



Neighbourhood Grant

Neighbourhood Grant 2026 - 2027 Guidance Notes

What is the Neighbourhood Grant?

The Neighbourhood Grant represents a fantastic opportunity for statutory and 'not for profit' voluntary and community organisations to access grant funding for projects and initiatives that benefit Watford's residents and communities including:

- Improving or renovating a building or space
- Provide new or additional short-term activities or programmes that address the impact that new development has on an area

The Neighbourhood Grant is a portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Community Infrastructure Levy or CIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. This is a charge based on the floorspace of new developments. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.

In line with the CIL Regulations the levy can be spent to 'support the development of the local council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation, maintenance of infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

Watford Borough Council collects CIL on new developments in the borough. For further information on CIL, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy>

A proportion of CIL is allocated as Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL). In Watford, we have decided to call this the Neighbourhood Grant and agreed in accordance with the regulations that a percentage (15%) of CIL received from new developments will be spent on local priorities and to support community led projects.

The following priorities have been identified for NCIL spending. Projects will be assessed against these priorities:

- Increase or improve access to a space where there are more people in the local area (due to new housing or retail)
- Improve the community ahead of new developments happening locally
- Develop new activities and projects to serve a wider number of residents
- Mitigate an issue caused by local development (new houses or retail)
- Ensure that a particular community is not left out of benefits of local growth and expansion (skills or overcoming barriers)
- Improve access to areas where growth and opportunity have increased from other parts of the borough (e.g. transport to jobs or facilities)
- Improve accessibility where existing local space or assets will be made usable by more people locally
- Improving the opportunities of individuals to access the benefits presented by local growth

It is a legal requirement that NCIL projects address the impact that development has on an area. Projects in areas that have experienced significant development (Central, Holywell and Vicarage wards) and those that support the delivery of Watford's Environmental Strategy 2023-2030 will be prioritised for Neighbourhood Grant spend. For further information on Watford's Environmental Strategy 2023-2030, please visit

<https://www.watford.gov.uk/sustainable-watford/leading-example/leading-example-1>

Who can apply for funding?

- Constituted 'Not for Profit' voluntary and community sector organisations
- Resident Associations
- Registered Charities
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO)
- Charitable branches of schools (i.e. Parent/Teacher Associations)
- Charitable companies (incorporated as 'not for profit') and trusts
- Community Amateur Sports Clubs
- Registered Community Interest Companies (limited by guarantee)
- Departments of Hertfordshire County Council
- Departments of Watford Borough Council

Constituted Groups

We can accept applications from 'not for profit' voluntary and community organisations who can comply with the following conditions:

- Have a registered address in England
- Hold a bank account in the name of the organisation
- Have a management committee of at least 3 unrelated/non-cohabiting committee members
- Be non-profit making, or a social enterprise where profits are reinvested for community benefit

Applicants

- Applicants can only submit one application per funding cycle.
- Applicants who have not met the terms of any previous funding agreement including the submission of monitoring reports will not be considered.

- Applicants are unable to reapply for funding for a period of at least 1 year following a successful application.

Statutory Organisations

As Hertfordshire County Council and Watford Borough Council have a duty to directly deliver infrastructure as well as facilitate collaboration among other stakeholders to help ensure necessary infrastructure is delivered, we accept applications annually.

Departments of Hertfordshire County Council and Watford Borough Council will need to complete an initial expression of interest form should they wish to apply for funding.

If either Council has received funding in the previous year, each expression of interest will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

What are the criteria for funding?

We will consider applications for projects and initiatives that:

- Are in Watford and benefit Watford residents
- Aim to support the local community by improving or renovating a building or space
- Provide new or additional short-term activities or programmes that address the impact that new development has on an area
- Are non-commercial and non-profit making
- Meet the CIL regulations
- Meet any of the NCIL priorities
- Support any of the priorities identified in the Council Plan
- Deliver high quality infrastructure, physical, social or anything else that addresses the demands that development places on an area*

*demands that development places on an area can include (but are not limited to) the need for community venues, activities that support education, training, physical and mental wellbeing in the community, environmental effects including pollution and loss of biodiversity, increase in population density, the need for outdoor or green space because of development, the need for cycling and walking links and infrastructure.

Council Plan 2022 – 2026 (Watford Together, United by Possibility.):

Our Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2024-26 sets out our aspirations for both Watford Borough Council and the town it serves. It is forward-looking, high level and outward facing, with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments. The plan demonstrates our role as leader of place and how we will continue to build on our strategic and operational excellence.

