



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Building Better Communities

Community Projects Scheme Suggestion Form Guidance Notes

INTRODUCTION

Building Better Communities is a major County Council initiative designed to improve the environmental quality of local communities in Nottinghamshire. Full details of the initiative can be found in the project brochure, which is available on the County Council's website www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/bbc, or by contacting:

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WHAT SORTS OF IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN?

Building Better Communities will work in a number of ways:

1 Major "flagship" environmental enhancement programmes.

These will be bold environmental initiatives to transform the environmental quality of certain key areas and communities of the County. They may involve single major sites or could involve lots of different types of project in the same area, which collectively will have a major impact. They will be targeted mainly at those areas where the schemes will bring the greatest benefit to the appearance or environmental quality of the County.

2 Thematic projects

These will be projects which target a single issue, like street trees or picnic sites, throughout the County. The aim will be to have a big impact on the image of the County as seen by local visitors and tourists alike. Projects could range from improving the appearance of transport corridors, to improving a whole range of different issues in a single parish, perhaps right down to celebrating the local history through a sculpture or "new market cross".

3 Local community schemes

These will be individual enhancement projects which communities feel will improve the environment of their local area. They may be in urban or rural locations, but must have clear support from both the County Councillor for the area, and from the majority of local people.

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At this stage we are seeking ideas particularly for local community schemes, although we would also be interested to hear if you have ideas for major flagship or thematic projects. All ideas must be submitted using the form provided. It is not anticipated that any individual community scheme would be of a value exceeding £50,000, and many will be considerably less than that.

WHAT SORT OF PROJECT MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE?

A wide range of projects may be undertaken indeed we are interested to consider the best ideas to create better neighbourhoods, better countryside, better business, better leisure and tourism, or better awareness. The following are only some examples of what might be possible:

1 Better neighbourhoods

- environmental improvements such as landscaping, street trees, and greening derelict areas
- refurbishing existing town centre improvements
- improving footways, verges, public seating, bus shelters, car parking and signage
- conserving historic buildings and protecting those at risk

2 Better countryside

- planting woodland, trees and hedges to create wildlife habitat
- schemes to safeguard biodiversity and strengthen rural character
- reclaiming derelict land and 'greening' vacant sites

3 Better business

- new woodlands to encourage biofuel production
- schemes promoting local food and produce
- regeneration of rural shops and facilities

4 Better leisure and tourism

- opportunities for the sensitive development of visitor attractions
- landscaped gateways and corridors to tourist attractions and places of interest in keeping with the character of the surrounding countryside
- clearer signage and directions to assist visitors and tourists
- improved visitor and interpretative facilities at key tourist locations

5 Better awareness

- guide books or information promoting understanding of local history or the environment
- educational activities
- projects to encourage people to enjoy the environment of Nottinghamshire without spoiling it for others.

HOW CAN LOCAL COMMUNITIES SUGGEST IDEAS?

Community groups within Nottinghamshire are being invited to put forward ideas for environmental improvement schemes in their local area. At this stage we are just looking for a brief description of the project or projects you would like to see happen. Most approved schemes will be delivered by the County Council, but there could be some elements which the local community can be involved in delivering themselves. A form has been designed to enable you to provide this information.

The sorts of community groups who are invited to put forward suggestions include:

- Parish and Town Councils
- Parish Meetings
- Residents Associations
- Town Centre Partnerships
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Local Area Forums
- Special Interest Groups
- Youth Groups
- Voluntary Groups
- Business Forums
- Civic Societies
- School Governing Bodies
- Local Conservation Societies
- Friends Groups

Once all ideas have been submitted, we will look at each one and decide which can be taken forward for further detailed design and assessment. The local County Councillor has a key role to play, as his/her support will be essential if the scheme is to progress. We will also consult Community Safety Partnerships to ensure that schemes do not inadvertently create a community safety problem. Successful applications will be programmed for delivery within the following financial year. Others will be placed on a reserve list for possible consideration in later years of the programme, or may be put in with other projects if they are more suited to flagship or thematic schemes.

HOW WILL NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DECIDE WHICH SCHEMES TO SUPPORT?

Decisions on which schemes will be undertaken will be based on an assessment of the benefit each individual scheme will bring. In particular we will consider the following:

1 What is the level of community support?

Community groups must be able to demonstrate that the proposals enjoy the widest support of the local community, as well as the specific support of the County Councillor. Some villages and communities may already have parish or village plans which have been prepared by involving the whole community. Others may wish to arrange public meetings or carry out local consultation. We recommend that you involve your local County Councillor at the earliest possible stage in order to gain his/her support.

2 What is the quality of the local environment?

Most areas could benefit from some environmental enhancement. We will have to consider whether the proposals will make a significant and lasting improvement when deciding which are the best schemes to support. Existing environmental quality will be important because a small scheme may be all that is needed to improve an otherwise good area, while a much larger scheme may be needed in a poorer area.

3 What environmental improvement will the proposal bring?

Some projects will bring major benefits to a community, and may be enjoyed by lots of people, even if they take a long time to mature (for example tree planting projects). Others may have less impact or may benefit fewer people. We will consider both the cost and the level of benefit each project brings, in deciding which represent best value for money.

4 The level of social deprivation

Some of the most deprived communities in Nottinghamshire might benefit most from environmental enhancement. For example, where car ownership is low people may be more reliant on their local area or on an area within easy walking distance of their homes. We will have to consider the type of scheme against the specific social needs of the area.

5 Deliverability and risk

Many projects on land owned by the local authority or by a community group may be easy to deliver. However the most important improvements will often require the consent of local landowners, who may be unhappy about the extra cost of looking after the site. Other projects may be likely to attract vandalism, or sites may have underground cables and services that prevent what is proposed. We therefore need to consider all the issues that could stop the project being completed successfully.

6 How will the project be maintained?

Building Better Communities funding will only be available for the initial costs of projects, not for their ongoing maintenance. We will consider carefully the arrangements that will be needed for long term maintenance, and are unlikely to support projects where this cannot be guaranteed. Community involvement in maintaining projects will enhance their likelihood of success.

7 How much other funding is available?

Some schemes will be fully funded by the Building Better Communities project. However a scheme will be more likely to be accepted if additional funding is also available. This may include local contributions, or grants from other agencies (for example lottery funding), or could be in the form of voluntary labour. If you think your ideas might also attract funding from other sources, please let us know. We may even refer your ideas to other organisations if they are likely to be able to fund them without the need for Building Better Communities contributions.

8 Is the scheme integrated with other schemes in the area?

A scheme will often have more impact or long term benefit if it is carried out alongside other schemes in the locality. Schemes may be more efficient in use of labour or materials when combined with another project near by. One scheme may improve a site, while another interprets the improved site for visitors. But it is not sensible to improve one site if it simply moves a problem elsewhere. How sites and schemes work together to create an overall improvement will need to be considered in selecting schemes.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO NEXT?

Please complete the scheme suggestion form setting out your ideas as a community group, **and send it to your local County Councillor**. If you need any further information or would like additional copies of the form, please contact:

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