

**Common Good Fund – Community Applications**

**Background**

On 25 October 2022 West Lothian Council agreed the governance arrangements for the management for common good property in accordance with the requirement of part 8 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. See ( <https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Di%96o%7C%88>)

The governance covered five areas of which one was to put in place arrangements for community applications for funding from the Common Good Fund(s).

This Guidance sets out the process by which community organisations can apply to West Lothian Council for common good funding as and when it becomes available.

The Common Good Funds are area specific and within West Lothian there are four former burghs that are covered. These are

1. Armadale
2. Bathgate
3. Linlithgow
4. Whitburn

The funding available in each case is based on income generated by the Common goods within that area within that particular community from the sale or lease of a common good property. Applicants should be aware that the funding only covers the boundary of the old Burgh and not the town as it is today. Maps showing the boundary is set out in four appendices at the end of this guidance.

**Who can apply?**

The scheme is open to all properly constituted third sector organisations in West Lothian that can deliver work that supports the aims of the fund. In relation to capital projects this include the local Community Council and recognised non-profit organisations for example Business Improvement Districts where these exist. Applications may also be accepted from West Lothian Council for capital project where community support is evidenced.

**What can we apply?**

Applications can be for revenue or capital projects that benefit the community covered by the fund. Projects will be required to address identified local needs and demonstrate the alignment within the four eligible areas. Community need will be assessed as part of the application process. These should align to one or more of the Council’s key eight priorities, within the context of local priorities.

The eight priorities are:

* 1. Improving attainment and positive destinations for school children
  2. Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality
  3. Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years
  4. Improving the quality of life for older people
  5. Delivering positive outcomes on health
  6. Improving the employment position in West Lothian
  7. Reducing crime and improving community safety
  8. Protecting the built and natural environment

For capital projects applications can also address environmental improvements within the boundaries covered by the fund and be accessible to the wider community.

**How much can I apply for?**

Given the nature of the source of the funding it remains uncertain how much may be available and when. However, it is generally expected that available funding will be small or relatively small in most cases. Any available funding will be promoted locally in the relevant town as well as on the Council website.

There is no minimum or maximum that can be applied for. Project will be considered on merit and in the context of the funding available at any given time.

There is a small grant application form for projects applying for £2,000 or below and a main grant application for grants applying for £2,000 or above.

**Balance of Funding**

Whilst we will fund 100% of costs for bigger projects in particular we would like to see match funding in place. You should think about proportionality when putting your application together to be clear that the amount being asked for is justified by the number of beneficiaries or level of support, and clearly shows value for money.

**What can the funding be used for?**

You can only use the funding to pay for costs associated with delivering what is set out in your application. This can be for a wide range of costs both revenue and capital.

**How to apply**

When funding becomes available we will promote the funding locally and County wide and publish key dates for applications. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis in line with the Local Areas Committee dates and be open until all funding is allocated. Applications should be received at least three weeks prior to the Local Area Committee meeting to be considered and will be presented to the meeting after if after this date, assuming any funding remains available.

**Completed applications and required documentation should be returned by email to the Community Planning and Regeneration Team at the following email address:**

**RegenerationTeam@westlothian.gov.uk**

Any application received beyond that date/time will not be eligible for consideration unless in exceptional circumstances.

As part of the application process you will be asked to provide the following information:

**How will the application be assessed?**

All applications received will be assessed by officers in terms of eligibility, both in terms of the applicant organisation and also the criteria for the funding. Applications up to £50,000 will then be presented to the relevant Local Area Committee with an officer recommendation for final decision. Any applications over that amount will go to the Committee for comment but final decision will be made by the Council Executive.

Please be aware that you ***must*** submit all requested documentation by the deadline or your application will not be submitted to the panel for assessment.

Officers may contact you with supplementary questions for the purposes of clarification before presenting to the committee.

**General guidance on completion of the application**

The detail you provide should be proportional to the amount you are applying for give council officers and the Local Area Committee a good understanding of what the project is, how you identified the need what the out came will be as well as cost. The more you are applying for the more detail we will expect to see provided. So the detail we would expect to see is likely to be different for a small £2,000 project and £20,000 project. If unsure please contact us to ask.

**A general summary of your project which outlines and identifies:**

* The need for the funding support;
* Who will benefit;
* How it will align with and contribute to the priorities that you have selected.

**Outcomes for the project which outline:**

* What you want to achieve; what changes or difference will the funding we give you make to the people and communities that you are targeting?
* Your planned activities: What measurable programmes, projects or activities you will design, use and deliver to achieve your outcomes?

**Outcome indicators for the project which demonstrate:**

* How you will measure your success?
* How you will show you are achieving or will achieve your stated outcomes?

**Costs which clearly show:**

Your application should clearly show how you have costed you project with a general breakdown of the resources you require e.g. staff, rent, equipment, construction cost etc.

As the funding that you receive is public money you will be asked to report back at the end of the funding period to show how the funding has been utilised and be able to provided supporting evidence (i.e. pay slips, timesheets, invoices, bank statements etc.).

**What happens if the application is successful?**

If you are successful, you will receive an offer letter from us via email that will outline how much we are investing, the terms of the offer and the methods of monitoring our investment.

Please note that you may not be offered the full amount requested.

All funding is reliant on you signing a Conditions of Grant agreement. Funding will be paid directly into your bank account. Please note that no funding will be provided until the Conditions of Grant agreement is signed.

**Monitoring**

All organisations that receive funding will be required to complete a project completion form. Details of which will be included with the award letter which must be completed and submitted once the project is completed, this would expected to be within 12 months of receipt of the grant.

Copies of the end of project monitoring form will accompany your funding award letter and conditions of grant so you will be clear of the requirements before you sign the offer. **This will cover both your performance in relation to your outcomes and financial monitoring.**

**What happens if the application is unsuccessful?**

If you are unsuccessful in your application, feedback will be provided as to the reasons why.

However, the decision is final and there is no process for appeal.

**Additional conditions**

Additional conditions that will apply to the offer will include:

* Right of access to organisation’s financial records to ensure the funding is being used for the purposes it is granted for
* The council can reclaim funding if it can be shown that it has not been used in accordance with the application and with conditions of funding agreement. We will not reclaim funding if it can be shown that there is no fault on the part of the organisation.

Other conditions appropriate to our investment may also be included in the Offer Letter and Funding Agreement.

**Help and Advice**

If you require further information or advice on your application please contact the Community Wealth Building Team at (regenerationteam@westlothian.gov.uk) and we will get back to you.