**DIY & Technical Assistance Community Fund**

**What is the DIY & Technical Assistance** **Community Fund?**

The DIY and Technical Assistance Community Fund is a grant scheme open to eligible organisations across the Lisburn & Castlereagh area. It aims to enable local groups to:

* refresh, refurbish or make general improvements to existing community facilities; and/or
* commission professional/technical assistance to explore the potential of expansion and/or upgrades to facilities or scope out the feasibility and sustainability of developing new capital projects.

Overall, the fund will make provision to fix, repair, maintain or improve community facilities to offer a wider range of activities and services to broaden community engagement and respond to community needs. Its focus will be on developing resilient communities where people are engaged and empowered. It will also assist local groups to engage professional expertise as a critical part of embarking on a capital project for wider community need.

The community and voluntary sector deliver crucial services locally providing facilities for a range of purposes. This grant scheme should deliver the following outcomes:

* enhanced internal / external environment of local facilities;
* increased participation and improved programme delivery;
* increased income generation opportunities;
* supporting the development and sustainability of future capital projects

**How much is available?**

The DIY & Technical Assistance Community Fund has £50,000 available. Organisations will be able to apply for grants up to a maximum of £1,500. There is no minimum amount requirement.

**Who can apply?**

The DIY & Technical Assistance Community Fund is open to community/voluntary organisations based in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area that meet the following criteria:

* an open and accountable governing document (Constitution or Articles and Memorandum of Association, or applicable governing document) that has been properly adopted;
* a bank account in the name of the organisation, which requires at least two (unrelated) signatories
* an annual set of independently examined financial accounts, endorsed at an Annual General Meeting;
* a Management Committee or Governing Board, elected by its membership at an Annual General Meeting, and elected office bearers;
* a minimum of £5 million Public Liability Insurance, to cover all risk associated with the activities of the organisation;
* Evidence of ownership or lease (minimum of 10 years remaining).

We will not fund individuals, sole traders or profit-making organisations.

**Programme Criteria**

The fund is designed to assist the improvement or future development of a community facility. Applicants will need to evidence that the facility to be enhanced is of strategic importance in the local community. For example, prove that the facility is needed and used by the community and is offering services not duplicated in the surrounding area; demonstrate the prevention of loss of vital community services; show how the improvement will encourage engagement or improve delivery of programmes.

It will cover minor improvements to local facilities or consultancy requirements, hiring expertise, design and development specialists to examine the viability and sustainability of a capital related programme.

**Examples of what we will fund (not exhaustive):**

* Internal furnishings such as floor coverings, curtains, blinds, chairs, tables etc;
* Materials including paint, wallpaper and hardware required to complete the refresh / refurbishment ;
* Improvements to external environment including groundworks e.g. landscaping, planters, fencing;
* Items of equipment directly related to delivering the project;
* Professional fees or other associated costs which may be required including design, architect, quantity surveyor, chartered surveyor, structural engineer and legal fees; and
* Technical Development – in assessing basic technical feasibility, innovative design.

Please note - if planning permission or building control consent is required for capital works, the applicant must be able to demonstrate this is in place or applied for.

**Examples of what we will not fund (not exhaustive):**

* Sole traders, profit making organisations or individuals (applicant must be a lease holder);
* Large scale capital works;
* Refresh/refurbishment that does not actively meet a community need;
* Routine operating expenses, such as administration or staffing;
* Equipment purchases that are not required to make a facility functional;
* Direct programming costs;
* Purchases of land;
* Private businesses / commercial /statutory /regional sector organisations.

**Project Details**

Please provide sufficient detail to enable us to understand what your project is about and what you will do with any funding offered.

You should provide as much detail as possible including:

* What facility improvements you intend to make
* How were these identified
* Who will organise and manage it
* How the improvement/s will benefit the local community
* Do you have experience of delivering similar projects
* What positive impact will the project make to your users / local community

**Delivering**

You will need to let us know if planning permission or building control is required. This can take time and needs to be factored into the timeframe of the project. Procurement is also required for any project activity and quotes need to be obtained before any work can be carried out. Again, this will have a time implication.

**Costs**

Please consider the following when estimating the cost of your project:

* Detail each specific cost on a separate line (eg. materials, equipment, furniture) giving a unit and total cost for each separate item when appropriate.
* Ensure your costings are relevant and realistic. It is beneficial to obtain quotes/ current market rates for costs proposed.
* If you are not applying for 100% of your project costs we need to know where you are planning to get the balance of your money from. This might be from another funder or from your own funds.

**ASSESSING**

**What criteria will we use to assess project applications?**

Projects will be assessed against five criteria – eligibility, feasibility, deliverability, affordability, sustainability. Eligible projects will be assessed against a prioritisation matrix based on the above criteria.

* **Project Eligibility** – If applicants do not meet the project eligibility criteria the application will be deemed to be unsuccessful and no further scoring will be recorded.

Prioritisation Scoring Matrix – Project assessment on:

* **Feasibility** – Why the project is required, what needs are being met, how these were identified, beneficiaries, outputs and outcomes
* **Deliverability** – details of location, realistic timeframe, management of the project
* **Affordability** – estimated total cost (budget). Costs must be reasonable, relevant and present value for money.
* **Sustainability** – How will future costs be met.

Projects must achieve a minimum threshold score of **70** in order to be successful and will be ranked according to individual scores.

* Successful projects must provide feedback to monitor progress, evaluate results and capture learning and good practice. This may include attendance at council facilitated workshops and/or meetings.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

The required supporting documentation must be sent with the application unless we have received it in the last 12 months and no changes have been made to it.

Before applying, please check that:

* your organisation is eligible to apply;
* your application meets the priorities of this fund;
* you have completed every question on your application form;
* you can provide all the information requested as part of the application process.

**Once your application is received, we will:**

* Perform an Eligibility Check on your application and then assess it against the Programme Criteria;
* Contact you with questions should we need to, so please keep a copy of your Application Form for reference;
* Not assess your application if it is incomplete.

**If your project is successful, we will:**

* Send you a Conditional Offer and our Terms & Conditions of Grant by email for your organisation to sign and return to the Council;
* Clearly indicate the eligible expenditure for the funding offered;
* Request the grant to be acknowledged through the inclusion of the official Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council’s logo on all related promotional material associated with the project and that an Elected Member or Council Officer from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, is invited to the event/activity to which the grant is awarded.

**If your application is unsuccessful, we will:**

* Contact you by email informing you of the reasons why your application has not been successful, for which there is no right of appeal.