



Ward Engagement & Funding Report 2024 – 25

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

4th November 2025

From: Lee Warner
Lead director: Sean Atterbury

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Adam Lunn / Lee Warner
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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an outline of how Ward Funding was spent across the city between April 2024 and March 2025. This report seeks to provide an insight into the variety of projects and initiatives that took place in the wards, and some of those that were important to residents locally.

2. Summary

- 2.1 A yearly budget of £18,000 per ward is allocated which can be used to support projects that bring benefits to that ward. The total annual budget for ward funding is £378,000
- 2.2 In non-election years each ward is permitted to carry over up to 10% of the annual ward budget. The amount brought forward from 2023/24 into 2024/25 was £20,138 giving a total available budget for the year of £398,138
- 2.3 In 2024/2025 a total of 555 applications for Ward Funding were received. Of these 70 were withdrawn, leaving 485 for consideration. A total of 431 applications were successful in receiving Ward Funding.
- 2.4 The total amount of ward funding approved for grants for the financial year 2024/2025 was £381,261.
- 2.5 In total the wards were able to carry over an underspend of £14,529 to the current financial year, 2025/2026.
- 2.6 The report provides further detail on the category and type of grant funded activities delivered, the overall number of volunteers engaged, and the amount of matched funding leveraged.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the report on ward funding for the year 2024 – 25.

5. Report/Supporting information

- 5.1 The annual ward engagement and funding report is attached as appendix A.

6. Financial, legal and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

This report presents a summary of how ward funding has been spent across the city for 2024/25. As such there are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

21st October 2025

6.2 Legal implications

This is an update report outlining the Local Authority's Ward Expenditure between April 2024 and March 2025 - the Authority is empowered under the Localism Act 2011 to authorise expenditure benefiting local communities. Any ward spending will be subject to the Authority's Constitution including the Authority's Contracts Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and ensuring all applicable Procurement Rules are complied with and Subsidy Control Principles, where relevant.

Report reviewed and advice updated on 22 October 2025 by Mariyam Suleiman, Commercial Lawyer, Commercial Legal, Ext 3867

6.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

The Ward Funding makes a positive contribution to addressing the climate emergency by funding environmental projects, such as projects to support local biodiversity. In addition, projects with a primarily social purpose can sometimes have a positive climate impact too. For example, projects supporting more active lifestyles and social connections through walking or cycling.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 2246

Dated: 22 October 2025

6.5 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report as it is for noting, however the funding approved for grants will benefit organisations who provide services for people from across a range of protected characteristics. The flexibility to set local limits and criteria means that projects can be tailored to the demographic makeup and needs of that specific ward, rather than being forced into a 'one-size-fits-all' city-wide solution.

Protected groups under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Surinder Singh Equalities Officer

Dated: 21 October 2025

Appendix A

Ward Engagement & Funding Report 2024 – 25

Date: 1 October 2025

Author: Adam Lunn

Lead Director: Sean Atterbury



Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an outline of how Ward Funding was spent across the city between April 2024 and March 2025. This report seeks to provide an insight into the variety of projects and initiatives that took place in the wards, and some of those that were important to residents locally.

Overview

A yearly budget of £18,000 per ward is allocated which can be used to support projects that bring benefits to that ward. The total annual budget for ward funding is £378,000

In non-election years each ward is permitted to carry over up to 10% of the annual ward budget. The amount brought forward from 2023/24 into 2024/25 was £20,138 giving **a total available budget for the year of £398,138**

In 2024/2025 a total of 555 applications for Ward Funding were received. Of these 70 were withdrawn, leaving 485 for consideration. A total of 431 applications were successful in receiving Ward Funding.

The total amount of ward funding approved for grants for the financial year 2024/2025 was £381,261. The wards were able to carry over an underspend of £14,529 to the current financial year, 2025/2026.

New ward funding guidelines were developed following recommendations from the Scrutiny task and finish group in early 2024. The guidelines were implemented part way through the financial year in November 2024. A key change included the removal of three assessment dates per year for applications over £500 which had delayed approvals for applications submitted early in each period. It is observed that overall approval timescales and payments for successful bids have been reduced as a result. The updated ward funding policy is included at the foot of this report.

The report provides further detail on the category and type of grant funded activities delivered, the overall number of volunteers engaged, and the amount of matched funding leveraged

What is Ward Community Funding?

