

Community Buildings Fund

Proposal for revised guidance

When people apply to our Community Buildings Fund, they have to meet criteria and provide information. Recent applications have come up against issues and had to be postponed, or due to the guidance, received lower initial assessment scores than Members felt should be given.

At our last Community Grants Panel meeting, Members asked for the guidance to be reviewed so it was more up to date.

Please see the attached revised guidance notes for your consideration and discussion. The main changes are:

Previous guidance	Reason for change	New proposed guidance
It was advisable that all or most match funding should be in place when the grant was applied for.	Where all match funding was not in place, Members were postponing the decision until it was, or inviting applicants to apply again when they had all match funding in place.	Applications are not eligible without all match funding in place.
It was suggested that applications should include a contribution from the parish council.	Applicants who had not approached their parish council for match funding were viewed unfavourably by Members. Some applicants were unaware they could ask their parish council for a contribution.	Applicants must approach their local parish council to see if they can help with any funding towards their project in order to be eligible. Councillors on the decision making panel do prefer to see a contribution from the parish council, however small, but applicants must at least have asked.
In order to be eligible, applicants had to have a significant number of years left on their lease, but no specific number was mentioned in the guidance. This is due to the funds we're giving out being public money, we wouldn't want improvements to be made and the freeholder take the hall back soon after.	This lack of clarity ended up with people applying with relatively short leases, which led to the applications having to be postponed until they had extended their leases, or invited to re-apply.	If the building is leasehold, people must have a minimum of 28 years remaining on their current lease when they apply. This is the recommended minimum from Devon Communities Together – who are community buildings experts.

<p>All the projects that were listed as eligible in the guidance were to do with the structure of the building itself, or projects inside the building.</p>	<p>Members wished to, and have, approved projects for car parks, and structures outside that were part of the building that increased the sustainability of the hall itself or the surrounding public open space. However, with the guidance as it was, projects such as this received lower assessment scores, especially those that increased the sustainability of the surrounding public open space.</p>	<p>Eligible projects must be for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the building itself. • structures permanently attached to the building that are often used in conjunction with the building, and increase the sustainability of the building itself and / or significantly increase the sustainability of the surrounding public open space. • car parks next to the building that are solely / mainly for the use of those accessing the building.
<p>Community buildings must be multi-use (minimum of three separate user groups), with open community access, and owned and / or managed by the community.</p>	<p>There have been some projects recently where it hasn't been clear how much usage the community building has had or will have from more than one main user group. This makes initially assessing the application difficult in some cases, and can make decisions on the application less well informed.</p> <p>The danger is that we could be funding community buildings for specific sports or activities rather than the whole community, and there are other funding streams that would be suitable for those kinds of projects.</p>	<p>Community buildings must be multi-use (minimum of three separate user groups), with open community access, and owned and / or managed by the community.</p> <p>Thinking about the main user group (if there is one), they should use the community building a maximum of 50% of the time it is in use. The remaining 50% of the time it must be used by a minimum of two other separate and distinct user groups from within the community.</p>
<p>Community buildings can't apply if they have heard they have been successful for a Community Buildings Grant from us within the last two years.</p>	<p>I have a couple of examples of community buildings coming up with very different worthy projects within the two years. I would suggest we reduce this to 18 months, so they would have to miss two funding rounds (as we have two each year) and then could re-apply on the third one.</p>	<p>Community buildings can't apply if they have heard they have been successful for a Community Buildings Grant from us within the last 18 months.</p>

