

What is Craigshill Community Choices?



Craigshill Community Choices is a process that enables the local community to decide how public funding is spent. It aims to improve the overall wellbeing of individuals and families in Craigshill through addressing key issues facing the community. This is a pilot project as part of the wider development of [Participatory Budgeting](#) (PB) in West Lothian.

A community survey was carried out to find out more about the impact of COVID-19 on the local community of Craigshill. This was developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre in partnership with Transform Craigshill (Transform Craigshill is the local community-led action group that is supported by the local services and organisations to help make a difference in Craigshill). 191 people took part in the survey. This survey was completed by those who live, learn, work, volunteer, play or do business in Craigshill. The findings from the survey are being used to update the local regeneration plan to ensure the needs of the community, and effects of the pandemic are fully addressed and reflected in the plan.

£25,000 has been allocated to the community of Craigshill to address those key issues in the community that have arisen due to COVID-19 and to ultimately improve the wellbeing of the local community. This process gives groups and organisations the opportunity to apply for funding and local people the chance to vote on what projects should receive funding. This way of allocating money gives groups and organisations an opportunity to show how their project can improve an aspect of wellbeing in Craigshill and allows members of the community to decide how the money is spent.

Craigshill Community Choices therefore provides a real opportunity for local people to have an input as to how public funding is spent to address some of the issues identified through the community survey and the Regeneration Planning process more generally.

Who can apply?

In order to apply for funding, you must;

- Be a constituted voluntary or community organisation or registered charity
- Have a bank account in the name of the group or organisation that has two signatories who are not related or live at the same address.
- Be able to offer provision for the community of Craigshill.
- Demonstrate how your idea or project addresses at least one of the priorities stated in the guidance.

Please note that Community Choices provides one off grants made to fund new activity. They are not intended to fund the continuation of existing activity or ongoing running costs for your organisation.

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please email community.planning@westlothian.gov.uk or contact Laura Murray

What can the funding be used for?

Only costs directly associated with the development and delivery of a new project will be funded. The list below is not definitive but gives some examples:

We can fund	We can't fund
✓ Equipment	✗ Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
✓ One-off events	✗ Electricity generation and feed in tariff payments
✓ Small land or building projects	✗ Political or religious activity
✓ Staff costs	✗ Fundraising activity
✓ Training costs	✗ VAT you can reclaim
✓ Transport	✗ Statutory activities
✓ Volunteer expenses	
✓ New services	
✓ Partnerships	

What should your project address?

Applications must demonstrate that your project or idea meets at least one of the three priority areas detailed below. These have been identified through the findings of the community survey that was carried out in Craigshill to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the local community.

Your project or idea should seek to address the issues below.

1. ***Digital Innovation, Inclusion & Connected Communities: Enabling and supporting local people to be involved in their communities in innovative ways.***

There has been a significant amount of work in Craigshill to distribute digital devices and WIFI connection to individuals and families. This has seen a significant shift and increase in individuals using digital devices for information, support and community activity, enabling those that might not normally have engaged in community activities to take part. We are looking for projects that aim to enhance and maximise the use of digital and hybrid forms of participation to enable local people to be able to participate in activities in Craigshill in different ways. This will help to reduce social isolation and enable groups to reach more people and for individuals to have more options in the ways they get involved. Projects should demonstrate innovation, focusing on enabling and encouraging local groups to use hybrid methods allowing individuals a choice in how they participate, removing barriers to participation and involvement and further enhancing the work already undertaken in the local area.

2. ***Poverty: Supporting individuals and families who are experiencing the negative effects of poverty.***

The effects of poverty are far reaching and varied and it can have a negative impact on peoples mental and physical wellbeing as well as their overall quality of life.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on poverty levels, widening and deepening its effect. We are looking for projects from groups and organisations to offer additional support to individuals and families to alleviate the impact of poverty. These effects will be felt more intensely now as inflation rises and associated costs for fuel, shopping and other household expenses also increase.

3. **Community Collaboration: Working together to benefit the Community**

Working collaboratively not only benefits organisations and groups, but also the local community. Collaboration accomplishes a shared vision and achieves more than just working alone. It also helps to avoid duplication of activity, results in more joined up activity with greater impact and can provide more opportunities for people to get involved. We are looking for projects that demonstrate collaborative working and promote approaches like co-production. Organisations and groups should evidence how they will work together to benefit the community.

Please note ALL groups involved in the community collaboration applications must sign the declaration in the application form.

How much can we apply for?

You can apply for any amount up to £5000.

*If we don't receive enough applications to allocate the full amount, applicants will be consulted to discuss whether they could utilise more of the funding.

How to apply

To apply for funding, you must complete and return an application form by **Friday 15th April 2022**. This is available on the Craigshill Community Choices [Webpage](#).

Please note that the information you provide in the application form will be used to provide a summary of your project which will be used to give local people information on which to base their vote. Projects will also be asked to submit a photo to accompany their application.

If your application is under the Community Collaboration theme, then ALL groups involved must sign the additional declaration at the end of the application form. The collaboration must agree a lead group to submit the application (as funds can only be paid into one bank account) but ALL groups must sign the declaration. All groups must submit the supporting information required, as indicated in the application form.

Completed application forms should be sent to community.planning@westlothian.gov.uk. For more information please contact Laura Murray (laura.murray2@westlothian.gov.uk) or Graham Whitelaw (graham.whitelaw@westlothian.gov.uk)

Information sessions

Two bidder information sessions will be held for groups and organisations who want to find out more about the process. More information on these sessions will be promoted.

Who decides how the funding is spent?

Projects will initially be independently verified to ensure they meet the application criteria outlined below. The information on the projects that meet the criteria will be posted on our webpage and publicised and members of the local community of Craigshill will be invited to vote on the projects they feel best meet the needs of Craigshill. Voting will take place in late April 2022 and it is anticipated that funds will be released to successful projects by the end of May 2022.

Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be used in checking eligibility of applications
Be a constituted voluntary or community organisation or registered charity
Have a bank account that has two signatories who are not related or live at the same address
Offer provision for the community of Craigshill
Not already be in receipt of monies from the Council for the project or idea; applications should be for new activity, not for the continuation of existing activity.
Demonstrate how your idea or project meets at least one of the priorities stated in the guidance
Demonstrate what difference the project will make
Demonstrate who will benefit from the project

Be able to deliver the project within 12 months

Monitoring of projects

This is a pilot project therefore evaluation of the participatory budgeting process and the impact of the projects will be carried out and used to learn for future activity. Projects will be monitored to ensure that they achieve what they set out to. Successful projects will be asked to report on progress 6 months from receiving the funding. A final update will be required after one year which will include a financial report on your spend in relation to your application and the return of any unallocated funding from the project.

Next Steps

Once you have submitted your application, West Lothian Council will;

- ✓ Confirm we have received your application
- ✓ Assess your application against criteria; if we need to clarify anything about your application we may contact by email.
- ✓ Complete assessment/verification process
- ✓ Inform you if your application meets the initial criteria
- ✓ Publicise the webpage for online voting to encourage local people to vote.
- ✓ Count and verify the votes cast
- ✓ Inform you if your project was successful in getting enough votes to receive funding. If so;
- ✓ Send you a formal letter of award and release the funds

You will then:

- ✓ Send an update on activity and spend within 6 months of receiving the funding
- ✓ Provide a final update after one year of receiving the funding