

Local Networks (LN) - Councillor Grant Guidelines

What is Councillor Grant (CG)?

CG is an allocation of funds to each DCC councillor to support:

- Social, economic and environmental well-being activities that improve the quality of life in communities.
- The funding of larger scale proposals which are identified as priorities within the Local Network Action Plan (LNAP) or meet emerging neighbourhood issues.
- The funding of new and additional community and voluntary projects within their area that meet an identified need and will benefit people.
- DCC councillors in their community champion role.
- Community participation in decision making.

How much do DCC Councillors receive?

DCC councillors have an individual CG allocation of £19,400. This is made up of £14,000 capital and £5,400 revenue funding.

DCC councillors must spend at least £14,000 of their allocation on capital expenditure, examples of which include works to land and buildings as well as purchasing items of equipment for local groups.

All possible attempts should be made to secure match funding, both cash and in-kind, for CG proposals to maximise the benefits of the scheme. This can include contributions from the Local Network Fund (LNF), as well as other external sources e.g., National Lottery, charitable trusts and foundations etc.

How do DCC councillors know what to spend CG on?

- By engaging with your LN. Your LN has a plan which identifies local priorities that can act as a reference point for the use of CG.
- DCC councillors may identify local projects that contribute to county-wide priorities such as those in the Council Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy 2014-2030.
- By engaging with local community and voluntary groups/organisations.
- By using your own local knowledge of the residents and communities you represent.
- By referring to local community and partnership plans.

Grants should ideally be one off and not give rise to expectations of any future funding. The issue of ongoing costs and future sustainability should be addressed during the project development stage.

Can LNs apply for CG funding?

No, LNs are not set up to deliver projects on behalf of DCC councillors or community organisations.

What type of projects can DCC councillors fund?

Examples of the types of items and activities you can support include (but are not restricted to):

- Capital items and equipment.
- Coaching or training activity.

- Project costs.
- Sessional costs.
- Contributions to core/running costs (where the expenditure of the organisation is typically less than £100,000 per year).
- Capacity building activities.
- Transport costs.
- Repair costs.
- IT equipment.

Quotes for proposed projects.

For any single items or works between £0 and £5,000, we would accept one quote or estimate of works. For single items or works between £5,001 and £50,000 three quotes should be obtained. For any single items of works above £50,000, applicants will be required to enter into a tendering process.

What cannot be funded?

- Retrospective projects. This means that a grant cannot pay for work or activities that have already started or taken place or pay for any goods or services that have been ordered or paid for (including deposits) before the applicant receives an offer letter. This means that you should allow enough time for the application to be processed and approved before the work or project is due to start. Applications should therefore be submitted a minimum of eight weeks in advance of the planned start date.
- Requests for more than three years running costs. Where such requests are approved funding will be awarded on a reducing scale (to encourage sustainability) and will only be released for year one initially then subject to suitable evidence being provided the following year's funding will be released.
- Projects that do not start within 12 months of the date of the offer letter (if there are issues that delay the start of the project, offer letters will be withdrawn and applicants may be given the option of re-applying when they are in a better position to proceed).
- Projects that will lead to future operating cost difficulties for the recipient organisation/group.
- Projects that only support an individual.
- Profit-making organisations.
- Organisations that have an outstanding bill owed to the council.
- Companies/organisations that can pay profits to directors, shareholders or members (including Companies Limited by Shares).
- Religious projects that are deemed denominational, although faith-based organisations can be supported to deliver a project where there is a clear wider community benefit. Improvements/repairs to the structure/windows of buildings whose main/sole purpose is of a religious nature, cannot be supported.

- Political activities.
- Purchase of alcohol or associated costs.
- Costs associated with gambling.
- Overseas travel/projects that take place outside of the UK.
- Projects that should be paid from mainstream budgets of the Council or of an external agency unless it can be demonstrated that the project will provide additionality.
- Mainstream educational activity i.e. activities/services that schools have a statutory responsibility to provide.
- Projects where the applicant has not managed a previous grant appropriately or where the applicant has failed to return monitoring information for a previous grant.
- VAT that the recipient organisation can recover.
- Loans and interest payments.
- Payments for individuals to cover bills or expenses that are not related to community activity.
- Liability arising out of negligence, for example, fines, fees or costs that arise due to negligent practice in the delivery of the project.
- Payments to employees of the organisation arising from claims of unfair dismissal or redundancy.
- Used vehicles.
- One organisation applying on behalf of another. Organisations can work in partnership on projects, however the applicant must be the main deliverer.
- Fireworks.
- Inflatables
- Contingencies

This list is not exhaustive, and there may be other items that are not appropriate to receive Local Network Funding.

Who can apply?

All not for profit organisations and groups. This can include charities, voluntary/community groups, Town and Parish councils, schools/educational establishments and social enterprises, provided they operate on a not-for-profit basis.

