

OKR REPORTING AND LEARNING: YEAR END REPORT

2025/26

Date: June 2026

This report provides a summary of performance against our strategy and Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) during the year. It is provided for transparency ahead of our annual report being published and alongside our 360 Giving grants data.

Summary

We closed the second year of our five-year strategy with a new grant management and application system in place, a new structure for the team aligned with the changing giving landscape and our duty of care to grassroots groups across the city, a balanced budget. We're proud of the progress made against our OKRs in terms of impact - in particular, the fact we've distributed more flexible funding than ever before and laid the foundations to do more in the future.

One such example - a grant made through the new Leeds Fund collective impact stream - has shown the real impact we can make across the city in line with our ambitions by using our funds for match. A grant made towards the end of 25-26 of a modest £20,000 value over 2 years into Climate Action Leeds has helped them leverage a further £480,000, pushed for a focus on equity, and positioned Leeds well for further national investment. [More on this on LinkedIn here.](#)

We're also proud of the work we've done in embedding DEI over the course of the last year having moved from a standalone workstream in our last strategy. Key achievements include:

- We have continued to build on existing targeted programmes including the Addressing Mental Health Inequalities in Minority Ethnic Communities programme and the Employment for People with Learning Disabilities programme
- We now ask about DEI characteristics intentionally in the grant application form - purpose/mission, leadership, participants worked with/ targeted through delivery and use this to drive our learning and programme design approach (learning loops)
- Improved our panel composition for decision making through a DEI lens, built outreach work into programme marketing and prioritised underrepresented groups in our grant making in our programme criteria
- OKRs are measuring progress on and targeting progress towards equity and diversity (because most deprived wards, small emerging groups etc. are all related to minority groups etc by proxy)
- We're now intentional about donor influence / thought leadership towards philanthropy that supports minoritised groups by being deliberate about building this

into our advice to donors and being intentional about it in our business development conversations from the start.

We also continue to develop how we monitor equity, diversity and inclusion. We collect information on the communities organisations serve, the characteristics of leadership teams, and the people participating in funded activity, which helps us understand who is benefiting from funding and where gaps may exist. We intend to increase transparency over this data as our data quality improves.

We have made great progress against our strategic priority on climate (see our commitments for the Funder Commitment on Climate Change).

Demand for Funding

In 2025/26, Leeds Community Foundation received 1,144 applications and awarded 338 grants, giving an overall success rate of approximately 30%. Success rates vary significantly between programmes depending on available funding and levels of demand. Applicants are encouraged to review programme guidance and eligibility criteria before applying.

Objectives and Key Results

Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) are intended to create clarity, alignment, focus, motivation and momentum, working on outcomes that matter. They are an agile working tool that involves regular reviews and sharpening or changing, if need be, based on learning and data gathered over time.

OKRs are a metric that contain the 'objective' along with the measurable 'key results'. The objective describes what we intend to achieve in a short memorable statement. The key results describe how we will know we have achieved our objective.

Our three objectives, based on the Leeds Community Foundation strategy for 2024-2029:

1. Increase flexible grant making

- 1.1. We want 75% of our total grant-making to be flexible by the end of 2029.
- 1.2. We want to increase the amount of flexible grants we make.

2. Grow our volume of grant making

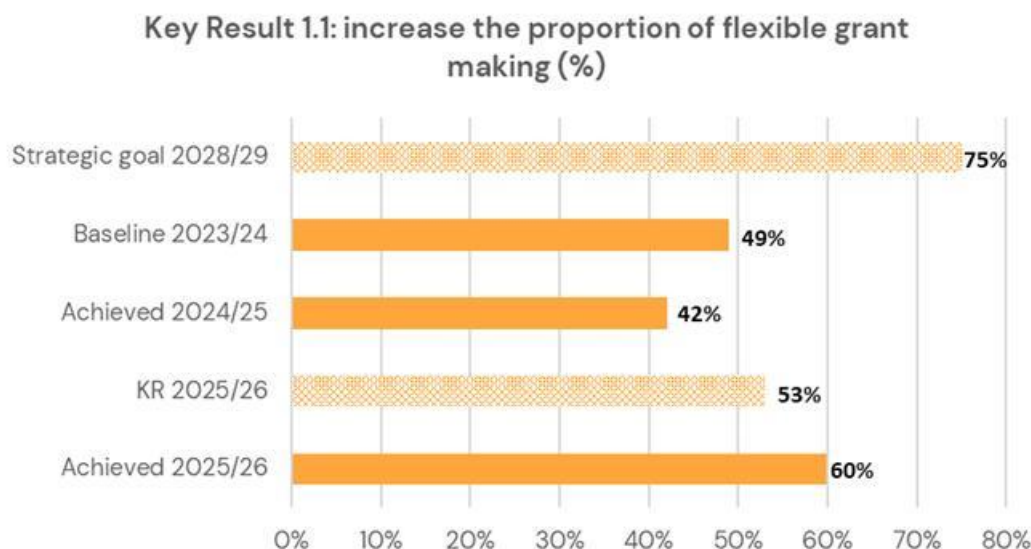
- 2.1. We want to maintain a minimum of £3m per year and grow to £4-5m by the end of 2028/29.

