

Shropshire Council

Environmental Maintenance Grant Programme 2018 – 2021

Briefing note

Background

Shropshire Council's Highways and Transport team has operated the Environmental Maintenance Grant (EMG) programme for the last 8 years. The programme has operated successfully and is seen as delivering a number of benefits.

The recipients of the grants are overwhelmingly rural parish councils and a small number of town councils. There is one community group using a grant to enable local residents to carry out litter picks and environmental tidy-ups.

At its meeting of 4th September 2017, Shropshire Council's Communities Overview Committee confirmed Terms of Reference for a time limited Task & Finish Group to review the EMG programme.

The Group's considerations were made in the context of Shropshire Council's extremely challenging financial position. Members of the Task & Finish Group wanted to consider if continuing the grant programme was a sustainable position at a time of declining revenue budgets, and what added, social and preventative impact is enabled through the investment of the grant.

The work undertaken by the Task & Finish Group and the recommendations confirmed at its workshop on 16th November 2017 were confirmed at a meeting of the Communities Overview Scrutiny Committee (COSC) on Monday 27th November 2017. The recommendations from COSC were made to Cabinet on 21st March 2018 where they were agreed.

Within the 2017/18 EMG application paperwork Shropshire Council advised potential applicants that the EMG programme would be reviewed and that the outcome of this review would be consulted on.

A consultation on the proposed redesigned scheme based on the recommendations made by Cabinet will take place between 9th April and 21st May 2018.

The consultation questions based on the recommendations within the report, are -

Q1

Changes to eligible activity criteria

The activity eligible for funding by the Environmental Maintenance Grant will be as detailed below and will take place on Shropshire Council owned land and assets **only**.

Eligible activity	Comments
Grass tidy	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented. Only if it is an area not currently being maintained on behalf of SC either to a standard or on instruction
Weed control	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented. e.g. pulling ragwort, - not to involve the use of chemicals

Clear leaves / debris from grids	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Clear vegetation from culverts	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Straighten and clean road signs	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Remove obstructing tree and hedge growth	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Litter picking	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Street sweeping	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented. Footways only
Maintain street furniture	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented. Not to include electrical works.
Maintain closed church yards	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.

Q2

Applicant eligibility

The eligible applicants will be rural town and parish councils. Councils can work in partnership with local community groups to submit applications. Town councils with a population of over 10K will not be eligible.

Q3

Providing value for money and added value

The total cost of the activity to be delivered will have to be funded in part by the applicant to be eligible for support from the EMG programme – the total cost cannot be funded wholly by the grant. e.g. if the total cost of the activity to be delivered is £1000, an application to the EMG programme could be for £500 with the additional £500 coming from the applicant.

Applications should demonstrate how the delivery of the activity is providing economies of scale, e.g. local councils working together and pooling resources to let one contract.

Applications should demonstrate how the delivery of the activity creates social, economic or environmental value, e.g. the involvement of volunteer time to add value to the core activity

Q4

Design of the funding programme

Funding decisions will be made for a 3 year period with annual reporting and monitoring. A review will be undertaken in the second year.

Q5

Annual value of the funding programme

The annual value of the programme will be £75K.

Q6

Value of individual grants

The maximum value of annual individual grants will be £1,500.

Q7

Guidance notes and monitoring

The guidance notes will be rewritten to ensure clarity on the design and delivery of the EMG funded activity, with a focus on health and safety. Applicants will be required to complete and submit an annual report including expenditure to evidence the activity delivered in the previous year.

Q8

Application assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed, deemed eligible and scored on the following criteria –

Pass/Fail questions

- Is the activity within the application eligible for funding through the EMG programme?
Yes/No
- Is there a financial contribution from the applicant towards total cost of the activity?
Yes/No

Criteria that will be scored

- How does the delivery of the activity provide value for money?
- How does the delivery of the activity demonstrate added value, e.g. social, economic or environmental?

Proposed activity timeline

Date	Activity
9 th April 2018	Consultation starts
21 st May 2018	Consultation ends
21 st May – 28 th May 2018	Outcomes of consultation and final details of the EMG programme confirmed
4 th June 2018	Application process opens
8 th July 2018	Application process ends
9 th – 20 th July	Applications considered
27 th July 2018	Decisions made
August 2018	Grants made
September 2018	Grant funded activity starts