

LOSTOCK SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PLANT (LSEP)

COMMUNITY FUND GUIDELINES

1. The LSEP Community Fund

The LSEP Community Fund has been established to provide tangible benefits for the local community during the final construction and commissioning phases of the plant.

The fund is a one-off sum of £50,000 which will be drawn down as projects are agreed to be funded up until the fund is all allocated.

2. Who can apply for funding?

Applications will only be accepted from properly constituted not-for-profit organisations, voluntary groups, and registered charities with a bank account requiring at least two signatories.

3. What projects can be funded?

Type of projects

The fund will have a primary focus on supporting projects which:

- (i) Have a demonstrably positive impact on the local environment
- (ii) Contribute positively to meeting the [sustainability goals of Cheshire West & Chester Council](#)
- (iii) Contributing to net zero and climate emergency goals
- (iv) Demonstrably improve community health, wellbeing and social value within the defined area (for example, create or improve a community amenity, or address an issue like fly-tipping).

Location of projects

Applications will only be accepted from organisations delivering projects within an agreed geographical area – the parishes of Northwich, Lostock Gralam, Lach Dennis & Lostock Green and Rudheath.

Eligible costs

Costs must be directly related to the project and not include ongoing organisational costs e.g. staffing/salary costs; transport costs.

Funding Exclusions

For clarity, the fund will not support:

- Projects outside the defined geographical benefit area.
- Fundraising for national charities unless funds are for a specific project within the benefit area.

- Projects that are a statutory responsibility of a local authority or other government body.
- Activities promoting political or religious objectives (although, for example, projects put forward by religious organisations which meet the fund objectives, but do not have any element of promoting religious objectives, would be considered).
- Retrospective funding for activities that have already taken place.
- Projects that conflict with the activities or interests of LSEP.
- Applications from individuals not acting on behalf of a properly constituted not-for-profit organisation, voluntary group or registered charity with a bank account requiring at least two signatories.
- Projects that duplicate other local environmental or community initiatives.

4. The application process

Application Requirements

To be considered, applications must provide:

- **A clear explanation of the need and benefits of the project** and the level of support from the local community.
- **Details of the project's costs** supported by a budget for the work and, where work is being done by a third party, two quotations from established companies for the work required.
- **A timeline** of when the work will be started and completed including interim milestones where appropriate
- **An explanation of the project's legacy**, outlining how any ongoing maintenance will be sustained.

Types of Grant

There are two types of grant:

- Small Grants: Up to a maximum of £2,500
- Large Grants: Up to a maximum of £10,000

The amounts for each type of grant are irrespective of the applicant's VAT status. Project costs in the application form should be shown as net of VAT for organisations able to recover VAT and as gross figures for those unable to recover.

In the interests of proportionality, whilst the application form for both grants is the same, it is expected that more detailed information and supporting documentation will be provided for large grants.

We anticipate awarding large grants to well-established organisations that can show a proven history of delivering successful outcomes. It is unlikely that new organisations without clear evidence of their ability to deliver will receive large grant funding.

Grant Conditions

- While an organisation can submit multiple applications, only one grant per project will be funded.
- An approved project must start within six months of approval and be completed within 12 months of approval.
- Applications will be considered on a 'first come, first served basis'.
- It is intended that the fund will spread grants across a variety of applicants across the geographical area of the fund.
- An application will lapse if it has not started after three months of being approved or if the project has not been completed within 12 months of approval. The panel may on a case by case basis, agree to extend these deadlines if requested by the applicant and justified by circumstances outside the applicant's control.

The Payment Process

Once approval for a scheme has been given by the panel, it is the responsibility of the applicant organisation to pay for the completed works and invoice LSEP. Invoices can be raised once proof of the works is provided (this could be a photograph of completed works or an invoice from a third party supplier).

How to apply

To apply for a grant, please complete an application form, available on our website. Please specify which grant you are applying for when filling out an application.

5. Decision making

To ensure the fund is managed in a transparent and independent manner, decisions on applications are made by a Community Fund Panel. This panel is made up of representatives with an existing electoral mandate from the communities local to the LSEP plant. This will include local ward councillors and town or parish councillors as follows:

- Cheshire West & Chester:
 - Northwich ward
 - Rudheath ward
- Town and parish councils
 - Northwich town council
 - Lach Dennis & Lostock Green parish council
 - Lostock Grlam parish council
 - Rudheath parish council

A representative from LSEP will chair the panel but will not have voting powers unless a vote is tied and then they have the casting vote. The decision of the panel will be final, and no negotiations or appeals will be entered into with an applicant.

The panel will be responsible for managing administration of the fund and reporting with support from LSEP.

6. Timelines

The fund will be allocated in a number of rounds in advance of LSEP becoming operational in early 2027. Indicative timelines are below, however these are subject to change at the discretion of LSEP and the panel.

Round one

- Applications close – 30th June 2026
- Grants awarded – 31st July 2026

Round two

Should all the money be awarded under round one there will be no further funding rounds. If funds are still available a second round of funding will be undertaken, expected to be before the end of 2026.

7. Further information

If you have any questions you can contact communityfund@lostocksep.co.uk.