civic pride are most effectively delivered through community-led action.

The Legacy Grants Programme is established to provide targeted financial support to local organisations delivering projects that benefit residents of North West Leicestershire. The programme is intended to complement, rather than replace, existing small grant schemes operated by the Council, such as the Community Lottery Grant and Zero Carbon Grant, by introducing a structured and proportionate route for larger-scale community investment.

The programme will operate through two distinct funding strands:

- **Revenue grants of up to £25,000 (minimum £2,500)**, designed to support the delivery of time-limited community activities, services or pilot projects.
- **Capital grants of up to £250,000 (minimum £10,000)**, designed to fund the creation or improvement of community assets and facilities that provide long-term benefit.

By offering both revenue and capital support within a single framework, the Council aims to enable community groups not only to run activities, but also to invest in the buildings and infrastructure that allow communities to thrive over the longer term.

2. Eligible organisations

Applications may be submitted by not-for-profit organisations that are properly constituted and able to demonstrate good governance and financial management. Eligible bodies include registered charities, charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs), community interest companies, constituted voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, and parish and town councils.

All applicants must be able to demonstrate that they are based in, or primarily active within, North West Leicestershire and that the benefits of the proposed project will be delivered predominantly to residents of the district.

Applicants must hold a bank account in the name of the organisation and have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place where activities involve children, young people or vulnerable adults.

The Council recognises that smaller community groups may be at an earlier stage of organisational development. For revenue grants in particular, governance and policy requirements will be applied proportionately, with officer support offered where appropriate to help groups become grant-ready.

3. Types of funding available

Revenue grants (up to £25,000)

Revenue grants are intended to support community activity that is time-limited and outcome-focused. Funding may be used to cover costs that are directly attributable to the

delivery of the proposed project, such as sessional staffing, facilitation costs, venue hire, volunteer expenses, outreach materials, transport required to enable participation, and small items of equipment or consumables that are essential to delivery.

Revenue funding is not intended to cover an organisation's general running costs on an ongoing basis. Instead, applicants should be able to demonstrate how the grant will enable a specific programme of activity to take place and what difference that activity will make for residents.

Capital grants (up to £250,000)

Capital grants are intended to support investment in physical assets that will provide benefit to the community for a minimum of five years. This includes, but is not limited to, refurbishment or extension of community buildings, accessibility improvements, energy-efficiency and decarbonisation measures, creation of community outdoor spaces, play areas, and the purchase of significant items of equipment.

Capital funding must clearly meet the definition of capital expenditure under local government accounting rules. Projects that primarily relate to routine maintenance or short-life items will not be supported through the capital programme.

For larger capital awards, the Council will expect applicants to demonstrate that they have ownership of, or a long-term lease on, the property or land in question and that future running and maintenance costs have been properly considered.

4. Strategic priorities and desired outcomes

The Legacy Grants Programme will operate within the strategic framework of the Council's corporate priorities and Council Delivery Plan. While priorities may be refreshed annually to reflect changing needs, the programme as a whole is focused on supporting projects that:

- Strengthen community cohesion and reduce social isolation, supporting the North West Leicestershire District Council's aim to build strong, connected communities as outlined in the Council Delivery Plan 2023–2028.
- Improve physical and mental health and wellbeing, in line with the Council's strategic priority to support healthy, safe and thriving communities.
- Provide positive opportunities for children and young people, reflecting the Council's commitment to investing in the next generation and ensuring access to enriching activities for all ages.
- Promote inclusion and equality of access, particularly for groups facing barriers to participation, supporting the Council's objective to ensure fairness and reduce inequalities across the district.
- Support climate action, environmental enhancement and the creation of sustainable community assets, contributing to the Council's ambitions for a cleaner, greener district and advancing its sustainability agenda.
- Increase volunteering, skills development and community participation in local decision-making, aligning with the Council's focus on empowering residents and fostering active citizenship as set out in the Delivery Plan 2023–2028.

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate clearly how their project aligns with one or more of these themes and how local need has been identified.

5. Application process

The Legacy Grants Programme will operate through a series of bidding rounds until the balance is exhausted. Guidance notes and application forms will be published on the Council's website, supported by online briefings and optional pre-application advice sessions.

For revenue grants, organisations will complete a single-stage application that sets out the case for funding, intended outcomes, delivery plan and budget.

For capital grants, the Council may operate a two-stage process for larger awards. An initial expression of interest will focus on strategic fit and readiness to deliver. Organisations that pass this stage will be invited to submit a full application supported by detailed costings, quotes, permissions and delivery plans.

The Council is committed to making the application process proportionate, transparent and accessible. Application requirements will increase in depth in line with the size and risk of the grant requested.