3. Improve the fairness of the distribution of our grants

Fairness is at the heart of our vision/mission and is among our strategic priorities. The three measurable key results we have selected are:

- 3.1. Increase the proportion of our grants going into neighbourhoods with the highest levels of multiple deprivation.
- 3.2. Increase the number of programmes where grants decisions are made with community participation
- 3.3. Increase the proportion of micro-organisations among grant holders we support.

The figures and percentages below are based on Leeds Community Foundation grants payments made in Leeds in the 2025/26 financial year.

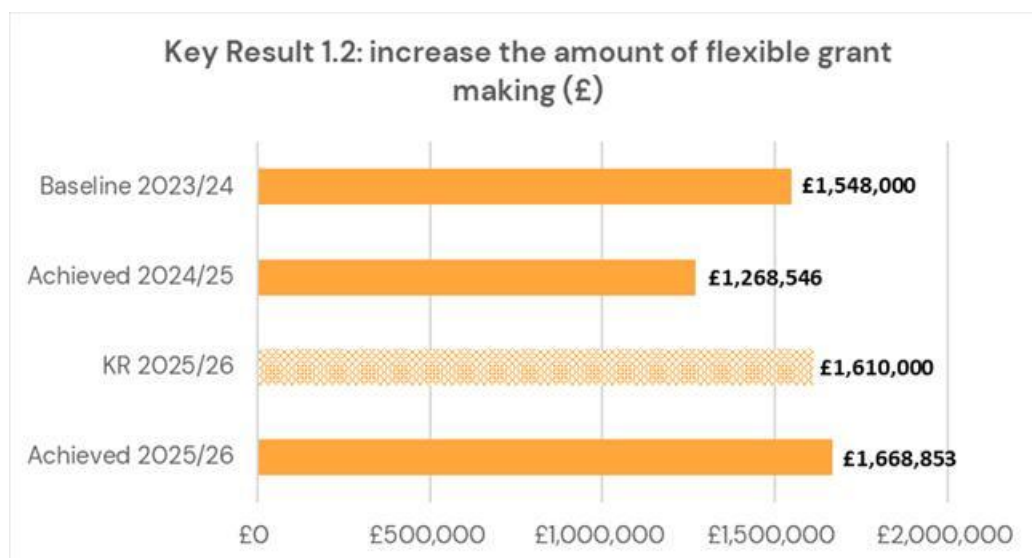


Notes and comments:

Flexible funds are those that offer grant holders choice about how they use their grant. To apply this definition consistently across grants programmes, we consider the degree of choice within five aspects of a grant: people, activity, outcomes, location and spend. A programme is flexible if three or more of the five aspects meet the threshold.

In Q4 £273,510 of the total amount of grants payments (£493,377) was flexible, bringing the proportion of flexible grants to 60% for the whole year. The new key result (KR) for 2026/27 will be 60% based on a strategy to maintain and then develop new funding streams for the future.

Five-year KRs: the 75% goal was set in the strategy. It is ambitious and is also affected by the amount of funding we distribute in grants that are not deemed flexible (such as from the Healthy Holidays programme) and our ability to build up an increased percentage of funding to sit alongside these, but we have agreed it is still something we want to aim towards based on ongoing feedback from our grant holders.

