

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, 10
SEPTEMBER 2026**



Title of Report	COMMUNITY GRANTS AND COMMUNITY LOTTERY ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT	
Presented by	Councillor M Wyatt Community, Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	None	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	The total general community grant budget for 2025/26 was £15,000. The total grant agreement budgets (Citizen Advice Leicestershire and Age UK Befriending) for 2025/26 was £79,330 NWL Community Lottery Scheme is financially self-sustaining with the Council's initial and on-going costs being met by income from the scheme.	
	Signed off by the Deputy Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	Grants are subsidies and are subject to the requirements for the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Therefore, the Council has considered the grants and assessed them in accordance with the subsidy control regime. The NWL Community Lottery is subject to checks and a Data Protection Impact Assessment which was completed prior to the project commencing.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	Small, Zero and Love Your Neighbourhood Grant programme and NWL Community Lottery Grants are led by one part time member of staff who reviews the grant applications, gathers further evidence (if required) and monitor projects. Citizen Advice Leicestershire (CAL) rent space at Stenson House. They paid £12,480 (inc. VAT) to the Council in 2025/26 under a lease agreement. The grant funding has not been used to cover this cost for CAL.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	

Purpose of Report	To provide an update on the general Community Grants for the financial year April 2025 to March 2026, highlighting impact, any changes and additional updates. To provide an update on year two of the NWL Community Lottery, share details of the funding that has been allocated, the impact (where monitoring has been provided) and the future services.
Recommendations	THAT THE COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROVIDES FEEDBACK ON THE 2025/26 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME, AND ON THE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY LOTTERY TO INFORM CABINET'S CONSIDERATION OF THE SCHEMES AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET PROCESS FOR 2027/28.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Council's Community Grant Programme, detailing the specific grants available, the allocation of funds throughout the year, and the measurable outcomes achieved from April 2025 to March 2026. It outlines how the Small Grant, Zero Carbon Grant, and Love Your Neighbourhood (LYN) initiatives were managed within the set budget of £15,000 and will illustrate the ways in which these grants have supported numerous local groups and projects across the district.
- 1.2 In addition, the report will present an update on year two of the North West Leicestershire (NWL) Community Lottery, including a summary of its first year of operation, financial spend and revenue generated, the impact on the community, and planned developments for the future.
- 1.3 The Committee is asked to provide feedback on both programmes to inform Cabinet's consideration of the schemes as part of the Council's budget process for 2027/28.