In addition, separate subsidy control assessments will be conducted during the grant approval process to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements. This step is necessary to confirm that the proposed funding arrangements do not constitute prohibited subsidies and are in line with current public sector obligations.

6. Assessment and determination of grants

All applications will be assessed against published criteria using a structured scoring methodology (see below). This ensures that decisions are evidence-based, consistent and fair, while still allowing for professional judgement and local knowledge.

Revenue grant applications will be assessed primarily on the strength of local need and outcomes, the realism of the delivery plan, inclusion and accessibility, and value for money. Particular weight will be given to projects that demonstrate clear community benefit within a defined timescale.

Capital grant applications will be assessed using a more detailed framework reflecting the higher level of financial commitment and long-term risk. In addition to strategic fit and community benefit, assessment will focus on deliverability, quality of design, long-term sustainability, robustness of cost estimates, and future maintenance arrangements.

To ensure proportionality, smaller revenue grants will be subject to lighter-touch assessment, while larger capital awards will undergo enhanced due diligence.

7. Officer Assessment

Applications submitted to the Legacy Grants Programme will be assessed by Council officers in accordance with the published eligibility criteria, scoring matrices and assessment guidance. Officer assessments will include due diligence checks to ensure compliance with financial, legal, equality, safeguarding and governance requirements. Funding recommendations in excess of £100,000 will be presented to Cabinet for decision-making or approval, in line with the Council's Constitution, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Procedure Rules. Awards of less than £100,000 will be awarded by delegation to designated officers with details subsequently reported to Cabinet. This approach ensures that grant awards are made consistently, transparently and in accordance with the Council's established governance processes, with appropriate executive oversight.

8. Value for money, match funding and payment arrangements

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that public funds are used effectively. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that their project represents good value for money, with costs that are reasonable and proportionate to the outcomes delivered.

For capital projects, applicants will normally be expected to contribute match funding from other sources. While there is no fixed minimum, projects that demonstrate higher levels of secured match funding will generally score more highly, particularly where this indicates

broader support and long-term viability. The Council recognises that in some cases, such as projects in areas of high deprivation, lower levels of match may be appropriate.

Payment arrangements will reflect the size and nature of the grant. Larger capital grants are likely to be paid in stages, with a proportion retained until satisfactory evidence of completion is provided.

9. Monitoring, reporting and learning

All funded organisations will be required to monitor and report on the use of grant funding. Reporting requirements will be proportionate to the level of funding received.

Revenue grants will normally require a brief end-of-project report summarising activity delivered, numbers reached and outcomes achieved. Capital grants will require evidence of expenditure, completion and, where appropriate, a short statement of impact once the asset is in use.

The Council intends to use monitoring information not only for assurance, but also to learn what works well and to inform future grant priorities.

Transparency and accountability

Details of all grants awarded through the programme, including the name of the organisation, project summary and funding amount, will be published on the Council's website to ensure transparency.

Applicants that are unsuccessful will be offered constructive feedback to support future applications, either to the Council or to other funders.

Closing statement

The Legacy Grants Programme is designed to be a fair, transparent and strategically aligned mechanism for investing in the people and places of North West Leicestershire. By combining proportionate assessment, cross-party oversight and a clear focus on outcomes, the Council seeks to empower communities while ensuring that public resources are used responsibly and effectively.

Assessment Criteria

To ensure equitable distribution of grant funding across the district, rather than concentrating resources in one specific geographical area. A well-designed grant scheme can address this by setting clear criteria that prioritise fairness and inclusivity, ensuring that all communities have equal opportunities to benefit. By monitoring allocation patterns and encouraging applications from underrepresented areas, the Council can help to balance investment and support a more diverse range of projects throughout North West Leicestershire.

Scoring Matrix

The specific details of the scoring matrices for both revenue and capital grants are provided in the sections below. These matrices outline the criteria, weightings, and examples used to assess applications, ensuring a transparent and consistent approach to evaluating grant proposals.

Detailed Scoring Matrices with Examples

PART 1: REVENUE GRANTS (up to £25,000)

Total available score: 100 points

Minimum score for consideration: 60 points

Revenue grants are assessed proportionately, recognising that many applicants are smaller community organisations. Assessors focus on need, impact, feasibility and value for money, rather than professional-level business planning.

1. Community Need and Benefit (0–20 points)

What we assess

- How clearly the local need is explained
- Evidence that the need exists in North West Leicestershire
- How clearly the project benefits residents

Score descriptions and examples

0–5 points (Limited evidence)

The application states a general issue (e.g. “loneliness is a problem”) but provides little or no evidence that the project responds to a specific local need. The benefit to residents is described in broad terms with limited clarity.

Example:

“People feel isolated, and our project will bring people together.”
(No local data, no target group, no explanation of scale.)

