

Where Quality of Life Matters Grant Scheme – Applicant Guidance July 2026

1. Introduction

This grant scheme provides funding for local community and charitable organisations, social enterprises, and Town and Parish Councils to deliver projects and initiatives that align with the Council's vision and bring clear benefits to our communities and local economy.

2. Our Funding Priorities

When you apply, we will prioritise projects that clearly align with and contribute to one or more of the following key areas, reflecting the Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2028 and the needs of our district:

- **Supporting Our Communities:** We're looking for projects that bring people together, actively reduce social isolation, and enhance the mental and physical health of residents across all age groups. Think about how your initiative can foster connections and wellbeing.
- **Investing In Our District:** Focuses on projects that **enhance and maintain community facilities, green spaces, and public areas**, making them more accessible and enjoyable for everyone. We also welcome investment in **culture**, improving what we offer to residents, businesses, and visitors alike.
- **Growing Our Economy:** We want to support initiatives that stimulate local economic growth. This could mean funding the **purchase of new goods or services** (like technology upgrades, marketing efforts, specialist training, or product diversification). Projects that aim to **increase visitor numbers** who stay longer and spend more in the district are also a high priority.
- **Protecting Our Environment:** Projects that contribute to **reducing carbon emissions**, promoting **energy efficiency**, enhancing **climate resilience**, and actively **protecting and improving the natural environment** within the Maldon District are crucial. These projects should align with [the Council's Climate Action Strategy](#).

3. Who Can Apply

To be eligible, your organisation must meet the following criteria:

- Your organisation must not have previously received funding through the Where Quality of Life Matters Grant Scheme.
- Be one of the following organisation types:
 - Town or Parish Council within the Maldon District.
 - Registered voluntary, community, or charitable organisation

- Registered Social Enterprise
- The project must be of benefit to the Maldon District and meet one or more of the [Council's Priorities within the Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028](#).
- Have a clearly demonstrated need for your project and explain how it will benefit the local community or economy.
- You must provide a clear breakdown of project costs and show how the project will be financially sustainable after the funding period. If your project involves capital improvements or purchases, you must also provide at least two quotes for the proposed expenditure, where relevant.
- Commit to the principle of equal opportunities and ensure services are accessible to all.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required permissions, licences, insurances, health and safety arrangements, safeguarding measures, and risk assessments are in place before the project begins. Please include copies of any relevant documents with your application.
- Only one application per organisation is permitted.

4. What The Funding Can Cover

The grant scheme is flexible and can support a range of project costs, including:

- **Project-Specific Costs:** This covers essential items like materials, equipment, venue hire, and fees for sessional workers directly involved in your project.
- **Capital Improvements:** You can apply for funding for minor building renovations, improvements to accessibility, or contributions towards energy efficiency measures. You must provide at least two quotes.
- **Activities:** The grant can fund a diverse range of activities, including community events, workshops, training sessions, engagement schemes, and youth activities.
- **Type of Funding:** The grant fund is flexible and can support a mix of capital and revenue costs. You will need to identify which category your costs fall into within your application.
 - **Capital Funding** - This refers to money spent by the applicant organisation to acquire, upgrade, or maintain long-term assets that will be used for more than one financial year. These are typically significant one-off investments that add value to the organisation's property, equipment, or infrastructure, or extend the useful life of an existing asset.
 - **Revenue Funding** - This refers to money spent on the day-to-day running costs of the proposed project, but not the general organisation.

These costs are typically consumed within a single financial year and relate to activities or services that enable the project to operate.

5. What We Can't Fund

To ensure fairness and effective use of public funds, the grant scheme cannot support:

- Organisations who have previously received funding through the Where Quality of Life Matters Grant Scheme.
- Activities that are the sole responsibility of statutory services.
- Projects that promote political or religious beliefs.
- Retrospective funding for activities/costs that have already taken place.
- Core costs for large organisations where the grant would not make a significant impact.
- Projects that exclusively benefit individuals (unless through a recognised community scheme for a specific vulnerable group).
- On-going costs associated with the usual operation of your organisation.
- Applications from any entity not listed in the **Section 3. "Who Can Apply"**.
- Activities with a legally restricted age limit.
- Any other activity that the Council has indicated that it does not regard as suitable for support from public funds.

