

Essex County Council Climate Action Challenge Fund Guidance Notes

1.0 Introduction

The Essex Climate Action Commission was set up to advise us about tackling climate change and make recommendations about how we can improve the environment and the economy of Essex.

The Commission has now launched a new report, [Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral](#), which has set out over 130 recommendations from the Commission on how best Essex can reach net zero and deal with increased risk from climate change such as flooding and over-heating.

Running alongside the work of the Commission, a Climate Action Challenge Fund has been launched to support community activities that embeds behavioural change in Essex residents around key climate issues.

This fund is seeking to engage local communities and discover and support solutions to address key priorities identified by the Essex Climate Change Commission

This fund will make available £500,000 to achieve this.

2.0 Fund Administration

The fund is administered by Essex County Council

Enquiries about this funding can be directed to:

Email: climate.challengeprize@essex.gov.uk

3.0 Eligibility of Funding

Grants of up to £20,000 are available to support the development of community-led responses to key climate change priorities – delivering practical solutions as well as activities that begin to embed behavioural change in Essex residents through making environmental action easy, accessible and attractive.

There are two strands to this programme:

The Local climate action small grants fund	The Local climate action large grants fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grants up to £5,000 - Aimed at small, localised community/unconstituted groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grants of up to £20,000 - Aimed at schools and constituted voluntary and Community Sector organisations with an income of over £100,000

Projects should demonstrate high levels of community engagement and participation and be diverse and inclusive in nature – recognising a collective responsibility to tackle climate issues. In addition to this however, we particularly welcome applications from projects that engage with/and or involve children and young people.

Funding should be used to address one of more of the below key priorities:

Land Use and Green Infrastructure

- Improving use of green space and other green features, urban and rural, which can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities.

Energy

- Widening access to/and uptake of renewable energies

Built Environment

- Implementing Initiatives/measures to meet net zero standards in buildings and the urban landscape

Transport

- Increasing active and sustainable travel provision within the county; reducing reliance on the car; and creating new cycling and walking opportunities

Waste

- making it easier for people to recycle, repair and re-use, and help people make good choices

Community Engagement

- Creating easy to engage with forums/methods to raise awareness around key climate challenges and support changing behaviours at a local level

Examples of eligible activity may include (but are not limited to):

- Reduce; recycle; re-use projects around food, clothing, furniture and biodegradable waste
- Projects promoting and enabling sustainable travel (i.e. cycling schemes; walking schemes)
- Community gardening projects
- Projects that make use of green space for community activity and promote biodiversity
- Projects that upgrade community facilities (i.e. energy efficiency adaptations, solar panels)
- Projects to support installation of more electric vehicle charging points

Eligible Spend:

- Revenue costs including marketing and communication costs
- Capital costs: capital requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should be able to clearly demonstrate how this activity will meet the objectives and timescales of the fund. Any capital assets will be owned and maintained by the applicant. ECC is not responsible for future/ongoing or disposal costs. Organisations are also responsible for ensuring necessary permissions are gained for any capital works.
- Staff and volunteer costs: if it can be demonstrated that they are vital in meeting the objectives of this fund

Projects are encouraged to make use of government or other sources of funding where available. This fund cannot be used where support already exists - though can be used as match funding.

Outcomes:

All applications must demonstrate how their activities address one or more of the key priorities of this fund as well as how activity can support behavioural changes in participants.

We are also interested in understanding secondary benefits of your project. You will be invited to tell us about the additional outcomes that you anticipate your project will deliver. This may include (but not limited to):

- Increased physical activity
- Increased community cohesion
- Improved connection with nature
- Reduced cost of utilities
- Increased growing and eating of fresh food
- Improved air quality
- Improved biodiversity

3.1 Who can apply?

Applications are welcome from:

- Voluntary and Community Sector organisations – constituted and unconstituted (i.e. community groups; registered charities; CICs/Social Enterprises)
- Schools (Early Years, Primary and Secondary, Sixth Form Colleges and holiday provision)

4.0 Grant Awards

- This is a rolling programme. It is expected that funds will be available until 31 March 2023 or when all funds are fully allocated – whichever comes first.
- Awards will be made on a rolling basis. Successful applicants will be notified, and grants awarded as quickly as possible.
- Grants are available to support both capital and revenue costs.
- Applications will be considered based upon feasibility of activities; value for money; and how activities meet the outcomes of the programme.
- The Funding Panel 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.

4.1 Validity of Funding

Funding will be allocated by ECC by 31 March 2023 or earlier if funds are exhausted.

Grants awarded must be spent within 12 months of award.

If for any reason the project does not come to fruition or funds cannot be spent, the Funding Officer should be notified, and funds returned to Essex County Council.

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. Any unspent funding from projects will be returned to Essex County Council within 28 days.

5.0 Fund Administration

5.1 Demonstration of Need

Applicants must:

- Demonstrate how their activities will have an impact in meeting the programme outcomes
- Demonstrate how their activities will meet a need in their communities (i.e. areas of high pollution; low rates of recycling)
- Demonstrate how their projects will involve the community in the design, development, and/or delivery of their project.

5.2 Financials

All applicants must:

- Have gained necessary permissions to undertake this work as required (i.e. permissions from landlords, planning permission)
- Demonstrate financial viability and whole life costs / on-going revenue costs.
- Be fully transparent on the total project costs and where funding will be allocated as well as any in-kind support for your activity/project
- Be transparent in their amount of unrestricted reserves, and such reserves should be fully justified in formally ratified reserves policy.
- submit latest accounts, including the balance sheet and reserves (where appropriate).

5.3 Project monitoring

To ensure that grant funding is being spent due diligently, ECC will seek project monitoring reports. Frequency and criteria for reporting will be agreed with ECC and set out in the grant agreement upon confirmation of successful awards.

ECC will work with the grant holder to agree reporting metrics.

ECC may request a full audit of the projects accounts and gain financial assurance.

5.4 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 considering applications organisations should consider that their projects and activities 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.

5.5 Timescales and Application Process

This is a rolling programme and applications can be submitted at any time prior to the deadline of 23.59 on 31 March 2023.

Successful applicants will be notified by email as soon as a decision is made by the panel and will be required to agree to terms and conditions set out in a grant agreement set by ECC.

ECC reserves the right to change timescales if circumstances change. Late Applications will not be accepted.

Supporting Documentation:

Please note the following will need to be provided by applicants where relevant. For those community groups/unconstituted groups that do not have these documents/policies in place, please contact the email address on **page 1** of this document so this can be discussed prior to an application:

- Copy of your latest accounts, including the balance sheet and reserves
- Copy of your safeguarding policy
- Copy of your volunteering policy
- Copy of insurance policy

PLEASE NOTE: Failure to fully complete applications or supply required documentation may make your application null and void. Completed applications are to be returned to Essex County Council. Applications should be emailed to the email address on **page 1** of this document.