

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Fund

What is the Community Environment Fund?

The Community Environment Fund supports community-led projects that improve the environment across the Liverpool City Region and encourage long-term environmental action.

The fund is designed to help local organisations and communities turn environmental ideas into practical projects, including projects that support climate resilience, enhance biodiversity and habitats, improve green and blue spaces, reduce energy use and improve environmental awareness.

How much funding is available in 2026?

A total of £350,000 is available for the 2026/27 Community Environment Fund programme.

There are two grant streams:

- Stream 1: £1,000 to £4,999
- Stream 2: £5,000 to £30,000

Applicants should apply for the amount needed to deliver their project effectively and provide a clear breakdown of proposed expenditure.

Before You Apply

Who can apply?

Applications are welcomed from not-for-profit community groups and organisations, including:

- charities
- schools and colleges
- faith groups
- residents' associations

- 'Friends of' groups
- other not-for-profit organisations.

Other organisations, such as local authorities, may also apply where the project has a strong community engagement focus or is being delivered with a community partner.

Applicants must have been established for at least one year and be able to provide one month of organisational bank statements.

Individuals applying in a personal or private capacity, businesses and other profit-making organisations are not eligible to apply directly to the Fund. However, we welcome their involvement in supporting projects led by eligible community groups. This could include providing volunteers, expertise, resources or additional funding to help strengthen the project and increase its wider community impact.

Can I apply as an individual?

No. Applications must be made through a recognised organisation or group.

We are unable to accept applications from individuals applying independently, so you must apply on behalf of an organisation or recognised group that meets the eligibility criteria.

What if my group does not have the required organisational bank account or banking information?

An eligible registered organisation, such as a parish council, local authority or social landlord, may be able to act as an accountable organisation and apply for and manage the funding on your behalf.

You should make sure this arrangement is agreed before submitting your application.

Can a local authority apply?

Yes, but the project should have a strong community engagement focus or be delivered with a community partner.

Any expenditure associated with a local authority will also need to meet the eligible expenditure requirements set out in the application guidance.

What types of projects can apply?

Projects should fall within one or more of the following categories:

1. Climate change and resilience
2. Transport
3. Water
4. Accessible green spaces, habitats and biodiversity
5. Carbon and environmental literacy
6. Energy reduction
7. Food

Projects should provide a clear environmental benefit to the Liverpool City Region and demonstrate how the local community will participate in or benefit from the project.

Can my project cover more than one category?

Yes. Environmental projects often contribute to several different outcomes.

You should identify the category that most closely reflects your project's primary purpose, while explaining any additional environmental and community benefits within your application.

Does my project need to be ready to start?

Yes. Projects should be sufficiently developed and ready to proceed if funding is awarded.

This means you should have considered issues such as project delivery, costs, permissions, landowner consent and planning permission, where applicable, before applying.

What if I need landowner permission?

If your project will take place on land that you do not own, you will need the appropriate landowner's consent.

You may be required to provide evidence of this as part of the funding process.

What if my project requires planning permission?

Where planning permission is required, it should be in place before the project proceeds. Applicants should establish whether their proposed project requires planning permission before applying.

Does the project location need to be publicly accessible?

Projects should provide a clear community or public benefit.

Publicly accessible locations can include places such as schools, community centres, churchyards and community green spaces.

Can I apply if I have received Community Environment Fund funding before?

Yes, previous applicants can apply again, but the fund will not support a repeat of the same project.

A previous project may potentially be developed further through a distinct new phase, provided the new proposal offers additional activity or benefits rather than simply repeating previously funded work. Previous rounds have applied this principle.

If you have an outstanding final claim or reporting requirement from previous Community Environment Fund funding, this will need to be resolved before a new application can be considered.

Funding and Project Costs

How much can I apply for?

Choose the grant stream appropriate to your project:

Stream 1: £1,000 to £4,999

Stream 2: £5,000 to £30,000

Your application should explain why the amount requested is necessary and provide a clear breakdown of how the funding will be spent.

Do I need match funding?

Match funding is not required. You may use Community Environment Fund funding alongside other sources of funding, provided the costs are clearly identified and all Community Environment Fund project delivery deadlines can be met.

