

Community Investment

General Criteria, Guide to the Application Process and Terms and Conditions of Funding

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cumberland Council has established an investment scheme for voluntary and non-profit-making groups. Investments are available for groups who are involved in community projects and initiatives that benefit the residents of a community within the area.
- 1.2 Community Investments are coordinated by the Council's Community Development Teams and applicants are advised to contact their local Community Development Team for advice and guidance in advance of making an application for funding.
- 1.3 In awarding funds we aim to ensure that the application process is easy to understand and made clear to all applicants, while at the same time ensuring sufficient information is gathered to promote value for money, fairness in decision making, public accountability and avoidance of fraud or misuse of funds, reflecting the highest standards of public sector financial management.

2 The Community Investment Fund – Criteria for Funding

- 2.1 Investments from this fund are awarded to groups who are involved in community based projects and initiatives that will benefit the local area. The Community Investment Fund is intended to invest in communities to bring about a positive and lasting change for the benefit of the whole community.
- 2.2 Projects and/or initiatives will be assessed on their ability to contribute to the achievement of the Cumberland Council Plan and locally identified community priorities.

2.3 The following criteria must be met in order to be eligible for funding under this community Investment scheme:

- a. Investments will be given only to voluntary and non-profit making groups and organisations to support community initiatives that benefit residents in their local area.
- b. Investments should support the achievement of the Council's Council Plan as agreed by the Cumberland Council. In addition, projects and initiatives should fit with locally identified priorities or plans for example, ward profiles, community plans, neighbourhood plans, parish plans etc.
- c. Investments will be awarded for one-off project costs for example, purchase of equipment, building work, refurbishment costs etc.
- d. Investment applications will be considered for non-recurring expenditure only, therefore operational running costs, general maintenance costs (energy bills, insurance) will not be funded.
- e. Applications will be considered from constituted groups only, we do not accept applications from individuals.
- f. Applications for less than 100% of costs are preferred and groups are advised to try other avenues of funding in addition to this fund.
- g. We will not normally accept more than one application for funding per organisation or group in any one financial year. We may accept more than one application from the same group for clearly identifiable different projects in the same financial year.
- h. Projects from schools, churches or other religious groups cannot be funded unless they have a clear wider non-religious community benefit for example, a church hall that is used by a local community group, a play area also open for public use, etc.
- i. Organisations or groups that operate a policy of exclusivity or have a closed membership and is thereby not open to any member of the public will not be considered for funding.
- j. We cannot fund community events if they are intended to pass on any surplus income to other organisations, for example, concerts with benefits to 'local charities'.
- k. Investment applications will not be considered from political organisations.
- l. Investments will not be awarded retrospectively, for example, investments will only be awarded for work or resources still to be purchased at the time the application is made.
- m. Organisations or groups with outstanding Project Achievement Report (PAR) will not be considered for future funding.

3 The Application Process

3.1 Applications for funding should be made on our application form and supported by all requested supporting documentation.

3.2 Application forms can be downloaded from our website www.cumberland.gov.uk

- 3.3 You can fill in an electronic version of the application form using Microsoft Word and email it to us but we must receive a hard copy of the application with at least two signatures along with the appropriate supporting documents in order for us to process it.
- 3.4 Completed application forms must be signed and returned with the following supporting documents:
- A minimum of two Estimates/Quotes from two different independent suppliers.
 - A detailed breakdown of all costs associated with your application for funding.
 - A copy of a recent Bank Statement for all accounts held in the name of your group.
 - A copy of your most recent Annual Accounts or Audited Accounts.
 - Your Equal Opportunities Policy or Statement (where not explicit in Constitution).
 - Your Constitution or other governing documents.
 - A copy of your last Annual Report and/or AGM minutes.
 - Your Child Protection Policy, where appropriate.
 - Your Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, where appropriate.
- 3.5 Incomplete applications or applications that do not include all of the above documentation cannot be considered for funding.
- 3.6 We may contact you to ask for more details about your project or possibly arrange to visit your organisation. We will be pleased to help you with any queries you may have in relation to the supporting information you are required to provide in advance of submitting your completed application.

4 How your Application is Dealt With

- 4.1 Upon receipt of an application for funding we will make an initial assessment to check that the application is eligible for funding against the criteria of the scheme and that all supporting documentation has been provided.
- 4.2 We aim to acknowledge receipt of all applications within 10 working days of receiving the application.
- 4.3 An evaluation report will be produced for each eligible application along with a recommendation for funding.
- 4.4 A community forum or investment panel made up of councillors and/or community leaders from the area will discuss the application and make a final recommendation for funding.
- 4.5 Once your application has been considered and a decision has been made we will inform you by letter and if you have been successful we will arrange for the funds to be released.

5 Unsuccessful or Ineligible Applications

- 5.1 Applicants whose applications are unsuccessful or ineligible will be notified by letter and receive feedback on the reasons for the failure of the investment application within two weeks of the decision.

6 Payment of Funding

- 6.1 Funding approved for payment can now be paid directly into a group or organisation bank account via the Bank Automated Credit System (BACS).
- 6.2 Once authorised the council's Financial Services department will arrange for funding to be paid directly into the group or organisation bank account as detailed in the application form.

7 Project Achievement Report (PAR)

- 7.1 As part of the conditions of funding you are required to complete and return a Project Achievement Report (PAR) within six months of receiving funding.
- 7.2 The PAR process is designed to assist you in evaluating the success of your project or initiative and also provides an evidence base for the council's internal audit process. As part of the PAR you will be required to provide supporting documentation e.g. receipts, invoices, bank statements, etc to evidence the expenditure of the funding awarded.
- 7.3 Organisations or groups who do not complete and return a satisfactory Project Achievement Report may be required to return their funding and will not be considered for future funding.

8 Promotion of our funding support

- 8.1 We require that groups and organisations recognise Cumberland Council's funding support by highlighting this on all promotional materials in relation to the project or initiative e.g. acknowledgement in any press releases issued by the group, posters, flyers, website, etc.

9 Terms and conditions of funding for Cumberland Council

- 9.1 You are required to maintain a bank account in the name of the group. All withdrawals from the account should require a minimum of two signatures.
- 9.2 Investments awarded must be spent only on the purpose for which is stated within your application. If for any reason your circumstances change and you wish to vary the way in which you spend your investment you are required to contact us and request written permission to do so.
- 9.3 You are required to provide access to all necessary documentation (see guidance notes & criteria) to support your application for funding.
- 9.4 Financial support provided by Cumberland Council should be acknowledged on all printed publicity and in information given to the press and media.
- 9.5 Your organisation or group should promote equality of opportunity and eliminate all forms of discrimination. Your commitment to this should be clearly identified in a written policy or statement that takes into account current legislation and good practice.
- 9.6 In the event of your organisation ceasing to operate or failing to undertake or complete the activity for which the investment was offered, the Council reserves the right to withhold payment, reduce its award or seek recovery.
- 9.7 You will be required to submit a Project Achievement Report six months after any investment award has been paid. Organisations or groups who do not complete and return a satisfactory Project Achievement Report may be required to return their funding and will not be considered for future funding.