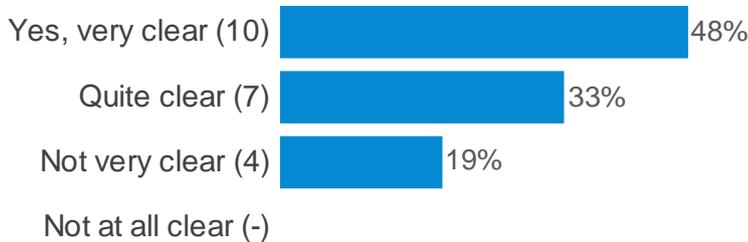


Councillor Local Community Fund

This report was generated on 01/03/22. Overall 21 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

Were you clear at the outset what the purpose of the fund is?



Any further comments?

Clear of the purpose but the £300 level of funding vs. the admin for members and officers did not ever allow for any meaningful purpose to be met.

Things did get clearer, but, to begin with, the idea of paying money into personal bank accounts just did not seem right.

The outline of the scheme was too vague and caused problems from the start with the suggestion that Members had the funding directly - no thank you and thankfully Staffs Foundation stepped in. No allowances for cross ward projects and too prescriptive to be easy to roll out.

The application form should allow groups to ask for funding from "all Lichfield Councillors" and "all Burntwood Councillors" (Burntwood councillors to include those from Hammerwich with Wall). There are several groups which operate across the whole Town/City, and therefore should be able to access funding from more than 2 wards - but the current design of the form does not allow applicants to select more than 6 councillors.

Given clarity at briefings

No

I missed a couple of applications amongst all my emails and so a reminder about applications which a cllr has not responded to after say 1 month would be helpful

Quite clear as a tool to engage with Community groups within the ward, including new ones!

This was dealt with in an unregulated and amateurish way that puts Councillors and the Council and risk of being accused of misuse of public funds. It is open to abuse and risks the reputation of the council.

Had a hiccup (a dot where it shouldnt have been) when my ldc email was set up wrong so didnt get all the informaiton and could have misse dout on requests.

The review must look at all the applications that were accepted to see if that they did comply with the stated aims. These need not be in great detail unless it shows up a particular case.

Some difficulty getting interest from local groups, despite asking a number of times.

How did you let local groups know about the fund?

asked around and asked others to spread the word into local groups and other volunteers

I did not. See above re. the £300 level of funding vs. the admin for members.

Facebook posts and word of mouth.

I do not have contact details for all groups. So very difficult to advertise the scheme. I tried spreading the word.

Circulated through email to community groups but all of the applications came via the general circulation of the scheme.

With much difficulty. What if any LDC publicity done did not produce any requests so it became a last minute scramble to try and get the funds out after the name and shame email which was not appreciated/appropriate.

I spoke to several groups in person and online, using social media, email and previous email lists from historic communications

Through Parish Councils

Via local Facebook account and through the Parish Council and word of mouth.

Sent on messages to Parish councils

Attending relevant meetings, information in local newsletters, magazines, word of mouth.

Mainly relied on LDC publicity

Facebook - local groups pages

I didn't publicise the fund as I do not believe the governance was sufficient for the use of public funds

I know the many groups in the area and also asked the Parish Council members to inform their contacts.

Advertised on fb in the village pages

It was poorly understood and poorly advertised. Local groups didn't really know what they were asking for and why and most that I spoke to just thought it was free money they could have and then decide what to do with it later. It was very difficult get legitimate applications and wasted a lot of time.

Yes

Didn't need to. The publicity associated with the fund meant that I was approached by groups.

Social Media, word of mouth and sharing LDC news releases.

Word of mouth. Through third party. Notes through doors. Telephoning.

Any further comments?

too much overlap with other grants around that are more well known;

I was aware of the above before the scheme was launched and recommended that it should not be started. Nothing has changed my opinions re level of funding vs. the admin for members and officers.

I approached a small group who had not had any prior funding who I knew could it to good use for a large number of people.

Ill thought our scheme that was dismissed in past years with low value and seemingly a lot of work for Members and officers for a relatively small amount of money when taking into account the Council budgets. Scheme should be reworked/scrapped in light of current hardships in our community eg funding to food banks or affordable warmth schemes for example would be a better means of helping those most in need in our community now.

The Council should thoroughly review whether sufficient checks and balances are in place to prevent the type of misuse that the County Council experienced. I am currently unaware of any impropriety by any applicant or councillor, but I do not believe the governance structure is adequate to preclude this

Any further comments?

