

## **Grant Awards Programme**

### **Information for Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations**

#### **New Pre-Assessment Eligibility and Completeness Check from 2027/28 onwards**

##### **Introduction**

The Pre-Assessment Eligibility and Completeness Check is a new stage within the Grant Award Programme designed to ensure that all applications meet a consistent minimum standard before progressing to scoring.

The change supports transparency, fairness and good governance while continuing to support community organisations to access funding and deliver positive outcomes for local communities.

##### **Why is this change being introduced?**

The Grant Award Programme continues to attract a high number of applications from organisations delivering valuable services, activities and projects across North Lanarkshire.

Applications are currently reviewed through several stages, including Community Board involvement, quality assessment and scoring. Experience has shown that while many applications demonstrate strong community benefit and alignment with local priorities, some applications progress into assessment despite missing key information or not fully meeting programme requirements.

This can make it more difficult to undertake fair and consistent assessments and can lead to additional clarification work for both applicants and assessors.

The introduction of a Pre-Assessment Eligibility and Completeness Check will help ensure that all applications entering the scoring process are ready to be assessed on an equal basis.

##### **What is the Pre-Assessment Eligibility and Completeness Check?**

The check is a simple review that takes place before applications enter the scoring stage.

It is not an additional scoring process, and it does not replace any existing assessment criteria.

Instead, it confirms that applications:

- Meet the programme's eligibility requirements;
- Contain sufficient information to allow a fair assessment;
- Include the required supporting documentation;
- Demonstrate a clear and deliverable proposal; and
- Comply with the published programme guidance.

Applications that successfully meet these minimum requirements will proceed through the normal assessment and scoring process.

## **What areas will be reviewed?**

The check will focus on three key areas:

### **Eligibility**

Confirming that the applicant organisation and proposed activity fall within the programme's published eligibility criteria.

### **Completeness and Assessability**

Confirming that sufficient information has been provided to allow the application to be assessed fairly and consistently.

This may include reviewing project descriptions, budgets, intended outcomes and supporting information.

### **Deliverability and Basic Assurance**

Confirming that the proposed activity appears realistic, achievable and capable of being delivered within the proposed timescales and funding conditions.

## **Will this make it harder to access funding?**

No.

The purpose of the change is not to reduce access to funding or create additional barriers for community organisations.

The aim is to ensure that all applications entering the scoring process are assessed fairly and consistently using the same minimum standards.

In many cases, organisations will already be providing the information required through the existing application process.

## **What happens if information is missing?**

Where minor administrative information is missing, organisations may be given an opportunity to provide clarification within a specified timescale. This will be restricted to 2 weeks from notification of any gaps or issues.

Examples may include:

- Missing supporting documents;
- Incomplete contact details;
- Minor budget inconsistencies; or
- Other administrative omissions.

The clarification process is intended to support applicants and avoid simple administrative oversights affecting otherwise strong applications.

However, organisations will not normally be permitted to make substantial changes to the nature, scope or purpose of a project after the application deadline.

## **Supporting Community Organisations**

North Lanarkshire Council recognises that organisations vary significantly in size, capacity and experience.

The new arrangements will therefore be designed and applied proportionately.

To support applicants, the Council will provide:

- Updated guidance notes;
- Frequently asked questions;
- Application support materials;
- Information sessions and briefings;
- Advice and guidance from the Community Partnership Team; and
- Clear explanations of the minimum requirements expected.

## **How will applications be assessed in future?**

The overall assessment process will continue to include several stages:

1. Administrative review;
2. Pre-Assessment Eligibility and Completeness Check;
3. Community Board consideration of local impact and priorities;
4. Quality assessment;
5. Full scoring; and
6. Award determination.

This approach helps ensure that applications are eligible and complete before entering comparative assessment and scoring.

## **Benefits of the New Approach**

The introduction of the Pre-Assessment Eligibility and Completeness Check is expected to:

- Improve consistency across all applications;
- Strengthen transparency in decision making;
- Support fair and equitable assessment;
- Reduce delays caused by incomplete submissions;
- Improve the quality of applications entering the scoring stage;
- Strengthen governance and auditability; and
- Provide greater clarity for applicants about programme expectations.

## **Further Information**

Organisations are encouraged to familiarise themselves with programme guidance and attend any future information sessions or briefings that may be offered.

The Community Partnership Team will continue to provide advice and guidance to organisations interested in applying for funding.