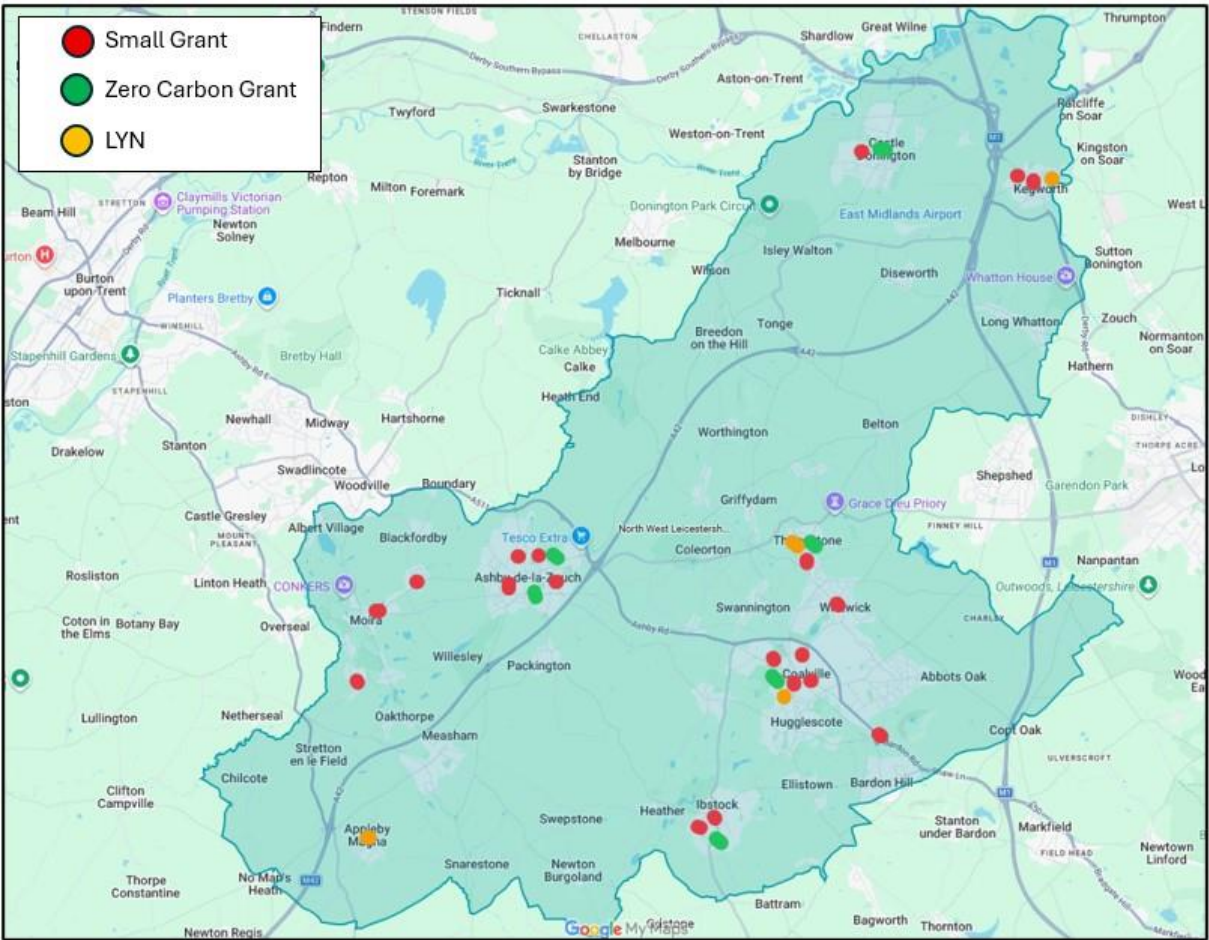
2.0 COMMUNITY GRANTS

- 2.1 The Council has supported communities across North West Leicestershire through its established grant programme for many years. The Community Focus team administers the general grants:
 - Small Grant (up to £500)
 - Zero Carbon Grant (up to £1,000)
 - This year Love Your Neighbourhood Grant (total available to this project £2,000)
- 2.2 For the 2025/26 financial year, the grant budget was set at £15,000. The financial budget covered the Small Grant, Zero Carbon Grant, and LYN Grant. Within the first month, organisations could also apply for activities that fit within the VE Day 80th Anniversary.

2.3 A new Grants Officer started in March 2025 and has quickly engaged with a wide range of voluntary, heritage, community, youth, school and church groups. The Officer has promoted the grants positively and the full funding was allocated by beginning of quarter three. There was a slight overspend with the budget as shown on the table below which was covered from the underspend from the Community Focus budget.

Community Grant Budget		£ 15,000.00
Breakdown		
Small Grant		£ 8,775.84
Zero Carbon Grant		£ 5,229.76
Love Your Neighbourhood Grant		£ 1,197.65
Total		£ 15,203.25
Overspend		£ 203.25

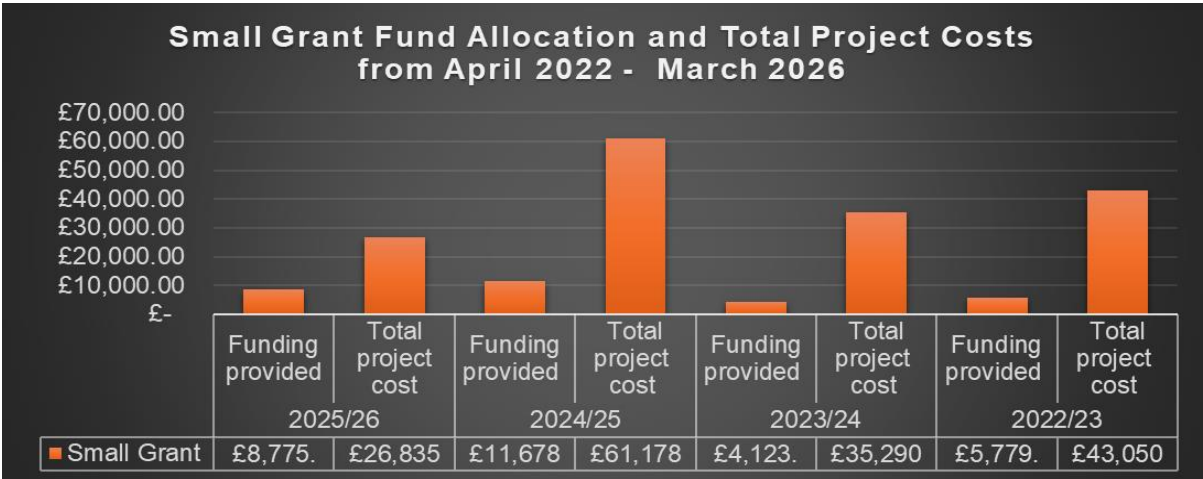
2.4 A map has been included to show where applications across the three grant streams have come from. It shows a good spread across the district, whilst also highlighting communities where further promotion of the grants could be focused in 2026/27. A more detailed breakdown of the types of organisations that applied for the three



