



VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR
(VCS) FUNDING PROSPECTUS
2024 - 2027

‘Together We...’ will make Lichfield district a more confident, prosperous, active, and green place to live, work and play.

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Introduction

Across the district we are lucky to have a strong, vibrant and diverse voluntary and community sector which plays a key role in supporting residents and local communities and particularly those who need some extra help.

Our emerging **Lichfield District 2050 Strategy** identifies the outcomes we want to achieve for our district. Working in partnership is key to delivering the strategy. The District Council has a strong relationship with the local voluntary and community sector that we want to continue to improve and build on. We invest in the sector in a number of different ways, including our VCS funding programme. Other initiatives include:

- [We Love Lichfield Fund](#)
- [Lichfield Community Lottery](#)
- [Staffordshire Commissioner Fund](#)
- [National Lottery Community Fund](#)

The aim of the VCS funding programme is to provide vital support to the sector to help achieve confident, prosperous, green and active communities. We want to prioritise funding where the voluntary and community sector can have the greatest impact and create a positive legacy for the district.

We look forward to receiving applications from any organisation that can contribute towards our **4 key emerging strategic plan outcomes**:

Confident Communities	<p>We will be the place across the UK where everyone aspires to live.</p> <p>We want people to be more confident about, take more pride in and ownership of the future of Lichfield district. We want to increase the sense of belonging we know already exists and for everyone to be more able to express their views and contribute.</p>
Prosperous Communities	<p>We will enable Lichfield, Burntwood and our villages to flourish.</p> <p>A Prosperous Community is one with economic wellbeing, where traditional and new business sectors succeed side by side and where innovation is commonplace and improves opportunity for all people and all areas of a place.</p> <p>We want Lichfield district to be recognised as a place where business succeeds, for our entrepreneurs and businesses to thrive and for our local workforce to share in the wealth they generate.</p>

Active Communities	<p>We will make Lichfield district the most active district in the UK.</p> <p>We know around 35% of adults and 60% of children and young people in our district are not active of recommended weekly levels and we want to change this. We want the very best sports and leisure facilities in our district, but we recognise it's not just about sports, we also need to encourage more community gardens, farms, and allotments, and to work with our schools to maximise the benefits of clubs and activities they offer.</p>
Green Communities	<p>We will create the greenest district in the country.</p> <p>Green communities are committed to the whole of the environment not just climate change; they have strong wildlife recovery, vibrant biodiversity, development that protects and enhances nature, and networks of sustainable travel routes connecting communities. We will work to incorporate consideration for the climate and environment across all our operations and agree priorities for nature recovery locally where we will map and outline projects to create and improve habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.</p>

What we want to fund?

We want to fund projects/activities that will impact on the 4 strategic plan outcomes identified above, and address where our Voluntary and Community Sector Fund can make a difference and meet the needs of target groups. We would particularly welcome new or innovative approaches and organisations working together with Lichfield District Council and other partners, to combine skills and expertise.

The total amount of funding available is **£163,000 per year** over a **total of 3 years 2024-2027**, a total value of £489,000. We want to award funding across all areas, with no indicative value set against each outcome. The **minimum award** per organisation will be **£1,000 per year** and we are unlikely to award an organisation more than **£50,000 per year**. All awards will be made across the 3 year cycle however organisations are not obliged to submit an application for the full three years of funding. Continued funding will be awarded over that period for projects that can demonstrate impact and performance. Where impact is not evidenced and new projects come forward that better meet local needs, funding may be reallocated.

In the event of an underspend of the fund in any year, Lichfield District Council reserves the right to re-open the application process.

In the event of an award decision being lower than the original bid, Lichfield District Council will reserve the right to see a revised project plan and outcomes.

