

Community Initiatives Fund 2021-2022 - Guidance Notes

1.0 Introduction

The new Communitive Initiatives Fund (CIF) comprises of an amalgamation of various community grant funding initiatives (original CIF, Local Services Fund, Local Connection Fund and Cultural Development grants) into a single community fund.

This fund will make available £700,000 (subject to availability of funding) over the next two financial years offering both capital and revenue grants, of which £100,000 will be ring fenced for microgrants (£50,000 per annum).

The Community Initiatives Fund will be segmented into the following:

- Grants up to £10,000 – The main CIF fund. This is for capital projects and projects that require a revenue funding for new service provision, (not core funding) or cultural initiatives.
- Grants up to £500 (microgrants, 'The Community Chest'). This is for both capital and revenue projects that are creative in connecting communities and delivering community benefit at a grass roots level.

2.0 Fund Administration

The administration of the 2021-2022 CIF and microgrants 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

Funding Officer:

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 same organisation can apply for the CIF Fund as long as it is a different project and will be assessed along with all applications.

The fundamental premise of the CIF and microgrant funding is for projects that:

- create, procure or develop new community assets
- enhance existing community assets
- enhance or develop initiatives that strengthen a community, including cultural projects.
- develop local capability
- NOT previously funded Projects in the last 3 years from 19/20 award date

3.1 Alignment to Essex County Council's Organisational Strategy

CIF projects should be able to demonstrate alignment to the aspirations set out within The Future of Essex and achieve at least one of the strategic aims and associated priorities set out within the Essex Organisational Strategy 2017-2021 that underpin the achievement of the ambitions to ensure Essex is a great place to live and work.

In addition, CIF projects are to 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.

Microgrant projects should demonstrate outcomes that generally reduce social isolation, improve wellbeing and support better connected communities whilst demonstrating community support and engagement towards the project.

3.1.1 Thinking about helping people to get the best start and age well

Essex County Council has announced its ambitions to support reducing homelessness and rough sleeping, and to help people at risk of losing their home.

In addition, mental health is recognised as one of the most important issues facing society. Essex County Council, along with partners has a responsibility in supporting those who may be experiencing or are at risk from, deteriorating mental health.

Grant applications are encouraged for those projects that support community initiatives that help to address these key priority areas.

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 by 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 limited to:

- Town and Parish Councils or Parish Meetings
- Constituted Neighbourhood Committees, Residents Associations, Community Groups and Voluntary 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.
- Projects awarded funds in the last 3 years.

4.0 Grant Awards

4.1 Community Initiatives Fund

The main CIF round shall be awarded on an annual basis and the 2021/22 panel(s) shall sit in November 2021 with successful applicants notified and grants made by the end of December 2021. Applications will be considered on their merits with outcomes that deliver against Essex County Council's strategic aims and priorities, and strong community support and need. The

decision of the panel(s) is final. The indicative timeline for the 2021/22 CIF funding is given in the table in 5.7 below.

The Evaluation Panel(s) will 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 level than applied for.

4.2 Microgrants

Microgrants will be awarded twice a month, on a continuous basis and will not be part of the main CIF funding panel award process to ensure that these are quick and easily accessible to assist community projects at a real grass roots level. These grants will also be able to be used to support any crowd funded projects, that show real community support and engagement.

4.3 Validity of Funding

For the 2021/2022 funding round, it should be noted that all funds awarded must be spent and projects delivered by 31 March 2023.

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 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 main fund is subject to a maximum application of £10,000 for any one project and is for capital projects and projects that require a revenue funding for new service provision, (not core funding) or for cultural initiatives.

CIF funding applications are considered once, on an annual basis only. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no longer any CIF Response Fund.

5.1 Eligible areas of funding

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

- Village halls and church 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.

Should you have any queries relating to submissions for programmes of arts and cultural activity and projects then please contact Essex County Council Cultural and Community Engagement Team via email culture@essex.gov.uk or by phone on 033301 32470 whereby the team will be able to advise on best practice, potential additional funding opportunities and general advice

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 Essex Organisation Strategy 2017-2021.
- 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(s) and where relevant the Parish Council.

5.3 Financials

Applicants must:

- 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.
- Applicants must submit latest full accounts, including the balance sheet and list of reserves.

5.4 Project monitoring

To ensure that grant funding is being spent due 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.

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 covert 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

Please note this is for the main CIF round only and not Micro-grants.

The CIF Application Process consists of a Pre-Application Form, Full Application Form and Award Panels.