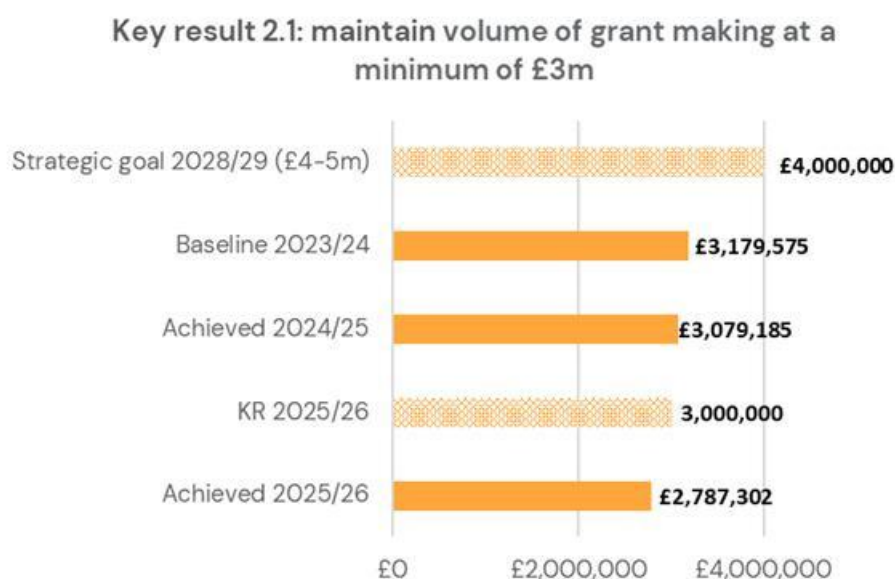


Notes and comments:

Key Result 1.2 is an additional one for 2025/26, tracking the total amount of flexible funding separately. The good news is that it has exceeded the KR for the year to a large extent due to payments from The Leeds Fund.

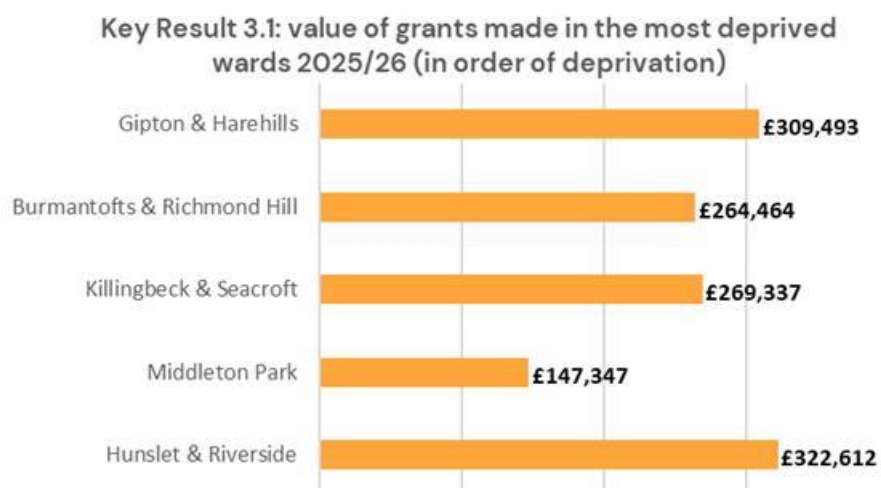
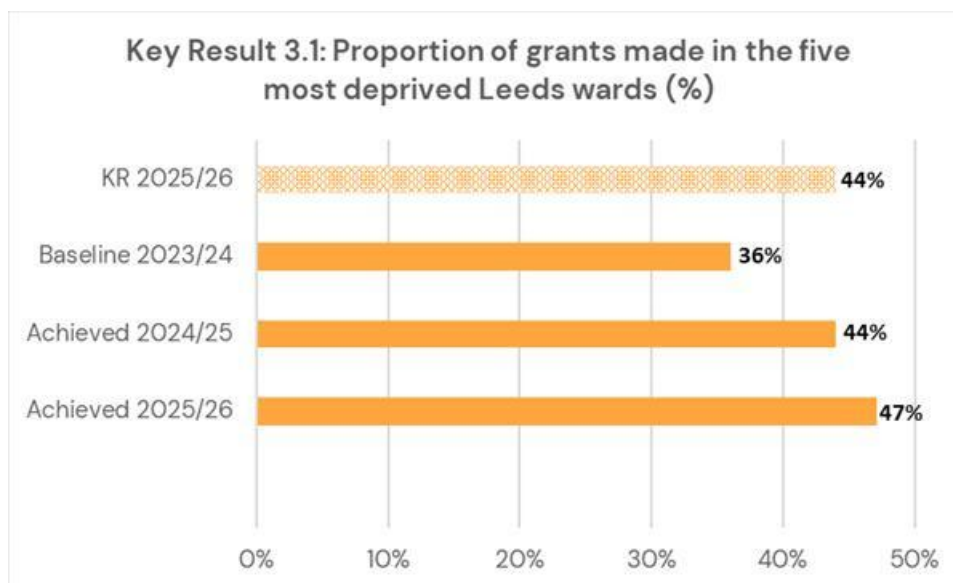
For the financial year 2026/27, the KR will be £1.966m, based on the KR for the total volume of grant making (£3.277m) and the proportion of flexible grants within this (£60%).

