

NEWCASTLE EAST – INCLUSIVE, HEALTHY, VIBRANT HIGH STREETS

SPACES FOR EVERYONE GRANT SCHEME GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS



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1. About this grant scheme

Through the Newcastle East High Streets Project, we are offering grant funding that will support projects to improve the quality and feel of public space in and around five high streets (Chillingham Rd, Heaton Rd, Heaton Park Rd, Shields Rd and Welbeck Rd) in the inner east of the city.

During the project's initial engagement phase (August to October 2022) residents highlighted a number of issues in relation to the environmental streetscape including insufficient green space and a lack of child friendly provision. More greenery features amongst the top three priorities for the high streets with residents recommending increased tree planting, planters, pocket parks and spaces for growing edibles. Alongside this, people-friendly spaces were requested including places to socialise and more benches and seating areas. We welcome other public realm improvements such as landscaping to improve biodiversity and health and wellbeing.

The level of funding available is limited and demand is expected to be high. Grants will be awarded in line with the eligibility criteria set out below, but we retain the right to amend or close the scheme at any time.

1.1 Background

Newcastle East High Streets project is a transformation programme aiming to revitalise the high streets in the east end of the city. Funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) this pilot will deliver changes on the ground to tackle issues around empty properties, poor quality public realm and connectivity, with a focus on Chillingham Road, Heaton Road, Heaton Park Road, Shields Road and part of Welbeck Road. Together with business support provision and grants to animate space and foster collaborative actions between residents, community groups and businesses, the project will develop a long-term plan for the area, co-produced with the local community. [Plans for Newcastle high streets unveiled | Newcastle City Council](#)

1.2 Our priorities

A key objective of the project is to improve the appearance of the high streets creating healthier and more inclusive spaces that will benefit everyone. During the project's initial engagement phase (August to December 2022) [Have Your Say Today - Project Engagement Report - Newcastle High Streets \(commonplace.is\)](#) respondents highlighted a number of issues in relation to the environmental landscape particularly in relation to the lack of greenery and green spaces.

We are now making funding available to enhance publicly accessible spaces on the five high streets. This will be mainly focussed on the design of schemes (revenue funding) and on making physical improvements to a space (capital funding).

1.3 Who can apply for a grant?

Applications are open to:

- Formally constituted community groups

- High street businesses
- Registered charities including charitable incorporated organisations
- Schools
- Social and not-for-profit businesses including community interest companies and social enterprises
- Tenants and residents' associations
- Places of worship and faith community centres

Applications must be from a formally constituted organisation that has an organisational bank account. You cannot apply as a private individual.

1.4 What will we fund?

To be eligible to apply for grant funding, the project must meet the following criteria:

- the project site must be located on a high street in the project area i.e., Shields Road, Chillingham Road, Welbeck Road (western part between Bothal Street/Allendale Road and Roman Avenue/St. Anthony's Road), Heaton Road and Heaton Park Road.
- the project site must be publicly accessible.
- the project's environmental impact has been considered.

The primary purpose of the funding is to improve the appearance of public spaces to create accessible and welcoming spaces that can be enjoyed on the high street.

This grant scheme will prioritise projects that:

- Are co-designed with and led by local communities and residents
- Include opportunities for training and developing new skills
- Have a clear maintenance and management strategy to ensure the longevity of the project
- Can demonstrate additional support from volunteer time and community buy-in

We would not support projects that do not align to the values (inclusive, healthy, vibrant) and intended outcomes of the project.

1.5 Available grant funding

We will fund revenue and capital projects. However, the scheme does not support works which have already been undertaken or any works which are started prior to a formal offer of grant funding being made. The available grant funding includes:

Revenue Grants of up to £15,000 for expenditure that includes but is not limited to:

- Specialist fees, for example a landscape architect or a designer

Capital Grants of up to £25,000 for physical improvements to outdoor space that includes but is not limited to:

- Purchase of trees and plants
- Purchase of other materials to create or improve public spaces
- Machine and equipment purchase or hire
- Labour costs

Applicants can apply for a Revenue Grant and a Capital Grant although not simultaneously i.e, it is expected that a Capital Grant application would follow a successful Revenue Grant and inform proposed capital activity.