Our Council Plan themes are:

- A council working for our community and serving our residents
- A greener, brighter future
- An inspiring, thriving and creative town
- A diverse, happy and healthy town

You can find a copy of our Council Plan and Delivery Plan here: <https://www.watford.gov.uk/council-13/council-strategies-plans-1>

How much can we apply for?

- Up to £50,000 towards a physical infrastructure project
- Up to £5,000 to deliver a new or additional activity or programme

When can we apply?

- This programme operates one round of funding. The fund is open from 9am on Monday 1st June 2026 to 5.00pm on Friday 21st August 2026.
- Late applications are not considered.

How do we apply?

- Applications must be made online by visiting <https://www.watford.gov.uk/neighbourhood-grant>
- **You must** complete **ALL** sections of the application form and provide **ALL** associated documents.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted, and organisations will be responsible for resubmitting a completed version of the application.

What documents do we need to submit with our application?

- A copy of your organisation's constitution, governing document or equivalent (signed and dated)
- A copy of your organisation's Equality & Diversity Policy
- A copy of your organisation's Environmental Policy (if applicable)
- A copy of your organisation's Safeguarding Policy (if applicable)
- Your latest set of organisation accounts
- A copy of your organisation's Public Liability Insurance - if applicable (Minimum cover of £5m)
- 3 x quotes for equipment/capital purchases - if applicable*

*There may be occasions when organisations find it difficult to obtain 3 quotes for equipment or capital purchases, especially if the item to be purchased is custom made or bespoke. If this is the case, please explain the reasons within your application or contact the Partnerships & Funding Manager for advice.

Who cannot apply for funding?

- Individuals
- Informal groups
- Sole traders
- Statutory organisations (Schools, NHS, Police etc.)
- Private businesses/companies

We strongly encourage individuals or informal groups who have great ideas for projects to please get in touch with Watford Borough Council at NCIL@watford.gov.uk or their ward councillor to discuss how we can work in partnership.

Examples of what we can fund:

- Improvements to play spaces, including the purchase of play equipment for children, young people, their families and carers.
- Improving the environmental impact of a building or space
- Making buildings/venues more accessible for people with disabilities or mobility issues
- Improvements to public footpaths
- Installation of solar panels to lower carbon emissions and reduce energy costs
- Mentoring projects for at risk young people
- Projects that improve physical and mental wellbeing
- Projects that improve education, skills and/or knowledge.

Examples of what we will not fund:

- Projects that support political and/or religious activity
- Projects that are purely research
- Projects that take place outside of Watford
- Standalone events
- Core funding including but not limited to an organisation's baseline service delivery and/or activities, on-going hall hire costs, salaries, utilities, rates, rent, insurance etc.
- Costs incurred in putting the application together which are not directly related to the project.
- For profit projects
- The purchase of land, buildings and vehicles.
- Applications to cover the running costs of existing projects
- Equipment which will be retained by individuals rather than the organisation
- Retrospective funding i.e. where the spend has already occurred

What are the conditions of funding?

- Organisations must provide a signed and dated copy of their Constitution or Governing Document, their Equality and Diversity Policy and their latest set of accounts at the time of application.
- Constituted organisations must provide the contact details of 2 references and these must be from a statutory organisation, constituted organisation or charity. Your references must not be connected/affiliated with your organisation. If you have not applied to the Neighbourhood Grant before, or if you are an organisation or group we do not know, we may contact your references to confirm your status and suitability for funding.
- It is the responsibility of the organisation to arrange and pay for public liability insurance with a minimum cover of £5m. If your application requires this insurance, a copy of the insurance certificate must be provided at the time of application. The council will not accept responsibility for the consequences, financial or otherwise, should the organisation fail to uphold their responsibilities to obtain adequate public liability insurance.
- Requests for equipment must be supported by 3 quotes, for each item, at the time of application.
- Any equipment purchased through this fund must remain within the organisation and must not be loaned out to external parties without the prior permission of WBC.
- Please keep all receipts for purchases as these will be required as part of the monitoring process.
- Where services or equipment are purchased from persons that are known to the organisation, this must be declared to the council in your application.
- Applications for funding towards a physical infrastructure project including but not limited to improvements/renovations to a building or space must be able to substantiate that the appropriate permission has been obtained and that any/all required lease, licence or other form

of occupation arrangement is in place, the length required of which will be determined by the level of funding support required.

The applicant must also be able to provide evidence that all required maintenance, statutory inspections and any other requirements that are binding on the applicant under the occupation agreement are up to date.

