



Leicester
City Council

Ward Engagement & Funding Report 2022 – 23

For consideration by: Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny
Commission

Date: 7th September 2023

Lead director: Sean Atterbury

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Shilen Pattni / 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 2022 and March 2023. 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 2022/2023 a total of 616 applications for Ward Funding were received. Of these 67 were withdrawn, leaving 549 for consideration. A total of 486 applications were successful in receiving Ward Funding.
- 2.3 The total amount of ward funding approved for the financial year 2022 – 23 was £387,888. The total includes funding carried over from ward budgets from financial year 2021-22. There was no carry over of funding permitted for 2022 – 23 as carry over is not permitted during an election year.
- 2.4 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 The members of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission are recommended to note the report on ward engagement and community funding for the year 2022 – 23 and are invited comment on the contents of the report.

4. Report/Supporting information

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

Appendix A

Ward Engagement & Funding Report 2022 – 23

Date: 9 August 2023

Author: Shilen Pattni

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 2022 and March 2023. This report seeks to provide an insight into the variety of projects and initiatives that took place in the wards and provides case studies of some of those that were important to residents locally.

What is Ward Community Funding?

Each of Leicester’s 21 electoral wards hold community events where members of the public have the opportunity to meet Councillors and council partners to help shape the services provided in their community. Each ward is allocated a yearly budget of £18,000 which can be used to support projects that bring benefits to that ward.

In 2022/2023 a total of **616** applications for Ward Funding were received and of these **67** were withdrawn, leaving **549** for consideration. The table below provides an outline of the number of applications received and of those, the number withdrawn:

Constituency	Number of applications received	Number of applications withdrawn	Number of applications for consideration
East	226	25	201
South	223	26	197
West	167	16	151
Total	616	67	549

Case study 1

Ward: Fosse
Amount awarded: £2500.00
Project name: Electric blankets

Summary of activity/event:

Since opening in 2020, Woodgate Food Bank, now known as Mutual Aid Association and based at Fosse Neighbourhood Centre have supported over 320 low-income families with food and household items. Energy costs in the UK are currently at an all-time high, and the association did a comparison of how much it costs to keep heating on, in relation to how much an electric blanket costs to run.

Outcome:

The association applied for funding to purchase electric blankets to be distributed to low-income families who live in the Fosse ward, to support them to stay warm during the winter months, reducing the amount they paid towards energy costs that were already unaffordable for them. Residents using the food bank were so grateful for the project being run in the ward, and some are now volunteering to ensure the project is sustainable.

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 thoroughly 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 guidance for Ward Funding, as outlined below.

What cannot be funded?

Ward Community Funding **cannot** be used for the following:

- 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)
- Full costs of infrastructure, running costs or capital investment
- Recoverable VAT – Ward Funding cannot be awarded for monies that will be reclaimed back as recoverable VAT by the applicant / organisation
- Any liability arising out of illegality or negligence
- Any form of gambling (except small fundraising activities e.g., raffle, tombola)
- Exclusively religious activity
- Political activity
- Evaluations outstanding from previous funding
- An event or activity which has already taken place. Which is an application that is submitted 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 based on whether the application is in breach of the Ward Funding guidelines and also highlight the merits and/or limitations of the application. Ward Councillors are asked to consider these findings to determine whether to support applications for funding.

Case study

Ward: Eyres Monsell

Amount awarded: £500.00

Project name: Pork Pie Library - Jubilee Commemorative Plaque

Summary of activity/event:

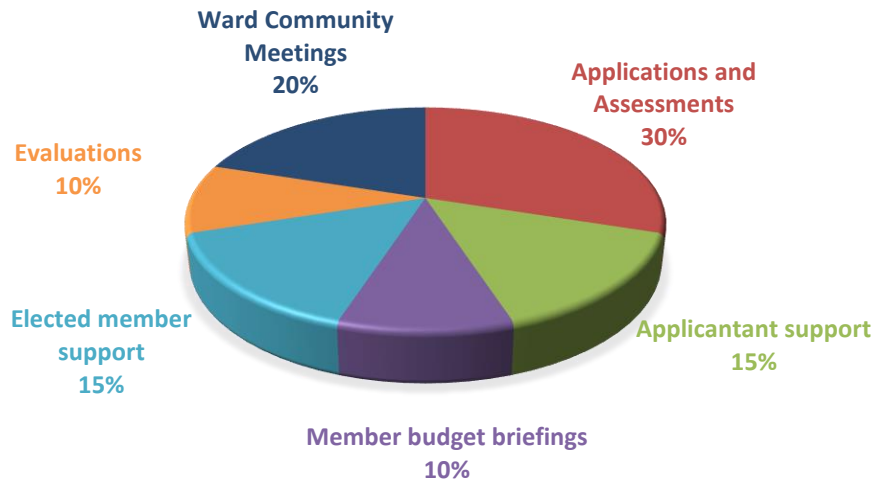
The Pork Pie Library, and community-based project 'Community Mind Matters', worked in conjunction with residents, and library users, to create a bespoke, commemorative plaque to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Residents worked together to create and design a plaque that reflected their views on what the Jubilee celebration meant to them, and how they wanted these to be reflected.

Outcome:

60 local residents, and library users took part in the project, whereby a design was created, and a plaque commissioned using ward funding. The feedback from the workshops stated that the project had provided a 'sense of togetherness' and a 'sense of community'. This was particularly important to the local people because they had previously felt that the two-year restrictions, had resulted in a sense of isolation.

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 play a significant part in the organisation and facilitation of 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 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 moderated by another Ward Community Engagement Officer who is not connected with the application.

Budget meetings

There are three funding rounds per year (end of January, May and September) and after each funding round, Ward Community Engagement Officers arrange to meet with Ward Councillors to discuss all of the applications 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 under £500 do not need to be considered at a budget meeting. Instead, Officers will e-mail the application and assessment to 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, Officers send confirmation e-mails to all applicants informing them of the outcome of their application.

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.

Evaluations

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

Ward Community Meetings

Ward Community Engagement Officers discuss venues, dates, and agendas at budget planning meetings with members. Officers will contact the Democratic Support Team to inform them of the preferred venue and dates. Once an agenda is confirmed, Officers will then contact those asked to attend and the confirmed agenda will also be sent to the Democratic Support Team who will publish online. Prior to the Ward Meeting officers will e-mail members all confirmed attendees and send the budget report which will be presented at the Ward Meeting.

Case study

Ward: Fosse and Abbey Wards

Amount awarded: £500.00

Project name: Soul to Sole

Summary of activity/event:

The Local priest at St Pauls in the Fosse area of the city, is also a Podiatrist. With the ward funding, church members opened up a warm hub two days a week at the church hall to enable mainly elderly people to not only keep warm and socialise, but also provide a podiatry service to them without having to travel to receive this.

Outcome:

Not only have local people been able to keep warm and fed without using their own energy, they can also access the podiatry service should they wish to, but the main value has been that more people are coming along, having initially been afraid to come out, due to the impact Covid has had on social isolation.

Successful applications

Between April 2022 and March 2023, out of 549, a total of **486** applications were successful in receiving Ward Funding. The following table provides details of the number of successful applications per constituency:

Constituency	Number of applications received for consideration	Number supported up to £500	Number supported over £500	Total Number of applications supported
East	201	91	78	169
South	197	96	78	174
West	151	98	45	143
Total	549	285	201	486

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 or activity was identified under the most likely category relative to the purpose of funding.

The categories are identified as follows:

Category	Description
Community and Social Events	A way of promoting community cohesion, to integrate and network. Examples include family fun days, day trips and lunch clubs.
Arts /Cultural/Celebration Events	Events that are specified as key cultural aspects, can sometimes be inclusive around religion for example Holi Celebrations, Eid Celebrations, Christmas, and Halloween events that are open and welcome to all.
Developing and Supporting Communities	To meet the current needs of the community, making neighbourhoods stronger and empowering for sustainable development. For example, Coronavirus initiatives, mental health advice in school projects, community events and foodbanks.
Education and Improving Skills	Projects that support the community in gaining further skills, e.g. computer, numeracy, and literacy, back to work and self-confidence.
Environmental events/projects	Improving the environment throughout neighbourhoods and communities. Examples include City Warden clean ups, clearing fly tipping and litter picking campaigns, and work in Parks with volunteers.
Sports and Leisure	A way of improving health and well-being through sports and leisure. Examples include football teams, various sporting activities, indoor bowls, knitting clubs, art groups and exhibitions.
Traffic and Highways	Work/initiatives around highway improvements, speeding and raising awareness throughout the

	community, and traffic safety including installation of bollards.
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The table below provides an outline of the number of applications supported across the different types of activity.

