

Community Initiatives Fund 2022-2023 - Guidance Notes

1.0 Introduction

The Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) is designed to help Parish & Town Councils, groups, clubs and community and voluntary sector organisations improve and support their local community.

The CIF will make available £300,000 to support both capital and revenue projects with grants of up to £10,000. This is for capital projects and projects that require revenue funding for new service provision (not core funding), or cultural initiatives. In exceptional circumstances continuation of existing services can be considered.

Only one CIF grant will be awarded to any one organisation in any one financial year.

2.0 Fund Administration

The administration of the 2022-2023 CIF will be undertaken by the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) on behalf of Essex County Council.

The Essex Association of Local Councils
42b High Street
Great Dunmow
CM6 1AH

Email: funding@ealc.gov.uk
Telephone: 01371 879 722
Web: www.ealc.gov.uk

Please **do not** contact Essex County Council regarding your grant application or questions or queries regarding the fund.

3.0 Eligibility of Funding

The objective of the CIF is to support projects that:

- create, procure or develop new community assets – examples include community centres/shop/cafe, wildlife/nature reserves, disability facilities
- enhance existing community assets – examples include playgrounds & sports fields, village hall improvements/energy efficiency, local transport facilities, improved communication services
- enhance or develop initiatives that strengthen a community, including cultural projects – examples include gardening clubs, age & wellbeing services, parent & educational activities, environment improvements, music & literature events, heritage projects

- develop local capability – examples include Advice/Support services, Youth clubs, Scouting Groups, Sports venues & clubs

3.1 Alignment to Essex County Council's Strategic Plans

CIF projects should be able to demonstrate alignment to the aspirations set out within Essex County Councils [Everyone's Essex](#) (click on link) and achieve at least one of the strategic aims and associated priorities that underpin the achievement of the ambitions to ensure Essex is a great place to live and work.

In addition, CIF projects must demonstrate the benefit to the wider community and that community engagement and co-production has occurred in the design and delivery of the project, demonstrating a real community need.

3.2 Who is funded?

Applications are invited from bodies which are within the administrative area of Essex County Council (excluding Southend and Thurrock) and are representative of their local community.

Applications may be considered from organisations that are based outside of the administrative area of Essex County Council, if the sole benefit of the project is for communities within the administrative area of Essex County Council.

Eligible bodies may be but not exclusively limited to:

- Town and Parish Councils
- Constituted Neighbourhood Committees, Residents Associations, Management Committees, Community Groups and Voluntary Organisations
- Constituted Clubs or Membership organisations
- Social Enterprises
- CIC's
- Community Benefit Societies
- Charities and trusts

3.3 Projects that are not eligible

Although, this is not an exhaustive list, grants will not be made for:

- The promotion of religion or political ideals
- Work that has already taken place, contracted or order placed,
- For the provision of existing services
- Events that have already been publicised for the elements that funding is requested for.
- Commercial activities and those projects for commercial gain.
- Activities for which a statutory body is responsible
- Animal welfare

- Anything that has individual benefits only e.g. equipment that is not shared
- Fabric appeals for places of worship
- Fundraising events or activities
- VAT or other taxes that cannot be recovered.
- On-going revenue and operating costs.
- Signage projects (not including Village Notice Boards)
- Fees for Professional services utilised within a project e.g. Solicitors, Architects, Surveyors.

4.0 Grant Awards

4.1 Community Initiatives Fund

The CIF Grants will be awarded on an annual basis and the 2022/23 Panel shall sit in early October 2022, with successful applicants notified and grants made by the end of November 2022.

Applications will be considered on their own merits with outcomes that deliver against Essex County Council's strategic aims and priorities, and strong community support and need.

The Panel reserve the right to use their sole discretion when assessing any grant applications for acceptance. Applications may be rejected, or grants awarded at a lesser sum than requested.

The decision of the Panel upon the Awards made shall be final and not subject to appeal.

The indicative timeline for the 2022/23 CIF funding is given in the table section 5.7 below.

4.2 Validity of Funding

For the 2022/2023 funding round, it should be noted that all funds awarded must be spent and projects delivered by 31 March 2024.

Extensions to the above will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and upon written application and agreement by the Funding Officer. Failure to attain any agreement in writing may result in funding being clawed back.