6–12 points (Clear and relevant need)

The application explains the issue clearly and provides some local evidence, such as community feedback, waiting lists or partner insight. The beneficiary group is defined and the proposed benefit is realistic.

Example:

“Feedback from our weekly drop-in shows older residents in X village are seeking more social activities. This project will provide six facilitated sessions for 12–15 residents.”

13 -20 points (Strong and compelling case)

The application presents strong, localised evidence of need using multiple sources. It clearly explains why the project is needed now and how it will make a meaningful difference.

Example:

“Attendance data shows a 40% increase in referrals to our food support over 12 months. This project will provide structured, supportive sessions to 50 households, reducing isolation and improving food security.”

2. Project Delivery and Feasibility (0–15 points)

What we assess

- Whether the activities are clearly described
- Whether the project can realistically be delivered
- Organisational capability to deliver

Score descriptions and examples

0–5 points (Unclear or risky delivery)

Activities are vague or unrealistic. Delivery roles and timescales are unclear. There is limited evidence that the organisation can deliver the project.

Example:

“We will run sessions when possible, depending on availability.”

6–10 points (Deliverable and realistic)

Activities are clearly described, with a realistic timetable and clear responsibility for delivery. The organisation appears capable, even if the project is new.

Example:

“We will deliver weekly sessions from April to July, facilitated by our experienced volunteer coordinator.”

11–15 points (Highly robust and well planned)

A strong, well-structured plan with clear milestones, partners, staffing and contingency arrangements. The organisation demonstrates experience or transferable skills.

Example:

“A detailed six-month plan with session schedules, facilitator cover, safeguarding arrangements and venue agreements already in place.”

3. Inclusion, Equality and Access (0–15 points)

What we assess

- How inclusive the project is
- Whether barriers to participation are addressed
- Whether inclusion is intentional or incidental

Score descriptions and examples

0–5 points (General access only)

The project is open to all but does not actively consider access barriers.

Example:

“Anyone can attend” (no consideration of transport, cost, language or disability).

6–10 points (Inclusive practice)

Some barriers are identified and reasonable adjustments are built into the design.

Example:

“Sessions are free, accessible, and held during daytime hours. Transport support is available on request.”

11–15 points (Inclusion embedded)

Inclusion is central to design. Outreach is targeted and adjustments are planned from the outset.

Example:

“Sessions are co-designed with disabled participants, delivered in accessible venues, with support workers present.”

4. Value for Money (0–15 points)

What we assess

- Whether costs are reasonable
- Whether funding is proportionate to outcomes
- Use of other resources (volunteers, in-kind support)

Score descriptions and examples

0–5 points (Poor value)

Costs appear high or poorly justified; outputs are unclear.

Example:

£8,000 requested for a one-off event with no wider benefit.

6–10 points (Reasonable value)

Budget is clear and realistic, with outcomes broadly proportionate to cost.

Example:

£5,000 for a 12-week programme reaching 30 residents.

11–15 points (Strong value)

Funding enables significant impact relative to cost, with additional contribution from volunteers or partners.

Example:

£7,500 supporting a £15,000 programme through volunteer time and donated venue space.

5. Learning, Sustainability and Legacy (0–10 points)

What we assess

- Whether learning will be captured
- Whether benefits extend beyond funding

Examples:

- Low score: “Funding will end when sessions finish.”
 - High score: “Evaluation findings will shape future delivery and inform parish partnerships.”
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6. Governance and Risk (0–5 points)

What we assess

- Basic governance

- Identification and management of risks

Examples:

- Clear safeguarding, insurance, and risks → higher score
 - No risk awareness → low score
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7. Strategic Fit (20 points)

- Strategic fit with local and organisational priorities
- Community benefit and clarity of purpose

Score descriptions and examples

0–5 points: (Vague or minimal alignment; unclear who benefits)

Example:

The intended benefits are not described, and it is uncertain which sections of the community, if any, will gain from the project.

6–10 points: (Some alignment; benefits evident but not well defined)

The application notes it will help families but does not detail how or which families will be involved. There is some mention of local priorities, but the connection is weak.

11–15 points: (Good fit; clearly addresses identified needs)

Example: The project is designed to create a youth activity centre in response to a local survey highlighting the need for youth facilities. It references alignment with the council's youth engagement strategy.

16–20 points: Strong, integrated fit; wide community support and clear outcomes

The project has been co-designed with residents and local organisations, is referenced in the community action plan, and has letters of support from key stakeholders. It demonstrates measurable social, economic, and environmental benefits for a broad cross-section of the community.