In your application you should look to address how your project or organisation meets the following criteria

1. It demonstrates impact on one or more Strategic Plan outcomes
2. It involves collaboration with other partners, including other VCSE organisations

3. It evidences need within a specific group or locality
4. Prevents problems and early identification rather than reacting to them
5. The project/activity works to try and address the source of the problem or signpost to others who can help
6. Reliance on public sector support is reduced
7. Promotes personal responsibility, independence and self reliance
8. It encourages and promotes sustainability for the sector
9. The project/ activity makes use of assets available to us in Lichfield district and creates a positive legacy for the local area.

We will use these criteria as part of our scoring criteria, so it is important that you refer to them fully in your application.

Your application should address the outcomes below and identify where you can make a difference and for which target groups. Please include any areas and target groups you have identified.

Strategic Plan Outcome - Confident Communities - We will be the place across the UK where everyone aspires to live.	
<p>The potential areas the VCS can make a difference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with the council to deliver local services • Working with us to support communities in need of extra help • Developing community based support to enable people to use digital technology • Collaborating and working with us to develop and deliver shared ideas • Helping us engage better with communities through use of new technology • Helping us to engage with communities in ways that work for them • Developing community navigators who can build positive relationships with communities • Helping us understand our communities and their needs so we can respond to them • Supporting councillors as community leaders and ambassadors 	<p>Target groups could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and rural communities • Communities of interest • Communities who feel disengaged • People who are hard to reach • Groups that are digitally excluded • Groups that rely on social media • VCS Support organisations • People who would benefit from volunteering

Strategic Plan Outcome - Prosperous Communities - We will enable Lichfield, Burntwood and our villages to flourish	
<p>The potential areas the VCS can make a difference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting those in most need of help to start up new business ventures and helping them to become more resilient • Helping people live independently in their community • Promoting and providing job opportunities to residents of Lichfield district • Providing opportunities for groups and activities that support individuals who are socially isolated • Helping residents who need advice and support on managing money and debt • Achieving greater collaboration with partners to problem solve and help individuals with complex needs • Supporting volunteering and a thriving voluntary and community sector • Helping those who need extra support to get back into work 	<p>Target groups could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who feel socially isolated • People benefitting from support to improve their mental health • People with disabilities • Older people who are socially isolated or at risk of becoming isolated • Low income households and those experiencing economic deprivation and food poverty • People economically affected by Covid • People looking for work employment opportunities

Strategic Plan Outcome Active Communities - We will make Lichfield district the most active district in the UK	
<p>The potential areas the VCS can make a difference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping older adults and vulnerable people in our communities to stay active or become more active • Supporting every child and young person to have the opportunity to do regular physical activity. • Supporting community based approaches that reduce social isolation and improve personal wellbeing • Providing activities that engage people to have healthy lifestyles and be more active preventing ill health. • Helping those who need help with substance misuse issues 	<p>Target groups could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who feel socially isolated • People benefitting from support to improve their mental health • People with disabilities • People who need to be more active • Children and adults who are inactive and not of a healthy weight. • People who would benefit from volunteering opportunities • People with addictions • Provide support and activities to prevent long term illness including people with Dementia

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving support to people suffering with mental health. • Helping people who need help to achieve and maintain a healthy weight • Providing positive activities for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people. 	
<p>Strategic Plan Outcome - Green Communities - We will create the greenest district in the country.</p>	
<p>The potential areas the VCS can make a difference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting activities that provide better access to green spaces and help enjoyment of parks • Helping groups maintain and improve the natural environment in their local community • Helping bring about environmental improvements and increasing biodiversity • Supporting activities that help address climate change and offset environmental impact • Warmer homes • Environmental education projects and events • Wildlife studies, surveys, and monitoring work for habitats and species 	<p>Target groups could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who would benefit from the outdoor environment • Children and young people • Vulnerable people • Children and young people at risk of exploitation • People who would benefit from volunteering

Who can apply for funding?

- Any formally constituted not-for-profit community group serving Lichfield district
- Locally based Community Enterprises and Charities
- Collaborative partnership bids from 2 or more partners (with a lead partner clearly identified)

What can be funded?

