

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

12 JULY 2017

THE COMMUNITY CHEST

Report of: Geoff Paul, Director of Planning and Economy

Cabinet Member: Peter Jackson, Leader

Purpose of report

To outline the changes proposed to the future operation of the Community Chest.

Recommendations

The Local Area Council is asked to consider the revised approach to the Community Chest and to put forward:

- a) any further suggested changes to the Scheme
- b) any suggested priority themes that the LAC should focus on in awarding the grants from the Scheme

for the Council's Business Chair to consider in consultation with the Chairs of the Local Area Councils prior to the launch of the Scheme.

Key Issues

The Community Chest Scheme was set up in 2009 and aims to support community groups and organisations to deliver activities which contribute to achieving the Council's ambition for Northumberland. High priority is given to projects that enhance the environment, strengthen communities, and which promote health and wellbeing. The scope of the Scheme is very broad with the guidelines and conditions of its use having evolved over its lifetime.

The Scheme is managed by the Area Committees (or their equivalent), each with a Grant Panel reflecting the political makeup of each area, together with the Area Chairs (or their equivalent) who consider Countywide applications. The process is managed through the calling of "rounds" with deadlines for applications throughout the year.

Over the lifetime of the Scheme, approximately 1,450 awards have been made totalling £2.6 million in response to requests for £5.6 million; an intervention rate of just under 50%. This contributed to projects valued as £18.7 million, a gearing ratio of approximately £7 invested for every £1 awarded. The vast majority (over 70%) of the grants awarded were for an allocation of £3,000 or less.

Following a review of the operation of the Community Chest, the new Administration of the Council have made one or two adjustments to the existing scheme. This is with a view to:

- ensuring a consistent approach in assessing projects is applied across the county
- encouraging a mixture of local and countywide projects that provide tangible benefits to local communities
- strengthening the scope to align projects with the Council's Members Local Improvement Scheme and other potential sources of funding

There will continue to be "local" and "countywide" components to the Community Chest. The funding allocations for each of the LACs will be based on the broad equivalent of £1 per head of the population living within that area whilst the size of the countywide pot has been doubled to £60,000.

The "local" element of the Scheme will be limited to applications of up to £5,000 and will include a ring-fence sum of £2,000 for each LAC to pilot the "Help for You" initiative. This will provide grants of up to £200 for young people aged under 18 years old to support them in pursuing a particular ambition. Both the local and countywide elements will meet up to a maximum of 75% of the costs of any proposal with the applicant expected to meet at least the residual quarter.

An Annual Report detailing the grant awards from the Community Chest will be presented to each of the LACs and the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) every Spring. This will include a review of the Scheme's operational arrangements with any further suggested changes put forward as considered appropriate.

The Scheme will be launched by the end of July with the first call for applications closing on Friday 29 September. On this basis, any comments or suggested changes to the Scheme should be made to the Council's Business Chair by close of play on Wednesday 26 July.

BACKGROUND

Current operation

- 1.1 The Community Chest Scheme was set up in 2009 following the creation of the new unitary authority for Northumberland and such replaced the equivalent local schemes operated by the former district and borough councils.
- 1.2 The aim of the current Scheme is to support community groups and organisations to deliver activities which contribute to achieving the Council's ambition for Northumberland. High priority is given to projects that enhance the environment, strengthen communities, and which promote health and wellbeing. Particular emphasis is also given to initiatives that will help groups to be sustainable in the longer term, are of value to a local area, and are not able to secure mainstream funding from the Council or other sources.
- 1.3 Eligibility for the Scheme is relatively simple; applicants are required to have a constitution and a bank account. The scope of the Scheme is also very broad with the guidelines and conditions of its use evolving over the lifetime of the Scheme. The current eligibility criteria are outlined below.

Eligibility Criteria

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to any voluntary, community or not for profit group or organisation (including charities) that is based in or serves the communities of Northumberland.

Who cannot apply?

Town and Parish Councils; Schools; and Businesses and other for profit organisations

What can be applied for?

