

Leicestershire County Council Community Forum Budgets 2011/12

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Introduction

Leicestershire County Council has set up a fund of £320,000 for local communities to invest in local priority improvement projects in 2011/12. The fund will be made available through Community Forums with each forum having between £10,000 and £15,000 to allocate depending on population size. Further funding, at the same level, is being made available in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

The process for submission and consideration of projects is simple and easy to access. This will ensure that as many good projects as possible can be put forward and decisions made whilst giving everyone in communities the opportunity to participate. The Project Proposal form is the first step in the process and should be used to set out the key elements of your project. Project Proposal forms normally need to be submitted three weeks prior to your Forum workshop, but this may be different from forum to forum. Valid forms will then be made available on the Leicestershire Forums website so that local residents and stakeholders can comment on your proposal and make suggestions for improvement.

NB Submission deadlines and workshop dates may be subject to change. An up to date schedule of forum workshop dates and submission deadlines is provided at <http://www.leicestershireforums.org/cfb.html>. Paper copies of this guidance will have a schedule attached that is up to date at the time it was sent to you. Please check the website or contact us to check the dates on the schedule are still correct.

The next step is for proposals to be considered at Community Forum workshops later this year where priority projects will be selected by workshop participants through a voting procedure. At least one representative for your project proposal will need to attend your local forum workshop. The project representative(s) will need to give a 90 second presentation of your project to the meeting and to discuss the proposal with others participants. Representatives will also be able to discuss project proposals by other groups.

Once projects have been selected the groups/organisations that put them forward will be assisted with advice on any outstanding issues and on the award of grants and relevant conditions. The final decision whether or not to approve projects has to be made by Leicestershire County Council as the accountable body for the funding.

Funding for successful projects will need to be spent by June 30th 2012 and progress will be monitored by Community Forums.

What projects are eligible?

Community Forum Budget funding can be used to support a wide range of new and existing projects and activities – the key test is that supported projects and activities will need to show that they are appropriate, feasible and sustainable.

To be **appropriate**, projects and activities should:

- Provide value for money.
- Be led by an eligible group or organisation (see below).
- Link to one or more of the six priorities of the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy. These priorities are:
 - Supporting individuals and families
 - Delivering effective services
 - Protecting our environment
 - Improving our communities
 - Enhancing children's lives
 - Developing our economy

A summary of the areas of activity covered by the priorities can be viewed at <http://www.leicestershireforums.org/uploads/scs.pdf> and is appended to paper copies of this guidance. You might also wish to consider priorities in district Sustainable Community Strategies as meeting these may be useful in gaining practical additional support from District Councils. These can be found on the website of the District Council for your area.

To be **feasible** projects and activities should:

- Be able to spend the funding applied for between January 2012 and 30 June 2012. Your reliance on securing further funding may, for instance, be a factor impacting on the feasibility of your project.
- Fulfill all legal requirements and have obtained the consents necessary to deliver the project or activity. These requirements and consents may include planning permission, consent from landowner(s), statutory undertakers and the Highway Authority and regulations relating to health and safety, protection of vulnerable people, wildlife etc.

NB at the time of submitting your Project Proposal Form, we do not expect you will have all funds, permissions etc. in place. The feasibility relates to how likely you can get everything in place to ensure your project will be completed effectively by June 30 2012.

To be **sustainable**, projects and activities should:

- Provide some lasting or longer term benefits for your community forum area.
- Ongoing projects should be capable of continuing without reliance on further public funding.

The Project Proposal form is a key document to demonstrate that the project is needed, is viable and will bring significant benefits, and will give your project the best opportunity to attract community support and win funding. Please also see the attached Criteria & Eligibility checklist.

What area is covered by Community Forum Budget funding?

Funding is available for projects and activities based in the County of Leicestershire. Each Community Forum will consider projects that are relevant to its area and the benefits that each of these projects will deliver to its local community. Projects that relate to more than one forum area can be submitted but each forum will only be able to support activities that directly benefit the community within its area.

