



Ward Enhancement Programme 2023 - 2025

Guidance Notes

Please note: The Ward Enhancement Programme Guidance Notes and Application Form have been updated as of 1st July 2024.

1. What is the Ward Enhancement Programme?

The Ward Enhancement Programme (WEP) is an 18 month capital grant programme worth £1,500,000 that is targeted towards improving local prosperity in areas across the East Staffordshire Borough.

The purpose of the programme is to deliver local regeneration initiatives across East Staffordshire under the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) investment priority of 'Communities and Place'.

Please note we are now delivering a programme of regeneration for play areas across the Borough so applications to improve play areas will not now be considered within this application process.

2. Who can apply to the WEP?

Applications are invited from either East Staffordshire Borough Councillors directly on behalf of local communities and groups or from the groups directly.

If an application is submitted by a Councillor, they are only able to submit applications that relate to the area they represent. Support from other Councillors from the same, or adjacent, wards will be viewed positively, and Councillors can put forward joint bids that cross Ward boundaries.

Applications can't be submitted by Parish Councils for their own projects or on behalf of a group or organisation. Parish Councils can support the application process and can act / assist in project management.

Applications from groups must cover the area in which they intend to operate.

Any applications by education providers such as schools, academies who are seeking to apply for funding must demonstrate that this is not for their core activities and represents increased extracurricular activity accessible to and for community benefit and engagement. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis or in exceptional circumstances.

3. How much can be applied for and what can it be spent on?

The total amount of funding available through the WEP is £1,500,000, which must be spent by 31st March 2025. If a project cannot demonstrate that it can be delivered before this deadline, it will not be considered for funding.

Grant applications must be for an amount between £10,000 and £50,000 and the funding is entirely capital based and so cannot be used for revenue schemes, such as ongoing financial support for projects.

Match funding in the form of cash contributions is not a requirement of the WEP, though the Council would expect to see an element of match in the form of volunteer time or similar non-financial contribution. Any evidence of match funding, in the form of a financial contribution and volunteer time or similar non-financial contribution, would be favoured.

Applicants must also show how they've reviewed alternative funding pots, outlining what these options are, if they've applied (and been successful) and why they've come to the conclusion of applying for the Ward Enhancement Programme. Including confirmation of other grants already pledged for the project.

Also outlining support your Parish Council has provided towards the project.

The types of projects that can be funded through the WEP include:

- Funding towards the development of social infrastructure projects or activities, demonstrating where there is a need;
- Funding towards enhancing local green spaces, including the installation of new equipment, planting schemes, furniture and lighting (but not maintenance and running costs);
- Funding towards tourism initiatives, such as events including art and theatre performances, encouraging people to visit and explore the local area;
- Funding towards upgrading existing community assets or introducing initiatives to promote and celebrate local culture and heritage;
- Funding towards capital projects for local sports facilities, tournaments and leagues to bring people together;
- Capital funding towards digital infrastructure for local community facilities, for example new computer servers.

Applications requesting £30,000 or more will require a more detailed assessment

Any applications requesting **£30,000** or more will have a financial review undertaken, with the following documents required:

- Last 2 years of accounts including a copy of the latest management accounts (management accounts or financial forecasts will suffice for organisations that have been trading for less than 12 months)
- Up to date balance sheet

Further detail is required in these applications with regards to:

- How the project will be delivered
- Progress to date on the projects e.g. any initial survey work, contact made with suppliers, funding being raised etc.
- How the grant will be claimed before the 31st March 25 (e.g. scheduling/when required).
- What will happen if the grant isn't received for the project.
- The outputs/outcomes being met by delivering the project
- Any problems which may occur during delivery and how they will be overcome.

Support must be received and evidenced (either through emails or a letter of support) from the Parish Council and local community for the project.

4. How can local residents get involved in shaping applications?

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with local residents, community groups and Parish Councils when developing their application. As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to set out and evidence any local support for their proposed project and will ultimately be responsible for publicising and promoting the project locally. This can and should be supported by local Councillors for the area in question.

