

Community Fund Round 6b Guidance Notes

Thank you for your interest in Richmond Council's Community Fund. It is important that you read these guidance notes before you apply.

Introduction

The Community Fund is the name given by Richmond Council to the neighbourhood element of the Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL). The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. Most new development which creates net additional floor space of 100 square metres or more, or creates a new dwelling, is potentially liable for the levy.

From the total CIL collected, 15% is dedicated to the 'neighbourhood' of the development for local people to develop infrastructure projects that address the demands that the new development places on the area. In Ham and Petersham where a Neighbourhood Plan has been developed, 25% of the CIL collected is dedicated to the locality.

Eligible organisations can apply for funding towards projects which are infrastructure based and aimed at relieving the demands placed on a local area by new development.

Application Stages and Key Dates

Stage 1 Expression of Interest

Closing Date: 5pm Monday 23 March 2026

Outcome: Expression of Interests will be evaluated against the eligibility criteria, and we aim to inform applicants if they are being invited to submit a stage 2 application by early May 2026

Stage 2 Main Application – by invitation only

Closing Date: 5pm Monday 20 July 2026

Outcome: Early December 2026

Please read these guidance notes carefully before submitting an Expression of Interest. If after reading these Guidance Notes you are unclear about whether your project meets our criteria, please contact the Voluntary Sector Team by emailing voluntarysector@richmond.gov.uk who will be pleased to help you.

Who Can Apply?

To be eligible for the Community Fund, your organisation must be:

1. Providing services or activities benefiting the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and its residents

Your organisation must provide services or carry out activities that directly benefit the residents of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

2. Not for Profit

You can apply if your organisation is a constituted voluntary or community organisation; constituted group or club; registered charity; charitable incorporated organisation (CIO); not-for-profit company; community interest company (CIC) limited by guarantee; community benefit society; co-operative society.

Organisations that generate profits for individuals or shareholders, including companies limited by shares, are not eligible. CICs limited by shares are not eligible.

Your organisation must have been **in operation for at least two years**.

If your organisation is not a registered charity, your governing document and accounts must show that any surplus is reinvested into the organisation's activities, and you must have a not-for-profit asset lock clause in your governing document.

Organisations can apply in partnership with other non-voluntary sector organisations e.g. statutory agencies or private companies, but the eligible voluntary or community group must be the lead partner, and funds will only be paid into their bank account.

3. Constituted

Your organisation must have a **governing document** or set of rules that is signed and dated, outlining how your organisation will operate. Additionally, your organisation must have at least **three board members/trustees** who are unrelated to each other and live at separate addresses.

4. Financially Solvent

Your organisation is only eligible if its liabilities do not exceed its current assets. Organisations must have a bank account with a minimum of 2 non-related signatories.

What are the Community Fund's Priorities and Objectives?

The Community Fund must be used to fund the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

Examples of demands that development may place on an area include:

- The need to counter the loss of biodiversity and other negative effects on the environment caused by development, including pollution
- Issues related to high population density such as heightened crime, including antisocial behaviour and littering, and pressure on waste management and food production systems
- The need for community cohesion to support different communities to share spaces and resources
- The need for community venues for events, activities and other opportunities
- The need for activities that support education, culture, and physical and mental wellbeing in the area
- The need for high-quality outdoor space, especially where outdoor space is being lost during development
- The need to facilitate safe and easy movement through the area, such as good walking routes, cycle paths and community bus services
- An increased cost of living and impact on community assets

Projects need to be infrastructure based aimed at relieving the demands placed on a local area by new development.

Physical infrastructure

For Example:

- Improvements to community buildings
- Street scene improvements to allow areas to be better used
- Contributing to borough greening initiatives
- Making environments more accessible and Disability Discrimination Act compliant
- Improvements to wildlife habitat and environmental initiatives
- Increasing the variety of play & fitness equipment
- Supply and installation of bike racks/storage/cycle routes

Social Infrastructure - local services and facilities that contribute to the quality of life

For Example:

- Projects that use digital solutions to include more vulnerable or marginalised residents
- Provision of community facilities and equipment
- Outreach provision to support more isolated members of the community

We do not fund:

- Political or religious orientated projects

- Projects that would be totally reliant on further funding from the Council to continue i.e. need to show sustainability
- Staff posts, unless it is time limited for the exclusive delivery of the project
- Professional fees to prepare application
- Feasibility studies
- Applications which are fundraising in nature
- Retrospective activity

Examples of previously funded projects can be found on the Community Fund pages on the Richmond Council website https://www.richmond.gov.uk/community_fund

Criteria for Funding

Applications must meet criteria 1-5 to be considered. Further weight will be given to applications which meet criteria 6-8.

1. The project must address the impact of development resulting in an increased number of people living in, or using your local area, and be for community benefit.
2. The project must not have any on-going revenue implications for the Council, in terms of further council grants.
3. The application must demonstrate evidence of need and support from the community. For applications in the Ham & Petersham Neighbourhood Area, the project must align with the priorities of the Neighbourhood Plan:
www.richmond.gov.uk/ham_and_petersham_neighbourhood_planning
4. The project must demonstrate value for money, showing the impact and difference it makes to the local community.
5. All relevant permissions including planning permission must be in place or imminently expected prior to the Expression of Interest submission. If you do not own the building or land, permission from the owner must be obtained.
6. The project can commence within a reasonable timescale; projects which cannot start within 12 months may apply but will be a lower priority than projects which can start within 12 months.
7. Evidence of match funding, including in-kind funding e.g. volunteer time
8. The project addresses Richmond Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan www.richmond.gov.uk/climate_emergency

Permissions

Some projects may need permission to proceed, and you should not assume obtaining permission will be easily achieved. All permissions must be in place or expected imminently (before 1 July 2026) for the project to be eligible for Round 6b of Community Fund, and you must provide proof of permissions obtained at the Expression of Interest stage. If you do not have the relevant permissions in place already, you are advised to apply to a future round.

