



Report to	Wem Town Council
Date of meeting	24 th September 2026
Report authors	Cllr B Barker, Cllr D Parry, Cllr M Hudson, A Roberts (RFO)
Subject	Report of the Support Service Working Group
Decisions required	Yes: Council is asked to approve the community grant application form, assessment guide and eligibility criteria.

Report of the Service Support Working Group

1. Executive Summary

The Service Support Working Group has considered two distinct matters:

- i. The use and management of the annual Service Support budget, including how this funding should be used to support community grants; and
- ii. The Council's approach to urgent service pressures, including how these should be identified, assessed and supported when they arise.

The Working Group has agreed a community grant application form, assessment guide and eligibility criteria, along with a proposed formal approach to the use of the Urgent Service Pressures earmarked reserve and recommends that Council approve these documents so that applications and requests for support can be assessed clearly, consistently and transparently.

2. Recommendations

- a. That the Council approves the eligibility criteria, Community Grant Application Form and Assessment Guide as agreed by the Service Support Working Group.
- b. That the Council approves the approach to considering Urgent Service Pressure funding requests agreed by the Service Support Working Group.
- c. That the approved processes and documentation are used to support clear, consistent and transparent decision making.
- d. That the responsibility for making recommendations relating to the award of all community grants should be delegated to the Finance Committee.
- e. That the grants process is reviewed after year 1 and amended if required.

3. Background

The Service Support Working Group was established (Minute Ref.182/25-29, 26 February 2026) to determine how the Council should manage funding for community grants and urgent service pressures.

The Group's tasks included

- Reviewing the Annual Community Grants Scheme and the £30,000 earmarked reserve for urgent service pressures.
- Defining which organisations and services can apply for grants, ensuring alignment with Council priorities, legal powers, and financial limits.
- Establishing clear grant award guidelines and ensuring that current grant recipients are made aware of any revised arrangements for 2027–28.
- Developing a clear process for the agreeing the use of the earmarked reserve should the need arise

The Group has developed a standardised grant application form and assessment guide as well as a process for evaluating urgent service pressures. These are to be found in Appendix A, B and C

4. Eligibility for Funding

The table below shows the proposed eligibility criteria.

	Eligible	Ineligible
Community Grants	• Sporting leisure or recreational organisations * • Services not considered to be at risk	• WSSA • WSLC • Ongoing support
Urgent Service Pressures EMR	• At risk statutory support services (eg library) • Key infrastructure where loss would have significant local impact (eg streetlights) • Key charitable organisations (e.g NS Wheelers) • The Council's own land and property	• Sporting leisure or recreational organisations • Services not considered to be at risk • Ongoing support

5. Financial Implications

No direct financial implications arise from accepting the application form, assessment guide and eligibility criteria. The documents support the administration of the Annual Community Grants Scheme budget, previously identified as £18,000 and use of the existing £30,000 earmarked for urgent service support

6. Legal, Risk and Governance Implications

Implementing the proposed changes to the community grant scheme and the proposed approach to use of the urgent service pressures reserve will support transparent, consistent and accountable decision-making. The criteria should assist

Council in ensuring that grant applications and support requests are assessed fairly and in accordance with the agreed purpose of both sources of funding.

7. Consultation and Engagement

The documents have been developed through the Service Support Working Group. Once the process is approved, the new funding arrangements, application form and evaluation guidance will be communicated to previous and potential applicants through the Council's website, social media and direct contact with relevant local organisations. If possible, the grants process can also be promoted through the Wemian. An opportunity will also be provided for potential applicants to ask questions about the new process before submitting an application.

8. Next Steps

If approved, the community grant application form, assessment guide and eligibility criteria should be finalised and made available for use. Officers should ensure that applicants are informed of the process and that completed applications are assessed in line with the agreed guide. The urgent service pressures guidance process will be ready for use should a request come forward but will be an internal Council document.