Applicants should outline discussions with the Parish Council and the outcome - what support they can give to the project (either in kind or monetary assistance).

5. How will applications be assessed?

Applications will initially be assessed by the Council's Enterprise Team against the following scorecard:

Priority Area (categorisation)		Prosperity Impact	
Ward area is Category A	3	Project is expected to have a direct impact on local prosperity	3
Ward area is Category B	2	Project is expected to have an indirect impact on local prosperity	2
Ward area is Category C	1	Project is not expected to have an impact on local prosperity	1
Tourism and Heritage		Community Support for Project	
Project is expected to promote local tourism and heritage	3	Local community and Parish Council support secured	3
Project is expected to promote local tourism or heritage	2	Either local community or Parish Council support secured	2
Project is not expected to promote local tourism or heritage	0	No local support secured	0

Applications that achieve a score of 8 or more will then be reviewed by the Ward Enhancement Programme Panel, who will invite applicants to present and discuss their projects. If an application scores less than 8, advice will be provided on how the project can be further developed. In that circumstance, progression to consideration by the WEP Panel will be at the discretion of the Panel Chair.

The 'priority area' category above is a ranking system for each Ward in East Staffordshire based on an analysis of factors such as population; education and employment opportunities; community facilities; deprivation; and health, in order to inform consideration of how impactful projects in those areas may be from a prosperity perspective.

The creation of the priority area list is based on available 2021 Census data and using this alongside the 2019 Indices of Deprivation data for Wards, cross-referenced with Parish level data in order to account for the boundary changes that took place post-Census collection.

The priority area list is as follows:

Category A	Category B	Category C
Anglesey	Branston	Bagots & Needwood
Burton & Eton	Horninglow & Outwoods	Blythe
Heath	Stretton	Brizlincote
Shobnall	Town	Crown
Stapenhill	Winshill	Dove

As set out in the scorecard, Categories A, B and C would be given a score of 3, 2 and 1 respectively. In practice, this means that applications from areas in Category C need to demonstrate a more direct impact on local prosperity than an area in Category A on the basis of pre-assessed local need.

The following table includes some worked examples of how projects in each category of wards could achieve the required minimum score of 8:

Example Project	Ward Score	Prosperity Score	Tourism & Heritage Score	Community Support Score	Total Score
Shobnall – Parish Council supported project for equipment to promote education opportunities	3	2 (Indirect prosperity impact)	1 (No Tourism & Heritage impact)	2 (Parish Council support)	8
Stretton – Community project for equipment to deliver new arts performances	2	2 (Indirect prosperity impact)	2 (Tourism impact)	2 (Community support)	8
Blythe – Parish and Community led project for equipment to deliver local cost of living support	1	3 (Direct prosperity impact)	1 (No Tourism & Heritage Impact)	3 (Parish and Community Support)	8

The Panel will then assess the application following the presentation and discussion with the applicant and make a determination based on the strategic fit of the project; proposed outputs/outcomes; local community benefit; deliverability; and local support.

6. How will projects will delivered?

It is expected that a local group or body, such as a community organisation or Parish Council, will be responsible for the delivery of the project. East Staffordshire Borough Council will only assume responsibility for project delivery in exceptional circumstances and subject to separate approvals.

The grant will be awarded through a grant agreement with that local body, which will confirm factors such as timescales, project outputs, and funding clawback.

Projects must be spent by 31st March 2025.

Funding will be provided in two (2) or three (3) instalments with evidence of spend through a redacted bank statement showing defrayal of the previous instalment required before the next instalment is released.

Applicants must advise, once confirmation of being approved has been received, the frequency of instalments for their project.

Where a project is not progressing in accordance with the agreed timescale, the Council reserves the right to terminate grant support if it feels the project will not financially complete by 31st March 2025.

It is anticipated that the funding will be fully allocated by December 2024 to enable full programme spend by 31st March 2025.