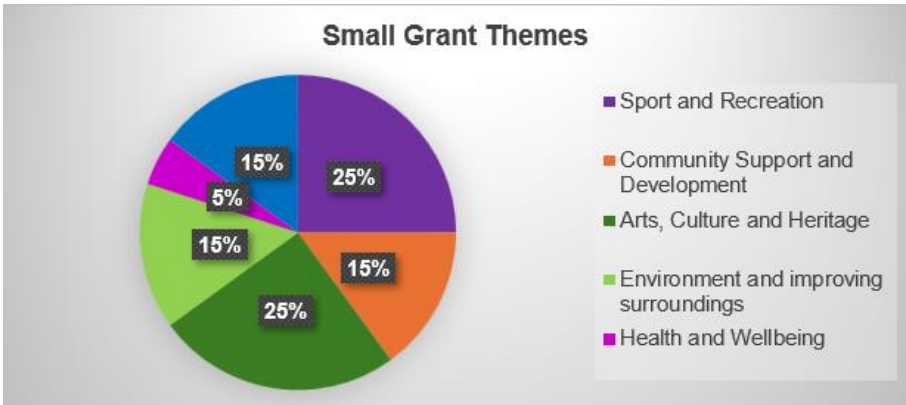
community grants is available on the [Grants and Funding](#) webpage.

3.0 **SMALL GRANT, ZERO CARBON GRANT AND LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD (LYN)**

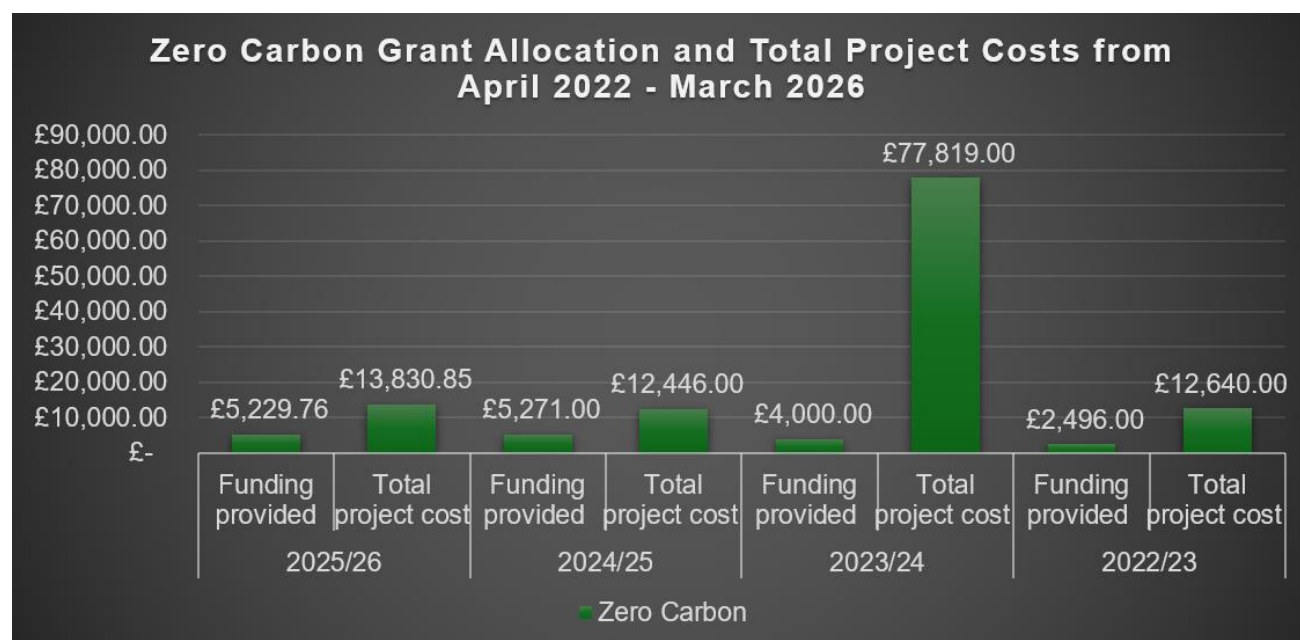
- 3.1 The Small Grant Scheme plays a crucial role in supporting community projects and programmes. To qualify for funding, applicants must be not-for-profit voluntary organisations, community groups, or registered charities. Although the grant amounts are modest, they have a significant impact on the supported projects.
- 3.2 The table below shows the total Small Grant funding awarded by the Council over the past four years, alongside the overall value of the projects. In 2025/26, £8,775 of the £13,000 general grant budget was allocated, with £2,000 set aside for the LYN Grant and the remaining was allocated towards/spent on Zero Carbon. The total project value was the lowest across the four-year period, suggesting the Small Grant supported smaller, lower key projects during the year. This may be in relation to larger grants being available or groups are focusing on smaller project wins.



