

Improved, Greener Community Facilities Fund  
Funded by the UK Rural England Prosperity  
Supporting Document

March 2024



*Working for a brighter future together*



Funded by  
UK Government

POWERED BY  
**LEVELLING  
UP**

OFFICIAL  
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## **1. BACKGROUND**

The Rural England prosperity fund has been created for councils to deliver as part of the government's levelling-up programme.

Funding (capital grants) will be pledged by Cheshire East Council towards projects which demonstrate investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. (UKSPF Intervention E11)

Grants are currently available to improve community facilities and buildings, energy efficiency and save carbon through the Improved, Greener Community Facilities Fund, funded by the UK Rural Prosperity Fund.

## **2. APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **Grant Application Process**

**2.1 Please note, there is no save function on this form. Your form must be completed in full prior to submission.**

**To add, each question has a 4,000 CHARACTER limit, this includes punctuation and spaces.**

**Link to Application here -**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EC25zcsjwUqpszT0-qooUXrfvN1E6OBIrdK2Dcg3m3tURTVQSVBEMTNKWDFTNvdGM0pRMjBXVDdFRy4u>

- 2.2** Organisations can apply for 75% of projects costs up to a maximum of £15,000. Applications will be considered from organisations for local projects, meeting the fund objectives and criteria.
- 2.3** Applicants are expected to contribute 25% of the total project costs in match funding. Match Funding can be obtained using reserves, in-kind donations, funding from other grant sources and fundraising activities or by using the Councils Crowdfunding Platform, Cheshire East Crowd. ([Cheshire East Crowd - Home \(spacehive.com\)](https://www.spacehive.com))
- 2.4** The application form must be completed in full
- 2.5** Applications will be accepted according to the timescales stated in section 6 of this document.
- 2.6** Given the fixed budget and the Council's aim to benefit as many organisations as possible, the Council cannot guarantee to fund the maximum amount applied for; therefore, organisations must ensure that they have procedures in place to cover the balance of funding required.

2.7 All successful applicants will be required to complete post grant monitoring and submit their supporting documents.

2.8 Applications for must be made using the Council's online application form <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EC25zcsjwUqpszT0-qooUXrfvN1E6OBIrdK2Dcq3m3tURTVQSVBEMTNKWDFTNvdGM0pRMjBXVDdFRy4u>

### 3. **WHO CAN APPLY**

To apply into this fund, you must:

3.1 Be a voluntary or community organisation, Town or Parish Council, registered charity or other not for profit organisation, including community faith sector organisations, community groups and community buildings operating within Cheshire East.

**Please note:** Your organisation must operate as one of the following –

A Community Building – Definition: A space for community collaboration, capacity building and bringing people together.

A Community Facility – Definition: A public space where community gather for recreational, educational, artistic, social or cultural activities.

3.2 If you are applying for improvements to a community building, you must be able to provide evidence that you are the owner of the building or have at least 5 years remaining on your lease secured on the building upon submitting your application.

3.3 Have a set of audited accounts, or as a minimum an organisation bank statement, and are able to provide such information as the Council reasonably requires in order to satisfy the Council as to the organisation's financial position and its need for the assistance requested. Organisation's established for less than 3 months that do not have this information available, must be able to provide proof of their organisation bank account;

3.4 Have a management committee with an up-to-date Governing Document which must be signed by at least two members of the committee who are unrelated to each other.

3.5 Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their organisation, which must include a requirement that staff / volunteers are cleared with the Disclosure and Barring Service where appropriate.

3.6 Have a bank or building society account in the name of the organisation applying with at least two signatories who are unrelated to each other.

3.7 Complete the application form in full, providing all required information.

### 4. **FUND CRITERIA AND PROJECT EXAMPLES**

#### **Objective**

The objective of the Improved, Greener Community Facilities fund is:

Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural, and social ties and amenities. This includes community infrastructure, local green space and community-led projects

### **Fund Criteria**

**4.1** To apply for funding we will be looking for projects that:

- Can demonstrate carbon offsetting.
- Are based in or will benefit the residents of rural areas of Cheshire East.
- Access our Cheshire East [Rural Map \(PDF, 684KB\)](#) to find out if your area is classed as rural. **Please note:** There is a small amount of funding available for carbon reduction projects in areas not classed as rural (Crewe, Macclesfield). If you wish to apply for funding for one of these areas, please contact the Cheshire East to discuss further at [communitygrants2@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants2@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**4.2** Meet the intended objectives of the fund - Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and amenities. This includes community infrastructure, local green space and community-led projects

**4.3** Demonstrate a passion to make a difference within the local community

**4.4** Improve your engagement with the community by at least 25%

**4.5** Improved community facilities as a result of support

**4.6** If you wish to submit an application for a net zero/carbon neutral project for a community building, you must have an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) or decarbonisation plan in place.

