



Shrewsbury Town Council

COST OF LIVING FUND

Assessment Panel Process, Shortlisting and Presentation Framework

1. Purpose of this Framework

This framework sets out how applications to the Cost of Living Fund will be considered by the assessment panel, how shortlisted organisations will be invited to present their proposals, and the types of questions panel members may ask to support transparent, fair, and consistent decision-making.

2. Assessment Panel Composition

Applications will be considered by an assessment panel comprising:

- 3 Members of Shrewsbury Town Council
- The Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Panel members will be required to declare any conflicts of interest prior to assessment and will not take part in scoring or discussion where a conflict exists.

3. Stage One: Initial Assessment and Scoring

3.1 Eligibility Check

All applications will first be reviewed by the RFO to confirm that they:

- Meet the eligibility criteria set out in the grant guidelines
- Have submitted all required information and supporting documents

Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria or are incomplete will not proceed to panel assessment.

3.2 Scored Assessment

Eligible applications will be assessed by the panel against the agreed scoring criteria, including:

- Strategic fit with the Cost of Living Fund priorities
- Evidence of local need and impact in Shrewsbury
- Clarity and robustness of proposed outcomes
- Value for money and deliverability
- Partnership working and collaboration
- Organisational capacity and governance

Each application will be scored independently by panel members, with scores moderated collectively to ensure consistency and fairness.

4. Shortlisting Process

Following scoring, the panel will:

- Agree a shortlist of applications that score highest overall
- Consider the balance of funded projects across the priority themes
- Consider geographic reach, target groups, and opportunities for collaboration

Shortlisting does not guarantee funding but identifies organisations to proceed to the next stage.

5. Stage Two: Invitation to Present Proposals

5.1 Purpose of Presentations

Shortlisted organisations will be invited to attend a panel meeting to present their proposals. Presentations are intended to:

- Clarify and expand on the written application
- Demonstrate organisational capability and leadership
- Explore partnership working and collective impact
- Allow the panel to test deliverability and outcomes

Presentations will not introduce new projects but may provide additional context or clarification.

5.2 Format of Presentations

- Each organisation will be invited to send up to two representatives
- Presentations will be limited to 10 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of questions
- Visual aids may be used but are not required
- Organisations will be advised in advance of the format and expectations

6. Focus of Presentations

Organisations will be asked to focus their presentation on:

- The core aims of the project and who it will support
- How the project will reduce costs or increase savings for residents
- Key outcomes and how they will be measured
- How the £20,000 annual funding will be used
- How the organisation will work with partners and other funded projects

7. Example Questions for Panel Members

The panel may ask a range of questions to test and clarify proposals. These may include:

Project Impact and Outcomes

- Can you explain how your project will lead to direct cost savings for residents?
- How confident are you in achieving the outcomes you have set out, and why?
- How will you evidence and report financial savings or cost reductions?

Local Need and Target Groups

- How have you identified the need for this project in Shrewsbury?
- Which residents will benefit most, and how will you reach them?
- How will you ensure the project is accessible to those most in need?

Delivery and Capacity

- What experience does your organisation have in delivering similar projects?
- How will the project be managed day to day?

- What are the key risks to delivery and how will you mitigate them?

Partnership and Collaboration

- How do you currently work with other organisations locally?
- How would you collaborate with other Cost of Living Fund recipients?
- How will you avoid duplication and add value to existing provision?

Value for Money and Sustainability

- Why is £20,000 per year the right level of funding for this project?
- How will the project continue or leave a legacy beyond the funding period?
- Are there opportunities to lever in additional funding or resources?

8. Final Decision-Making

Following presentations:

- Panel members will reflect on both written applications and presentations
- Final scores may be confirmed or adjusted based on clarification received
- The panel will agree recommended awards, subject to available budget

Funding recommendations will be reported to the appropriate Council body for approval, in line with the Council's governance arrangements.

9. Feedback to Applicants

- Successful applicants will receive a formal offer letter and funding agreement
- Unsuccessful applicants will be offered brief written feedback where possible

This framework is intended to support a transparent, proportionate, and fair funding process.