- Any project or activity which is for the benefit of the community and meets the requirements of this prospectus. This can include small capital elements of a larger proposal and / or revenue based costs
- If the project/ activity includes the purchase of equipment the application must be able to demonstrate plans to use the equipment in future activities which are of benefit to Lichfield district
- Staffing costs can be funded, providing they are directly linked to the project/activity being applied for

What cannot be funded?

- Organisations that cannot provide documentary evidence that they have the required governance and policy framework in place
- Any school curriculum based activity
- Any projects for the sole benefit of an individual
- Events or activities the principle aim of which is to fundraise for another organisation
- Political or religious activities or events (although secular activities promoted by faith based groups are welcome)
- Projects that are being entirely subcontracted to another party
- Any projects that are a statutory duty of public bodies (excluding Lichfield District Council) unless they are an enhancement to existing service delivery
- Projects/ activities which have happened prior to receiving notification of an award. Applications cannot be made in retrospect -
- Projects being delivered outside the Lichfield district boundary unless they benefit Lichfield district residents
- VAT for any project cannot be funded as this is a grant process The payment of the grant is believed to be outside the scope of Value Added Tax but if any Value Added Tax shall become chargeable all payments shall be deemed to be inclusive of all Value Added Tax and the Funder shall not be obliged to pay any additional amount by way of Value Added Tax.

What successful applicants will need to be able to demonstrate

You will need to be able to demonstrate the following in your application:

- How it supports the Lichfield District 2050 strategy outcomes

- Evidence of an understanding of need and how the project / activity will address this need
- Evidence of how the project will be targeted to have the maximum impact
- How the project addresses the cross cutting criteria
- The organisational capacity and financial management skills to enable successful delivery of your project / activity
- A breakdown of costs and other funding contributions
- What success will look like and how it will be demonstrated
- The ability to adapt a project/activity if changes will better impact on outcomes
- Evidence of an Exit Strategy and/or how you will make the project/activity sustainable and leave a positive legacy when funding ends

If you cannot meet the above requirements your application will not be assessed.

Information Sources for consideration:

[Social progress index- https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/council/social-progress-index](https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/council/social-progress-index)
[Housing strategies and policies https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/climatechange](https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/climatechange)
<https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/planning-policy>
[Area data - Staffordshire Observatory](#)

How much can you apply for?

We are looking to award funding across all outcomes but have not apportioned specific amounts of funding against each outcome. We want to fund projects or activities of an annual value of at least **£1,000** so that this funding is able to make a demonstrable difference and directly impact towards making Lichfield district a greener, confident, prosperous and active place to live and work. Larger bids are welcomed, but please note that we are unlikely to award an organisation more than **£50,000 per year** so that we are able to support as many organisations as possible.

If you are looking for a smaller amount of funding there are a number of other options, for example: -

- [We Love Lichfield Fund](#)
- [Lichfield Community Lottery](#)
- [Staffordshire Commissioner Community Funding](#)

Funding advice and opportunities can also be sought from Support Staffordshire (Lichfield and District) or from the [Community Foundation](#).

Matched funding is not a requirement of this scheme, and you can apply for 100% of the cost of your project or activity. However, any other contributions from other funding sources will strengthen your application. Contributions “in kind” (e.g., volunteer time or hall use given free of charge) can be counted towards a contribution. Volunteer time can be costed, with the hourly rate included.

Lichfield District Council reserve the right to request additional information from the applicant, including but not limited to:

1. Identification of risks and how these will be mitigated
2. Key performance indicators and targets
3. A detailed Exit Strategy
4. Presentation of project proposal to an Assessment Panel
5. Quarterly performance reports

Breakfast Briefing / Meet the Funder Session

Applicants are invited to join an informal breakfast briefing session on:

Friday 3rd November at 10 am, via Teams.