**Please note**, if your community building does not have an EPC or a decarbonisation plan in place, there is funding available for us to fund the decarbonisation plans for you. You are still able to apply for funding on the basis that you obtain one prior to the funding being released by the Council. Please ensure to let us know in your application form that you wish to have a decarbonisation plan done and one of our colleagues will be in touch.

**4.7** Projects of net zero/carbon neutral nature have the following criteria -

- Tackle climate change this can include: Reduce carbon emissions (e.g. from buildings, travel, food and waste)
- Capture carbon through tree planting and improved green spaces for nature and the community.
- Protect people and the environment from the effects of climate change
- Help communities to take action against climate change through sustainable energy projects and travel

**Project Examples – (Please note when applying into the fund, all grant offers are subject to your project being able to demonstrate carbon offsetting evidence)**

Examples of projects include, but are not limited to:

**4.8 Capital grants for provision of net zero infrastructure for Community Buildings, for example -**

**Energy saving behaviours & low-cost measures**

Improved monitoring  
Smart controls  
Insulating Boiler and Pipework  
Draught-proofing  
Efficient lighting  
Efficient fixed appliances  
Efficient water use

**Building Fabric**

Wall insulation  
Roof insulation  
Floor insulation  
Windows & Doors

**Space & Water Heating**

Efficient boiler/heating system  
Heat pumps  
Room heaters  
New heating controls  
Point-of-use water heaters  
Boiler servicing and replacements  
Oil heating tune-ups

**Renewable energy**

Solar panels  
Small wind turbines  
Heat Pumps  
Biomass (if appropriate)  
Grid improvements required for low carbon solutions  
Connections to renewable energy sources (excluding grid connections)  
Power Down Units to be supplied as an item to be picked up or delivered as appropriate

**Transport**

Electric vehicle charging points  
Active travel measures

**Please note the Council will not pay for electric or ultra-low carbon vehicles themselves**

**4.10** Capital grants for kitchens in community hubs which, may also be capable of supporting food and drink entrepreneurs to get accreditation for food production. For example:

Energy efficient kitchen improvements  
Appliances

**4.11** Resilience infrastructure and nature-based solutions that protect local businesses and community areas from natural hazards including flooding, for example the following:

Installation of warning systems  
Radio communications equipment

**4.12** Provision of net zero infrastructure for rural communities and to support rural tourism, for example the following:

Improvement of sidewalks by tree planning and eco-friendly lighting  
Improved footpaths  
Bicycle racks and storage  
Improved digital connectivity  
Access to nature amenities  
Support to improve social isolation  
Tree Planting

**4.13** Funding for resilience infrastructure and nature-based solutions at Community Facilities to protect the local community, for example the following:

Wildfire Resistance  
Flood Resistance  
Improvements of greenways  
Green roofs  
Rain gardens or wetlands to reduce flood risks

**(Please note when applying into the fund, all grant offers are subject to your project being able to demonstrate carbon offsetting evidence)**