- 3.3 In 2025/26, 20 applications were received for the Small Grant fund, of which 19 were approved and one was withdrawn. The funding supported a range of activities, including sports coaching, community events, VE Day 80th commemoration activities, equipment for village hall activities, and first aid workshops. As part of the monitoring process, applications are reviewed by theme. The themes align with the categories shown in the table below, with most applications relating to sports and recreation, and arts, culture and heritage. Fewer applications were received for community support and development, with no applications relating to disability and access issues or supporting families. However, there is some overlap between themes; for example, a free community event could be classed as both community development and support for families.



- 3.4 This information helps the team target promotion to specific groups and, where the Small Grant is not suitable, helps the Grants Officer to suggest alternative funding options, such as the NWL Community Lottery or the Making Local Life Better Fund.
- 3.5 For each Small Grant, an impact report is provided in Appendix A. These reports highlight the benefits delivered, including the number of residents who benefited, volunteer hours contributed, and the overall benefit created by the grant.
- 3.6 The Zero Carbon Grant supports environmentally focused community projects across North West Leicestershire. It is available to constituted organisations, parish councils and town councils. The grant was promoted directly to voluntary organisations, at community events, and through engagement with parishes and community groups.
- 3.7 In 2025/26, for Zero Carbon Grants, six applications were received and all were approved. This was similar to 2024/25, when seven applications were received and six were approved. While application numbers have not increased, the total project costs were broadly comparable across the two years.



- 3.8 Assessing the impact of Zero Carbon grants is more challenging, as a full year is needed to measure the outcomes. Appendix A, provides some feedback on each project and highlights some of the positive impacts achieved.
- 3.9 LYN is an environmental campaign focused on bringing residents together to create cleaner, greener neighbourhoods everyone can all be proud of. In year two of the LYN project, £2,000 from the grant budget was allocated to support community green initiatives. The full year two LYN project report can be found [here](#). For the grant element, funding was agreed for up to three grants of £500 and up to five grants of £100. Two £500 applications were later withdrawn: Ashby de la Zouch Town Council, which instead applied for a Zero Carbon Grant, and Coalville CAN, which required

further work before submitting. Some images can be seen in Appendix A and the table below outlines the activity of the LYN grants.

Organisation	Activity	Collaboration with	Awarded
One Kegworth	Litter picking, planting hanging baskets, clearing areas, bird, bat and bug boxes	Kegworth Scouts Kegworth Library Kegworth Primary School Kegworth Plan Group Litter Wombles Kegworth Imps Football Club Kegworth Cricket Club One Kegworth	£500
Charles Booth Centre	Equipment to cut back hedges and planting	Charles Booth preschool Volunteers from the community	£498
Organisation	Activity	Grant for	Awarded
Newbridge School	Litter picking, plants, hanging baskets	Compost, gardening equipment, plants	£100
1st Appleby and Measham Scout Groups	Litter picking and planting – engaged with McDonalds from Appleby Magna	Fruit trees, fruit bushes, compost	£100

4.0 GRANT AGREEMENTS – CITIZENS ADVICE LEICESTERSHIRE AND AGE UK LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND

4.1 CITIZENS ADVICE LEICESTERSHIRE

Citizens Advice Leicestershire (CAL) was awarded a grant of £72,000 for the period from April 2025 to March 2026. This funding was designated to enhance CAL's services across Leicestershire, with a particular emphasis on North West Leicestershire. The key services provided by CAL under this grant include;

- Debt advice and financial management,
- Assistance with benefit applications,
- Access to charitable funding,
- Support for debt relief orders and breathing space initiatives,
- Benefit checks and claims,
- Energy advice,
- Budgeting guidance,
- Macmillan advice,
- Pension Wise,
- Family advice,
- Support to help reduce the risk of homelessness,
- Advice on landlord and tenant issues, with a special focus on private landlords.