A paper poster was requested to pin up in village halls.

No

I cannot see how the scheme in its current guise can demonstrate sufficient proactive governance. Retrospective governance is insufficient.

Given the issues that have occurred with money being given to Councillor Loughbrough Rudd at Staffordshire County Council. It is clear that this unregulated and unaccountable way of allocating public funds is widely open to abuse.

Wasnt much media from LDC, this could have been done better. LDC should have more contacts than Cllrs.

I know from my experience at SCC that you are going to need to tighten up on oversight of the fund. The overwhelming majority of people will be honest and transparent, but it only takes one idiot to undermine the ethos of the scheme.

Very few responses. Difficult to motivate groups to show enthusiasm.

How did you go about engaging with local groups in your areas?

as above

None. See above

Local discussions.

See earlier comment. Not easy as the 'well known groups I find are 'regulars' on request for funding to various charitable trusts etc. I wanted to ensure the money was really going to boost a group who had not had any prior funding from other sources.

As previous plus mentioned it at a couple of meetings

With difficulty and after much chasing of possible options with slow responses as often volunteer led.

See above

Parish Councils and email

Speaking to community groups on the Village and raising it at Parish Council meetings

Calls and direct emails

Attending Parish Council meetings.

Mainly relied upon LDC publicity

local groups mainly responded to the posts on Facebook

I didn't - see previous answer

basically the same as previous question and I mainly used email

Messaged them directly via fb

Had to pester them to apply as they didn't understand it and then people were making up reasons to apply for the money which makes you question the integrity of the claim.

Many different ways. Some come for help and advice, some invite for events, some you pick up with case work, some you find through social media and get invloves... lots of ways

N/a

See previous answer. Covid restrictions made it more difficult than it should be in future.

As above.

Any further comments?

I reiterate my comments above re. level of funding vs. the admin for members and officers

Rethink or scrap as community needs are changing rapidly with current pressures on food heating costs etc

Need to ensure all methods of comms are covered especially printed

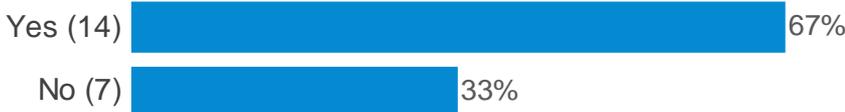
No

I feel this is poorly monitored and far more risk than it is a benefit. Local groups should be able to apply formally for small amounts of grant funding and it should not be down to the personal judgement of Councillors.

Dont add "further comments" when the question above is the answer.

N/a

Did you have more groups contacting you than you had funds available?



Any further comments?

no one contacted us directly or indirectly despite all our efforts

Not worth the effort and admin. Do not repeat.

I had in mind the group to whom I gave my money when I was approached by a fairly well known organisation who were asking a number of councillors to contribute to a specific activity they wanted to provide. I did not feel it was entirely appropriate in any event. I also was aware of a limited number of small groups who could do with some extra funding but who had accessed grants already.

Change or scrap the scheme.

This was very much a push exercise this time round.

Poor uptake from my Ward, not all of the money I had was distributed.

amount too small to be really beneficial

The groups that contacted me were larger groups such as the Lichfield Festival being opportunistic

It would be perhaps better to have received all requests by a deadline and then evaluate their needs

This is not a good way to allocate grant funding from the public purse. It is open to abuse and is not worth the risk.

If the fund is dispensed quickly other can miss out. This is always the issues with first come first served system.

Nil

As a result of the scheme have you come across groups you were previously unaware of?

no

No.

No.

One, to whom I gave the money.

No

As a result of the scheme have you come across groups you were previously unaware of?

No

No, in fact almost all of the groups who did apply to my fund were ones that I had actively reached out to encourage them to apply

Yes

Yes

Yes

No

Yes.

Yes

No.

Yes

Yes

No

No, in my own ward I know alot of groups and these where targets.

Yes

Yes, one, but not strictly a Community Group.

No, except being able to help a new scout group setting up in the ward.

Any further comments?

we had to rely too much on officer support to find worthy recipients- probably cost more than the grant itself

None

No

Two new groups out of the Covid pandemic looking at Mental Health

These are in neighbouring wards, shared support with other Cllrs

No

none

Dont add "further comments" when the question above is the answer.

Nil

How did you find the overall process, from group contact to arranging payment?

once we found a potential applicant the process was easy

Nothing wrong with the process but see earlier re. the level of funding vs. the admin for members and officers.