**What this grant will not fund**

**4.14** Projects which promote a political party or are of a religious nature

**4.15** Any costs incurred in putting together an application for this fund

**4.16** Work associated with land or building projects where the ownership or lease is not in place

**4.17** Projects/initiatives that cannot demonstrate sustainability after the ideas stage

**4.18** Departments within Cheshire East Council

**4.19** Items that are purchased on behalf of another organization

**4.20** Projects taking place abroad/or outside of Cheshire East

**4.21** Work which has already taken place and been paid for

## **5. GENERAL CONDITIONS**

- 5.1** Grants are classed as one-off.
- 5.2** Grants must be claimed before the date stated in the offer letter and will be paid upon receipt of the signed offer letter and grant agreement.
- 5.3** Organisations must mobilise projects/services within 1 month of receiving grant payment.
- 5.4** Any profits from projects/services must be used to further develop the organisation/community activity or for any future projects and not used to support other organisations or different projects/services;
- 5.5** Organisations must be committed to and have policies on equalities and inclusion and in delivering the services or activity the organisation must not unlawfully discriminate, directly or indirectly against any of the nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The organisation can direct some or all of its activities at specific groups where the intention is to address discrimination or disadvantage.
- 5.6** Successful applicants must be able to provide the Council with monitoring information and provide evidence (if requested) how the grant money has been spent in adherence to the conditions of the grant. This may include receipts or invoices. An officer will be in touch to inform you of your monitoring requirements and timescales following your grant payment.
- 5.7** Successful applicants must notify the Council of any changes in circumstances which affect their financial position throughout the period in which the grant monies are being used;
- 5.8** The grant must only be used for the purposes specifically stated in the application form, should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the individual or Organisation may be asked to return some or all of the monies paid;
- 5.9** If the project/service is cancelled or only partially achieved, or if the organisation is wound up, any unused grant money must be returned to the Council;
- 5.10** All conditions, under which the grant has been awarded, including any Special Conditions, must be met. Failure to do so could result in the Organisation being asked to repay the grant monies to the Council.

## **6. DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

- 6.1** The Improved, Greener Community Facilities grant applications will be considered by council officers and other relevant partner agencies following the grant closing date.
- 6.2** Applicants will be notified to inform them of whether they have been successful or not within 6 weeks of submitting their application.
- 6.3** Offer acceptance forms and grant agreements should be returned before the date stated in the offer letter date and via the email address provided. Payments will be made once a signed form is received.

**6.4** Complaints about any aspect of the grants process will be dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. A copy of the [Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy](#) is available from the Council's website.

## **7. MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING**

**7.1** Once your signed grant agreement is received, you will be sent a bespoke monitoring and evaluation plan. Examples of what maybe asked for include:

### **Quantitative data**

Numbers of volunteer hours  
Numbers of project beneficiaries

### **Qualitative data**

Case studies  
Photographs (with permissions)  
Conversations with beneficiaries - letting them tell their story  
Feedback from staff and volunteers  
Social media/communication information  
Impact measurement – To show that your work has had an impact on people's lives, it is useful to gather information how things have changed for beneficiaries

### **Financial information**

We will need to see evidence of all financial spend including receipts, invoices etc A completed monitoring form including a case study and invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Council within 2 months of the date of the payment.

**7.2** The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support an application.

**7.3** Successful applicants must retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be advised depending on the grant).

**7.4** If successful applicants do not supply satisfactory monitoring reports and supporting information in full and within the set time scale, they may be asked to repay the grant funding to the Council. Failure to comply with the conditions of this grant may be taken into account when considering any further applications for grant funding made by the same person or organisation in the future.

## **8. PROCESS AND TIMESCALES**

<b>Process</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
Applications Open	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Applications Close	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2025 – Please note applications are reviewed on a rolling basis
Applications Reviewed by Council	Applications will be reviewed upon receipt and on a rolling basis until the final application closing date
Outcomes Confirmed and Offer Letter Acceptance Letters Sent	Outcome and offer letters will be sent within 6 weeks of the Council receiving the application



Return Offer Acceptance Deadline	Within 7 days of receiving offer letter from the Council
Payment Made	On receipt of signed offer letter, grant agreement and evidence of the 25% funding of total project target and any required supporting documentation
Service commenced	Within 1 month of payment made
Monitoring information provided to CEC	According to bespoke monitoring plan

## **9. APPLICATION QUESTION GUIDANCE**

### **Question 1 - Organisation Name**

### **Question 2 - Please can you confirm you agree to the declarations below**

Select you agree to all of the declarations

### **Question 3 - Type of Organisation**

Select the type of organisation that applies

### **Question 4 - What does your organisation do?**

Briefly explain what your organisation does and offers to the wider community

### **Question 5 - How long has your organisation been in existence?**

### **Question 6 - Main Contact Details for Application**

Name(s)

### **Question 7 – Position Within Organisation**

### **Question 8 - E-mail Address(es)**

### **Question 9 - Organisation Address**

### **Question 10 - Organisation Postcode**

### **Question 11 - Telephone Number**

### **Question 12 - Organisation Website or Social Media Channel(s) URL**

### **Question 13 - Project Name**

### **Question 14 - Describe the project that you will deliver using the Improved, Greener Community Facilities Fund**

What will your project do. Include information about what your project will achieve, deliver and any key milestones. If you're applying for a community building, please specify the types of improvements you think are required, for example: heating system, lighting, windows, roof, insulation etc.

