

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

COMMUNITY CHEST SCHEME

2009/10

Community Chest: A Summary

Community groups and voluntary organisations across Northumberland provide a whole host of activities that support their communities. These groups are often enthusiastic to do more to meet the demands and needs of their communities, but their ambitions are often constrained by available resource. The County Council has therefore put in place a 'Community Chest' scheme which gives local organisations a chance to bid for funding to do something extra this year – a one-off project that they wouldn't otherwise be able to do. This might be a tea dance or buying new equipment for a youth centre – but these ideas will be coming from the community themselves. The Council is making £150,000 available this financial year which will be administered through a straightforward application process. Local Councillors through the 3 Area Committees in Northumberland will consider all applications.

Purpose of Community Chest

The Community Chest Scheme is a Northumberland County Council initiative to provide access to funding support to deliver priority activities appropriate to each 3 Areas as determined by the 3 County Council's Area Committees.

The aims of the community chest are as follows:

- To support voluntary and community groups/organisation to deliver activity that will make an impact in the relevant Area.
- To support one-off initiatives that are seen as valuable to the Area, but were not able to secure mainstream funding from the Council or other service providers.
- To provide an easily accessible process of funding support.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to any voluntary/community or not-for-profit group or organisation (to include charities) based in or predominantly serving Northumberland which is properly constituted with a bank account that has at least two signatories.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Local Councils and schools are not eligible to apply.

What can be applied for?

The Scheme is designed to support any activity to benefit the community that takes place in the respective Area within the current financial year. The following conditions and tests will be applied:

- It must be activity that supports the Council's strategic priorities and when appropriate, feeds into the emerging 3 Area Implementation Frameworks.

- The project must not be in conflict with any existing national government or local Council policies (e.g. equality and diversity policies).
- The majority of people benefiting from the project should be from Northumberland – with particular emphasis on the relevant Area.
- One group can only receive one grant within any financial period.
- If an application is unsuccessful, the applicant may make another application in the same year for a different activity.
- Core costs of organisations will not be supported.
- Projects that contain any provision of financial assistance – that will in turn support small grants to community and/or individuals will not be supported.
- Retrospective applications cannot be considered.
- It is expected that projects will be delivered within the current financial year. Where this is not possible, a rationale and a clear timetable for any slippage into next financial year needs to be agreed.

How much money is available?

Each Area has access to £50,000 in financial year 2009/10

The following conditions are placed on accessing the funding:

- All funding needs to be spent in the same financial year that it was approved.
- Applications will not exceed £5,000.
- There is no minimum amount for applications.
- Applications must demonstrate financial need

When can applications be made?

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis, therefore there are no deadlines for submitting application forms.

It is expected that applications will take no longer than 12 weeks to be assessed. Wherever possible, applications will be processed in a shorter timescale.

To allow time for processing and delivery, all applications must be submitted before end of November 2009.

How will applications be assessed?

Each application will be submitted on a simple standardised application form. Additional information may be provided to support the application if appropriate (e.g. business plan where one exists, confirmation of match funding if relevant etc).

Once the project activity and applicant are deemed eligible, the project will be considered on its merits and assessed against the following criteria:

- There is a clear rationale and evidence of need for the project.
- The project adds value being genuinely new and/or in addition to any existing activity.
- The benefits to the community are clear.
- The project contributes to the Council priorities; Sustainable Community Strategy; LAA targets; and once devised, the Area Implementation Framework.
- Where possible, appropriate match funding to be demonstrated to add value to the project (e.g. Members Small Grant Scheme for capital projects). Match funding can include in-kind support.
- The applicant group/organisation is able to demonstrate their ability to deliver activity successfully.
- The project has a clear exit strategy or plan for forward sustainability.

Each application will be assessed against these criteria by 3 funding panels which are made up of Councillors from each area. Each funding panel will present their conclusions to the appropriate Area Committee for ratification.

The Funding Panel may agree to approve applications with applied conditions to be pursued by supporting officers (e.g. obtaining outstanding evidence of match funding etc).

How will grants be paid?

When a grant is approved by Area Committee and all conditions satisfied, an offer of funding letter will be sent out to the applicant. A cheque for the agreed amount will be raised and should normally reach the applicant within 28 days. This timescale should be taken into account when deciding when to make an application.

A condition of grant approval will be for the successful projects to recognise the Council's contribution to the project in all publicity.

How will approved projects be monitored?

In order to track the impact and success of the investment made through the community chest, standardised tracking forms will be sent to all successful applicants in November 2009. This will outline any demonstrable outcomes achieved from the delivery of the project and reflections on the impact and sustainability of the project.

All applicants are required to return this tracking form within 8 weeks of receipt.

How do I get an application form?

Application forms are available from the Locality Development Team within Northumberland County Council. Completed applications should be returned to the same address:

Please contact for application forms and for further information/queries:

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