What is the value of Community Forum Budget funding?

Community Forum Budgets can fund up to 100% of the costs of a project, but your project is more likely to be successful if you have additional sources of funding, or match funding, to demonstrate commitment from the community and/or other external funders. Match funding can include 'In kind' contributions such as volunteer time.

Who can apply for Community Forum Budget funding?

The following groups and organisations will be eligible to receive funding:

- Voluntary and community sector organisations including constituted local groups and charities that operate a 'not-for-profit' business model and which aim to meet the needs of, and make a positive difference to, the local community. Non-constituted groups can apply for funding but would need to be constituted before funding could be awarded. Assistance with becoming a constituted group can be obtained from Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (www.valonline.org.uk) and the Rural Community Council Leicestershire and Rutland (www.ruralcc.org.uk).
- Parish Councils, local authorities and other statutory agencies.

Individuals, businesses, political groups and schools, colleges or other academic institutions are not eligible to receive funding. Applications from Parent Teacher Associations may however be considered.

Key financial requirements

- It is expected that you will obtain a minimum of at least 3 competitive quotes for any work carried out which is of a value greater than £5,000. It is advisable and will be seen as good practice for projects under £5,000 to seek comparable quotes for the work.

- Community Forum Budget funding can be used to match fund grants received from other organisations, providing that it does not duplicate other funding so that the scheme makes a surplus.
- Funding will only be granted to groups and organisations that have a bank account, with at least two signatories.

What activities can't be supported?

Community Forum Budget funding cannot be used for:

- Projects or activities that duplicate existing services.
- Projects or activities which benefit only an individual person.
- Funds to build up reserves or a surplus.
- Costs for activities which have already taken place.
- Any political and faith only activities.

How will funding be paid?

If your project is successful you will be provided with a County Council contact that you should notify by letter, fax, telephone or e-mail when the work is complete. Payment will normally be made on receipt of invoices, but exceptionally advanced payments may be considered. Please contact us if you would like to be considered for an advanced payment.

Where you have stated on the Project Proposal form that your group or organisation can reclaim VAT, any subsequent grant offer will be based on the value of your project net of VAT: VAT payments that can be reclaimed cannot be grant aided.

Disclaimer

Leicestershire County Council reserves the right to vary the terms of the criteria.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Projects will be expected to provide feedback/evidence of spend (e.g. letter, short report, photograph, visit from funder) to confirm the project activities have taken place. You may be asked to attend a community forum meeting to report on progress and/or the results of your project.

Further Information

Further information on the Community Forum Budget process is available at <http://www.leicestershireforums.org/cfb.html>

Email: leicestershireforums@leics.gov.uk

Tel: 0116 305 7034

CRITERIA AND ELIGIBILITY - Checklist

Delegates at the Community Forum Budget workshops will prioritise the project proposals for the Forum area by voting on their favourites. The decisions on awarding funding to the priority projects will ultimately be made by Leicestershire County Council – with due regards to the views of the local community. Leicestershire County Council’s decision will be based on whether a priority project is considered appropriate, feasible and sustainable.

We will ask residents and delegates at the workshops to consider the following questions, which are directly related to the funding criteria, so you will want to make sure you cover these points in your Project Proposal Form.

NB at the time of submitting your Project Proposal Form, we do not expect you will have all funds, permissions etc. in place. The question is whether you could get everything in place to ensure your project will be completed by June 30 2012.

APPROPRIATENESS	
Does the project duplicate existing services?	
Does the project provide value for money?	
Is the project led by an eligible organisation?	
Does the project meet 1 or more of the 6 Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities?	
Is there evidence of need and community support?	
FEASIBILITY	
Can the project commence delivery in January 2012?	
Can the project (or that part of it for which you are seeking funding) be completed by 30 June 2012?	
Does the project fulfil all relevant legal requirements?	
SUSTAINABILITY	
Does the project provide lasting/long term benefits?	
Does the project rely on future public funding?	