- Be aware that if your organisation provides services to residents outside of Watford, we may only fund the proportion that relates to the number of Watford residents benefiting from your project.
- If you will be working with children and/or vulnerable adults, you must provide a copy of your organisation's Safeguarding Policy and any related documents (i.e. evidence of enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS checks). We may not be able to proceed with your application if these documents cannot be provided when requested. You may also be asked to tell us who your Designated Safeguarding Lead is.
- We cannot accept applications from a Watford Councillor. Watford Councillors can support an organisation in their application but cannot be named as the main contact.
- The funding will be used wholly and exclusively for the purpose agreed with WBC.
- Unspent funds or those not used for the described purpose must be repaid to the council.
- Permission must be approved by WBC for any changes your organisation wishes to make to the purpose for which the funding has been awarded. Any changes made without WBC's prior approval may result in the organisation having to return all or part of the funding award.
- The organisation must acknowledge the council's support in any publicity material by using the council's logo. Should the council's support be withdrawn from the organisation, the council's logo must be removed from all publicity material immediately.
- Be aware that if your application for funding is successful (for any amount up to £50,000) you may be unable to reapply for funding for a period of at least 1 year following a successful application.

What are the monitoring requirements?

All successful applicants should take photographs if appropriate. You will be required to:

- Provide receipts against spend. Following consideration of these by WBC, please note that unspent awards or those not used for the described purpose must be repaid to the council within one month of WBC's notification to avoid any further action.
- Infrastructure projects (up to £50,000) must provide quarterly reports and an end of project report.
- Service/Activity projects (up to £5,000) must provide an end of project report.
- Other additional monitoring requirements may be put in place for individual organisations as WBC deems necessary and/or appropriate.
- Meet all/any conditions of funding that have been set.

General Data Protection Regulations

Watford Borough Council takes the security of your personal information seriously. We are required to collect certain personal information from you to deal with your application for a Neighbourhood Grant.

You can view our privacy notices to see how we intend to deal with your personal data by going to <https://www.watford.gov.uk/transparency-open-data-1/privacy-notice/6>

The council will use the information you have provided for the stated purpose only. No personal information you have given us will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes. The council's policy is that information may be shared among officers across departments and other agencies,

where the legal framework allows, if this will help to improve the service you receive and to develop other services.

This council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. We may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

When will we know if we have been successful?

- Organisations are informed of the decision by email in December 2026.
- Successful applicants awarded funding over £5,000, will be required to complete and sign a Grant Agreement and agree to any individual conditions of funding before the grant is paid.
- Successful applicants awarded up to £5,000 will be required to sign a Declaration of Funding and agree to any individual conditions of funding before the grant is paid.
- Once we have received your signed grant agreement or declaration, your grant will be paid within two weeks.
- Grant payments are made by BACS into the organisation's UK bank account.
- Successful applicants must ensure the grant is in the organisation's bank account before making payments against it.
- Successful applicants have 1 year to complete their projects (January – December 2027)

How we will review your application:

Prior to the submission of your application, we strongly recommend you attend one of the Neighbourhood Grant drop-in sessions and/or bookable project appointments to discuss your application with officers who will be able to provide advice and guidance to support you and therefore increase the possibility of your application being successful. It is also crucial that you read all available documentation provided including these guidance notes.

Stage 1

Once your application has been submitted, officers will undertake an initial assessment to ensure the application meets our Council Plan themes, CIL regulations and to check that the organisation is eligible to apply.

Stage 2

Applications that have passed stage 1 will undergo a thorough due diligence check and full assessment process. They will be evaluated according to the specified criteria and given scores based on the details provided within the application form. The applications will then be ranked according to their total scores.

A governance panel made up of internal officers and external partners will meet and discuss each application to ensure the terms of the Neighbourhood Grant are met.

A report setting out our funding recommendations is presented to the Mayor, our Corporate Management Board and our Portfolio Holders.

Any applications that have not passed stage 2 of the process will not continue any further and organisations will be informed by email.

Stage 3

Applications that have passed stage 2 will undergo a period of public voting from 26th October – 6th November 2026 so that residents can show their support for the projects they would like to see come to fruition.

The report, subject to any amendments is finally submitted to Cabinet on 30th November 2026 to decide the awarded projects for the 2026-27 year.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in December 2026 following the Cabinet meeting.