Each of Leicester's 21 electoral wards is allocated a yearly budget of £18,000 which can be used to support projects that bring benefits to that ward. Councillors support a wide a range of activities, events and projects. Councillors also have the flexibility to make local arrangements for their ward to set limits on how much funding can be allocated to each application.

Wards

East	South	West
Belgrave	Aylestone	Abbey
Evington	Castle	Beaumont Leys
Humberstone and Hamilton	Eyres Monsell	Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields
North Evington	Knighton	Fosse
Rushey Mead	Saffron	Westcotes
Thurncourt	Spinney Hill	Western
Troon	Stoneygate	
	Wycliffe	

In 2024/2025 a total of 555 applications for Ward Funding were received. Of these 70 were withdrawn, leaving 485 for consideration. The table below provides an outline of the number of applications received and of those, the number withdrawn:

Wards	Number of applications received	Number of applications withdrawn	Number of applications for consideration
East	199	26	173
South	215	29	186
West	141	15	126
Total	555	70	485

Case study

Ward: Evington

Amount awarded: £3,500

Project name: Evington Annual Village Fete and Show

Summary of activity/event:

The Evington Village Fete and Show is an annual event within the Evington ward. This year the Fete and Show celebrated its twentieth year. The Event was originally organised to raise local awareness and participation in horticulture, arts and crafts; and to share traditional and new knowledge and skills, within the ward. The Event has now grown exponentially over the years and continues with its original ethos, while remaining within the co-ordination and management of a team of dedicated volunteers, who are supported by the ward councillors as a committed priority spend.

Outcome:

The Show encourages all residents to participate, fostering artistic talents and growing skills within all ages. The show has developed a cultural awareness and diversity that represents all residents within the ward and has grown into an event that promotes a unique, multicultural and immersive yearly show.

The application process

Councillors are supportive of projects that bring benefits to their ward and those that address local priorities. Councillors tend to want to support as wide a range of activities as possible and for this reason do not support many proposals which would take up a large proportion of their funds. To assist with this, Councillors have the flexibility to make local arrangements for their ward to set limits on how much funding can be allocated to each application.

Each application is reviewed against key priorities defined locally by ward Councillors and against predefined criteria ensuring applications do not breach any of the funding conditions as set out within the Ward Funding Policy, as outlined below

What cannot be funded?

Ward Community funding cannot be used for the following:

1. Staffing, except temporary staff or specialist staff brought in to do a specific and short-term piece of work (for up to a maximum of 12 months)
2. Full costs of infrastructure, running costs or capital investment
3. Recoverable VAT – Ward Funding cannot be awarded for monies that will be reclaimed back as recoverable VAT by the applicant / organisation
4. Any liability arising out of illegality or negligence
5. Any form of gambling (except small fundraising activities e.g., raffle, tombola)
6. Exclusively religious activity
7. Political activity
8. Applications where previously awarded funds have not been accounted for with an evaluation and evidence of expenditure
9. An event or activity which has already taken place e.g. an application that is submitted on the day of or after the activity, event, or project has taken place (Retrospective Application).

Following the review of each application, Councillors are presented with an assessment, summarising the key points of the application and any additional information received on request. It will include a recommendation to Support or Reject, highlighting the merits and/or limitations of the application, based on officer opinion. Ward Councillors are asked to consider these findings to determine their decisions.

Case study

Ward: Westcotes

Amount awarded: £750

Project name: Diamond Art – Family Workshops

Summary of activity/event:

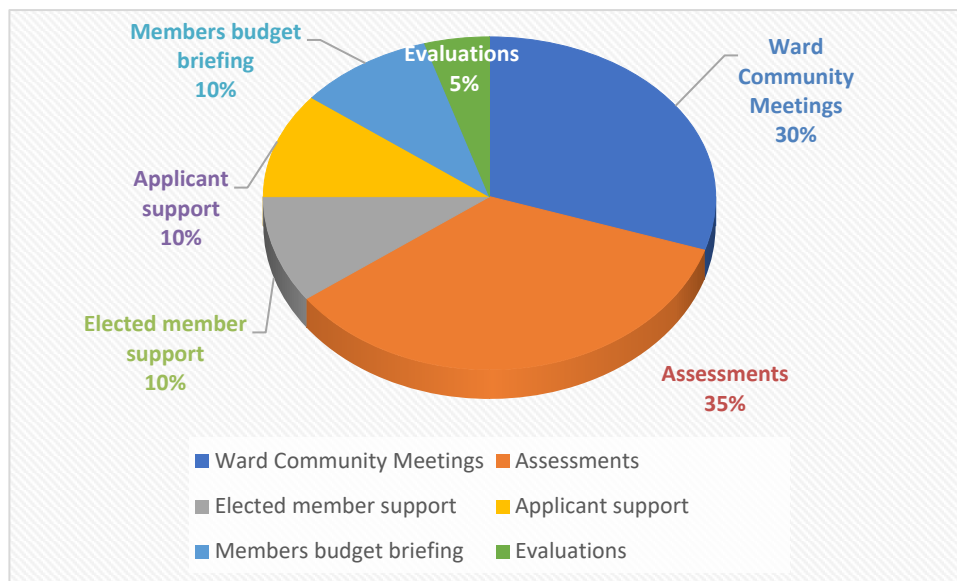
'Diamond Art Family Workshops' are specialist family art workshops aimed at working with people who experience mental health within the family. This funding supported a six-week summer programme, consisting of two hourly community based workshops. The Workshops provided a safe space, and time for families to sit together, and begin to discuss topics, while developing an art project.

