

# **Community Regeneration Fund Criteria and Guidance Notes 2023/24**

## **What is the Community Regeneration Fund?**

The Community Regeneration Fund is a new scheme to support the ongoing regeneration of East Staffordshire.

The fund is designed to support local groups and organisations, including social enterprises, to deliver capital projects which will help to enhance local areas. The fund specifically focuses and supports projects that will help to improve the public realm of local areas rather than repairing and maintaining existing assets.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis operating on a first come, first served basis. The scheme will run for 12 months or until the funds are fully allocated, whichever comes sooner.

## **Who can apply to the fund?**

Local community groups, charities and social enterprises are all eligible for the scheme.

Businesses that operate for profit are not generally eligible. However, if the project can clearly show public benefit then these applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

Parish and Town Councils are not able to apply. Applications which seek to pay for projects which a local council of any tier has a statutory duty to provide will also not be funded. A community group can, however, use the funds to enhance land owned by a Parish or Town Council, for example a sports club working in partnership with the Council.

## **What can the fund be used for?**

The fund is designed to help deliver capital regeneration projects to help improve local areas; one-off capital projects (capital projects are fixed assets).

Projects must clearly show how they are improving and regenerating a local, community space and must have public access showing a wide community benefit. Some examples of the types of projects that could be funded are provided below:

- Community gardens
- Community woodlands
- Heritage boards
- Public art
- Sport and recreation spaces

This is not an exhaustive list and organisations are encouraged to speak to the Social Regeneration Officer to discuss their idea in more detail prior to submission to help assess if the project is eligible.

## **What the fund cannot be used for?**

- Repairs and ongoing maintenance to community buildings
- Running costs of community buildings (e.g. heating, lighting)
- Village/Parish/Town signs and way marker signage
- Burton town centre projects as they are part of the existing work that East Staffordshire Borough Council is taking forward
- Projects on private land which are not publicly accessible
- Retrospective funding
- Salary costs and volunteer expenses
- VAT costs

## **Funding Outcomes**

ESBC is required to measure the success of the grant and project. Within the application, groups need to be clear about how success can be measured. Some examples are included below:

- Increasing the number of volunteers
- Increasing the number of residents participating in an activity
- Increasing local resident satisfaction with the area
- Demonstrating that residents are able to better manage their physical and/or mental health

## **How much grant funding is available?**

The total amount of funding available through the scheme is £100,000.00. The minimum grant available is £1,000.00 and the maximum grant available is £16,000.

At least 20% of the total cost of the project will need to be funded from other sources/by the applicant. The match funding provided by the applicant can be used to pay VAT.

The contribution from the Community Regeneration Fund must make a significant difference to the project. Projects with a total value in excess of £100,000.00 will not be considered by the under this grant scheme other than by exception.

## **Application process**

If you are interested in applying for the fund, in the first instance please contact the Social Regeneration Officer at ESBC to talk through your project. The forms will be available online but can be emailed to you if needed.

## **How will applications be assessed?**

Applicants to the Fund will go through three stages.

- Stage 1 Expression of interest
- Stage 2 Panel presentation
- Stage 3 Final submission

Bidders will be supported by an officer from ESBC throughout the process.

The application process is competitive; applications will be judged and scored by a new cross party Panel. The Panel will judge applications based on their own merits, considering the expected outcomes and the community impact for each project. Projects must be able to demonstrate how it will impact positively on the local community and what the likely impact might be.

The local Ward Councillor must support the project and evidence of their support is required. In the case of Wards with more than one member, at least one Councillor must support the project. All Councillors within the Ward are to be consulted.

### **When will applications be assessed?**

The Community Regeneration Fund panel will meet monthly to consider applications at all stages. Information about the panel meeting dates and associated cut-off dates for receipt of applications will be available on the website (add link).

### **Stages 1: Expression of interest**

An initial expression of interest will need to be submitted. This will enable the Panel to assess if both the organisation applying and the project are eligible. Expression of interest forms will be available to download from the ESBC website. The expression of interest will be submitted to the next available panel meeting and applicants will be informed by email within three working days of that meeting of the outcome of Stage 1 of the application process.