Assessment Criteria:

Assessment Criteria:	Questions to consider when completing your application:
Does the project meet the CIL regulations?	Does your project support the development of Watford by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation, maintenance of infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area?
Does the project meet at least one of the NCIL priorities and at least one of the priorities of the Council Plan?	Explain how your project helps achieve/contribute towards the NCIL priorities and the priorities of the Council Plan? Can you provide evidence of how your project accomplishes this? Have you read the Council Plan, and can you provide links to it within your application?
Is the project deliverable?	The project should be able to begin within the year ahead from January 2027. It should have clear outcomes and deliverables. You should be able to explain who is responsible for delivering your project and who will manage it. Will volunteers from the local community be involved and assist with its delivery? Do you have a project delivery strategy or project plan? How long will the project take to deliver? Does your organisation have a proven track record of delivery?
Does the project benefit the local and/or the wider community in the borough?	Can you provide evidence of community benefit of the project? Are you able to demonstrate who in the community will benefit from your project and explain how your project addresses local needs? Is the project accessible to the wider community or is it limited to a specific area or ward or group of people?
Does the project demonstrate how it will be sustained at the end of the funding period and what the ongoing benefits will be.	Can you provide details of how your project becomes sustainable at the end of the funding period to ensure it continues? How will your project benefit future generations of Watford residents? What is your project's ongoing legacy?
Does the project offer value for money?	You must be able to provide quotes for any works being undertaken and for any equipment you wish to purchase. Have you achieved the best price possible? Will you be using local suppliers? Does the project have any match funding?
Is there evidence of local community support?	Does your project have the support of the local community, Councillor, council officer or department?

	How is this evidenced (letters, survey results etc)?
Does the project support the delivery of Watford's Environmental Strategy 2023-2030?	Are you able to demonstrate how your project will support the delivery of our Environmental Strategy?
Projects in areas that have experienced significant development (Central, Holywell and Vicarage wards) will be prioritised for Neighbourhood Grant spend.	Are you able to describe the development that has taken place in your area and the impact this has had on the local community? How will your project mitigate or alleviate that impact?

Who can I contact for further information and advice?

Kim Bloomfield
Partnerships & Funding Manager
kim.bloomfield@watford.gov.uk
01923 278319

Other useful contact details:

Caroline Roche Sports Development & Physical Activity Manager 01923 278242 caroline.roche@watford.gov.uk	Lewis Butler Arts Development & Events Officer 01923 278705 lewis.butler@watford.gov.uk
Neil Cole Parks & Greenspace Development Lead 01923 278060 neil.cole@watford.gov.uk	Hayley Page Parks & Streets Contract Manager 01923 278629 hayley.page@watford.gov.uk
Filipe Costa Mayor's Political Assistant 01923 278373 filipe.costa@watford.gov.uk	Isabel Crozier Park Manager (Cassiobury & Oxhey Activity Park) 01923 278025 isabel.crozier@watford.gov.uk
Susheel Rao Strategic Sustainability Manager 01923 278130 susheel.rao@watford.gov.uk sustainability@watford.gov.uk	For other contacts including Planning, Conservation, Building Control, Environment, Licensing, Rubbish & Recycling, please visit our website: www.watford.gov.uk
For information on marketing and publicity including the use of the WBC logo please email communications@watford.gov.uk	For contacts at Hertfordshire County Council including highways, please visit the HCC website: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/home.aspx

Testimonial from Watford Women's Centre – 2024-25 Neighbourhood Grant Applicant:

When I started at Watford Women's Centre in March 2024, our outside space was completely unusable. It was so overgrown with weeds, thorns, and brambles, you couldn't actually open the doors onto the garden area! After a few false starts, we found a wonderful group of volunteers

from Taylor Woodrow, who came and cleared the area – so then we knew what we had to work with!

Having heard about the Neighbourhood Grant, I went along to one of the information sessions, where I spoke to Council officers and told them about our ideas for the garden. We wanted a safe, calm space where staff and clients could relax, have lunch, chat to colleagues. For clients who had had a counselling or domestic abuse support session, we wanted to offer somewhere to decompress and recharge before returning to the hustle and bustle of daily life.

The whole process from filling in the grant application form to receiving the funding was extremely well organised and the Neighbourhood Grant team were really supportive at all points. We obtained parking permits for outside our office on Market Street and encountered a few issues with people parking in the spaces, but again the team at Watford Borough Council were really helpful.

We used the same gardening company - Jay's Gardens - that another local charity had used for their garden refurbishment. They were fantastic and, importantly for us, really understood our requirements and aligned with our values as a charity.

The end result has been absolutely transformational for us, and we simply could not have achieved anything like this without the support of the Neighbourhood Grant. We were delighted to be able to show the garden off to Mayor Peter Taylor and Deputy Mayor Aga Dychton. For anyone thinking about applying for a Neighbourhood Grant, we would really encourage organisations who are eligible to go for it!

Lucy Martin, CEO, Watford Women's Centre