Outcome:

The overall outcome of the project was to assist families to communicate with each other, and to appreciate the differences in one another's abilities within the family dynamics. The Workshops were oversubscribed, resulting in a waiting list for future workshops. The respondents' feedback highlighted the need for a space and support for the people who live with mental illness in their families.

Ward Engagement Duties

The ward engagement team manage all aspects of Ward Funding Applications, from submission by applicant right up until the evaluation has been received. Officers also organise and facilitate Ward Community meetings across the city. Although every day can be different for each Ward Community Engagement Officer, below is an approximate breakdown of time spent on various duties, followed by a brief description.



Applicant support

Ward Community Engagement Officers provide one to one support to applicants wanting to apply for Ward Funding. Officers meet with applicants in person, at either Community Centres or Libraries, where they provide advice and support with submitting their application. Officers will discuss the process with applicants along with explaining the requirements needed to meet the criteria and guidelines, including the evaluation stage. Officers also provide support to applicants over the phone and via e-mail.

Assessments

Once an application has been submitted, it will be assigned to the relevant Officer who is responsible for bids relating to the ward that has been applied to. Officers read through each application and contact the applicant to gather any additional information. Once all necessary information has been received, an assessment is then completed with an overview of the project, and a detailed check that the application meets ward funding guidelines. Every assessment is peer moderated by another Ward

Community Engagement Officer and then group moderated for a final time by all officers.

Budget meetings

Ward Community Engagement Officers arrange to meet with Ward Councillors to discuss all of the applications which have been received, ensuring assessments and applications are supplied prior to the meeting. During the budget meeting, Officers and Councillors discuss each application and assessment and confirm their decision.

Councillors may ask for additional information to support their decision which may require officers to make further contact with applicants before Councillors can make a final decision.

Applications will also be e-mailed to Ward Councillors. Officers will then monitor the outcome and responses. Once a decision is reached on an application, the Ward Funding database is updated accordingly. All supported applications are listed on a report generated ahead of Executive sign off. Once supported applications have been signed off by the appointed Executive Lead, payments are processed, and Officers send confirmation e-mails to all applicants informing them of the outcome of their application.

Evaluations

For every application that has been supported, an evaluation along with evidence of expenditure is required by the stated deadline. If these are not received by the given deadline, Officers follow up with applicants. Applications are only closed once evaluations have been received and receipts and invoices checked to reconcile expenditure for audit purposes.

Elected Member support

Ward Engagement officers provide support to Elected Members in relation to Ward Funding Applications and their Ward budget, Ward Community Meetings, community patch walks and general enquiries about work within their wards.

Case study

Ward: Eyres Monsell and Saffron

Amount awarded: £2,000 (£1,000 per ward)

Project name: The Friendship Group

Summary of activity/event:

The Friendship Group is a social inclusion and support group based at the Pork Pie Library, with the age ranging from 40 to 101 years old. The Group provides and participates in activities and events, organised by the volunteer group leader. Aimed at supporting people in the Eyres Monsell and Saffron wards, it provides group support to reduce the fear, and the impact of [negative] mental health, caused by social isolation.

The Group supports up to forty members from the two wards, through two weekly sessions, one of which being a weekly lunch club, helping members of the group within these wards to receive at least one hot meal per week.

Outcome:

The Friendship Group members state that they greatly benefit from the activities and support of the group. The weekly lunch club not only provides a wholesome hot meal, but also companionship and interaction. The £2,000 ward funding benefits 40 people, over two years, which equates to 50p per visit.