The Scheme largely funds capital items, such as the purchase of equipment.

What cannot be applied for?

The scheme will not normally fund the following:

- Core running costs, including premises
- Wages, salaries, expenses or professional fees
- Annual or repeat funding
- Funding for other grant schemes or loan repayments
- Feasibility studies or pre project costs
- Goods and services already purchased
- Food, hospitality or consumables
- Advertising and marketing
- Fundraising and prize-giving
- Social excursions
- Religious or political activity
- Sports kit, uniforms/personal clothing

How much can be applied for?

The Scheme can provide grants of up to £10,000; however, the average grant is £2,500. The grant is paid up front and must be spent within 12 months of award.

- 1.4 In addition to the above, the previous Administration maintained an additional annual allocation of £62,000 to support social welfare centres in the south east of the county. This represented transitional relief to mitigate the annual support provided by the former Wansbeck and Blyth Valley councils.
- 1.5 The Scheme is managed by the Area Committees (or their equivalent), each with a Grant Panel reflecting the political makeup of each area, together with the Area Chairs Committee (or its equivalent) which considers Countywide applications. The process is managed through the calling of “rounds” with deadlines for applications in May, September and January. The Panels are supported by the Council’s Community Regeneration Team which consists of 3 staff, one of whom takes the lead for administering the Scheme.
- 1.6 Over the lifetime of the Scheme, approximately 1,450 awards have been made totalling £2.6 million in response to requests for £5.6 million; an intervention rate of just under 50%. This contributed to projects valued as £18.7 million, a gearing ratio of approximately £7 invested for every £1 awarded. The vast majority (over 70%) of the grants awarded were for an allocation of £3,000 or less.
- 1.7 For information, the list of grant awards from 2016/17 is reproduced at Appendix 1.

Future operation

- 1.8 Following a review of the operation of the Community Chest, the new Administration of the Council have made one or two adjustments to the existing scheme. This is with a view to:
- ensuring a consistent approach in assessing projects is applied across the county
 - encouraging a mixture of local and countywide projects that provide tangible benefits to local communities
 - strengthening the scope to align projects with the Council’s Members Local Improvement Scheme and other potential sources of funding
- 1.9 There will continue to be “local” and “countywide” components to the Community Chest. The funding allocations for each of the LACs will be based on the broad equivalent of £1 per head of the population living within that area whilst the size of the countywide pot has been doubled to £60,000.

Area	Allocation
Ashington & Blyth	76,000
Castle Morpeth	61,100
Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley	59,100
North Northumberland	59,500
Tynedale	59,600

Countywide	60,000
TOTAL	375,300

1.10 However, different and amended conditions will apply to the two component parts of the Community Chest as follows:

The “local” element

- each LAC will have the flexibility to identify particular priority themes which are seen as particularly relevant to their local circumstances as part of the call for projects - as part of this both the Ashington & Blyth and Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley LACs will have the ability to ring fence an element of their allocations to specifically support the social welfare centres within their areas
- the upper limit of this element of the Scheme will be £5,000 with a maximum grant award of 75% of the initiative’s costs
- each LAC will pilot from its allocation a “Help for You” initiative which will seek to provide up to £200 to support young people aged under 18 to pursue a particular ambition - a maximum of £2,000 will be ring-fenced for this purpose
- the application form will ask applicants to outline the steps they have taken to generate or attract funding from other sources

The “countywide” element

- there will be no upper limit of this element whilst recognising the level of funding available, with a maximum grant award of 75% of the initiative’s costs
- the application form will ask applicants to outline how their proposal contributes to either county or local priorities; and the steps they have taken to generate or attract funding from other sources
- applications for revenue funding that support new ways of working and invest to save proposals will be eligible for support but any grant recipient would be unable to receive a second award for the same initiative
- the Local Area Council (LAC) Chairs will act as the Grants Panel for this element of the Scheme and would have the flexibility, as appropriate, to award the grants in instalments and subject to certain conditions being met