4.2 The grant enabled CAL to offer advisory services in person at Stenson House, strictly by appointment. In addition, CAL run a well-attended drop-in service at the Customer

Services Centre in Coalville every Friday. The service can only support a limited number of clients due to clients' cases becoming increasingly complex and can take up to 45 minutes to hour.

Quarter	Stenson House	Coalville Customer Service Centre
1	0	53
2	2	54
3	3	32
4	0	45

4.3 Each quarter, CAL engaged with approximately 550 residents in North West Leicestershire, this has decreased slightly from the year before. This is due to clients with complex needs but also no funding uplift for the last five years. While some individuals may access services more than once, the majority of contacts are new clients. The total debt written off and income gains achieved through these interventions highlight the significant impact of the financial support provided. Most client interactions occur via phone and email, yet the continued availability of face-to-face appointments remain a valuable option for residents.

4.4 Throughout 2025/26, CAL worked to provide increasingly detailed information. The details of which can be found [here](#). As requested at the December 2025 Community Scrutiny CAL has provided a social value and return on investment report, Appendix B. For 2026/27 this has been included within the Grant Agreement with an additional face-to-face service in Castle Donington once a quarter provided. Should this service be of value, additional funding would need to be considered.

4.5 **LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND AGE UK BEFRIENDING SERVICE**
Leicestershire and Rutland Age UK Befriending Service received £7,330 in funding for 2025/26. This supported a central service with a countywide befriending coordinator to support existing volunteers; befriending connects and any new referrals into the service. Where volunteers were based locally, they continued to provide face to face befriending support. However, due to reduced funding, the service also explored alternative ways to engage residents, including telephone support and existing community services, such as coffee mornings.

4.6 Over the course of the year, the service assisted between 23 and 35 residents. A positive development was that there was an increase of volunteers from quarter one (17) to quarter four (22). As the service came to quarter four, they did not take on any more clients. The statistics and case studies can be found in Appendix C.

4.7 A new befriending service procurement tender has been developed and completed within the year. Age UK Leicestershire and Rutland has been awarded the contract. There were three other submissions; however, Age UK demonstrated outstanding quality throughout its tender response and provided the strongest overall proposal to deliver the service for residents of North West Leicestershire.

5.0 NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE (NWL) COMMUNITY LOTTERY

- 5.1 The North West Leicestershire (NWL) Community Lottery has now been operating officially for a full two years, from August 2024 to August 2026. Approval for the scheme was granted in February 2024, after which a period of project work took place leading up to the launch on 24 August 2024.
- 5.2 Since last year, the NWL Community Lottery has seven new good causes, a total of 66 good causes are now part of the lottery, including the Council's own good cause. These organisations represent a broad cross-section of the district, encompassing a variety of community and charitable groups. There are groups outside of the district, but they must confirm where and how they are supporting NWL residents and the funds are to be ring-fenced for those engagements only.
- 5.3 The Council's good cause, known as the NWL Community Lottery Central Fund, was initially forecasted to raise £36,735 over five years. The first year the scheme has achieved £30,960. In accordance with project approval requirements, initial project costs were recouped from the funds raised. Project costs were kept to a minimum for the first year totalling £8,555. This approach has contributed to a net total of £22,405 raised. In year two £28,000 has been raised this includes the remaining funds from year one and any payments for things like the licenses.
- 5.4 The NWL Community Lottery does not align with the Council's financial year, as it launched at the end of August 2024 and the first round of community funding opened in September 2025. As a result, the figures in the table differ from those in the paragraph above, as they include partial-year figures rather than a full-year total. The table has been included to show the funds raised, spent and awarded as grants within each financial year.

