

## South Lakeland District Council **Fairer South Lakeland Fund**

### **Purpose**

Financial grants which will enable local parish and town councils and community groups to alleviate financial hardship in their communities. Provides seed funding for community projects both with longer term aims to tackle poverty and short term measures to meet immediate need.

The funding must be spent to benefit the local community, and we expect applicants will work with other funders and community organisations and agencies to maximise benefit.

For example the funding could support:

- Community schemes/projects (eg community energy, repair/reuse, community food initiatives, community car share schemes, warm hubs and networking schemes)
- Projects to support local people in moving toward financial stability and security
- Schemes which target the alleviation of child poverty and promote inclusion in mainstream activities
- Projects supporting vulnerable people back into work
- Sustainable cost effective transport initiatives for example community lift-share, cycling and walking projects
- Behaviour change initiatives towards sound financial management

### **The Fund**

£25,000 - to be distributed across South Lakeland for community projects.

The fund can support all types of costs relating to your project or activity, including: core costs (e.g. staff, office costs), project costs (e.g. venue hire, project worker) and capital costs (can support the cost of a renewable installation).

Grants are targeted at Town and Parish Councils, small organisations with charitable or community focused aims and community groups that are based and working in South Lakeland.

The fund will support up to a maximum of 50% of total costs (more than 50% for groups with an exceptional case) for the project.

### **We will not fund:**

- 100% of your project (unless an exceptional case and at discretion of portfolio holder )
- Funding of general running costs of your organisation
- Activities that fail to show how impact on alleviating poverty will be measured
- Projects not benefiting people living in South Lakeland
- Direct replacement of statutory obligation and public funding
- Groups that cannot justify having significant unrestricted reserves e.g. where a Group has £10k or more in unrestricted reserves
- Private members' sports/social clubs
- National charities/organisations

### **Who Can Apply?**

The Council will consider applications from Town and Parish Councils, local charities, community interest companies, voluntary groups and other not for profit organisations in South Lakeland.

## Minimum and maximum awards

To ensure focus and impact, grants will be for a minimum of £500 and a maximum of £8,000 (**waived in exceptional cases**).

## Context

On 6th October 2020 in South Lakeland's Full Council meeting a motion to declare a Poverty Emergency, signed by Councillor Suzie Pye, was carried:

*"I move that our Council pass a motion declaring a Poverty Emergency, and explore the feasibility of setting up a Poverty Truth Commission, working closely with our Morecambe Bay partners. This will aid our aim of tackling the root causes of poverty and inequalities, which is critical to the success of our Council Plan."*

## Council Strategy:

The Council Plan 2021 – 2026 has 4 priorities: Priority 3 is "Delivering a fairer South Lakeland".

Targets include:

- Halve the proportion of households in poverty and
- Eliminate child poverty.

Compared to many parts of Cumbria and Lancashire, South Lakeland is prosperous with relatively low levels of most types of deprivation.

This, however, masks some significant inequalities. Some of the key facts that illustrate this include:

- median house prices across South Lakeland are almost seven times the average annual household income and up to 12 times income in some parts of the district and there are around 4,000 households on the Social Housing Register
- 7.2% of households in South Lakeland have an annual household income of under £10,000 and 7% of children live in low-income households
- 13% of households are in fuel poverty – driven both by low incomes and high heating costs in older, less well insulated homes
- there is major variation in life expectancy across the district, with men living 3.4 years longer and women living 4 years longer in the least deprived areas than the most deprived areas.

The Covid crisis has exposed vulnerabilities in South Lakeland's local economy. The visitor economy including accommodation, retail, food and drink, transport and visitor attractions has been badly hit.

This in turn has had an impact on the network of services; professional services, catering, building maintenance etc, which supports the visitor economy.

The longer term prognosis is unclear and a lot depends on changing holidaying habits and the balance between increased domestic tourism and reduced international tourism.

The full impact has yet to be felt as a lot of businesses have been in receipt of assistance through various grant regimes and the furlough scheme.

Although still the lowest in Cumbria and well below national and county averages, since the beginning of the pandemic, unemployment in South Lakeland has nearly doubled from 1.1% to 1.9% (and the proportion of the working age population receiving Universal Credit has risen from 6.8% to 7.8% (February 2022)).

There is a particular concern that, as a result of the pandemic, many people are finding themselves at financial risk, often unexpectedly and suddenly. Many people are encountering the benefits system for the first time and having to budget and manage money carefully. They are having to do this in the context of the physical and mental health impacts of the Covid crisis. There is a need for support.

For all of the above reasons South Lakeland has declared a poverty emergency and is implementing a strategy and action plan to tackle poverty and inequality.

### **Procedure**

Community groups/ organisations will submit a short proposal on their project, explaining how they would meet the criteria and what they request from SLDC. An application form will be used to ensure all necessary information is supplied.

Decision making on the scheme and awarding of grants will rest with SLDC. Proposals will be assessed by the Poverty Alleviation Portfolio Holder and designated officers (SB, JF, MW/ colleague). (In the event of the Portfolio Holder's unavailability, the Leader will nominate an alternative Portfolio Holder).

### **Criteria**

- Does the proposal address poverty alleviation through measures to support local communities and residents to become more sustainable and financially resilient.
- Does the requested funding link to a clear proposal with clear and measurable outputs and do the costs look reasonable?
- Match funded projects will stand a better chance of success
- Does the proposal explain how the grant would fit with a wider package of funding if applicable?
- Have you provided evidence of public support and community involvement?
- Projects must be completed within one year and recognise the support of this fund in all publicity.

### **Decision making**

The decision to award a grant will be made by the Strategy Lead Specialist (or an officer delegated by them) as an administrative decision, acting on the advice of the Portfolio Holder and officers assessing the proposal.

The grant agreement will comprise:

- An offer letter – with standard terms included. For the organisation to counter sign as an acceptance of the offer and terms
- The proposal

To receive the award the applicant must have their match funding in place and confirmed (Waivered in exceptional circumstances).

On receipt of an accepted offer, SLDC will raise a purchase order, against which the community group will invoice the Council.

Organisations will be required to provide a short written report on how the funds have been applied.