Applicants are limited to one Revenue Grant and one Capital Grant.

We expect to award grants of no greater than the maximum amount. In exceptional circumstances we may be willing to consider grants beyond the maximum amount however this will be entirely at our discretion and may require additional evidence and monitoring requirements.

There is no minimum grant award; but strategic fit will be more difficult to justify for very small projects. We will signpost to more appropriate funds if applicable.

Applicants will be expected to collect data to demonstrate the impact of the investment. (e.g., the number of new spaces for community activities and the amount of public realm created or improved (sqm).

1.6 Match funding

Applicants are required to contribute at least 20% of the overall cost of the investment. This applies to both revenue and capital grants. This match funding can either be cash (for example, from another grant or from your own funds), and/or in-kind. In-kind means a non-cash contribution to your project, such as materials or services that are provided free of charge or at a reduced rate (for example, donated materials, specialist support and volunteer time). We use a standard rate of £20 per hour to calculate the value of volunteer contributions.

The table below gives examples of how the total project cost, high street grant and match funding work:

Total project cost	Maximum High Street Grant	Minimum Match funding
£20,000	£16,000	£4,000
£14,500	£11,600	£2,900
£10,000	£8,000	£2,000

1.7 Subsidy Control

The United Kingdom has now left the European Union, and there is a new UK subsidy control regime. The previous State aid rules no longer apply in most circumstances.

Under this new subsidy control regime, the Council is permitted to award an individual/organisation up to £315,000 in the elapsed part of the current financial year, and the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.

Funding is subject to this allowance not being exceeded during that period. This £315,000 allowance also includes any previous funding you/your organisation received as de minimis State aid (under the previous regime). Applicants will be required to declare that receipt of this grant will not take them above this threshold.

Further information on this allowance can be found within [Section 7.2 of the Statutory Guidance](#)

2. Applying for a grant

2.1 Application process

Potential applicants must first express an interest in the scheme by contacting economicdevelopment@newcastle.gov.uk. Please use 'High Street Grants' as your subject heading and provide a brief outline of your ideas/proposal.

If you meet the eligibility criteria, an officer will then be in contact to arrange a phone call to further discuss your proposal. Following this, applicants will be sent an application form.

Once an application has been submitted a completeness and eligibility check will be undertaken before it is considered by the assessment panel. The essential eligibility criteria are set out below.

We may request further information or clarification on an application, and this may impact on the assessment schedule.

We aim to make decisions within a month of the receipt of an application.

There is currently no deadline for this scheme, though this may change in the future as funding is awarded. We expect the first applications to be assessed from October 2023, with subsequent assessments taking place roughly every month (except December).

2.2 Evidence required to support the application

Applicants are required to provide 3 quotes for all proposed expenditure.

For capital grants, the following additional evidence is required:

- Evidence of site permissions from the landowner
- A copy of a site plan (this does not need to be a technical drawing)
- Photographs of the current space/land

2.3 Assessment of the eligibility of your application

On receiving an application, we will check whether it meets the following essential criteria:

- Applicant is not in administration/insolvent/dissolved or subject to a striking off notice/proposal to strike off notice.
- Award of grant will not breach Subsidy Control limits (£315,000 as of January 2023).
- The application form is fully completed, signed and dated and you must have sent us all the supporting information we ask for (including evidence of 3 quotes for each cost identified and any permissions required).
- The project site is located on a high street in the project area i.e., Shields Road, Chillingham Road, Welbeck Road (western part between Bothal Street/Allendale Road and Roman Avenue/St. Anthony's Road), Heaton Road and Heaton Park Road.

- The applicant can contribute at least 20% of the total project costs, through cash and/or in-kind contributions.
- The application includes an itemised breakdown of project costs and total project costs.

