



Committee
Thriving Council

Date
30 July 2026

Subject: Community Grants Programme 2026-2028

Report by:

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Contact Officer:

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Executive Summary:

This report seeks approval of budget allocation to establish a Community Grants Programme for 2026/27 and 2027/28.

The delivery of a Community Grants Programme has been approved by the Thriving People committee. Thriving People committee has made recommendations for budget allocation to the Thriving Council committee.

The programme will build on the Council's existing grant activity and provide four funding routes: the Councillor Initiative Fund, Community Action Fund, Community Facilities Fund and Community Environment Fund.

A formal review will take place when £2 million has been awarded, allowing Members to consider impact, demand and affordability before further delivery is confirmed.

Appendices to Report

- None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- (a) That members approve the allocation of up to £4,000,000 from the Reprioritisation (Investment for Growth) Reserve to deliver the Community Grants Programme across 2026/27 and 2027/28.**
- (b) That members approve delegated authority to approve spend of the £4,000,000 to Thriving People Committee, with a formal review when £2,000,000 has been awarded or during 2027/28 Q1, whichever is sooner.**
- (c) That members approve the allocation of up to £86,400 from the Community Grant Scheme Reserve for staff costs to deliver the Community Grants Programme across 2026/27 and 2027/28.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Thriving People Committee approved the delivery of a Community Grants Programme on 16 July 2026. As part of report to approve this, Thriving People Committee also approved several recommendations to be submitted to Thriving Council Committee for approval.
- 1.2 The report produced for Thriving People Committee included details of the Community Grants Programme. A copy of this report has been published and can be viewed here: <https://democracy.west-lindsey.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=436&MId=4136>
- 1.3 This report presents recommendations from Thriving People Committee to Thriving Council Committee to approve budget for the delivery of the Community Grants Programme.

2. Finance

- 2.1 To deliver the Community Grants Programme, this report proposes allocation of budget from Council reserves.
- 2.2 **Community Action Fund and Community Facilities Fund**

The proposed budget allocation for these funds will be delivered in two stages:

Stage	Proposal
Stage 1 – Initial Delivery	Allocation of up to £4 million from Council reserves
Stage 2 – On-going Delivery	Review when £2 million has been awarded

At the point of awarding £2 million from these funds or by 2027/28 Q1, a review of impact, external factors and the Council's financial position will be completed. The review will inform the decision to continue, pause or end delivery of these funds.

3. Resources

- 3.1 The scale of the proposed community grants programme will require additional delivery capacity within the Council's Localities and Community Service. To successfully deliver the programme officers will need to provide active promotion, applicant support, eligible assessment, project scoring, panel administration, payment processing, monitoring, evaluation and impact reporting.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the Community Grant Scheme Reserve is used to support staff resourcing within Localities and Community Services. Up to £86,400 will be allocated to support staff resource costs. This represents an 18 month fixed-term post, at the top of band 9.

- 3.3 This approach will help ensure the programme has sufficient officer capacity and resilience to make it accessible to applicants, managed effectively and delivered within timescales.

4. Alternative Options

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	Do not deliver a community grants programme.	Without a continuation of a wider community grants programme, the council will not be able to support community project delivery which can contribute towards Corporate Plan objectives. The benefits and community impact from community grant funding would not be realised. Community projects in West Lindsey may not be able to proceed without funding support from the Council. Alternative sources of funding can be limited.
2	Deliver the Community Grants Programme with different funds compared to those proposed in this report.	The proposed funds in this report build on the grant programme brand already established since 2023. The funds proposed allow for various community projects to be supported with appropriate governance processes. The funds proposed in this report have already been delivered so the processes, governance and working knowledge of their delivery is already in-place. This enables an immediate launch and fast-paced delivery of the programme.
3	Commission an external organisation to deliver a Community Grants Programme.	Due to the budget value being proposed any external commissioning of programme delivery would require extensive planning for a procurement process. Any procurement process would add additional setup time to delivering community grant awards. It is expected the costs of external commissioning for the scale of this programme would exceed the cost implications of additional staff resource

		proposed in this report. This may reduce the total amount of budget available to issue as grant awards to projects. The Council has staff with experience of community grant programme delivery. External commissioning may lead to a loss of engagement and relationship development with organisations.
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ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The community grants programme will be delivered in accordance with the Council's constitution, financial rules and subsidy control requirements. Standard grant funding agreements will be used for all grant awards and will be reviewed to ensure they are proportionate to the value, nature and risk of projects supported.

Financial: FIN/59/27/TC/SL

The following proposals require Thriving Council Committee approval:

- a. The council agreed to utilise £8m from reserves for member priorities. This report is requesting usage of £4m from this reprioritisation allocation for the delivery of the Community Action Fund and Community Facilities Fund across 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Description	£
Allocation Approved for Reprioritisation	8,000,000
RIBA Stage 3 Alliance Leisure	(273,700)
Community Grants Programme 2026-2028	(4,000,000)
Remaining Balance:	3,726,300

- b. Approval of the allocation of up to £86,400 from the Community Grant Scheme Reserve for staff costs to deliver the Community Grants Programme across 2026/27 and 2027/28. This is based on an 18 month fixed term post at band 9.

Staffing:

For the delivery of the programme, it is proposed to allocate funds to support staff resourcing within Localities and Community Services. Officers will work with People Services and the Leadership Team to establish the most appropriate resourcing options.

Any staffing arrangement will be developed in consultation with Human Resources, Leadership Team and Finance and will follow relevant Council's procedures. Where fixed-term posts are created, the duration, funding source and end of contract implications will be clearly identified before recruitment.

LGR implications:

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

The community grants programme will be delivered in accordance with the Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. Organisations applying for funding will be required to demonstrate how their project provides community benefit and will be accessible to the communities they intend to support.

Grant funding agreements include appropriate requirements to ensure organisations funded meet relevant standards.

Data Protection Implications:

Information collected whilst delivering the community grants programme will be managed securely and in line with the Council's policies. A Communities Privacy Notice is in place which references grants for community projects and services.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The community grants programme will provide direct opportunities to support community-led projects that can have an impact on environment, biodiversity, nature recovery, tree planting, carbon reduction and climate engagement.

Specifically, the Community Environment Fund will focus on this area of impact.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

There are no direct implications, however some funded projects may have a direct or indirect impact on reducing crime, disorder or anti-social behaviour. Examples may include projects that provide youth activity, community cohesion, support for vulnerable residents, safety/security improvements and improved public spaces.

Health Implications:

There are no direct implications, however some funded projects may have a direct or indirect impact on health and wellbeing. This may include projects that support physical activity, access to community facilities, social connection, volunteering, cultural activities, access to green spaces and support for vulnerable residents.

Health and wellbeing outcomes will be captured during any project evaluation work.

Risk Assessment:

Not applicable.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Not applicable.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

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No

X

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Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

X

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No

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