OK in the end. Use of Community Foundation was a good idea.

I did not have a link to the SCC 'community office' . Had to sort this out for myself. After that no problem, got the form and forwarded it to my group. Suggest if scheme is run again members are sent the application form/contact details at the start. Apologies if this did happen but I was not able to attend either of the 'induction sessions online'.

Worked well.

Difficult challenging and stressful.

This was very simple

How did you find the overall process, from group contact to arranging payment?

Confusing. Still not sure if my 'successful' applicants have had their money.

Very good

OK?

Apart from a few queries regarding payment, was straightforward.

Smooth

Slow

No comment - I didn't distribute any money and won't take part in the scheme in its current guise where councillors are expected to risk their own reputation.

relatively easy although there was confusion until different numbers were used for each submission

The form could have been easier and the groups contacted me to see if they were accepted as did not hear anything back once form submitted

It was tiresome trying to establish if the groups had a legitimate claim or not when there was no proof required at all and no accountability for what money was to be used for.

No issues.

Slightly convoluted.

Not as easy and transparent as it should be. The emails went into the "other" rather than the "Focus" inbox and was, amazingly, from a "noreply" address. I think I am right in saying we did not get a confirmation of acceptance and payment. (Not checking because last time I lost this feedback form - so may be wrong.)

Fairly easy.

Any further comments?

most of our contacts were not interested and did not bother to apply despite help

Do not repeat.

Once our allocation has been spent it seems pointless to continue to forward us further requests in the knowledge that we have no money left to allocate. Logically once the request comes in it should be checked against the councillors remaining allocation and if there is none left the applicant should be directed to a councillor who does have some spend left.

Always useful to have a means of checking progress of applications - have they been paid?

No

Would like a system that gave regular updates without the groups having to chase up. A lot of work for relatively small grants of £50 for example

Dont add "further comments" when the question above is the answer.

Nil

Do you think there are any changes that could be made to improve the scheme? (Do you have any other suggestions of other ways in which we could communicate with you?)

Yes (17)  81%

No (4)  19%

Please give details

Information templates to give to groups. Wider publicity from LDC about the scheme.

See previous comments. Send out press to schools, colleges and churches to alert them to the 'seed founding' if they know of new initiatives

As previous entry regarding allocations and may be access to more money to distribute.

See previous comments

As above, and mentioned while the fund was open - the drop downs on the application forms should allow groups to apply to "all Lichfield City Councillors" and "All Burntwood Councillors" It is also not clear how an application would be moved forward if a group asked for funding from more than one councillor and not all of them agreed to fund the group.

Make it plain that the cut-off date is the end of the time we have to make payment. I thought I could wait until cut-off and then decide which claims I could meet. Got that wrong!

Comms to grass roots groups - posters to pin up in areas they meet. Progress review of application visibility.

Perhaps a longer lead in time would make more residents aware, but even though I made contact with individual groups, this did not make them interested. Most said they did not need the money as they hadn't spent much over the last few months.

Increased funding

The whole thing needs a rethink. Councillors should not be placed in the situation where they are responsible for making decisions about distribution of public funds to groups where it is impossible to undertake sufficient due diligence and where there is a risk that they could be retrospectively found to have misused public funds.

a little more money would be nice but probably unrealistic

Just communication

Get rid of it and have a properly administered small grant scheme.

There will need to be some audit trail to ensure the money is appropriately spent.

Ability to check the stages in the process from the application form being received to the payment being made.

More publicity.

Finally, have you any other feedback on the fund?

no changes, just do not run again and subsume into other community grants with a wider awareness raising if anything we and others were all but hunting down applicants so that reputational damage was avoided

Because of the level of funding vs. the admin for members and officers, DO NOT REPEAT.

No

2 of the applicants have said thank you.

See previous comments. Survey to long often repeating similar information requests.

The governance needs to be reviewed to ensure that sufficient balances are in place to ensure that groups do deliver on the projects that they are given funding for and to ensure that all awards of funding are free from the potential for controversy

It was an opportunity to engage with new groups and raise the profile of the District Council

Where are the published records of the fund recipients?

If a group has benefited once from the fund are they/ will they be allowed to apply again if this goes ahead?

Reminders to cllrs (see above)

Finally, have you any other feedback on the fund?

All groups have been very positive with their feedback

It needs a massive rethink.

It was even worse in practice than I anticipated.

No

No

Whilst there is a request for applicants to say which councillors were being asked for a grant I would like assurance that this was checked and that councillors would have been informed if that was wrong or changed later.

No.