

LEGACY FUND GRANT AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS/CEMETERIES GRANT SCHEME

Comments on the Legacy Fund Grant and closed Churchyards/Cemeteries Grant Scheme report made by Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 March 2026

Date considered by Cabinet: 24 March 2026

	Comments/recommendations from scrutiny	Advice provided by officers at the Scrutiny meeting	Cabinet response
C1	Legacy fund: Members welcomed the scheme and recognised the positive opportunity for communities across the district. The significant amount of work by officers in developing the framework was also acknowledged and the transparency of scoring was welcomed.	Officers confirmed the scheme was designed to be robust, fair and aligned to strategic priorities.	
C2	Scale of funding: some concerns were raised that limiting the grant to £250k would be problematic to the delivery of larger scale projects such as the Ashby Canal restoration. There was a risk that funding would not achieve meaningful outcomes.	The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the cap was to ensure the fund was distributed fairly across the district rather than being exhausted by a few large schemes. It was also confirmed that there was the ability to review or enhance funding levels in the future should the opportunity arise.	
C3	Governance and decision making: Members sought clarity on 'enhanced due diligence' and 'member oversight' as referenced within the scheme. Some initial concern was raised around the approval of grants by Cabinet. Comments were also raised about reputational risk if funding decisions were perceived as unfair or politically influenced.	Officers clarified the process which would be undertaken by officers and signed off by Cabinet, for those grants over a certain threshold, in accordance with the award of grants withing the Council's Constitution. It was confirmed that it would be the Members role to set the framework, not determine individual awards. It was acknowledged that any conflicts of interest would be managed through the Code of Conduct.	

C4	<p>Cross-party oversight and transparency: Members sought clarity on the process regarding cross-party oversight. They also felt that the scoring of applications should be published so that unsuccessful applicants could understand outcomes.</p>	<p>Officers confirmed that the reference to cross-party oversight would be provided via the scrutiny process. The commitment to transparency was supported by officers and the portfolio holder but further checks on data protection considerations would be required before publishing full scoring information.</p>	
C5	<p>Potential bias towards larger organisations: Concerns were raised that the grant scoring criteria could unintentionally favour larger established organisations and disadvantage smaller community groups. Members stressed the importance of ensuring equitable access across communities.</p>	<p>Officers acknowledged concern as a valid point and would be considered by Cabinet before final approval.</p>	
C6	<p>Application process: Members felt strongly that support should be available for inexperienced or new groups, who had not applied for a grant during the application process.</p>	<p>Officers confirmed that support would be provided and groups will be given sufficient preparation time as part of the process. Officers would ensure clear communication and guidance to accompany the launch of the scheme.</p>	
C7	<p>Staffing and administration: Members questioned if the allocated funds for administering the fund was sufficient and if the new community focus officer role would be absorbed entirely by administering the scheme. They felt this role should be undertaking community focus work which was the intention of the new post within the budget.</p>	<p>Officers confirmed the administrative arrangements were still being developed and the capacity would be reviewed once the demand was understood. The Portfolio Holder gave assurances that adequate resources would be provided.</p>	

C8	Closed Churchyards and cemeteries grant: Clarification was sought on application timelines and communication with parishes.	Officers confirmed that the details were still being developed. It was confirmed that officers would engage with parish clerks and issue clear guidance once the scheme was finalised.	
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