Successful applications

Between April 2024 and March 2025, out of 485, a total of **431** applications were successful in receiving Ward Funding. The following table provides details of the number of successful applications per ward grouping:

Wards	Number of applications received for consideration	Number supported up to £500	Number supported over £500	Total Number supported	Total Number not supported
East	173	84	66	150	23
South	186	76	81	157	29
West	126	62	62	124	2
Total	485	222	209	431	54

Types of ward funded activity

Ward Funding was provided for a number of local priorities and events determined by ward Councillors. As part of analysing the successful applications, each project/activity was identified under the most appropriate category relative to the purpose of funding. This support councillors to monitor the allocation of grant funding according to their agreed ward priorities. The categories are identified as follows:

Category	Description
Arts and Culture e.g. Celebratory Events	Projects that are specified as arts related or include key cultural aspects. These can sometimes be inclusive around religion for example Holi, Eid, Christmas and Halloween events, that are open to all.
Developing and Supporting Communities	Projects designed to meet the current needs of the community, making neighbourhoods stronger and empowering for sustainable development such as mental health advice workshops, school projects, community information events and foodbanks.
Education and Improving Skills	Projects that support the community in gaining further skills such as ICT, numeracy and literacy, employability and self-confidence.

Environmental	Projects that help improve the environment throughout neighbourhoods and communities such as City Warden clean ups, clearance of fly tips, litter picking campaigns, and work in parks with volunteers.
Social and Community	Projects that promote community cohesion, integration and networking such as family fun days, day trips and lunch clubs.
Sports and Leisure	Projects that improve health and well-being through sports and leisure such as football tournaments, various sporting activities, indoor bowls, dance troupes, and knit and natter groups.
Other work e.g. Traffic and Highways	Other work/initiatives including highway improvements, speeding, and traffic safety including installation of bollards.

The table below provides an outline of the number of applications supported across the different types of activity.

	Type of activity							
Wards	Arts & Culture	Developing & Supporting Communities /Volunteering	Education and Improving Skills	Environmental	Social and Community	Sports/ Leisure	Other	Total
East	8	76	6	7	21	23	9	150
South	15	67	5	14	27	16	13	157
West	16	55	14	7	11	12	9	124
Total	39	198	25	28	59	51	31	431

Case study

Ward: Western

Amount awarded: £2,880

Project name: GNR8

Summary of activity/event:

GNR8 provide community boxing classes for young people, along with weekly exercise classes, and holiday sports camps. GNR8 works with boys aged 7 -11 years from low socio-economic backgrounds, with the aim being to reduce crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, and to promote life skills, physical and mental good health. Through ward funding GNR8 expanded their community boxing classes to work with young girls, to boost their inclusivity, confidence, and self-worth.

Outcomes:

The outcomes for the boxing project were to contribute to a reduction in -

- Local Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
- An improvement in Mental Health and Wellbeing
- An increase in Inclusivity, Resilience and Fun

Above all the GNR8 Project boosted the inclusivity, discipline and enjoyment through diversionary youth work and physical and mental discipline with the young people in the ward.

Volunteer engagement

The table below provides information about the estimated number of volunteers engaged in organising, coordinating, and delivering ward funded activities.

Wards	Volunteers per session	Total Number of sessions / Activities	Total volunteer hours
East	1624	2297	6366
South	1856	2908	6647
West	1102	4010	1521
Total	4582	9215	14,534

Council schemes

Through discussions with residents and Council services, ward specific priorities or issues are often identified. A total of 34 applications for Council led projects/schemes were awarded Ward Funding to a total value of **£53,244** (14.8% of the total amount of funding awarded) to help address local issues and priorities that could not be funded by core service budgets. The table below provides details of the service areas that received funding in 2024/25.

Wards	Number of schemes	Amount of funding
City Wardens	6	£8,321
Festivals/Events	1	£3,000
Highways/Transport	5	£8,668
Housing	1	£6,000
Libraries	12	£6,968
Environmental	7	£16,127
Handy Person Services	1	£141
Cleansing Services	1	£4,000
Total	34	£53,245

Declared 'Other Sources' of Funding

As part of the application process, applicants show how the projects/activities are supported through other sources of funding. In total £524,145 of matched funding was leveraged through the Ward Funding scheme. The table below shows the matched funding by ward grouping area:

Wards	Amount
East	£70,294
South	£262,078
West	£191,774
Total	£524,146