If for any reason the project does not come to fruition or there is remaining unspent grant funding at the end of the project, the Funding Officer should be notified, and funds returned to the EALC.

The EALC on behalf of Essex County Council will reserve the right to claw back all or partial funding owing to the performance of the project delivery and benefits realisation.

5.0 The Community Initiatives Fund

This CIF is subject to a maximum application of £10,000 for any one project and is for capital projects and projects that require revenue funding for new service provision (not core funding), or for cultural initiatives. In exceptional circumstances continuation of existing services may be considered

CIF funding applications are considered once, on an annual basis only.

5.1 Eligible areas of funding

Eligible areas of *capital funding* could include, but not limited to, community, social and recreational facilities:

- Village halls, church halls, Scout halls
- Community shops (general stores and pubs in some circumstances)
- Community transport initiatives (no single use group)
- Land acquisition
- Playground equipment
- Environmental works

Eligible areas of *revenue funding* for new local services could include, but not limited to:

- Handyman Scheme
- Gardening Co-ordinator
- Youth Café Worker
- Trainee Cemetery Operative
- Village Warden
- Outreach Worker
- Grounds Maintenance Apprenticeship
- Riding Instructor for the Disabled
- Adult Friendship Scheme Co-ordinator

Revenue funding is also available for cultural initiatives, this could include but not limited to:

- Festivals – e.g. music, community, combined arts, BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)
- Heritage & Museums
- Music & Theatre – e.g. performance
- Economy – e.g. tourism
- Equality & Diversity – e.g. BAME, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability), Age, sexual orientation etc.

5.2 Demonstration of Need

Applicants must:

- Demonstrate evidence of alignment of the local community need to one or more of the four strategic aims and underlying priorities within the Everyone's Essex 2021 - 2025.
- Demonstrate clear evidence that the project meets a local need and has full community support. Applicants should provide strong evidence on co-production of their project's needs, accessibility and benefits through engagement and consultation with their local community and community partners.
- Consult with and obtain support from their County Councillor.

5.3 Financials

Applicants must:

- All Parish and Town Councils must provide a minimum of 50% matched funding contribution of the total project cost.
- If a Parish or Town Council is unable to provide a minimum of 50% contribution then they must clearly state any exceptional circumstances for the Panel to consider, eg size of Parish/Town and Precept level.
- More generally, all applicants should look to attract match funding, crowd funding, grants or other financial contribution towards their project aside from the CIF grant, and declare if they are receiving any other financial contribution from a public body. Benefit-in-kind (e.g. volunteering) contribution is actively encouraged and will enhance your application but does not contribute towards the financial aspect of your project.
- Demonstrate financial viability and whole life costs / on-going revenue costs. CIF funding is not utilised to support on-going revenue cost of day-to-day operations of any organisations.
- Be transparent in their amount of unrestricted reserves, and such reserves should be fully justified in formally ratified reserves policy.
- If applying as a Town or Parish Council, demonstrate why the agreed annual Precept cannot fully or partially fund the project for which they are applying for funding.
- Be fully-transparent on the total project costs and where funding will be allocated.

5.4 Project monitoring

To ensure that grant funding is being spent diligently and show progression of projects, quarterly reporting is required to be submitted to the Funding Officer.

The EALC on behalf of Essex County Council may request a full audit of the projects accounts and gain financial assurance.

5.5 Accessibility

Applicants must:

- Ensure that the project or facility is available to all sectors of the local community.
- Where projects focus on specific cohorts, these should be accessible to all those within those cohorts.

To ensure that diversity is maintained amongst the beneficiaries of CIF funded projects, no funding shall be provided to organisations which evangelise (the practice of preaching or spreading religious beliefs) or proselytize (the practice of trying to convert people to one's own beliefs or religious views).

Essex County Council recognises that faith-based organisations undertake valuable work in supporting disadvantaged and marginalised communities in Essex, and we wish to fully support this and work in the spirit of the Essex Faith Covenant.

5.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 states that public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and for them to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who have protected characteristics under The Act.

These protected characteristics are:

- Age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, and marriage and civil partnership.

Essex County Council is committed to the positive advancement of equality, fostering good relations between different groups and tackling unlawful discrimination.