Five-year KRs: As the 75% proportion of flexible granting has been set in the strategy, the proportion of flexible payments will follow the total annual value of payments and will be £2.412m in 2027/28 and £3m in 2028/29 (based on £4m total value in 2028/29).



Notes and comments:

The total amount of grants paid in Leeds over the past financial year was below the key result we aimed for in 2025/26, but by less than 10%. The KR figure does not include 'out of area' grants payments by Leeds Community Foundation (such as those from the Bartlett Group Fund or the Pears Youth Fund for activities in Bradford & District) and this we will need to aim for higher targets where we can control Leeds grant making in future years.


Notes and comments:

The allocation of a grant to a Leeds City Council ward is based on the postcode where the grant applicant expects most of the people benefiting from the grant to be based.

The most deprived Leeds wards include five that have a majority of their Lower Layer Super Output Areas (neighbourhoods of 1,500 people or 650 households on average) in the 10% most deprived nationally, using the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

All five wards received grants payments in Q4. The total paid to these wards over the financial year exceeded the key result of 44% set for 2025/26.

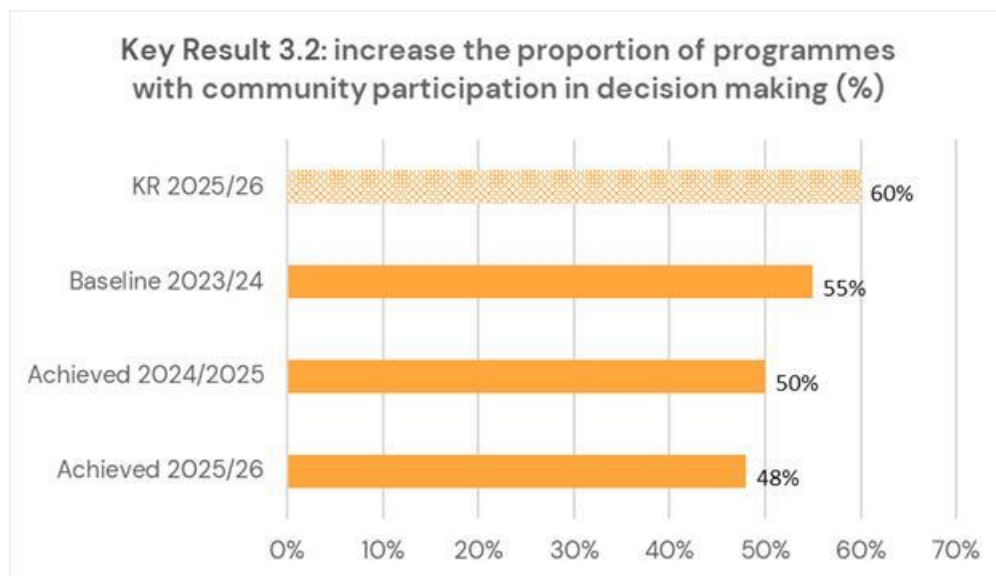
The distribution of amounts between the 5 wards is similar to that in previous years, with Middleton Park receiving less than the other four wards. However, the discrepancy in 2025/26 was less than in the previous financial year.