For CIF the timescales for 2021/22 are as follows:

Activity	Date
Go Live	Monday 7th June 2021
Expressions of Interest	

Expressions of Interest Closing Date	Saturday 14 th August – By 17.00
Successful/Unsuccessful Notified, and Application Sent By:	Monday 16 th August 2021
Full Applications	
Closing Date	Friday 17 th September – 23:59
Prep applications for Panel completed by:	Monday 27 th September 2021
Essex County Council	Traffic Light System agreed
Send applications to Panel Members by:	Monday 4 th October 2021
Panels	
Panel(s)	CIF Panel Meeting 2021 – TO BE CONFIRMED
Funding Awards	
Successful Letters sent by:	TBC
T&C's returned and grant invoiced By	TBC
All grant payments made by	TBC
Grant expiry	Friday 31 st March 2023
Grant Monitoring	
Quarterly Monitoring	March, June, Sept, Dec 2022
Final Project Report	March 2023

EALC reserve the right to change time timetable. Late Applications will not be accepted.

The applicant will be required to complete a Pre-Application Form and should they be successful will be invited to make a Full Application. Both of which 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: Louise Gambardella
Email: louise.gambardella@ealc.gov.uk
Telephone: 01371 879 722

6.0 Micro-grants

Micro-grants, are available up to the value of £500 (both capital and revenue) for any one project, The grants will be awarded twice a month, on a continuous engagement basis and are one-time-only, grant awards that are available to community groups and voluntary organisations for short-term community projects. These projects would have outcomes that generally

reduce social isolation, improve wellbeing and support better connected communities

6.1 Eligible areas of funding

Examples of such projects could be:

- Plant and maintain a community garden
- Establish a Library of 'things'
- Run a Repair Café
- Purchase a fridge for a Foodbank
- Provide Walking Football sessions
- Form a Knit and Natter group
- Organise a community clean-up.

In addition, at the discretion of the EALC, the EALC will use the grant to support and pledge to crowd funded projects, demonstrating community support and engagement.

Applicants will need to demonstrate a real community need and demonstrate support from the local community; for example, this could be through polling results of a Facebook Group. Applicants should also look to engage the local community in terms benefit in kind support (volunteering) to support your project. Projects should benefit the wider community and promote the principles of equality and diversity.

7.0 Applications

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

7.1 Community Initiatives Fund

Application to the CIF is a two-part process consisting of a Pre-Application Form and the full Application Form. You will be required to complete the Pre-Application Form, and this will be reviewed by the Funding Officer. Successful applicants will then be invited to make a full application. The Pre-Application is a simple tick list and completions should be self-explanatory.

7.1.1 Full Application

Section1 - Applicant Details

- 1 Local Authority - This is your District, Borough or City Council.
- 2 Name of your organisation – This is the full name with no abbreviations. **If a Parish/Town Council state the Precept**

- 3 Contact Details – This is the person who must be able to answer detailed questions about the application.

Section 2 – Project Details

- 4 Project title – If applicable the name chosen for your project, salaried position or event.
- 5 Project location – Location of where the community asset is, equipment utilised, salaried position based or event etc held.
- 6 Anticipated start and finish date – construction period, term of sailed position, period when events etc will be held, or equipment purchased.
- 7 Detail how any CIF Grant will be spent by March 2023 – self explanatory
- 8 Previous grant funding - Give details of all funding received, amounts and dates.
- 9 Project Description – Please provide a full description of your project. If this is a works project, for example, is this a phase that is part of the overall project.
- 10 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)

Details of decision-making in agreement to project delivery / grant application should be also given including formally recorded decisions where applicable.

- 11 Who owns the land?

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 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

12 If you do not get this funding, how will the project go ahead?

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

Section 3 – Community

13 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.
- Social Media polling
- Community forum or meeting.

14 Essex Organisational Strategy

Please provide full details of how your projects outcomes will contribute to a least on of the key priorities.

15 Evidence of Support

Please provide written confirmation that your project is fully supported by your County Councillor. Other acknowledgements of support can be provided as appropriate.

16 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.

17 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.

18 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, if successful over future years.

SECTION 4 – Financial

19 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.

20 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

21 CIF Grant

Please enter the amount of grant you are requesting

22 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 formal estimates, where applicable.

23 Organisation Contribution

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

24 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

25 Other Sources of Funding

Please give details of any additional funding that you may receive, e.g. personal donations, fundraising activities, crowd funding, other grants, match funding etc.

26 Band D Council Tax

Please state.

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.

27 Membership to a Club

Please provide the details requested.

28 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 may result in your application being dis-regarded.

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.