NWL Community Lottery Scheme	24/25	25/26	26/27 as at 03/08/26
	£	£	£
<u>Expenditure (including commitments)</u>			
Running costs	7,694	874	797
Grants paid	0	13,279	5,776
Total Expenditure	7,694	14,153	6,573
<u>Income</u>			
Actual income received	(17,459)	(25,988)	(8,746)
Donated prizes	0	(50)	(25)
Vat reclaimed	(1,705)	(2,586)	(848)
Total Income	(19,164)	(28,624)	(9,619)
In year Surplus	(11,470)	(14,471)	(3,046)
Current balance	(11,470)	(25,941)	(28,987)

- 5.5 The funds generated by both the good causes and the Council's good cause are attributable to the generosity of residents and supporters across the district. Currently, the NWL Community Lottery has approximately 650 participants ('supporters') who purchase tickets on a weekly basis. The chance to win prizes of up to £25,000 acts as a significant incentive, with additional bundle prizes provided by Gatherwell Ltd, the company managing the lottery. The value of community engagement should also be recognised. The Council's Communications Team has played an instrumental role in promoting the lottery. Notably, whenever there have been social media posts or GovDelivery newsletters, there has been a corresponding increase in ticket sales.
- 5.6 Throughout the year, promotion of the lottery has been undertaken via a range of channels, including social media, electronic newsletters, emails, and face to face engagement at community events. Surveys and short workshops have provided opportunities to connect with good causes, determine any further support needs, and facilitate the sharing of best practice. Gatherwell Ltd has supported good causes with regular sessions, newsletters, and marketing materials. Feedback from community groups has been positive, with those actively promoting the lottery reporting satisfaction with the financial contributions received, which support a wide array of activities. Furthermore, public support remains strong, and participation in the NWL Community Lottery has not diminished contributions to other fundraising activities by these groups at community events. However, it must be noted that this is based on groups engaged with at events, so not all good causes have been consulted.
- 5.7 Of the £22,405 raised through the NWL Community Lottery Central Fund, £20,000 has been allocated to a grant scheme supporting community groups and charities across North West Leicestershire to deliver new or enhanced projects and activities. Successful applicants can receive up to £750. The remaining £2,094 has been ring-fenced and will be added to next year's fundraising pot. Applicants must meet the agreed criteria, and the scheme is monitored in line with the Council's Small and Zero Carbon grants. The thematic criteria and funding amounts may be reviewed next year. Details of the grant allocations are included in Appendix D, with the project impact expected to be available in 2027.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	- Communities and housing - Clean, green and Zero Carbon - A well-run Council
Policy Considerations:	n/a
Safeguarding:	Grants: Applicants must provide copies of their safeguarding policies if the project directly involves children or young people or if deemed necessary. NWL Community Lottery: Good Cause must provide copies of their safeguarding policies if the group directly involves children or vulnerable individuals, or if deemed necessary.
Equalities/Diversity:	Grant: applications are consistently evaluated against the grant criteria and undergo an approval process to ensure fair consideration for all. An Equalities Impact Assessment was conducted recently to make sure that the criteria and process is fair, transparent and does not negatively impact a protected characteristic. Following the assessment, it was clear that the criteria is robust and suitable and does not negatively affect any protected group. An addition following this review is that upon receipt of Small Grant applications, it is noted whether the application aligns with any protected characteristics. NWL Community Lottery: The community lottery is open to any community group that can provide the necessary information to prove the legitimacy of the group. Supporters can support by submitting details online or by phone.
Customer Impact:	Grant: Successful grants awarded directly enhance the community of North West Leicestershire and its residents. Less funds this year meant that the funding was allocated quicker but NWL Community Lottery Grant was launched in September, this allowed more organisations to apply. NWL Community Lottery: residents (supporters) sign up for a direct debit of £1 a week with the chance to win extra tickets or a monetary prize. Residents/supporters can withdraw at any time by emailing or calling. If there are any changes to term and conditions set out, all residents/supporters are notified.

Economic and Social Impact:	Grant: Successful grants awarded directly provide an economic and social impact by providing employment opportunities to organisations and businesses within the district who are contracted to provide goods and services. The Council encourages organisations to work within the local community. The additional grant from NWL Community Lottery funds raised means more organisations have been able to offer additional services that support the economic and social impact.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	Grant: schemes actively support and promote the Council's Zero Carbon Roadmap and Action Plan. NWL Community Lottery: any purchases for the lottery are considered from make to landfill/recycling.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Grant: Ward members are notified of the outcome of the applications in their ward. Grants are promoted to all the voluntary and community organisations in North West Leicestershire and promoted via social media. NWL Community Lottery: ward members are notified on the receipt and outcome of the applications. The NWL Community Lottery is promoted via social media, electronic newsletters and at community events.
Risks:	Grant: Reputational risk is managed by ensuring positive community applications are supported. Support is provided to applicants to ensure applications are not refused where possible. NWL Community Lottery: Reputational risk is managed by ensuring safeguarding processes are in place at various levels. This is done by NWLDC and Gatherwell Ltd.
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