We continue to monitor grant applications from, and awards to, organisations in Middleton Park. In Q4 we received 6 applications aimed at working in the ward, for Lunch Clubs and Healthy Holidays provision. Five of the applicants were local organisations, the sixth a charity working in various localities in England. There were no new grants awarded for activities specifically in Middleton Park in the quarter.

We re-baselined our grant payment figures according to IMD2025, in line with our earlier recommendation that from 2026/27 we focus on the 7 council wards which have at least half of their small neighbourhoods in the 20% most deprived nationally. These include the five we have already had in our sights, plus Armley and Beeston & Holbeck. As new wards are being added this year, we have made 2025/26 the new baseline year. The new baseline for the 7 wards is 64%, the proportion of our total funding paid out in Leeds in 2025/26.

Five-year KRs: The two new wards mean that we now have a higher proportion (64%) of our funding invested in the wards that see the highest levels of multiple deprivation in the city. The index of multiple deprivation is about unmet needs, income being one among seven indices. We use it as a proxy to reflect on how we're fulfilling our DEI intentions of investing in local organisations led by and/or working with people affected by various types of inequity, whether due to discrimination based on race, disability, gender or other characteristics. On this basis, we assess the level of funding going into the seven wards to be proportionate to fulfilling our intentions. Small annual increases up to 70% would make an effective contribution to making Leeds fairer.

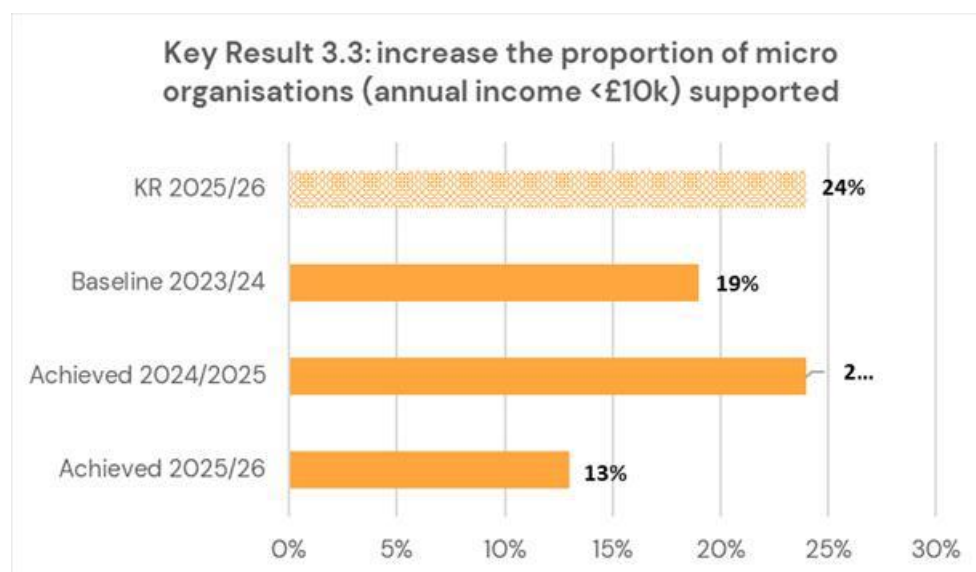
We will monitor developments in the city, such as targeted funding streams (e.g. Pride in Place) coming on board in some neighbourhoods and will suggest adjustments if necessary.


Notes and comments:

Community participation in decision making may take a variety of forms, including one community representative being part of a grants panel, a shortlisting community panel, decision making by a panel of young people and participatory grant making.

The KR for 2025/26 has been revised down to a more realistic 60% (from the original 90%). By the end of the financial year, however, community participation was part of decision making in just under half (11 out of 23) grants programmes. We will aim for the same KR of 60% in 2026/27 and will also assess the value of grant-making where we include community participation as we believe this to be higher as an overall percentage than the number of programmes and we know from our communities that this is more meaningful to them.

Five-year KRs: We want more of our grants decisions to be informed and influenced by people with experience of the issues and communities we want to invest in. Setting the KR at 70% for the final two years of the strategy will be an ambition to work towards.



Notes and comments:

This KR is about extending our reach to small and/or new grassroots organisations and groups and supports our mission to enable starting and strengthening community organisations.

