

Policy Register

Community Grants Policy 2025-29

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Responsible Service Unit	- Economic and Cultural Activation
Authorised by	- Council
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This policy is part of a suite of policies adopted by Council or the Executive Management Team (EMT).

New or replacement policies can be created and developed within Service Units but can only be added to Council's Policy Register by Governance Services following the approval of the policy by Council or the EMT.

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PURPOSE

The Community Grants Policy 2025-29 (the Policy) confirms principles for the management of the Manningham Community Grant Program, including alignment with Manningham Council's strategic objectives, overarching funding and governance requirements, and key processes and practices to deliver a robust and well-governed funding program.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Manningham Community Grant Program provides financial support for local not-for-profit community organisations to develop activities, programs and services that benefit and respond to current and emerging needs and interests of the Manningham community.

The Policy is consistent with the key action areas included in the current Manningham Council Plan.

GOVERNANCE

Related Legislation and Policy

This Policy is strategically aligned with the following legislation and guiding documents:

- Local Government Act 2020
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012
- Gender Equity Act 2020
- Manningham Council Plan (active years)
- Conflict of Interest Policy (POL/566)
- Community Grants Assessment Panel Terms of Reference 2025-26

Principles

The management of this Policy is guided by the following principles:

- **Transparency:** Ensuring all processes and practices supporting the program are clearly defined, well documented, and consistently applied across Manningham Council and the community, with accessible information provided to all.
- **Equity:** All applicants will have equal access to information, advice, and support, and will undergo a consistent assessment and evaluation process. We are committed to removing barriers for our diverse community by ensuring the grants program is accessible, including to non-English speaking communities.
- **Accountability:** A rigorous process will be maintained to uphold good governance, guided by appropriate policies and procedures, and ensuring conflicts of interest are managed at all stages of the grants process.
- **Efficiency:** The program will be administered using thorough application processes, effective and timely assessments, and robust program management systems to ensure resources are used responsibly.

Conflict of Interest

All members involved in the Community Grants program and Councillors have an obligation in relation to conflict of interest and confidentiality.

Conflicts of interest must be avoided when carrying out duties and any potential conflicts of interest must be declared.

- Officers will be required to complete a Conflict of Interest Declaration upon receipt of the applications and act in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy (POL/566).
- Panel will be required to complete a Conflict of Interest Declaration prior to assessment.
- Councillors are required to declare any conflicts of interest prior to endorsing any grants.

OBJECTIVES

The Manningham Community Grant Program is underpinned by the principles of community and cultural development, which are reflected in the grant objectives below. Applicants are required to address these grant objectives in their applications.

Collaboration	Foster and develop partnerships between Manningham Council, groups and not-for-profit organisations for the delivery of shared outcomes.
Services and Activities	Provide a range of services and activities that respond to the needs of our diverse community that align with our plans and strategies.
Connection and Inclusion	Foster community involvement and participation with a focus on groups and individuals that experience barriers to participating in community life.
Capacity Building	Build community capacity and empower communities to further develop or gain new skills to enhance their quality of life.
Innovation	Pilot activities that provide an innovative response to local priorities and ensure ongoing environmental, economic and social sustainability.
Public Value	Provide measurable, cost-effective and efficient means to deliver community outcomes in a transparent and accountable manner.

SCOPE OF POLICY

The Policy includes the five categories within the suite of the Manningham Community Grant Program, comprising of:

#	Category	Streams	Frequency
1.	Community Partnerships Grants	1. Community Development 2. Minor Community Events 3. Major Community Events	4-Yearly
2.	Neighbourhood Houses Grants	N/A	4-Yearly
3.	Annual Community Grants	1. Community Development 2. Arts 3. Festivals and Events 4. Healthy Ageing	Yearly
4.	Small Grants	1. Community Strengthening 2. Equipment Purchases	Yearly
5.	Senior Club Support Grants	N/A	Yearly

Funding Framework

Applicants may apply for one stream in each grant category per financial year. Each application must be for a different program or activity.