Applying to both elements

- there will be two rounds calling for applications which will normally take place in May/June and September/October each year (but September and January for this financial year)
- each grant award will be conditional on grant recipient providing the requested information about the spending of their grant by a certain date; failure to comply with this will bar that organisation from receiving any grants from the Community Chest for the subsequent two years

- 1.11 An Annual Report detailing the grant awards from the Community Chest will be presented to each of the LACs and the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) every Spring. This will include a review of the Scheme's operational arrangements with any further suggested changes put forward as considered appropriate.
- 1.12 The Scheme will be launched by the end of July with the first call for applications closing on Friday 29 September. On this basis, any comments or suggested changes to this revised approach, together with any suggested priority themes for any of the individual LACS, should be made to the Council's Business Chair by close of play on Wednesday 26 July.

Implications

Policy	The Community Chest contributes to the Council's strategic objective to promote stronger communities.
Finance and value for money	The changes proposed are intended to maximise the community impact of the Scheme and provide a readily available source of funding to voluntary and community sectors groups of different scale and with diverse remits.
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities	No Impact Assessment Attached. However, it is considered that the changes to the eligibility criteria of the Scheme remain unchanged, there is little impact with regard to promoting equality and diversity.
Risk Assessment	The changes proposed are based on the experience of administering the scheme for the past 8 years and the views of the Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison Forum.
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	The Scheme will continue to provide opportunities for voluntary and community sector organisations to secure a grant from the Council to help with the funding of a broad range of local activities.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	ALL

Background papers:

- Current Community Chest Guidance
- Current Community Chest Application Form

Report sign off

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	name
Finance Officer	Alison Elsdon
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Liam Henry
Human Resources	Kelly Angus
Procurement	Teresa Palmer
I.T.	Neil Arnold
Executive Director	Geoff Paul
Portfolio Holder(s)	Peter Jackson

Author and Contact Details

Janice Rose, Economic and Inclusion Policy Manager
01670 624747 janice.rose@northumberland.gov.uk

Appendix 1:**Breakdown of the grants awarded through the Community Chest Scheme 2016/17**

Countywide		
Broomley Grange	Refurbish shower and bathroom facilities	£5,068.00
Carers Northumberland	Display panels for photographic exhibition	£1,392.00
Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering	50th Anniversary event	£8,500.00
Newsham & New Delaval Youth Forum	Holocaust Memorial short film for County event	£900.00
Northumberland Theatre Company	Portable lighting	£2,477.00
Northumberland Voluntary Ranger Service (Groundwork)	PPE, camera and tools	£757.00
Royal Society of the Culinary Arts	IT equipment and cooking utensils for schools project.	£3,135.00
Williams Gansey Project (Blyth Tall Ship)	Wool and knitting equipment	£7,771.00

Central Area		
1st Ponteland Boys Brigade	Expedition equipment	£1,016.00
1st Prudhoe Scouts Groups	Outdoor equipment	£1,500.00
Barnabas Safe and Sound	Installation of new heating system	£5,000.00
Blagdon Park Cricket Club	Junior cricket equipment	£1,278.00
Dalton Village Hall	WC upgrade	£2,000.00
Great Whittington Village Hall	Refurbishment work, tables and chairs	£2,525.00
Greater Morpeth Development Trust	Picnic in the Park: artist and materials	£550.00
Morpeth Flower Club	Flower arranging demonstrations	£150.00
Morpeth Parochial Church Council	St Aidan's Church community garden	£7,500.00
Morpeth Pipe Band	Pipe bags, reeds, drum heads & drum cases	£5,000.00
Northumberland Enterprise Limited	St Aidan's Church community garden: materials	£1,502.82
Ponteland Community Partnership	Interpretation panels for footpath.	£2,200.00
Ponteland Repertory Society	Dismountable staging and stage carpet	£3,000.00
Prudhoe Patchers	Sewing and knitting equipment	£1,125.00
Prudhoe Town Football Club	Pavilion: Heat pump, kitchen equipment, security systems and flooring.	£6,913.18
Prudhoe Youth Club Football Club	New goal posts, corner flags, pitch barriers, dug outs	£5,000.00
Spetchells Conservation Interest Group	Tools and equipment for conservation work	£2,660.00
St Mary the Virgin, Ovingham	Refurbishment for community activities	£500.00
Stobhill Community Forum	Development of multi play area	£7,500.00