The decision of the panel is final.

### **Stage 2: Presentation**

If successful at Stage 1 then applicants will be invited to present their project to the panel. Applicants will be advised in advance of the date and time of the next available panel meeting and will be given guidance of what should be included in their presentation. There will also be an opportunity for questions at the end of the presentation should panel members require any additional information to assist with their decision making.

A maximum of 4 applications will be considered by the panel each month. It is likely that panel meetings will be held in a hybrid form, with an opportunity for presentations to be made via Zoom or in person.

At the end of Stage 2, feedback will be provided from the panel to the applicant by email within three working days of the panel meeting. By the end of Stage 2 an application will either have been:

- Approved with an in-principle funding award
- Refused

No funding award is guaranteed until the application has been approved at Stage 3 and the decision of the panel is final.

### Stage 3: Final Submission

If successful at Stage 2 applicants will receive a copy of the final stage application.

All sources of funding for the project need to be in place before submitting the final stage application. Applicants will be required to include evidence that all match funding required for the project has been secured.

Copies of quotes will need to be included to support your application. The value of the application will determine the procedures that have to be adhered to. The table below sets out ESBC criteria.

Goods/Services	Procurement Procedure
Up to £3000	One quotation (confirmed in writing)
£3,001 to £50,000	Three Written Quotations
£50,001 or more	Invitation to tender to at least three, normally no more than 6

All relevant permissions (Planning and/or Building Regulations consent\*) must have been obtained by the time your application is assessed by the grants panel (where applicable).

The checklist at the end of the final stage application details all other supporting information that needs to be submitted with the application.

Applicants must understand their responsibilities and have in place suitable policies. Applicants must demonstrate compliance with any other legislation governing the activity being undertaken. Overall responsibility remains with the organisation applying for the grant and not with East Staffordshire Borough Council.

The final stage application will be considered by the Panel at one of the monthly meetings and applicants will be informed by email of the outcome of the final stage of the process within three working days of the meeting. There are two potential outcomes at this stage:

- Approved for the full amount requested
- Approved for a different amount than requested.

The decision of the panel is final.

\*Applicants need to be mindful of the timescales relating to planning and building regulations consent.

### If successful, how will the grant be paid?

Grant payments will be made upon receipt of the signed grant agreement and written confirmation of a start date for the project.

Payment of the Community Regeneration Fund grant will be made to the organisation named on the application form by BACS, using the bank details provided on the grant agreement form.

The grant approval is based on the information provided in the application form and the applicant must only use the grant in accordance with the information provided.

## **What happens after the project is completed?**

The applicant will complete a grant monitoring form upon completion of the project. Photographs of the work undertaken, detailing improvements and associated benefits to the community will be provided within three months of the grant payment. It will also be expected that site visits from ESBC officers to view the project, will be accommodated by the applicant upon completion of the project.

All invoices, receipts and accounting records relating to the project must be kept for at least 6 years after completion of the project and made available for inspection by East Staffordshire Borough Council, its auditors or other nominees.

If the project is not completed or progressed within the agreed timescales then the Council may ask for the grant money to be returned.

Any asset bought by the grant must be adequately stored, maintained, insured and available for inspection on request.

The applicant and applicant's organisation must publicise in a way to the satisfaction of East Staffordshire Borough Council the support given by the Council. In particular any publicity material, press releases, handouts, notice boards must include and acknowledge that this project received funding from East Staffordshire Borough Council's Community Regeneration Fund.

The applicant and/or applicant's organisation must make a representative available for any PR organised by East Staffordshire Borough Council.

East Staffordshire Borough Council reserves the right to use the applicant and/or applicant's organisation details in publicity materials.

If the applicant or any person connected with the application fails to comply with these conditions or commits any breach of faith such as misrepresentation or concealment of information, the Council may require the immediate repayment of all or part of the grant.