In 2025/26 we didn't manage to maintain the achievement we had made in 2024/25. The proportion of micro organisations among the total supported was 13% (23 organisations, against last year's total of 55).

We therefore plan to make a substantial number of micro- and small grants in 2026/27 to reach the KR of 24% in 2026/27.

Five-year KRs: We aim to reach and then maintain our grant making to micro organisations at 25% in the final two years of the strategy. We believe that we're the right organisation to provide funding opportunities and support to small local organisations. Bearing in mind the cost of processing small-value applications and the additional support often needed by new organisations, and on the other hand the different funding needs of community organisations across the spectrum (e.g. larger, multi-year grants for mid-sized and larger organisations), 25% seems about the right balance for us.

Multi-Year Granting

Data on grant length is provided for information, as we know how valuable multi-year grants are to community organisations. We have not set OKRs for multi-year granting. This is because we often have less influence over the way donors' annual budgeting works than other relevant aspects of a donation, for example how flexibly grants can be spent.

The figures have been calculated on a grants-awarded (not grants paid out) basis, as grants longer than one year we frequently pay in instalments. This also means that the full amount of a large grant, for example the full value of a £50,000 Strategic Grant from The Leeds Fund, would be counted upfront, because from the point of award we're committed to paying out the whole grant, subject to satisfactory progress with grant. This means that the more multi-year grants are awarded, the more the figures will differ from what gets paid out in a year. Grants for activity taking place outside Leeds have not been included (this also applies to Bradford grants from Leeds Community Foundation programmes).

In Q4 we awarded 30 grants to the value of £499,009 in Leeds, of which only 7 grants, less than 10% of the total value, were for one-year or under. The rest of the grants were mostly for two years from the Flint Family Fund and The Lightbulb Fund. We also made 3 Collective Impact Grants from The Leeds Fund, one for three years, the other two for two years.

Instead of quarterly data, the two tables below present our multi-year grant making in Leeds over the past three financial years. They confirm that amidst an overall decreasing number of grants awarded year-on-year, **the number of 2- and 3-year grants increased and shorter grants decreased**. The balance of grants value has also tipped towards 2-3-year grants.

Table 1. Number of grants by length in Leeds

Length of grant (years)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<1	50	58	19
1	219	200	137
2	25	9	58
3	1	0	23
Totals	295	267	237

*Three grants between 1-2 years in 2023/24 and one in 2024/25 were added to the 1-year grants.

Table 2. Value of grants by length in Leeds

Length of grant (years)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<1	£157,896	£243,381	£56,230
1	£2,297,220	£1,588,284	£415,288
2	£478,757	£139,730	£2,124,918
3	£10,000	0	£898,261
Totals	£2,943,874	£1,971,395	£3,494,696

Reflecting on our effectiveness as a funder

We believe effective funding should be flexible, reach communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage, support grassroots organisations, and involve communities in decision-making. During 2025/26:

- 60% of our grant payments in Leeds were flexible, ahead of our target for the year.
- 64% of our grant-making in Leeds was invested in the seven wards experiencing the highest levels of multiple deprivation nationally.
- Community participation was included in decision-making across 11 of our 23 grant programmes.
- We increased the value of multi-year funding commitments, with 2- and 3-year grants now making up the largest share of our grant value.

We did not achieve all of our targets, particularly around support for micro-organisations, and will prioritise this area during 2026/27.

What we've learned and changed

During 2025/26 we reviewed our performance and feedback from applicants, grant holders, donors, communities and partners. As a result:

- We continued to prioritise flexible funding, because organisations consistently tell us that unrestricted funding provides the greatest benefit.
- We strengthened community participation in grant-making decisions.
- We introduced more intentional collection of diversity and inclusion data through our grant application process.
- We increased our focus on outreach to underrepresented groups when promoting funding opportunities.
- We revised some performance targets where experience showed our earlier assumptions were unrealistic (for example, our community participation target for 2025/26).

Priorities for 2026/27

Based on our review of performance this year, we will:

- Increase support for micro-organisations, aiming for 24% of grant holders in 2026/27.
- Strengthen community participation in funding decisions, aiming for 60% of programmes.
- Continue to increase flexible funding where possible.
- Improve our collection and, over time, publication of diversity and inclusion data.
- Continue implementation of our climate commitments under the Funder Commitment on Climate Change.