The Hearth Centre	Motion sensors and LED lighting	£500.00
-------------------	---------------------------------	---------

North Area		
1st Longridge BP Scout Group	Tools for outdoor wood craft activities	£1,500.00
1st Whittingham BP Scout Group	Camping equipment and woodcraft tools	£1,500.00
Aln Valley Railway	Woodwork router for coach restoration	£600.00
Alnmouth & Lesbury Cricket Club	New power roller	£1,000.00
Alnmouth Community Rowing	Second-hand skiff, trailer, and equipment	£1,392.80
Alnwick & District Sports Council	Venue hire for event	£500.00
Alnwick Amateur Boxing Club	Exercise bike and treadmill	£1,947.90
Alnwick and District Flower Club	Flower arranging workshops	£200.00
Alnwick Bowling Club	New window for pavilion	£1,500.00
Alnwick District Swimming & Lifesaving Club	Swim fin sets	£180.00
Alnwick Town Homing Society	10 new race panniers	£780.00
Alwinton Border Shepherds' Show	New tent for 150th Anniversary show	£540.00
Bamburgh & Beadnell Community Rowing Club	Skiff building materials and trailer	£1,000.00
Bamburgh Research Project (Bradford Kaims)	Radiocarbon dating	£1,500.00
Bell View, Belford	ICT equipment	£2,220.00
Berwick Amateur Rowing Club	Sweep oars and sculling blades	£1,500.00
Berwick and District Youth Activity Group	ICT equipment	£1,322.01
Berwick Male Voice Choir	Printed music and programmes	£1,050.00
Berwick Migrant Support	Christmas event for migrant children	£450.00
Breamish Hall, Powburn	Kitchen and front hall refurbishment	£2,380.00
Chatton Village Hall Trust	Carpeting, rewiring and lighting	£1,000.00
Cheviot Valleys Flower Club	Flower arranging workshops	£325.00
Coquet Community Trust	Wild flowers planting on Rotary Way, Warkworth	£750.00
Craster Coastal Rowing Club	Trailer for Skiff	£700.00
Craster Community Trust	Picnic tables and benches for play park	£600.00
Felton Village Hall	Roof repairs	£3,392.00
Glendale Local History Society	ICT equipment	£600.00
Jubilee Hall, Newton on the Moor	Restoration of the bell and bell tower.	£3,034.00
Lesbury Village Hall Committee	Table Tennis table equipment	£854.61
Lionheart Radio	Licence for one year	£1,150.00
Local Living (NE) Limited	Radio microphones and event banners	£1,732.00
Longhoughton Village Development Trust	New chairs for community centre	£1,000.00
Milfield Heavy Horse Association	CCTV and security system	£2,500.00

Newton on the Moor Bowls Club	Indoor bowls equipment	£1,399.68
Northumbria Basketry Group	Materials and venue for Holy Island project	£1,900.00
Northumbria Hang-gliding and Paragliding Club	Reserve chutes and equipment	£1,500.00
Re-Nu-It	Vehicle repair and tyres.	£700.00
Shilbottle Community Hall	Storage, noticeboards, and various equipment	£800.00
Spittal Rovers FC	Training equipment	£700.00
The Portable Theatre Company	Costumes and props	£200.00
Tillside Cricket Club	Practice equipment	£600.00
Tyneside & Northumberland Mind (Alnwick)	Photocopier	£250.00
Upper Coquetdale Resource Group	Printer for community newsletter	£3,200.00
Warkworth War Memorial Hall	Refurbishment	£2,000.00
West End Residents Association, Tweedmouth	Local environmental improvements	£800.00
Young Mums North	Training programme for young Mums	£2,000.00