When submitting applications organisations will be asked to demonstrate how their projects will help advance the following of the Public Sector Equality Duty and The Act, the aims being:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation i.e. projects that seek to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Advancing equality of opportunity i.e. projects that provide opportunities to those with protected characteristics
- Fostering good relations i.e. projects that encourage those with protected characteristics to participate in public life, bringing communities together to share commonalities and promote community cohesion and inclusion.

5.7 CIF Timescale and Application Process

This year, the CIF Application Process consists of one Full Application Form and one Award Panel.

The CIF scheme timescales for 2022/23 are as follows:

Activity	Date
Applications	
Launch Date	Monday 30 th May 2022
Closing Date	Friday 19 th August 23:59 Hours
Panel Review	
Panel sits	11th October 2022
Funding Awards	
Decision Letters sent by:	31 st October 2022
Signed T&C's returned and grant invoiced by	Wednesday 30 th November 2022
All grant payments made by	Friday 23 rd December 2022
Grant expiry	31 st March 2024
Grant Monitoring	
Quarterly Monitoring	March, June, Sept, Dec 2023
Final Project Report	30 th March 2024

EALC reserve the right to change time timetable if and when required.
Late Applications will not be accepted.

The Application Form and Guidance Notes are available on the EALC website.

Completed applications are to be returned to the EALC and not Essex County Council. Applications should be emailed to:

Funding Officer:

Email: funding@ealc.gov.uk

Telephone: 01371 879 722

6.0 Completion of Application Form

Please see below some general pointers regarding completing an Application. If you have any questions or queries, then please contact the Funding Officer.

6.1.1 Full Application

Section1 - Applicant Details

- 1 Local Authority - This is the name of your District, Borough or City Council.
- 2 Name of your organisation – This is the full name with no abbreviations.
- 3 List of eligible entities who can apply – circle the appropriate type
- 4 Contact Details – This is the person who must be able to answer detailed questions about the application.

Section 2 – Project Details

- 5 Project title – If applicable the name chosen for your project, salaried position or event.
- 6 Project location – Location of where the community asset is, equipment utilised, salaried position based or event etc held.
- 7 Anticipated start and finish date – construction period, term of salaried position, period when events etc will be held, or equipment purchased.
- 8 If your organisation has received a CIF Grant or any other funding from Essex County Council in the past Three Years you have to provide the details here. This includes the grant amount; what activity it supported; and what fund it was from
- 9 Please confirm if this is a new standalone project/service or a continuation of an existing.
As an example an earlier CIF Award replacing playground equipment at the same location is deemed a continuation.
Please state clearly why Grant funding for an existing project/service is required as only exceptional reasons will be considered.
- 10 Project Description – Please provide a full description of your project & what you plan to achieve. If this is a smaller element of a larger project

please also provide details on this larger scheme and how it is being funded.

- 11 If your project engages with any of the Essex County Council Levelling Up priority cohorts, this is your opportunity to explain which ones and how. It is not an essential requirement for CIF projects to engage with these priority cohorts, however we are interested to understand where project may do so.

- 12 Have all consents, permissions been obtained etc. –

Are all permissions, consents, indemnities, either applied for, in place and agreed? Dependent upon your type these may include but not limited to:

- Planning Permission
- Listed Building Consent
- Building Control
- Insurances
- Risk Assessments
- Event Licences – Premises Licences, Temporary Events Notice, Road Closure Application, Licensable activity (sale and supply of alcohol, regulated entertainment, provision of late-night refreshments)

Full copies of other Grant approvals, Permissions & Consents, and Licences should be provided with your Application.

All Parish & Town Councils and constituted body must provide a copy of the Minute extract agreeing the organisation submits the Application.

- 13 Who owns the land/building?

If this project is for a capital/revenue works project or for equipment installation please provide details of ownership including details of any lease arrangements you may have e.g. length and remaining number of years, arrangements for renewing.

If the land/building is in the process of being acquired/ownership transferred please confirm if legal Exchange has occurred & the estimated date of formal completion. Please note that Grant Funds will not be released until legal ownership is formally in place.

If this project is for a salaried service, please provide details of any location the salaried position will be based out of including details of any lease arrangements you may have, e.g. length and remaining number of years, arrangements for renewing

If this project is for an event, then please provide details regarding where the event is to be held

- 14 If you do not obtain this funding, how will the project still proceed?

