

Warwickshire Social Fabric Fund

The Social Fabric Fund is a blended £2.5million fund, comprising £1.5 million capital and £1 million revenue elements, focusing primarily (but not exclusively) on the [22 Lower Super Output Areas \(LSOAs\)](#) identified in the [Countywide Approach to Levelling Up](#). The Fund will run for two years up to the end of March 2025.

The objective of the Fund is to invest in “social infrastructure” to develop and strengthen Warwickshire’s most deprived communities and, in so doing so, improve residents’ life chances and reduce inequalities.

The Fund will deliver a blend of investment to enable communities to access both capital funding to build “social fabric” through physical community infrastructure, as well as time-limited start-up revenue funding for community development that delivers on local priorities and demonstrates sustainability.

Fund Principles

1. Investment will demonstrate strong community support and engagement.
2. Investment will create or improve a long-term community asset or build long-term community capability and resilience (or both).
3. Proposals will demonstrate sustainability and a credible longer-term funding/exit strategy.
4. Proposals will contribute to the identified priorities in the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up:
 - o Investment will reduce disparities and address gaps and inequalities.
 - o Investment will increase opportunity and social mobility.
 - o Investment will support the Council’s commitment to tackling climate change and the biodiversity crisis, reflecting the draft Sustainable Futures Strategy.
 - o Investment will build community power.

Fund Aims

The aim of the fund is to fill a gap in funding available to communities by being flexible and starting with the communities’ strengths and priorities.

Applications will need to be visibly led or demonstrate strong support from local communities.

We do not want to see applications that take the approach of 'doing to' communities, we would like to see 'working with' communities.

- Proposals will need to align to the Social Fabric Fund principles described above.
- Proposals will need to come from within and be driven by communities.
- Proposals will be welcome from all VCSE sector organisations, and town and parish councils.
- Proposals will need to focus primarily on the [22 Lower Super Output Areas \(LSOAs\)](#) identified in the [Countywide Approach to Levelling Up](#), although by exception proposals will be considered from communities outside of the 22.
- Proposals will need to align to:
 - At least one of the County Council's [Council Plan](#) outcomes.
 - [The Countywide Approach to Levelling Up](#).
 - At least one of the 6 core themes of the County Council's [Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-25](#).
- Proposals will need to demonstrate sustainability and a credible longer-term funding/exit strategy.
- Proposals will need to describe how the project:
 - Incorporates a community powered approach, relating to the following three elements:
 - Involve communities in decision making.
 - Work alongside communities to take practical action.
 - Enable communities to lead.
 - Helps to reduce climate change and promote biodiversity.

What will we support?

There is no lower or upper grant limit. We expect the projects to be completed within two years.

- **Start-up costs for a new project or organisation**
- **To extend or develop an existing project – including staff costs**
- **To purchase equipment or resources**
- **Capital expenditure is buying or enhancing big investments in assets, such as property or enabling an asset transfer.**

Payments will be paid in instalments.

The fund will be complemented by dedicated community worker capacity, provided by Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action, focusing primarily on the [22 priority LSOAs](#) and with responsibilities around supporting funding proposals. More specifically, the community workers will:

1. Increase community power in target areas.

2. Lead in-depth community powered engagement to understand local priorities.
3. Scope, shape, and support proposals to address local priorities.
4. Take the lead to help the community/communities develop proposals working as appropriate with officers from the County Council, the relevant Borough or District Council, and the Integrated Care System to co-produce proposals.
5. Liaise with the County Council and other agencies regarding potential supplementary contributions in terms of time, skills, money, and assets.

Application process

Gate 1 - Expression of Interest - Online

Gate 2 - Invitation to submit full application – Online & business case & project Timeline – including key milestones

We will require the following:

- List of your organisation / company management committee / board of trustees / board of directors with at least 3 unrelated people as members (a list of those directors will be required showing who has bank authorisation)
- A written constitution / articles / set of rules
- A copy of your most recent annual accounts or financial records showing your organisation's balance of funds, income and reserves
- A bank account in the name of the organisation with at least two unrelated signatories
- A bank statement from the last 3 months
- Safeguarding policy
- Equal opportunities policy
- Quotes for capital items over £300

You will also need to complete a **Subsidy Control Declaration**

Monitoring requirements

- Interim monitoring at 6 months (may require additional monitoring dependent on length of project)
- End of grant monitoring form and receipts to be submitted within 1 month of project end date
- **All grant applicants** will be expected to participate in any appropriate publicity as requested by HoECF and/or Warwickshire County Council

Eligibility

You can apply to this fund if you are one of the following:

- Registered charities
- Constituted Community groups
- Companies Limited by Guarantee with charitable aims
- Community Interest Companies
- Co-operatives - registered Community Benefit Societies and registered Industrial and Provident Societies
- Social Enterprises
- All VCSE sector organisations including town and parish councils
- Schools via "Friends Of" and Parent Teacher Associations
- Religious organisation if wider inclusive benefit is demonstrated

***Funding to Community Interest Companies and other non-charities may include conditions to restrict funding to charitable objectives only and those with governing documents which include asset and mission locks.*

Sorry, we cannot fund:

- Statutory organisations
Organisations that have failed to meet the requirements of other County Council funding awards.
- Individuals
- Direct replacement of statutory obligation and public funding
- Promotion of religious or political activities or party-political beliefs
- Any activity deemed to be lobbying
- Projects for personal profit or the benefit of an individual
- Groups with significant financial free reserves
- Retrospective grants – Project where costs relate to items or work already carried out
or
purchased before an award is made
- Contribution to endowment fund, payment of deficit funding or repayment of loans or debt
- Overseas travel or expeditions
- Medical research and equipment for statutory or private healthcare
- General appeals
- Animal welfare, unless the project benefits people (e.g. disabled riding schemes)
- Statutory work in educational institutions
- Sponsored or fundraising events or groups raising funds to distribute to other causes

For the Foundation's full eligibility criteria see our website.

Appendix

Definitions

Community Powered Warwickshire is an approach the council has adopted through working with partners to harness the power of communities to offer greater control over their lives and places, and to help improve outcomes and encourage innovation in service delivery. In essence it changes the conversation from "doing to", or "doing for" communities, to "working with" communities.

“Levelling Up” is a key Central Government policy to “level up” the country and reduce regional disparities. The 2022 levelling up white paper defined what levelling up means in more detail, specifying 12 ‘missions’ to be achieved by 2030 which can be found [here](#), covering most aspects of Government policy across the economy, public services, pride in place and devolution. Warwickshire's own definition of Levelling Up can also be found [here](#).

Social fabric is the relationships and connections we make with one another; making us all a part of the common thread of society as a whole.

Social infrastructure covers a range of services and facilities that meet local and strategic needs and contribute towards a good quality of life.

Lower Super Output Area (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. LSOAs have been used by the Council to identify priority areas for Levelling Up and represent an average population of 1,500.

Subsidy Control enables public authorities, including devolved administrations and local authorities, to give subsidies that are tailored to their local needs, and that drive economic growth while minimising distortion to UK competition and protecting our international obligations.

Co-production refers to a way of working whereby everybody works together on an equal basis to create a service or come to a decision which works for them all.