6. Grant Tiers & How Much You Can Apply For

The scheme operates across three grant tiers to support projects of different sizes and levels of impact:

- **Small Grants:** Apply for **up to £1,000** for smaller, localised initiatives.
- **Medium Grants:** Apply for **£1,001 - £5,000** for more developed projects with a wider community reach.
- **Large Grants:** Apply for **£5,001 - £10,000** for significant projects demonstrating substantial community impact and strong strategic alignment.

For applications over £1,000, we strongly advise an exploratory conversation before you submit your application. Please email strategy.team@maldon.gov.uk with a brief description of your project to arrange this.

Please note: The total available funding for the scheme will be announced annually and depends on Council budget allocations and any external funding secured.

7. The Application Process

- **Read the Guidelines:** You must read this guidance in full before completing your application form. For hints and tips on how to write a good grant application, please watch the [Effective Bid Writing Workshop video from Supersonic Startup](#).
- **Online Application Form:** All applications must be submitted through the [online application form](#) on the Maldon District Council website. A copy of the questions is included in **Section 12** of this document. You will need to provide supporting documents with your application.
 - A fully itemised budget.
 - At least two quotes for any proposed expenditure relating to capital improvements or purchases.
- **Supporting Documents:** You may also be asked for further information during the assessment process. This could include:
 - Your latest annual accounts or financial statements.
 - Your constitution or governing document.
 - Safeguarding policies (if you work with children or vulnerable adults).
 - Your public liability insurance certificate.
 - Evidence of any match funding from the organisation or third parties.
 - Letters of support from partner organisations (if applicable).
- **Assessment:** A dedicated panel will assess your application based on the eligibility criteria, alignment with our funding priorities, the strength of your evidence, deliverability, value for money, sustainability, and the Tiered Scoring Matrices under **Section 13** of this document.
- **Decision & Notification:** We aim to notify applicants of the outcome in October 2026. See the application deadlines in **Section 8** for details.
- **Grant Agreement:** If your application is successful, you'll be required to sign a grant agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the funding.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** As a grant recipient, you will need to provide progress reports and a final evaluation report. This will include evidence of expenditure, evidence that the project has been delivered, and details of outcomes achieved. Applicants should think about how they will collect this evidence before applying.

8. Application Deadlines

The Where Quality of Life Matters Grant Scheme will be open for applications from 10 July 2026 to 30 September 2026. Applications received after this date will not be accepted.

9. Get In Touch

For any queries regarding the Maldon District Council Where Quality of Life Matters Grant Scheme, please don't hesitate to contact us strategy.team@maldon.gov.uk.

10. Important Notes

These guidelines and priorities will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant, reflect learning from previous funding rounds, and continue to align with the needs of the district and the Council's wider strategies. Any updates will be clearly communicated on the Council's website.

11. How To Strengthen Your Application

Following the first year of delivering the scheme, we have identified several areas where applications can be strengthened. Applicants should use the points below as a checklist before submitting their application.

- **Be clear about the need:** Strong applications explain the problem, opportunity, or gap the project is responding to. Where possible, include local evidence such as community feedback, waiting lists, survey results or local data.
- **Show who will benefit:** Explain who the project is for, how many people are expected to benefit, and why the project is particularly important for those residents, businesses, visitors, or community groups.
- **Make the project realistic:** Include a clear timetable, key milestones, and enough detail to show that the project can be delivered within the proposed timescale and budget.
- **Provide a detailed budget:** Break costs down clearly and explain how each item supports the project. Avoid broad estimates where possible. For capital purchases or improvements, include at least two quotes where relevant.
- **Explain value for money:** Describe why the proposed costs are reasonable and how the grant will make a meaningful difference. For larger applications, show how matchfunding, volunteer time, in-kind support, or partnership working will add value.
- **Think about sustainability:** If the project is not a one-off activity, explain how the benefits will continue after the grant funding ends. This could include future income, volunteer support, maintenance arrangements, partner contributions, or integration into existing activity.