What can the grant pay for?

Eligible expenditure can include costs that directly contribute to delivering your project, such as:

- plants, trees and seeds
- materials and equipment
- tools and appropriate PPE
- machinery or equipment hire
- specialist or professional fees directly related to delivery
- project events
- staff or volunteer costs directly associated with delivering the funded project.

Applicants should refer to the full application guidance for detailed eligible and ineligible expenditure.

What can't the Fund pay for?

Further information can be found in the application guidance but as an overview the fund will not normally support:

- activities that do not benefit the Liverpool City Region
- projects already underway or completed before funding is awarded
- general organisational overheads
- purchase of land, vehicles or buildings
- alcohol, tobacco or other addictive substances
- political, gambling or religious activities

- ongoing staffing costs unrelated to delivering the project
- retrospective expenditure.

Can I purchase solar photovoltaic panels?

Photovoltaic panels are not eligible.

You can find further funding options available through Community Energy England here: [GBE Community Fund and GBE Partnerships Grant - Community Energy England](#)

Do I need to get quotations?

Where your project involves major works or significant purchases, you may be required to demonstrate that the costs represent good value for money. Works or purchases over £5000 will generally be required at least 2 quotes.

Will the grant be a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022?

No, Community Environment Fund grants are for non-economic activities that benefit local communities and their residents and therefore do not meet the definition of a subsidy under the Act.

Completing Your Application

What information will I need to provide?

You should be prepared to tell us:

- who your organisation is
- where your project will take place
- what you plan to deliver
- why the project is needed
- how the community has been or will be involved
- the environmental and community benefits
- how the project will be maintained after funding ends
- your project milestones and timescales
- how much funding you are requesting
- what the money will be spent on
- the outcomes you expect to achieve
- the main risks to delivery and how you will manage them.

You may also need supporting information such as landowner consent, planning permission, quotations or other relevant evidence.

How detailed should my project plan be?

Your project plan should clearly show what you are going to do, when you will do it and how you will deliver it.

Your milestones should be realistic and allow the assessment team to understand how the project can be successfully completed within the funding period.

What should I include in my project budget?

Your budget should clearly show:

- what you intend to buy or pay for
- the estimated cost of each item
- the quantity required
- the total project cost
- any other funding contributing to the project.

Costs should be realistic and provide value for money.

What are KPIs and why do I need them?

Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs, are measures that help demonstrate what your project has achieved.

For example, depending on the type of project, you might measure:

- number of volunteers involved
- number of volunteer hours
- number of people participating
- number of trees planted
- area of habitat improved
- energy saved
- people participating in environmental learning.

You should choose realistic targets because successful projects will be expected to report against them.

What if I'm not sure which KPI or project category to select?

Choose the category and measures that most closely reflect the main purpose and intended outcomes of your project.

Read the application guidance and KPI information before submitting your application. If you are still unsure, contact the Community Environment Fund team by emailing CEF@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk.

Applying and Getting Help

When do applications open?

Applications open on 15 October 2026.

When is the application deadline?

Applications must be submitted by 23:59 on 30 November 2026.

Applicants are encouraged not to leave submission until the final few minutes.

Is there a webinar for potential applicants?

Yes. An applicant webinar will take place on Tuesday 20th October 2026, 5pm to 5:45pm.

The webinar will provide further information about the Community Environment Fund and help applicants understand the funding and application process. There will be an open Q&A function throughout the webinar.

The session will be recorded for anyone unable to attend live.

[Register your attendance to the webinar.](#)

Can I get help before submitting?

The FAQ, application guidance and applicant webinar should answer many of the questions you may have.

If your question is not answered by the published information, you can contact the Community Environment Fund team at:

CEF@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk

We would make clear that the team can clarify the application process and eligibility requirements but cannot help to write an application or guarantee whether it will be successful.

What Happens After I Apply?

What happens after I submit my application?

Applications will be checked and assessed against the Community Environment Fund criteria.

Assessment, including required due diligence, is currently scheduled to be completed by the week ending December 18th 2026.

Applicants will then be informed of the outcome in January 2027.

How will my application be assessed?

Applications will be assessed against the published funding criteria.