PART 2: CAPITAL GRANTS (up to £250,000)

Total available score: 120 points

Minimum score for consideration: 75 points

Capital grant support long-term community assets and therefore require clearer evidence of readiness, sustainability and value for money

Assessment and Scoring Framework

Applications would be assessed by officers using a structured scoring framework designed to ensure consistency, transparency and objectivity. Each application would be scored against the criteria set out below, with scores awarded within defined low, medium and high bands. The maximum total score available would be 120 points. Scores would be supported by written commentary and retained as part of the decision-making record.

1. Strategic Fit and Community Benefit (0–30 points)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal aligns with council priorities, adopted strategies and identified community needs, as well as the scale of benefit delivered. A low score, typically in the range of 0–10 points, would apply where the proposal demonstrates limited community use, serves a narrow group of users, or has an unclear purpose or weak alignment with council plans and local priorities. A medium score, typically 11–20 points, would apply where the proposal demonstrates a reasonable level of community benefit, serves a defined local audience and shows some alignment with relevant strategies, but with limited evidence of wider impact or strategic contribution.

A high score, typically 21–30 points, would apply where the proposal relates to a widely used or clearly needed community asset, strongly aligns with adopted community plans and council priorities, and demonstrates clear and significant benefits to the local area.

2. Deliverability and Readiness (0–25 points)

This criterion considers whether the project is sufficiently developed and capable of being delivered within the required timescales.

A low score, typically 0–8 points, would apply where the proposal remains at a conceptual stage, with limited cost certainty, no confirmed quotations, designs or permissions, and significant uncertainty around delivery.

A medium score, typically 9–17 points, would apply where the proposal is partially developed, with some indicative costs, emerging designs or approvals, and a broadly realistic but not fully evidenced delivery plan.

A high score, typically 18–25 points, would apply where the proposal is fully developed and ready to proceed, supported by detailed quotations, designs, necessary permissions or approvals, and a clear and achievable delivery timetable.

3. Capital Eligibility and Asset Life (0–10 points)

This criterion assesses whether the proposed expenditure is genuinely capital in nature and represents a long-term investment.

A low score, typically 0–3 points, would apply where the proposal consists primarily of minor repairs or short-term works that do not meet capital definitions or offer limited asset life.

A medium score, typically 4–7 points, would apply where the proposal includes eligible capital works but with limited clarity on asset longevity or long-term benefit.

A high score, typically 8–10 points, would apply where the proposal clearly involves eligible capital expenditure resulting in an asset with a demonstrable lifespan of 10 to 20 years or more.

4. Value for Money and Match Funding (0–20 points)

This criterion considers the extent to which the proposal represents good value for money and leverages external funding.

A low score, typically 0–7 points, would apply where the proposal is heavily or wholly reliant on council funding, with limited evidence of cost control or alternative funding sources.

A medium score, typically 8–14 points, would apply where the proposal includes some match funding or in-kind contributions and demonstrates reasonable value for money, but with limited leverage.

A high score, typically 15–20 points, would apply where the proposal demonstrates strong value for money, includes significant cash match funding (typically in the range of 30–50 per cent), and provides evidence of competitive procurement and robust cost management.

5. Sustainability and Maintenance (0–15 points)

This criterion assesses the applicant's ability to maintain and sustain the asset over time.

A low score, typically 0–5 points, would apply where there is no clear plan or funding identified for ongoing maintenance and future costs.

A medium score, typically 6–10 points, would apply where the applicant provides a basic maintenance plan with some identified resources, but with limited long-term certainty.

A high score, typically 11–15 points, would apply where the proposal is supported by a fully costed maintenance plan covering at least five years, with credible income streams or funding arrangements identified.

6. Inclusion, Accessibility and Climate Impact (0–10 points)

This criterion considers the extent to which the proposal improves accessibility, inclusion and environmental outcomes.

A low score, typically 0–3 points, would apply where the proposal delivers no meaningful improvement in accessibility or environmental performance.

A medium score, typically 4–7 points, would apply where the proposal includes some improvements to access or energy efficiency but with limited overall impact.

A high score, typically 8–10 points, would apply where the proposal delivers fully accessible design, promotes inclusion and demonstrates a clear reduction in carbon emissions or energy use.

7. Governance, Risk and Compliance (0–10 points)

This criterion assesses the robustness of the applicant's governance arrangements and the management of delivery risks.

A low score, typically 0–3 points, would apply where ownership, tenure, responsibilities or governance arrangements are unclear or inadequately evidenced.

A medium score, typically 4–7 points, would apply where governance and risk arrangements are broadly in place but with some gaps or unresolved issues.

A high score, typically 8–10 points, would apply where the applicant can demonstrate secure freehold or long-term lease arrangements, appropriate insurance, sound governance structures and a clear understanding of risks supported by a risk register.

Officer recommendations would be informed by the overall score achieved and the availability of funding. Any decision to award funding to an application that scores poorly against key criteria, or to depart from the scoring outcomes, would require a clear and recorded rationale.