- **Confirm permissions and responsibilities:** If the project involves land, buildings, public space, events, equipment, children, vulnerable adults, or physical works, make clear what permissions, insurances, risk assessments, safeguarding arrangements, and maintenance responsibilities are required and whether they are already in place.
- **Plan how you will measure impact:** Explain what success will look like and how you will collect evidence. This could include attendance numbers, feedback forms, case studies, photographs, business impact measures, environmental improvements, or wellbeing outcomes.

12. Application Form Question Synopsis

- Organisation Details
- Contact Details
- Project name
- Project location
- Target demographic / participant profiles
- Which Corporate Plan priority does the project support
- Brief project description, including what your project is aiming to achieve, the need it responds to, key activities, milestones and expected outcomes. Milestones should be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound. (max 500 words)
- Number of beneficiaries of the project, including how this estimate has been calculated where possible
- Timescale (in weeks, start and end date) – note the project cannot start before the grant award date
- Amount of grant applied for
- Legacy of project
- Evaluation and data collection, including how you will measure whether the project has achieved its intended outcomes
- Upload supporting documents, including budget breakdown, quotes where relevant, policies, permissions, evidence of need and letters of support
- Details of previous funding received



13. Tiered Scoring Matrices

Small Grants Assessment (Up to £1,000) total possible score: 50 points, with a minimum pass score of 30

Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
Community/Business Need & Benefit (Does it meet a clear local need and deliver positive outcomes for communities or the economy?)	20	0 = No evidence of need/benefit 1-5 = Anecdotal/Limited: Relies on assumptions; benefits a very small group or limited effect on business; impact unclear 6-10 = Good: Some evidence (e.g., small survey, local data); clear benefit for a reasonable number/range of people or to the success of the business, with clear positive outcomes 11-15 = Strong: Robust evidence (e.g., strong community feedback, statistics); significant, measurable benefits for many residents or a specifically vulnerable group or measurable increase to the business' economic performance, clearly outlining how lives will be improved.
Project Feasibility (Is it achievable with a clear plan and timeline?)	15	0 = Unclear/Unrealistic/High Risk Delivery 1-3 = Basic: Activities listed, but vague on how; high-level dates only 4-7 = Good: Clear plan, realistic timeline with key activities defined; organisation seems capable. 8-10 = Strong: Very clear, achievable, and logical plan; detailed, realistic timeline; organisation has relevant experience/capacity.
Budget & Value for Money (Are the costs justified and does the project offer good value?)	10	0 = Poor/Vague 1-2 = Basic: Costs listed, but justification missing or vague 3-4 = Good: Clear breakdown, costs seem reasonable for the activity; good use of funds for the proposed outcome 5 = Strong: Detailed, justified budget; excellent value for the proposed outcome.
Alignment with the Council's Priorities (Project explicitly aligns with one or more of Council's Priorities.)	5	0 = No alignment 1-2 = Limited: Addresses one priority generally



Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
		3-4 = Good: Clearly aligns with one main priority 5 = Excellent: Strongly aligns with one or more priorities

Medium Grants Assessment (£1,001 - £5,000) total possible score: 75 points, with a minimum pass score of 45

Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
Strategic Alignment (Project explicitly aligns with one of Council's Priorities outlined in the fund and demonstrates how.)	20	0-4 = No alignment or contradictory: The project fails to address any of the Council's priorities or conflicts with them. 5-9 = Limited: Addresses one priority generally, but without strong detail or a clear link 10-14 = Good: Clearly aligns with one main priority, providing some rationale 15-20 = Strong: Strongly aligns with one or more key priorities, demonstrating a clear understanding of the Council's vision. <i>If the project relates to climate action and energy efficiency, it should directly contribute to the Council's "Our Home, Our Future" strategy.</i>
Community/Business Need & Impact (Provides concrete evidence of the problem or opportunity the project will address (e.g., survey results, local statistics, community feedback, or business plan.)	20	0-4 = No evidence of need/benefit 5-9 = Limited: Relies on anecdotal evidence; benefits a small specific group or limited effect on business, limited; impact unclear 10-14 = Good: Some evidence of need (e.g., small survey, local data); clear benefit for a reasonable number/range of people or to the success of the business, with positive outcomes outlined 15-20 = Strong: Provides good evidence of community need (e.g., community feedback, local statistics); delivers significant positive impact for a notable number of residents or a specifically identified vulnerable group or measurable increase to the business' economic



Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
		performance, clearly outlining how quality of life will be improved.
Project Design & Deliverability (Project goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). A clear, step-by-step plan of how the project will be delivered. A logical and achievable schedule for project activities and milestones.)	15	0-3 = Unclear/Unrealistic/High Risk Delivery 4-7 = Basic: Activities listed, but vague on how; high-level dates only; organisation capacity implied but not clearly demonstrated 8-11 = Good: Clear plan, realistic timeline with key activities defined; organisation has relevant experience and appears capable 12-15 = Strong: Very clear, achievable, and logical plan; detailed, realistic timeline with key milestones; organisation demonstrates relevant experience to make the project a success and adequate staffing/volunteers.
Financial Management & Value for Money (Comprehensive breakdown of all costs, clearly justified with supporting quotes where appropriate. Project demonstrates efficient use of funds, maximising impact, and considering long-term sustainability beyond the grant period, where not a one-off event.)	10	0-2 = Poor/Vague 3-5 = Basic: Costs listed, but justification missing or vague; value for money not explicitly addressed 6-7 = Good: Clear budget breakdown, most costs justified; project seems to offer reasonable value for money 8-10 = Strong: Detailed, justified budget; excellent value for the proposed outcome; demonstrates efficient use of funds and some consideration for sustainability
Partnership & Collaboration (Evidence of working with other organisations or community groups to enhance impact and reach.) For a private business to score well in this criterion, they must demonstrate how the grant will also contribute to wider collaborations (with community groups, charities, or other businesses) creating a clear, measurable, and positive impact on the community. This means leveraging their resources	10	0-2 = No collaboration 3-5 = Basic: Project delivered in isolation, or very informal, limited collaborations 6-7 = Good: Some informal partnerships demonstrated; limited collaboration with other local groups or services 8-10 = Strong: Evidence of meaningful informal or formal partnerships, clear joint working, and/or leveraging resources from other organisations to enhance project reach or impact.



Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
(expertise, facilities, funding, Corporate Social Responsibility) to address identified community needs or enhance existing public services.		

Large Grants Assessment (£5,001 - £10,000) total possible score: 100 points, with a minimum pass score of 65

Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
Strategic Alignment (Project explicitly aligns with one of Council's Priorities outlined in the fund and demonstrates how.)	25	0-5 = None 6-10 = Limited: Project generally touches upon one Council priority but lacks clear detail or a strong, explicit link to the Council's vision. If climate-related, it's very general or not directly measurable. 11-17 = Good: Project clearly aligns with one or two main Council priorities, providing sound rationale and demonstrating a good understanding of the Council's strategic goals. If climate-related, it shows a reasonable contribution to "Our Home, Our Future." 18-25 = Strong: Project strongly aligns with multiple Council priorities, demonstrating a deep understanding of the Council's vision and how the project directly supports it. If "Climate Action & Energy Efficiency," it is a core component and explicitly contributes measurably to Council's "Our Home, Our Future" strategy (e.g., quantified carbon reduction, significant energy savings, biodiversity net gain, enhanced climate resilience).
Community/Business Need & Impact (Provides concrete evidence of the problem or opportunity the project will address (e.g., survey results, local statistics, community feedback, or business plan.)	20	0-4 = None: No evidence of community/business need or anticipated benefits. Impact is unclear, irrelevant, or minimal. 5-9 = Limited: Relies on anecdotal evidence; benefits a very small, specific



Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
		group; impact is vague or difficult to measure. 10-14 = Good: Some evidence of need (e.g., small survey, local data); clear benefits outlined for a reasonable number/range of people, with positive outcomes described. Impact is generally clear. 15-20 = Strong: Provides robust, comprehensive evidence of community need (for example, through detailed needs assessment, extensive consultation, local statistics, or strong letters of support). The project delivers substantial, measurable benefits for a large number of residents or strategically important vulnerable groups within the Maldon District, clearly showing how quality of life will be improved.
Project Design & Deliverability (Project goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). A clear, step-by-step plan of how the project will be delivered. A logical and achievable schedule for project activities and milestones.)	20	0-4 = None: Aims, objectives, activities, or timeline are unclear, unrealistic, or illogical. Organisation's capacity is not demonstrated or appears insufficient. High risk delivery. 5-9 points = Limited: Aims are broad, objectives lack detail/measurability. Activities listed but vague on methodology. Timeline is basic. Organisation's capacity is implied but not strongly evidenced. 10-14 point = Good: Clear aims, objectives are generally SMART. Activities are well-defined and logical. Realistic timeline with key milestones. Organisation demonstrates relevant experience and appears capable. 15-20 = Strong Exceptionally well-defined aims, with clear and SMART objectives. Comprehensive, logical, and innovative plan outlining all key activities, roles, responsibilities, and specific methodologies. Professional, detailed, and



Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
		realistic timeline with clear milestones, assigned responsibilities, and well-considered contingency planning. Organisation demonstrates a strong track record of successful project delivery, dedicated team (staff/volunteers).
Financial Management & Value for Money (Comprehensive breakdown of all costs, clearly justified with supporting quotes where appropriate. Project demonstrates efficient use of funds, maximising impact, and considering long-term sustainability beyond the grant period, where not a one-off event.)	20	0-4 = None: Budget is absent, highly vague, or contains significant unjustified costs. No consideration of value for money or sustainability. 5-9 = Limited: Basic budget breakdown, but justification for costs is weak or missing for key items. Value for money not explicitly addressed; sustainability plan is absent or unconvincing. 10-14 = Good: Clear budget breakdown, most costs justified with some supporting quotes. Project appears to offer reasonable value for money. Some consideration for long-term sustainability (e.g., potential for future funding, volunteer training, investment from the business itself). 15-20 = Strong: Highly detailed, realistic, and fully justified budget with clear cost breakdowns for all items. Multiple competitive quotes for significant expenditure are provided. Demonstrates exceptional return on investment, innovative approaches to maximise impact, and highly efficient use of public funds. A robust and credible plan for long-term project sustainability beyond the grant funding, including clear strategies for diverse income generation, volunteer retention, or integration into existing services.
Partnership & Collaboration For a private business to score well in this criterion, they must demonstrate how the grant will also contribute to wider collaborations (with community	15	0-3 = None: No evidence of working with other organisations. Project appears isolated.



Criteria	Max Score	Scoring Guidance (Examples)
groups, charities, or other businesses) creating a clear, measurable, and positive impact on the community. This means leveraging their resources (expertise, facilities, funding, Corporate Social Responsibility) to address identified community needs or enhance existing public services.		4-7 = Limited: Project delivered largely in isolation, or very informal, limited collaborations with minimal stated benefits. 8-11 points = Good: Some informal partnerships or limited collaboration with other local groups/services, with their roles generally described. Some benefits of partnership are stated. 12-15 = Strong: Strong evidence of formal or informal strategic partnerships that significantly enhance the project's reach, expertise, and sustainability. Clear demonstration of how partnerships will leverage additional resources (financial, in-kind, expertise) and avoid duplication. Evidence of meaningful community co-production or engagement in the design and delivery of the project (beyond mere consultation), especially with target beneficiaries.