South Area		
1st CELL Scout Group	Expedition equipment	£2,645.00
2nd Cramlington Scout Group	Mains gas for heating	£5,000.00
8th Blyth Sea Scouts	Two sailing boats	£5,000.00
Amble Netball Club	Netballs and kit	£900.00
Amble Youth Project	Carpeting and floor covering	£1,000.00
Ashington Branch, Royal British Legion	Garden and disabled access improvements	£3,128.00
Ashington Community Cinema	Projector	£2,999.00
Ashington Hirst Running Club	Tent	£474.98
Ashington Panto Group	Costumes and stage sets	£500.00
Astley Park Summer Gala	Marquees and PA system	£1,906.50
ATAC Widdrington Station	Renovation work	£3,000.00
Bedlingtonshire Development Trust	One-off hire costs for Attlee Park event	£2,280.00
Blyth Cricket Club	Portable practice cage	£1,470.00
Blyth Photographic Society	Laptop and projector	£1,850.00
Blyth Star Enterprises	Replacement windows for offices	£5,000.00
Blyth Station RNLI	Portable toilets and signage for event	£520.00
Blyth Stroke Support Group	A wheelchair	£245.00
Bright Beginnings	Sensory toys	£500.00
Butokokan Judo Club	Judo mats for Ashington club	£2,000.00
Cambois Community Association	Marquee hire for Gala	£1,050.00
Cramlington Archers	Archery equipment	£1,000.00

Cramlington Community Tennis Programme	Windbreaks	£1,500.00
Cramlington Rockets RLFC	Sports equipment	£1,500.00
Cramlington Toddler Group	Toys and equipment	£1,500.00
Cramlington Town FC	Toilet refurbishment	£3,000.00
Cramlington United FC	Path for spectators	£5,000.00
Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project	Expedition equipment	£3,483.78
Doxford Youth Project	ICT and equipment	£429.97
Druridge Bay Regeneration Partnership	Baby changing units	£494.36
Dynamic Gymnastics Foundation, Cramlington	Gym equipment	£1,500.00
Earth Balance Shed	Tools for men's shed	£1,375.29
Ellington Colliery Band	A BB Cornet	£2,900.00
Ellington Juniors FC	Security fencing	£10,000.00
Fourth Action	Women's Workshop external improvements	£3,586.99
Friends of Ashington Community Woods	Trail camera and animal food	£351.92
Friends of East Meets West Black Belt Academy	Fighting kits for World Championships	£500.00
Friends of Ridley Park, Blyth	Display board	£700.00
Friends of the Teen Bar	ICT equipment	£1,000.00
Get U Started Training Ltd	Minibus	£5,000.00
Hadston House	Dishwasher, solar panels and extraction unit	£5,722.44
Headway Arts	Decoration	£1,500.00
Mowbray Primary School PTA	Secure cycle storage	£8,043.20
Neptune Headquarters, Blyth	Boiler, LED lights and insulation	£7,676.00
New Hartley Kids Club	Arts/crafts material, ICT, and sports equipment	£500.00
Newbiggin Bowling Club	Water boiler, suspended ceiling and fencing	£2,734.00
Newbiggin Heritage Partnership	Kite festival	£360.00
Newbiggin Juniors FC	Container cabin for match days	£4,000.00
Newbiggin Traders Association	Gazebos, tables and bunting	£867.55
Newsham and New Delaval Youth Forum	ICT and cooking utensils	£1,515.00
North Seaton Colliery Community Centre	Fencing and gates for recreation ground	£5,000.00
Northburn Wanderers FC	Mini soccer goals, bags and nets	£1,691.88
Northern Learning Trust (Newsham/New Delaval)	ICT equipment	£1,000.00
Parkhead & Wansbeck Powersports	Olympic competition set and squat stand	£6,984.36
People and Drugs Ltd (Silx Teen Bar)	DJ and MC mixing equipment	£2,669.00