2.4 Panel assessment of the project

Applications will be considered by a panel who will review each on a case-by-case basis; and reach a view based on the strategic value of the investment in the wider context of the Newcastle East High Streets Project.

This assessment will consider whether the outputs that will be achieved by each grant will directly or indirectly contribute towards project output targets and provide good value for money. The panel may decide to approve, reject, or ask for further clarification or amendments to the proposals. There is no appeals process.

The panel will use the following criteria to assess an application:

- How the proposed activity will help to address and improve the current high street offer and how it will contribute to furthering the aims of the project.
- How publicly accessible the project site is and the wider public benefits
- Demonstration of volunteer time and community buy-in
- Demonstration of a maintenance and management strategy to ensure longevity of the project
- Does the project provide value for money

Grant awards will be made at the levels set out above to applicants satisfying the above eligibility criteria, subject to the availability of resources.

2.5 Receiving a grant offer

You will be notified in writing if you have been successful with your application.

Prior to receiving a formal offer of a grant, we will provide you with a Subsidy Control Eligibility letter to be returned, to confirm that the amount of financial assistance offered will not cause your organisation to exceed the Minimal Financial Assistance threshold. This is to ensure compliance with legal obligations governing the award of subsidies by the Council and other public bodies.

The grant offer will include:

- The maximum value of the grant as well the value of your match-funding.
- Details of your grant including start and completion dates, outputs agreed, when payments will be made and when Monitoring Returns are due.
- General terms and conditions including how to promote the grant and details of document retention.

Together with your grant offer letter, we will send you:

- A Successful Applicant Pack, to include our financial claim form, output forms and logo pack.
- A Monitoring Return template to enable you to report your project's progress and outputs on agreed dates.

You will have two weeks to accept the offer, and sign and return the offer. On-going support will be provided by the project team throughout the delivery of your project.

Successful applicants will receive written confirmation stating that by accepting the grant payment, they confirm they are eligible for the grant scheme, including that any payments accepted will be subject to subsidy control requirements.

2.6 Promoting your Project

As part of your grant offer letter, you will commit to acknowledging your Newcastle East High Streets grant. We require that you make reference to the programme and the funding in your project's promotional materials where applicable (websites, press releases and social media content), stating that it is funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority and the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and using logos that will be provided in a logo pack.

The wording below should be used:

"This [project/activity] has been supported by the Newcastle East High Streets Project, funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with the North of Tyne Combined Authority as the lead authority."

For social media please use the hashtag #newcastleeasthighstreets

You will also be required to provide copies or screenshots of promotional materials at the end of the project.

2.7 Grant payment

Grant funding for approved projects will be paid in arrears, in agreed instalments on production of invoices, receipts and evidence of defrayal e.g., a bank statement, as detailed in the Grant Offer Letter. The frequency of the instalments will be determined by your project's timetable and will be agreed upon an offer of grant funding.

The final 10% of your grant will be paid once your project is complete upon satisfactory completion of works/activity, evidence of spend for the total project costs as well as submission of final monitoring information.

You must also enclose the below documentation where applicable:

- Photographs of the completed improvements
- Information on the amount of space improved for public use
- Any supporting evidence that demonstrates the impact of the improvements

Documentation should be sent to economicdevelopment@newcastle.co.uk

If you have any queries in relation to the payments or evidence we require, please contact Vanessa Nogueras, Programme Support Officer, on 0191 211 5673, or vanessa.nogueras@newcastle.gov.uk

The last date you can claim money from us is 3 months from the completion of your project. **If you expect any delays, please contact us as soon as possible.**

Failure to deliver any output targets set may result in clawback.

2.9 After project completion

Upon completion of your project, we will provide you with a Subsidy Control Confirmation Letter, with details of the total grant received, which you must retain for 3 years.

The grant approved is funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority and the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. In accordance with funding regulations, you are required to keep relevant evidence until at least December 2033.

Grants are part of the Newcastle East High Streets Project, funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with the North of Tyne Combined Authority as the lead authority.

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