Organisations seeking funding must meet the following criteria *:

Volunteer-led organisations, registered charities sports clubs and CIOs must:	Social enterprises, Community Interest Companies (CIC) and other companies must:
Have a governing document, such as a constitution that sets out the name and purpose of your organisation. It should also cover how it will work. So, things like how people join, how your committee will work, and when you'll have meetings. Branches of larger organisations need their own governing document	Have a governing document that sets out the name and purpose of your organisation. It should also cover how it will work
Have a management committee with a minimum of four unrelated members	Have a management committee with a of three directors, or four directors if two are related
Have a bank or building society account in the name of the organisation/group, with a minimum of two unrelated cheque signatories	Have a bank or building society account in the name of the organisation/company, with a minimum of two unrelated cheque signatories
Have yearly financial accounts – If you don't have yearly accounts, as you're a new organisation (less than 15 months old), we'll still look at your application if you can provide a projection of income and expenditure over the next 12 months.	Have yearly financial accounts
Have charitable aims	Have clear charitable purposes and a defined social benefit
Provide evidence of good governance practices and sound financial management (including registering with the Charity Commission, CASC or other governing body, depending on the size of the organisation)	Have a recognised status (e.g., a company limited by guarantee), and be registered with the necessary relevant body (e.g., Companies House)

<p>Usually, you must register with the Charity Commission if your charity is based in England or Wales and has over £5,000 income per year.</p> <p>We may ask for evidence of this in the form of a letter from the Charity Commission confirming receipt of your application for charitable status.</p>	<p>Have a nominated organisation as an asset lock body.</p>
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**All above documents that require a signature, must be signed by the relevant individual/s.*

Important additional information for social enterprises including Community Interest Companies (CICs) and other companies.

As a model it is expected that all forms of social enterprise should have a tradable service or product that generates funds for social benefit. Grant funding will only be available to support this social benefit element

All social enterprises, including CICs, must demonstrate a reasonable percentage of their income has been earned through trading (usually 25% or more will be considered a reasonable percentage). Social enterprises will be asked to provide a breakdown of their income streams, quantifying the income from grants and the income from trade, to verify this.

All social enterprises must also demonstrate within applications that:

- The company has been registered for a minimum of 12 months.
- The application is made for cost to deliver the project not managing the CIC.
- There is clear evidence of need (consultation etc.) from the community and the benefit must also be clear.
- The project or activity for which funding is sought is charitable i.e., it must not be part of the trading services for which they would usually have a charge.
- Sessional costs are in line with an appropriate pay spine structure.

Expected policies.

We would expect that any organisation we fund has the appropriate policies are in place. These should include (if appropriate) but not be restricted to:

- Safeguarding policies and procedures for children and vulnerable adults.
- Public liability insurance.
- Employer's liability.
- Equality and diversity.
- Disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks carried out and in place for all paid and unpaid volunteer staff working with children and vulnerable adults.
- Suitable planning permissions and/or other regulations approval are in place prior to the commencement of any improvements to building or land as required.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policy.

We are unable to accept application from groups that:

- Have not returned monitoring forms for previous grants.

- Are subject to an investigation by the Charity Commission, the police or any other organisation in a legal capacity.
- Have restricted membership other than that associated with the objects of the group itself i.e. necessary for the safety/wellbeing of disadvantaged users
- Fail due diligence or do not comply with Charity Commission guidelines i.e., we would not make grants to organisations that had related bank signatories, several related trustees.

Projects taking place on land or buildings.

The project deliverer will need to either:

- Own the land or building
- Have a lease that cannot be ended for five years
- Have a letter from the owner saying the land or building will be leased to you for at least five years, or
- Have an official letter from the owner or landlord that says you're allowed to carry out your project.

You should also find out if you will need planning permission or building regulations approval for the work. Evidence of this must be submitted with your application.

Is there a limit on how much DCC councillors can give a project?

The minimum amount of CG funding that can be allocated by an individual DCC councillor to a project through the CG main grant scheme is £1,000.

DCC councillors will be able to use up to £2,000 of their CG revenue funding to allocate small grants to projects in sums from £100 to £999

Where a DCC councillor has committed more than £18,400 to projects across the year, leaving a balance of less than £1,000 (the minimum grant amount) and has committed £2,000 to small grants, we will need to identify the capital/revenue breakdown of the remaining balance to determine how the rest should be applied. For example, if a member has an £800 balance made up of £500 capital and £300 revenue, they can either submit one capital application for £800 or one capital application for £500 and a revenue application for £300.

Can DCC councillors pool their CG to support a project?

Yes, DCC councillors can combine their allocation with other DCC councillors to support larger schemes, as long as the minimum total CG contribution is £1,000. The minimum individual contribution should be £1,000 for a main grant application.

DCC councillors can combine their small grant allowance to support a scheme up to £999 (projects over this amount will become a main grant application).

DCC councillors can pool their CG to fund a project that will benefit communities in more than one electoral division.

Can DCC councillors use their CG to support projects outside their electoral division?

Yes, DCC councillors can fund a project outside of their electoral division, but the application must demonstrate that the majority of beneficiaries are from their own division. Where this is not the case, then DCC councillors will be encouraged to consider a grant amount based on the proportion of beneficiaries from their area.

DCC councillors wishing to support projects outside of their electoral division must show that they have positively engaged with the DCC councillor/s whose electoral division the project will take place in (where appropriate).

Can DCC councillors support a project where they have an interest under Elected Member publicity, probity and conduct protocols?

If an DCC councillor wants to support an organisation in which they have an interest, other than a disclosable pecuniary interest, as defined in the code of conduct, they should confirm this on the CG application declaration section.

Any DCC councillor having a disclosable pecuniary interest in an organisation is prohibited from allocating CG funding to any project delivered by or in connection with that organisation.

Can DCC councillors give their CG to a third-party organisation to distribute on their behalf?

DCC councillors cannot give all/part of their CG funding to a third-party organisation to distribute on their behalf.

Can DCC councillors carry any unspent CG over to the next financial year?

DCC councillors are encouraged to spend their annual allocation within each financial year, however unspent funds can be carried forward but not beyond a DCC councillors' term of office.

Can DCC councillors make changes to the allocation of funding from a previous term of office?

Changes to funding allocations from a previous term of office cannot be made unless there are significant circumstances preventing the delivery of the original project.