Peoples Painting for Health and Leisure, Bedlington	Art materials and exhibition venue	£500.00
Real Deal Plus, Ashington Life Centre	Equipment for community cafe	£5,560.22
Red Row Welfare FC	New dug outs and bases	£3,000.00
Seaton Delaval Dynamos Junior FC	Disco and training equipment	£400.00
Seaton Delaval Pantomime Society	LED Starcloth	£600.00
Seaton Sluice Bowling Club	New changing room	£5,000.00
Seb and Olivia's Den, Northburn	Mobile hoist	£1,152.00
Splinter	Trailer and banners	£2,544.80
Stakeford & Bomarsund Sports & Welfare Centre	Heating system	£4,551.88
Stakeford Juniors FC	Portable lighting	£1,600.00
Tinywoods Academy	Secure container	£3,000.00
Twyford Toddler Group	Play equipment	£750.00
Walk of Life	Laptop and camera	£1,076.98
Wansbeck CVS	Volunteer CRM software system	£3,000.00
Wansbeck Ladies and Juniors Netball Club	Lock up boxes and training equipment	£450.00

West Area		
1st Stocksfield Scouts	Scout hut rebuilding works	£3,500.00
Allendale Cricket Club	Rotary mower and compact tractor	£1,610.00
Allendale Golf Club	Turf care equipment	£3,000.00
Allendale Pre School	Outdoor play equipment	£3,000.00
Bardon Mill Village Hall	Outside extension to hall	£1,500.00
Broomley Bee Project	Shed for meetings	£400.00
Corbridge Cricket Club	Furnishings for clubhouse kitchen/bar	£1,000.00
Corsenside Parish Hall	Floor repairs and ventilation	£1,500.00
Crafty Allsorts	Materials and disabled handrails	£850.00
Featherstone Village Hall	Roof repairs	£4,000.00
Haltwhistle Cricket Club	Pavilion roof repair	£1,800.00
Haltwhistle Swimming and Leisure Centre	Pump replacement	£1,500.00
Haydon Bridge & Haydon Parish Development Trust	Materials for public meeting area	£2,160.00
Hexham & District Flower Club	Flower arranging workshops	£200.00
Hexham & Tynedale Community Trust	Roof repairs	£3,000.00
Hexham Elvaston Bowling Club	Taster sessions for young people with learning	£400.00

	difficulties	
Kielder Water & Forest Park DT	Materials for adventure play area	£3,000.00
Let's Get Growing	Materials, tools and outdoor furniture	£700.00
Newbrough Town Hall	Cycle storage shed	£1,000.00
No 28 Regeneration Project	ICT equipment	£2,000.00
North of Tyne Flower Club	Flower arranging workshop	£300.00
Otterburn Children's Party Fund	Play park equipment	£3,000.00
Riding Mill Village Hall Trust	Hall refurbishment	£1,500.00
Riding Mill Village Hall Trust	Restoration of First World War Roll of Honour	£500.00
Stocksfield South of Tyne Flower Club	Flower arranging workshop	£100.00
StopGap Supported Housing	ICT equipment for vulnerable adults	£500.00
Tynedale Cricket Club	Bowling practice equipment	£600.00
Young and Sweet	Building refurbishment	£3,000.00

South Area: Community Buildings & Social Welfare Centres Fund		
Buffalo Centre	New flooring	£4,998.00
East Bedlington Community Centre	Furnishings, white goods and display monitors	£8,021.22
Isabella Community Association	Kitchen refurbishment	£7,663.81
North Seaton Community Association	Door, floor, boiler, and new tables	£6,394.00
Real Deal Plus	Refurbishment of food and clothes banks, and day rooms	£5,000.00
Seaton Sluice Community Association	Patio doors, fencing, ramps, fire exits	£7,024.85
Seghill (Institute) Community Association	Roof refurbishment	£5,000.00
Spital Estate Community Association	Cooking utensils, tools, equipment, and art resources	£5,000.00
Stakeford & Bomarsund Sports and Social Welfare Centre	Heat exchangers, electrical works and decoration	£3,398.12
Stobswood Welfare	Refurbish ceilings, walls, lighting, and carpets	£9,500.00