The purpose of this session is for Lichfield District Council to provide details on the prospectus and application process followed by a brief Q&A session.

What is the application process?

The application is a two stage process where successful applicants will be shortlisted to the second stage. All application forms must be submitted electronically by emailing- **PolicyandStrategy@lichfielddc.gov.uk**

In the event you are unable to complete the digital application form, a paper version is available from the reception desk at District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield WS13 6YY

STAGE 1:

In order to be considered for assessment all applicants will need to:

1. Complete the first stage application form which is available here
2. Adhere to the maximum word counts
3. Complete the declaration form which is available here
4. Be able to supply evidence of the following documents / policies to be eligible for funding (electronic / scanned copies relevant to the organisation making the application will be accepted). These should have been developed/ reviewed within the last 3 years:
 - a. Constitution
 - b. The latest available Annual Report (if produced) and annual accounts / or, in the case of new established organisations, statements from 6 months operation
 - c. Health & Safety Policy and when it was approved or last reviewed
 - d. Equalities and Diversity Policy (for service delivery) and when it was approved or last reviewed
 - e. Public Liability Insurance certification
 - f. Children's Safeguarding Policy and when it was approved or last reviewed *
 - g. Adults at Risk safeguarding Policy and when it was approved or last reviewed *

*Where the project/activity involves these groups

If you cannot meet the above requirements your application will not be assessed.

There will be an assessment of the scored question criteria against the Stage 1 questionnaire.

Applicants must achieve a minimum total score of 70% to be shortlisted to the second stage.

Stage 2

Applicants will be notified by email if they have been successful in being shortlisted to the second stage. Successful applicants will be required to complete and submit the stage 2 questionnaire by the deadline stated. Stage 2 will involve an assessment of the scored question criteria against the Stage 2 questionnaire as follows:

Scores from Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be added together, and applications will be ranked according to their score, with funding being allocated by the highest scoring the applicant(s) until all funding has been allocated.

If there is not sufficient funding available, you may be asked to scale down your project and show what can be delivered with less funding.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application for funding. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with the opportunity to request feedback. The decision of the Council is final.

The scoring methodology can be found on the application form.

Help and advice

Although we are keen to encourage enquiries from potential applicants, we are mindful of the need to treat everybody fairly and transparently in terms of help and advice. Consequently, if you have any questions about any aspect of this Prospectus or the application process, please email

PolicyandStrategy@lichfielddc.gov.uk

We will respond as soon as possible. We will keep a log of all questions and answers and update these regularly on the website.

Payment profile

Payment of grants will be made quarterly in arrears upon the completion of a Grant Payment request form containing monitoring and evaluation questions. LDC will need to be satisfied that the project is progressing in accordance with the required outputs and outcomes for the next payment to be made.

Timeline

What Happens?	Timescales	Supporting Information
The Prospectus including the application forms and guidance notes will be made available online	To be made available on Wednesday 18th October 2023	(Insert web address for content page of the website)
Breakfast Briefing/Meet The Funder Session	Friday 3 rd November at 10am	A Microsoft Teams meeting will be held giving the opportunity for any questions to be raised regarding the prospectus and application process.
Stage 1 Applications to be submitted	By Friday 10 th November 2023	An acknowledgement email will be sent on receipt of your application. If you don't receive a notification, please email advising of the case so that we can check receipt of your application.
A Funding Panel will assess stage 1 applications and notify successful and unsuccessful applicants	By Friday 24 th November 2023	Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email.
Shortlisted applicants will be required to submit stage 2 questionnaires	By Friday 12th January 2024	An acknowledgement email will be sent on receipt of your application. If you don't receive a notification, please email advising of the case so that we can check receipt of your application.
An officer Funding Panel will assess stage 2 applications and will make recommendations to a Member Panel chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	By Friday 19 th January 2024	Applicants maybe required to provide further information at this stage.
Stage 2 successful and unsuccessful applicants to be notified	By Friday 2 nd February 2024	Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email.