Grant Category	Purpose & Streams	Funding Allocations	Assessment Timing
Community Partnership Grants	<p>Available to not-for-profit or community organisations operating in Manningham to achieve longer term community development outcomes. The category has three streams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development: Supporting development of key community services, program and other initiatives that respond to the needs of Manningham's diverse community. Minor Community Events: Supporting the activation of key locations and the attraction of people to Manningham. Major Community Events: Supporting the activation of key locations, attracting and engaging a minimum of 8,000 people to the event. 	<p>Community Development: Allocations of \$20,001 to \$50,000 per year with a maximum of \$200,000 over four years.</p> <p>Minor Community Events: Allocations of \$10,001 to \$30,000 per year with a maximum of \$120,000 over four years.</p> <p>Major Community Events: Allocations of \$30,001 up to \$60,000 per year with a maximum of \$240,000 over four years.</p>	Four-year funding round.
Neighbourhood Houses Grants	<p>Support for Manningham's Neighbourhood Houses to deliver community development initiatives to benefit the health and wellbeing of the Manningham community.</p> <p>This is an invitation only grant category, designed to support the following neighborhood houses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ajani Neighbourhood House 	<p>Allocations of up to \$60,000 per year with a maximum of \$240,000 over four years.</p> <p>Breakdown of annual funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50,000 per house for site-specific initiatives \$10,000 per house for collaborative initiatives across all five Neighbourhood Houses 	Four-year funding round.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Park Orchards Community House and Learning Centre 3. Pines Learning 4. Warrandyte Neighbourhood House 5. Wonga Park Community Cottage 		
Annual Community Grants	<p>Support diverse range of community-led initiatives through four streams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Development: Supporting the needs of Manningham's diverse community. 2. Arts: Supporting activities that enable participation in the cultural life of Manningham. 3. Festivals and Events: Supporting the activation of key locations and the attraction of visitors to Manningham. 4. Healthy Ageing: Support not-for-profit organisations to deliver short to medium term healthy ageing initiatives to reach a wide range of Manningham's older community. 	\$3,001 - \$20,000 per application.	Annual funding round.
Small Grants	<p>Support community strengthening initiatives to enhance the quality of life of Manningham residents through two streams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Development 2. Equipment Purchases 	<p>Community Development: Up to \$3,000.</p> <p>Equipment Purchases: 50% contribution of the total cost up to \$1,500.</p>	Applications open all year.
Senior's Club Support Grants	The grant allows seniors clubs to achieve short term community development outcomes.	Up to \$8,000 per application.	Annual funding round.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Key Roles

The following roles support the effective delivery and governance of the Community Grant Program:

Coordinator Community Grants and Events	Program lead and Assessment Panel Chair.
Community Grants Officers	Oversee the administration of the Community Grants Program. Conduct eligibility across the program and assessment for the Small Grants and Senior's Club Support Grants categories.
Subject Matter Experts (SME) – Council Officers	Assessment of applications and provide advice to Panel.
Assessment Panel	Review applications and provide recommendations to Council for formal endorsement.
Director Connected Communities	Endorse Panel recommendations under delegation for the Small Grants and Senior's Club Support Grants categories.
Council	Endorse Panel recommendations under delegation for the Community Partnership Grants, Neighbourhood House Grants and Annual Community Grants categories.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for funding through the Community Grant Program, applicants must be either:

- Not-for-profit constituted body such as an Incorporated Association; or
- Company Limited by Guarantee
- An entity auspiced by an incorporated not-for-profit organisation that accepts legal and financial responsibility for the funded activity. An 'Auspice Agreement', which is provided by Manningham Council, must be submitted as part of any grant application that involves an auspice arrangement.

The following are not eligible for funding:

- Individuals
- Unincorporated organisations
- For-profit or commercial organisations

In addition, funding cannot be provided for initiatives that:

- Are delivered by organisations with outstanding debts to Manningham Council
- Are not delivered within the Manningham municipality
- Do not primarily benefit Manningham residents

What activities cannot be funded?

The following activities are not eligible for funding under the Manningham Community Grant Program:

- Activities that are inconsistent with the current Council Plan or the objectives of the Community Grant Program
- Initiatives that are the responsibility of other levels of government (e.g. State or Federal)
- Activities that do not promote:
 - Inclusion practices that ensure equal access and participation for all targeted groups
 - Health and wellbeing outcomes
 - Harm minimisation, specifically discouraging behaviours that may cause harm or risk to individuals and communities. In line with this principle, grant funding cannot be used for the purchase or service of alcohol at funded activities or events.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

The delivery of the program varies by grant category. Each category has its own tailored Grant Guidelines to support effective and transparent administration.

Grant Guidelines

Each grant category has its own guidelines that sets out:

- Objectives of the program
- Timelines
- Eligibility
- What will not be funded
- How to apply
- Assessment criteria
- Assessment process
- Reporting and financial acquittal requirements

Grant Guidelines will be reviewed and updated prior to each funding round to ensure alignment with our strategic priorities and to clearly communicate the outcomes sought for that round.

Application Process

Grant rounds will be advertised through a range of avenues to promote the programs across the municipality to encourage eligible organisations to apply.

Grant applications are administered via the SmartyGrants online grants administration system.

Assessment Criteria

Priority outcomes for all grants must align with the key action areas outlined in the current Council Plan. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Alignment of the application with Manningham Council's strategic priorities
- Anticipated community benefit of the proposed program or initiative
- The applicant's capacity to successfully deliver the proposed outcomes
- Public value including reach, inclusivity, and cost-effectiveness

Assessments will be based solely on the information provided in the application. Officers may seek clarification on submitted information; however, applications cannot be rewritten or resubmitted after the closing date.