Constituency	Type of activity							Total
	Arts & Culture	Developing & Supporting Communities /Volunteering	Education and Improving Skills	Environmental Events/ Projects	Community / Social events	Sports/ Leisure	Other	
East	8	79	5	6	24	27	20	169
South	12	85	4	7	28	27	11	174
West	20	70	6	7	16	19	5	143
Total	40	234	15	20	68	73	36	486

The following table provides details of the amount of funding awarded in support of activities across the different categories. The total awarded was **£387,888**.

Constituency	Type of activity							Total
	Arts & Culture	Developing & Supporting Communities /Volunteering	Education and Improving Skills	Environmental Events/ Projects	Community / Social events	Sports/ Leisure	Other	
East	£4,444	£58,567	£4,660	£6,460	£16,521	£26,625	£13,808	£131,085
South	£4,790	£67,325	£8,984	£7,049	£30,999	£19,759	£8,411	£147,317
West	£13,167	£58,369	£5,971	£4,723	£8,239	£14,707	£4,310	£109,486
Total	£22,401	£184,261	£19,615	£18,232	£55,759	£61,091	£26,529	£387,888

Case study

Ward: Aylestone

Amount awarded: £3351

Project name: Aylestone Rookeries Allotment and Gardening Society – Rookeries Community Allotment for Older People.

Summary of activity/event:

The Aylestone Rookeries Allotment and Gardening Society are a long-established allotment society that is based in the Aylestone ward. The society became aware that many of their older allotment members, who had become less able, were regrettably giving up their plots because they were unable to manage and maintain them. The allotment society wanted to assist by providing a specific area for older people to continue growing and enjoying the benefits associated with being members of the society.

Outcome:

Ward funding of £3351 was awarded towards the costs of supplying and building purpose built raised beds in a designated area of the site, that would allow easy access for older members. The purchase of user-friendly gardening equipment would also enable the older and new members of the society to continue to garden and produce their own food. One hundred members have benefitted from the raised beds, in the designated area that allows wheelchair users and those with walking aids access. The members produce has resulted in the development of a garden shop, in which local people can purchase fresh, home grown produce, at affordable prices. In addition, the older people who would have previously given up their plots, have stated that being able to continue to garden at the site, has meant that they have remained active, are not socially isolated, and are providing a benefit to other people in the community by producing fresh home-grown food.

Volunteer engagement

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

Constituency	Type of activity							Total
	Arts & Culture	Developing & Supporting Communities/Volunteering	Education and Improving Skills	Environmental Events/ Projects	Community / Social events	Sports/ Leisure	Other	
East	180	278	50	9	303	226	392	1438
South	37	593	14	11	290	85	164	1194
West	111	628	25	89	142	36	20	1051
Total	328	1499	89	109	735	347	576	3683

Council schemes

Through discussions with local residents and Council services, ward specific priorities or issues are often identified. A total of 37 applications for Council led projects/schemes were awarded Ward Funding to a total value of **£51,691** (14% of the total amount of funding awarded) to help address local issues/priorities that are not funded by core service budgets. The table below provides details of the service areas that received funding in 2022/23.

Service area	Number of schemes	Amount of funding
City Wardens	7	£12,469
Festivals/Events	1	£2,000
Highways/Transport	2	£2,030
Housing	2	£9,815
Libraries	20	£15,090
Parks	5	£10,287
Total	37	£51,691

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 £480,279.63 of matched funding

was leveraged through the Ward Funding scheme. The table below shows the matched funding by constituency area:

Constituency	Amount
East	£166,771
South	£158,839
West	£154,670
Total	£480,280