**Question 15 - How will your project demonstrate carbon reduction?**

Please evidence the carbon reduction, you can do this by using metrics.

**Question 16 - Do you have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) or Decarbonisation Plan in place?**

**A community building must have an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) or decarbonisation plan in place if applying for carbon reduction type projects.**

We need to ensure that the measures you propose are appropriate and the most cost effective for a Community Building, an energy/carbon assessment such as an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) or Decarbonisation Plan is usually required for any community building.

If you do not have an assessment in place, you are still able to pitch for funding on the basis that you obtain one prior to the funding being released by the Council.

If you have selected 'No' to this question, one of the Council representatives will be in touch to discuss if we can help fund the assessment for you to successfully apply into the Improved Greener Community Facilities Fund.

Exceptions for the fund are when you are not improving a Community Building or if there are no alternatives to the measures proposed, such as changing external lighting to LEDs or installing an Electric Vehicle Charger. Please select 'Not Applicable' in this instance.

**Question 17 - If you have answered 'Yes' to the above question, please can you let us know of any information relating to the EPC and/or Energy Efficiency/Carbon Neutrality assessment?**

Please include any costs you have had quoted by potential contractors to carry out the works on the premises. Please note, copies of any quotes will be requested upon review of your application.

**Question 18 - When will your project start?**

**Question 19 - When will your project end?**

**Question 20 - Please select the area your project will operate within - You can select multiple options if appropriate**

**Question 21 - Location of your project**

Address and Postcode

**Question 22 - What benefits will your project bring?**

Please state how you anticipate the community benefiting from your project and explain why it's needed.

**Question 23 - Current number of beneficiaries of your Community Facility/Community Building**

Please state how many people already benefit from your community facility/community building. This information is needed to help us measure the intended outcomes of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Question 24 - Expected number of beneficiaries following improvements made to your Community Facility/Community Building**

Explain how you plan to increase the reach of your community facility/community building by at least 25% - This information is needed to help us measure the intended outcomes of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Question 25 - Does your project need permission from Cheshire East Council**

For example - Public Rights of Way Order, Planning Permission, Environment Agency - List of permissions can be found on the Councils website - [Other Planning Consents \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**Question 26 - Are you the owner of the premises?**

**Question 27 - If you have answered 'No' to the above question, please can you confirm you have owners permission to carry out any potential works and you have 5 years remaining on your lease?**

**Question 28 - Who owns the land that your project will be delivered on?**

**Question 29 - Does your project need permission from the landowner?**

**Question 30 - Landowner Contact Details**

Telephone Number and E-mail Address

Please type 'Not applicable' if you are the landowner

**Question 31 - What are the outcomes of your project and how will you measure them?**

How will you measure what you want to achieve and how will we know the project has been a success. Please note, you will be required to submit quarterly reports.

**Question 32 - Please state the amount of funding you are requesting**

**Question 33 - What is the total of your project cost?**

Please note, Cheshire East Council will only be able to grant up to 75% or up to a maximum of £15,000 towards your total project costs.

**Question 34 - Please give a cost breakdown of how you will utilise this grant**

Please provide details about how funding will be spent over the period of the grant and include a breakdown of costs.

Please note, you will be required to submit at least 3 quotations for any works directly to Cheshire East Council.

**Question 35 - How will you raise 25% of the amount of funding you are requesting**

Please include detail of any funding which, you have applied for from other sources, any reserves being used, general fundraising or crowdfunding which will contribute towards this project. Include where this funding is from and how much.

Please note - we will require evidence of the 25% match funding prior to Council releasing the grant.

**Question 36 - Will you restrict access to your activity/project on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation?**

**Question 37 - If you have answered 'Yes' to above question please let us know and explain why**

Click here to apply into the fund –

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EC25zcsjwUqpszT0-gooUXrfvN1E6OBlrdK2Dcq3m3tURTVQSVBEMTNKWDFTNvdGM0pRMjBXVDdFRy4u>