Give details on any fund-raising activities, redistribution of funds, rescheduling of projects, re-scoping of the project etc.

Section 3 – Community

- 15 Community need

Provide detailed evidence of how the community need was identified and how your chosen project fulfils this need. Provide evidence of any co-production with your community in terms of designing the outcome of your project

Evidence of community engagement may be from, but not limited to:

- Inclusion in Parish Plan accounting for views of whole community.
- Community Engagement Survey/Questionnaire.
- Social Media polling
- Community forum or meeting.
- Current numbers of users be it daily/weekly/monthly

- 16 Essex County Council Strategic Aims

Please provide full details of how your project's outcome will contribute to a least one of the key priorities outlined in Everyone's Essex Plan 2021 to 2025

- 17 Evidence of Support

Written or email confirmation from your local County Councillor fully supporting your project must be provided. Other acknowledgements of support can also be provided from other bodies as appropriate to strengthen your case

- 18 Benefits in Kind

Please give details of any community volunteering or other non - financial donations you will receive to deliver your project. Please note that benefits in kind do not contribute financially towards the funding you are seeking.

- 19 Equality

[The Equality Act 2010](#) highlights legal protection for people who are most likely to be disadvantaged or discriminated against by our society.

Assurance is to be given that different groups of people (particularly those with [protected characteristics](#)) are not disadvantaged when accessing your project's services, amenities or through participation.

20 Sustaining your Project

For example, if your project is constructing a new facility, refurbishment or installation of/ purchase of equipment etc, please provide details of how ongoing maintenance and repair will be addressed.

If this project is for a new local service, how will the service be sustained in future years.

SECTION 4 – Financial

21 VAT Reclaim

Please state. If you answered 'yes' please show all costings **exclusive** of VAT. If you cannot reclaim VAT, please include it in your costings.

22 Total Project Cost

Please provide the total project cost. If this is a phased project, please indicate the total of the cost of the phase you are intending to deliver with the CIF grant contribution and an indication of the cost of all the phases you aspire to deliver. Please ensure clarity is given between figures

23 CIF Grant

Please enter the amount of grant you are requesting

24 Project Costings

Please provide, full a breakdown of your project costs (if phased the phased which you intend to deliver with the CIF grant funding contribution), indicating what the CIF funding is to be spent on.

Please provide at least Two formal estimates from contractors or suppliers, where applicable.

25 Organisation Contribution

Please state the amount of any funding you are putting towards the project. This should be funds you already have readily available. **For**

Parish & Town Councils, this must be a minimum of 50% of the total cost of the project.

- 26 Unable to meet required minimum Contribution

For Parish & Town Councils only: If you cannot contribute a minimum of 50% towards the total cost, please provide details why this is the case, and what circumstances the Panel should take into consideration.

- 27 Unrestricted Reserves

Please indicate the amount of funds you have in unrestricted reserves. You will need to provide a copy of your Reserves policy with your application, giving justification to the accumulation of reserves. If you have restricted or earmarked reserves for other commitments please clearly state what & how much these are.

- 28 Other Sources of Funding

Please complete the simple arithmetic to confirm if any shortfall exists between total costs, your contribution and the Grant requested. If a shortfall does exist then please give details of any additional funding that you will receive, e.g. personal donations, fundraising activities, crowd funding, other grants, match funding etc.

- 29 Band D Council Tax

For Parish & Town Council Applicants only please state precept figures.

This information enables the Panel to understand the current charge levied when comparing it to the total electorate in the Town or Parish Council, which will be compared to the average Band D charge.

- 30 Membership to a Club

For Membership organisations please provide the details requested.

- 31 The Essex Lottery

The Essex Lottery has been established to provide, regular unrestricted funding for good causes in Essex. There is no cost to be registered as a good cause to receive funding through your active promotion of tickets sales to players who support you as a good cause. Please visit <https://www.essexlottery.co.uk/> for more information.

Please indicate if you are registered and actively promoting tickets or if not willing to be contacted to discuss The Essex Lottery as a fund-raising initiative for your organisation.

Checklist

The documents listed must be appended to your application.
Failure to do so will result in your application being ineligible.

Please Note: Late Applications WILL NOT be accepted.

If you are experiencing any issues or have any questions regarding the completion of your application, please contact the Funding Officer.