Landowner and property owner consent – if you do not own the land or property, you will be required to provide your lease agreement and you will need written permission from the owner that they have given their permission for the project to go ahead. If the landowner is the Council, you will need permission from the relevant Council department. See the Council land and property assets register to identify Council owned assets: www.richmond.gov.uk/council_land_and_property_assets

If you hold an existing lease from the Council, rather than holding over or occupying premises under license or under any other arrangement, the unexpired term of the lease must significantly exceed the length of the projected timescale of any proposed infrastructure project.

Planning Permission – you must review whether your project requires planning permission or needs to meet building regulations e.g. changing structures, building work, altering boundaries, conservation areas. Visit the Council's Planning webpages for further information www.richmond.gov.uk/planning. Standard timeframe for planning outcome is between 8 and 16 weeks depending on scale of project: www.richmond.gov.uk/make_a_planning_application.

Listed Building Consent – this may be required if your project is taking place on a site that has been placed on the statutory list of 'special architectural or historic interest'. Visit the Council's Listed Buildings website www.richmond.gov.uk/listed_buildings

How much can you apply for?

The Borough has been divided into three cluster areas 'East', 'West' and Ham and Petersham to provide a substantial funding stream for all areas. Ham and Petersham have a ratified Neighbourhood Plan which sets out a vision and objectives to help shape the future of the area. Please refer to www.richmond.gov.uk/ham_and_petersham_neighbourhood_planning for the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

THIS ROUND IS SOLELY FOR APPLICATIONS FROM THE HAM & PETERSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA.

Amounts available in Round 6b:

Cluster Area	Wards	Amount Available
Ham and Petersham Neighbourhood Plan Area	Please refer to www.richmond.gov.uk/ham_and_petersham_neighbourhood_planning for the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area	£121,509

Applicants can apply for a **minimum of £20,000** and the request **must not exceed the total amount available for your cluster area**. We anticipate that demand will exceed the funding available.

Match funding is not essential but projects which have secured match funding, monetary or in-kind, will be a higher priority.

Application Process

The application is in two stages.

Stage 1: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Format: WORD form along with required supporting documentation to be submitted by email. Form available to download from the Community Fund pages of the Council website.

Deadline: Please submit the Expression of Interest form online by **5pm on 23 March 2026**

Process and Outcome: Expression of Interests will be evaluated against the eligibility criteria and we aim to inform applicants if they are being invited to submit a stage 2 application **by early May 2026**.

The purpose of this stage is to check the eligibility and feasibility of the proposed project. Applicants will only be invited to submit a Stage 2 application if the following criteria are met in the Expression of Interest stage:

- The applicant is eligible for funding in accordance with the eligibility criteria set out above for the fund
- The applicant is financially solvent and holds a level of reserves which is within its reserves policy or have a valid reason otherwise
- Evidence that full permissions to carry out the proposed works have been obtained or are expected imminently
- The proposed project meets regulations for the 'Neighbourhood' element of CIL
- The project can feasibly start within a reasonable timeframe

If your application is successful at the Expression of Interest Stage, you will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application.

Once submitted, your Expression of Interest will be shared with local Ward Councillors; although securing Ward Councillor endorsement ahead of submitting an application is not a requirement as per previous rounds, applicants are encouraged to discuss the proposed project with their Ward Councillors.

Please note an invitation to submit a Stage 2 application is not a guarantee of funding.

Stage 2: MAIN APPLICATION – by invitation only

Format: WORD form along with required supporting documentation to be submitted by email. The application form and guidance on completing the form are available to download from the Community Fund pages of the Council website.

Deadline: 5pm on 20 July 2026

Process and Outcome: Stage 2 applications will be evaluated against the grant fund priorities and criteria, and funding decisions will be made by the Council's Finance, Policy and Resources Committee. We aim to notify applicants of the outcome in **early December 2026.**

A more detailed application will be required at Stage 2 to include:

- full details of the use of the facility and how the local community will benefit from it
- demonstration of the need and proof of support from the community for your project
- a full and complete breakdown of all costs including quotations for the works
- a project plan / milestones

What happens if my application is successful in Stage 2?

Successful applicants will be contacted and asked to complete a Funding Level Agreement. After any additional special conditions are met, the grant will be released for payment by BACS transfer to the organisation's bank account. Awards over £30,000 will be paid in 2 instalments, according to project timelines.

Grantees will be expected to update on the project progress regularly, complete an end of project evaluation form and provide photographs of the completed project. Officers may request project visits during and after the project.

Contact Information

Richmond Council Voluntary Sector Team voluntarysector@richmond.gov.uk

Additional support for your application:

Richmond CVS is the local voluntary sector umbrella body which provides support, advice and training in all aspects of charity, community and voluntary activity in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. They can provide specific support to help you develop and plan your project, as well as provide feedback on funding applications. action@richmond cvs.org.uk

Habitats and Heritage is a local charity that assists people and organisations who protect and enhance the environment. They help environmental groups to start, operate, find volunteers, raise funds, get insured, share good practices and collaborate. For more information, please visit the Habitats and Heritage website: <https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/>