While community benefit remains central to the assessment process, the accuracy, completeness, and relevance of the application content will also be taken into account during evaluation.

Assessment of Applications

Grant applications will be assessed by a panel to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with Council priorities. Two types of panels will be used, depending on the grant category and scale.

1. Internal Panel:
 - Two (2) Senior Manningham Council Officers (Manager level)
 - One (1) Coordinator
2. External Panel
 - Two (2) Senior Manningham Council Officers (Director and/or Manager level)
 - Three (3) independent community members

All members of the panel, including senior officers, will have voting rights.

Appointment and management of the external panel is governed by the Community Grants Assessment Panel Terms of Reference.

Independent community members will be selected through an annual Expression of Interest (EOI) process and will receive an honorarium for their participation.

Nominations will be presented to Council for endorsement, with the option to extend panel membership for an additional year.

Panel Support and Process

Each assessment panel will be chaired by the Coordinator Community Grants and Events, supported by two (2) Community Grants Officers, to ensure good governance and answer any questions from the panel. All support officers will not have voting rights.

Before convening the external assessment panel, officers with subject matter expertise will review applications to assess alignment with the active Council Plan. This alignment assessment will be presented to the panel as part of each application's documentation.

The internal and external assessment panels are allocated as per below:

Panel	Community Partnership Grants	Neighbourhood Houses Grants	Annual Grants	Small Grants	Senior's Club Support Grants
Internal				✓	✓
External	✓	✓	✓		

Assessment Process

The assessment process is structured to reflect the scale and complexity of each grant category. The following table outlines the process steps for each stream of the Community Grants Program:

Action	Community Partnership Grants	Neighbourhood Houses Grants	Annual Grants	Small Grants	Senior's Club Support Grants
Application assessed by Community Grant Officers for compliance with the eligibility criteria.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Officers with subject matter expertise (SME) to assess applications. Evaluations referred to the assessment panel for consideration.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Panel members individually review applications and SME evaluations, pre-scoring each application prior to the panel meeting.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Panel convenes to discuss scoring and finalise funding recommendations.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Panel recommendations presented to the Director Connected Communities for approval under delegation.				✓	✓
Panel recommendations presented to Council for formal endorsement under delegation.	✓	✓	✓		

Any questions raised by the delegated authority, (either Council or the Director Connected Communities), in relation to a specific application will be referred back to the Assessment Panel for consideration. The Panel will review and investigate the matter, and the outcome will be reported to the relevant authority.

Unsuccessful Applications

All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their submission. While the funding decisions are final, Community Grants Officers are available to provide feedback that will support applicants in strengthening future submissions. Applicants are encouraged to re-apply in future funding rounds.

Reporting and Financial Acquittals

Reporting Requirements

Manningham Council's standard Funding and Service Agreements (FASA) outline the specific reporting requirements for each grant category. Any additional conditions or deliverables for a particular funding agreement will be detailed in the FASA.

Activity Completion Report

Grant recipients must submit an Activity Completion Report, including financial acquittals, via our SmartyGrants portal. This report confirms that the funded activity was completed in accordance with the terms of the FASA.

Audit Access

Officers may request access to the applicant's records and accounts (relevant to the grant activity) for audit purposes. Failure to comply may result in ineligibility for future funding.

Support for Reporting

If an applicant requires assistance with the reporting process, they are encouraged to contact the Community Grants Team before the due date of the activity to ensure they receive the support they require.

Consequences of Late or Missing Reports

If an applicant fails to submit the completed Activity Completion Report on time, they will not be eligible to apply for future funding until the current activity is finalised.

If an applicant fails to submit the completed Activity Completion Report for more than two grants, they will be ineligible for any future grants.

Performance and Grant Variations

Over the course of a grant, changes to the timeframe, budget, or scope may occur. These changes are managed through a formal grant variation process via SmartyGrants, with the Community Grants Team facilitating this process.

Once a Grant Variation Form is submitted, officers will seek the necessary approvals before any changes can be confirmed.

If a funded program cannot be delivered as outlined in the FASA, or if there are unspent funds remaining at the conclusion of the project, the remaining funds must be returned to Manningham Council within an agreed timeframe.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Policy Title:	Community Grants Policy 2025-29
Responsible Officer:	Vanessa Bove
Resp. Officer Position:	Manager Economic and Cultural Activation
Next Review Date:	July 2029
To be included on website?	Yes

Last Updated	Meeting type? - Council or EMT	Meeting Date	Item N°
July 2025	Council	22 July 2025	11.2