This will include consideration of the project's environmental impact, community benefit, deliverability, value for money and the information provided within the application.

The current funding round also retains weighting relating to areas of deprivation and boroughs that have been under-represented in previous rounds of funding.

When will I find out whether I've been successful?

We will announce the successful applicants in January 2027. All applicants will be contacted to confirm whether or not their application has been successful.

What happens if my application is unsuccessful?

You will be notified that your application has been unsuccessful.

Individual feedback cannot be provided because of the expected volume of applications.

If Your Application Is Successful

Can I start my project as soon as I receive an award notification?

No.

Successful applicants should not begin expenditure or delivery until the required funding agreement and onboarding process have been completed and they have been told that the project can commence.

Grant Funding Agreements are currently scheduled for the signing phase by 26 February 2027.

When must my project start?

All projects must commence before 1 May 2027 but can start sooner, as long as the grant funding agreement is in place.

When must my project finish?

All funded projects must be completed by 30 November 2027.

When are final project reports due?

Project reports and case studies should be submitted by 31 January 2028.

When will I receive the funding?

- Stream 1 grants paid 100% upfront following completion of the funding agreement
- Stream 2 grants paid 50% upfront and 50% following successful completion and reporting.

Delivering Your Project

What records will I need to keep?

Successful applicants should keep appropriate project records, including:

- invoices and receipts
- evidence that expenditure has been paid
- relevant timesheets, where required
- progress against agreed milestones
- evidence relating to agreed KPIs
- photographs and other evidence of project delivery.

The Grant Funding Agreement and project monitoring requirements will set out exactly what you need to retain and provide.

What happens if my project changes after funding has been awarded?

Contact the Community Environment Fund team before making significant changes to the project, budget, delivery dates or agreed outcomes.

Do not assume that funding can automatically be transferred to different activities or costs.

What happens if my project is delayed?

Contact the Community Environment Fund team as soon as you believe your project may be delayed.

Projects must currently be completed by 30 November 2027, so early communication is important if anything could affect delivery.

What happens if I don't spend the full grant?

You should notify the Community Environment Fund team.

Any underspend should be managed in accordance with your Grant Funding Agreement and must not automatically be spent on alternative items or activities without agreement.

Do I have to maintain the project after the funding finishes?

Where funding creates or improves a long-term asset, habitat, facility or resource, applicants should demonstrate how it will be managed, maintained and funded in the future.

For example, a project creating a community garden, orchard or wildlife habitat should consider who will maintain it and how ongoing costs will be met.

Communications and Your Responsibilities

Do I need to publicise my project?

Yes. Successful applicants will be expected to acknowledge support from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and help communicate the impact of the Community Environment Fund.

Detailed branding and publicity requirements will be provided to successful projects.

Will I need to provide photographs?

Yes. Successful projects should expect to provide good-quality photographs or other appropriate visual evidence showing project delivery and outcomes.

For physical projects, before-and-after photographs can be particularly useful.

These may also be used to help tell the story of the Community Environment Fund and celebrate the work being delivered by communities across the Liverpool City Region.

Will my project be used as a case study?

Potentially.

Funded organisations may be asked to contribute to Community Environment Fund communications, case studies or media opportunities.

This is particularly important because the fund is designed not only to deliver individual projects but to show what communities can achieve by taking environmental action locally.

What happens if I don't meet the conditions of the grant?

Funding is subject to the terms of the Grant Funding Agreement.

Failure to deliver the agreed project, provide required evidence or comply with funding conditions may affect payments and could, depending on the circumstances, result in funding needing to be repaid by your organisation.

Further Information

Where can I learn more about nature recovery and climate priorities?

Applicants will be able to access useful supporting information from the Community Environment Fund webpage, including:

- the [Liverpool City Region Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)
- the [Five Year Climate Action Plan](#)
- the [Local Habitats Map](#)

- the Community Environment Fund Application Guidance
- the online Application Form.

These resources can help you understand the wider environmental priorities your project could contribute towards

My question isn't answered here. Who should I contact?

Please read the full Community Environment Fund Application Guidance first, available on the Community Environment Fund webpage.

If you still cannot find the answer to your question, contact: