Land and building projects guidance

For capital projects asking for more than £20,001

COMMUNITY FUND

Reaching Communities

Standard and Partnerships

Introduction

Our aim is to support people to shape and sustain the places that matter to them. Places and spaces are valuable and meaningful to communities because of the social activities that take place and the relationships that are formed there. We support communities to improve their physical places and spaces, so they welcome a wide range of people and have a lasting impact on community life.

This additional guidance* is for organisations in England applying for a grant at or above £20,001 that involves the purchasing, refurbishing or developing of land and buildings or other construction-related works. **It contains a checklist to be completed if we like your idea and ask you to submit a formal proposal for funding.** It also includes some key considerations for land or building projects, to ensure that you are well prepared to deliver your project.

***This guidance should be read alongside the Reaching Communities or Partnerships programme guidance.**

Supporting you with your land and building application

Please get in touch if you would like more information, or if anything in this guidance is unclear. If you have already discussed your proposal with us, additional support can be accessed by contacting your Funding Officer, especially if you feel your project does not fit in with these guidance notes.

What we can fund

We anticipate meeting costs associated with construction work, professional fees and surveys. We can also support organisations to:

- plan a new project
- gain new skills to manage the project
- produce an options appraisal

Our funding also provides support to projects where there is a mix of funders involved, or we can be the sole funder. In either case, what is crucial is that you can demonstrate wider community support for your idea and that your project has been planned well.

Checklist and considerations

Project name

Name and address of organisation

Main contact details (telephone number/email address)

Address of the project site

Postcode for the project site

Local Authority for the project site

We ask that you review each section of the checklist. We understand that projects are all different and so the information we request will be proportionate and appropriate to the scale and type of project you are undertaking. If you are seeking a grant award of £100,000 or above, we will request more detailed information.

You will be required to meet your obligations under construction legislation of your country. If you have any concerns, please seek independent legal advice.

1. Options appraisal

Please provide a description of the options you have considered for delivering the project, you should include:

- a description of the current situation and the alternatives that you have considered
- how your proposals will help facilitate the delivery of your planned activities
- how you have engaged with your members, users and local community
- the constraints and opportunities you face with each option
- the estimated costs of each option
- the risks associated with each option
- a delivery programme for your preferred option

2. Confirmation of ownership

Our grants for projects involving the purchasing, refurbishing or developing of land or buildings have specific terms and conditions that need to be met, they concern your ownership of the site in question and the security we may take over it. You may need to engage a legal professional to help you comply with our requirements.

If your ownership is via leasehold arrangements, please supply a copy of the existing or draft lease, in addition to a copy of your Land Registry title document and title plan, if available. Please note that our lease requirements are as follows:

- for awards between £20,001 - £99,999, a lease of at least 5-years (after the work has been completed or practical completion has been certified) is required and it should:
    - Not contain any early termination rights (break option) for either party in the asset liability period (see below) of the grant
- for awards between £100,000 and £499,999, a lease of at least 5-years (after the work is complete) is required and it should:
    i. not contain any early termination rights for either party during the asset liability period
    ii. be freely transferable
    iii. not allow for an automatic return of the land and buildings to the landlord in the event your organisation becomes insolvent

If you have freehold ownership, please supply a copy of your Land Registry title document and plan. If you plan to buy a freehold or leasehold interest in land or buildings, then you must supply:

- a description of the land and/or building you want to buy
- an independent surveyor's report on the condition of the land or buildings, its current/ open market valuation for the purposes of this project, which is less than six months old (with any restrictions upon usage noted) and whether it is suitable for the intended grant purpose

- details of any potential issues such as access to the site, contamination or rights of way
- evidence that Heads of Terms for the purchase have been agreed (payment should have not been made)
    - if the cost of the purchase is above £50,000, you will need to provide a certificate of title for the property. In addition, you will need to instruct Solicitors to liaise with our legal team, even if no security is to be taken
- a timetable for the purchase

Asset liability and monitoring periods.

Please note that if the value of the grant is at or above £100,000, we will need to take security over the relevant asset, be that land and/or buildings. This security will be in the form of a deed that restricts the use of the asset to the use approved by the grant and limits your ability to dispose of the asset without our consent. Where the grant is at or above £500,000, we may require a legal charge over the asset.

In either scenario, you will need to instruct Solicitors to liaise with our legal department to ensure the security is in place. We cannot pay more than 5% of any grant awarded until this security is in place. It will remain in place for a period of 5-years or more after the completion of your capital project. This period is called the 'asset liability period', during which we will contact you to make sure the asset is being used for the intended grant purpose.

3. Design Information - Drawings and surveys

Where applicable, to help us understand your proposals, please supply as much of the following as possible:

- an existing site plan showing the outline of the building and the site, surrounding properties and access routes at an appropriate scale
- colour photographs of the existing site or buildings (inside and outside)
- survey information undertaken or planned (for example, existing layout, asbestos, structural, ecological)
- proposed floor plans or general arrangement drawings (including sections and elevations), noting the gross internal floor area (GIFA) in square metres (m^2) at an appropriate scale
- an outline specification of the proposed works
- a schedule of any furniture or equipment (specialist or not) essential to the delivery of your project

3.1 Design information - Inclusive Design

We wish to support projects that promote inclusive design – that is places and spaces that are designed to be accessible for all. Therefore:

- we would like you to include an Access Plan that provides more details about how your project will improve access for all. See **Appendix A** for more guidance on what your Access Plan might include

3.2 Design information - Tackling Climate Change

We wish to support projects that will help save energy and promote greener living, therefore:

- we would like you to include a Carbon Savings Plan to tell us about how your project will help tackle climate change. See **Appendix B** for more guidance on what your Carbon Savings Plan might include

4. Summary of project costs

Please supply a breakdown of your project costs in the table below, based on the cost estimates, quotes or tenders that you have received. We would expect that your costs are prepared by a suitably qualified building professional such as a Quantity Surveyor, or from contractor quotations. Where possible, calculate the cost per square metre (£/m^2) of the proposed building or landscape project.

Capital cost item	Amount (£)
a. Land and/or building purchase	
b. Construction costs including any preliminaries	
c. Furniture, fittings and equipment	
d. Professional fees (do not include costs already incurred)	
e. Other costs such as legal, administration, statutory and/or survey fees. (Specify what these are in a separate note)	
f. Inflation	
h. Contingency (10% of total capital cost, excluding inflation value)	
i. Non-recoverable VAT (seek professional advice if necessary)	
Total capital cost £	0.00

5. Permissions, approvals and other consents

Where applicable, please supply any consents you may have (or describe the progress you have made). Most projects need to consider:

- planning permission (including listed building consent)
- building regulations approval
- any other statutory consents such as from utility companies or the Environment Agency.

6. Professional team appointment

Where applicable, please supply details of your professional team members. Although we will adopt a proportionate approach for smaller refurbishment and landscape projects, for schemes requesting £100,000 and above, we will expect you to appoint a lead building professional. You may wish to use an Architect, Building Surveyor, Landscape Architect, Project Manager or Civil/Structural Engineer to help you develop the proposals.

7. Health and Safety

The Construction Design and Management Regulations (2015), The Building Safety Act (2022) and The Building Regulations (2023) place responsibility on clients, designers and contractors involved in construction projects to ensure adequate health and safety processes are put in place. Please confirm that you will adhere to client duties within the CDM Regulations (2015), The Building Safety Act (2022) and The Building Regulations (2023) and appoint Principal Designers and Contractors for the project as required.

8. Procurement

Where you are engaging building professionals, contractors or suppliers to help develop your idea into a formal proposal you must use an appropriate procurement process that is compliant with your organisation's procurement policy or accepted good practice in the public / charity sector; it should be transparent and fair. You will need to adhere to any publicly funded legal requirements in advance of your application.

- for professional fees at or above £10,000, we expect you to obtain at least 3 quotes
- for construction works between £20,001 and £100,000 you must provide 3 recent quotes from established contractors and/or suppliers
- for construction works above £100,000 you should undertake a competitive tender process to arrive at the construction costs for your project

As part of your application, we may require a report from a suitably qualified member of your team to include the following:

- procurement method undertaken (e.g., recent quotes or competitive tenders)
- if applicable, include details of the appropriate form of contract to be used
- lowest and highest bid, and total number of bids received
- evaluation criteria used to evaluate bids (to show transparency and fairness in the process used)
- name of preferred supplier and price, indicating if this bid was the lowest. If you decide not to accept the lowest quote or tender received, we will need to understand why

Monitoring and claiming your grant

- Please remember that if you are successful and are awarded a grant for a construction project, we shall inspect the work being undertaken at different stages, in particular, when the work is complete. We need to be satisfied with the quality of the work undertaken and be confident that the new facilities that you have created will let you deliver the outcomes you described in your main application.
- We do not pay for design or construction work in advance of it being undertaken, instead we release our grant for costs that you have incurred during the project and these must be evidenced by invoices. So you should ensure that you have prepared a clear cash flow for the duration of the project.

Appendix A

The Access Plan

Introduction

We wish to support projects that promote inclusive design and are inclusive and accessible to all. The Government defines inclusive design as a ‘process that ensures that all buildings, places and spaces can be easily and comfortably accessed and used by everyone’.

We can support projects that include a change of use, alterations or refurbishment, extensions, new builds and landscape improvements. An inclusive environment is one that everyone can benefit from, by not just being able to move in with independence, but also without barriers or fears regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, culture, economic circumstances or whether travelling with children, on a cycle or carrying and using equipment.

An access plan should accompany your application. We don’t have a template for the plan as we recognise that there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution for the wide range of ideas that we support. So, we ask that you develop your own, and expect it to be proportionate to the scale and type of your proposals.

Key Requirements

We ask that as a minimum your plan addresses the following:

- an assessment of the ease of access and use of your building or landscape, along with the details of the specific design measures that you propose
- for all projects, a policy commitment to become an inclusive organisation, building or open space

Key Considerations

Here are a few areas that you may wish to think about when developing your plan.

Early planning for access

It is important to try to involve your Board, team, users and visitors when thinking about your access arrangements and carrying out an access audit. Ideally this should be at the beginning of the design process. Overcoming access barriers at a later stage in the project can result in a building or open space that is not inclusive and may be expensive to change.

Key Legislation and Regulation

In Britain, the The Equality Act (2010) protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. Service providers must take reasonable steps to remove physical features that may place somebody at a disadvantage by limiting their access to goods, facilities or services. They should alter it so that it no longer has that effect; provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature; or provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available.

Part M of the Building Regulations, (or equivalent regulations in your country), promotes an approach to building design that reflects the needs of all people, requiring that reasonable provisions shall be made for all people to gain access and use building and their facilities.

Remember, you may be required to produce a design and access statement as part of a planning application, this is separate document to an access plan.

Here are few examples of design features to consider for both building and outdoor spaces:

Approach	Think about how you get to, arrive at and exit your building or open space. Are path widths and surfaces appropriate for all users? E.g. baby buggies, bikes, scooters, walking aid users. Is the approach level or gently ramped, slip resistant, well illuminated, with clear signage (including the building name and number)?
Parking	Are there suitably designed, marked and signed parking spaces on accessible surfaces, as close as possible to all accessible entrances? Is there an appropriately located and signed dropping off point?
Entrances	There should be at least one entrance door that is accessible to all, level or adequately ramped and stepped if necessary, with appropriately designed handrails, automatic or assisted doors and of contrasting colour. Landings should allow a wheelchair user to move clear of one door before opening the second door.
Lobbies and Receptions	Floor surfaces should not impede movement, and should avoid dips, changing surfaces, or busy patterns which can be confusing particularly for those with dementia. Think about providing hearing enhancement systems, lowered wheelchair accessible counters and door handles designed to aide those with limited manual dexterity. Consider if it is possible to reduce hard surfaces that cause noise reverberation.
Horizontal or vertical circulation	Where possible areas above or below ground floor should be accessible. A lifting device and suitable stairs to all storeys above and below ground should be provided – in a new build this should be a full passenger lift. Ensure, adequately wide corridors and door openings free from obstructions. To aide navigation, think about providing clear and well-lit signs with universally recognised pictograms particularly at key decision points (e.g. when getting out of a lift). Include contrasting colour schemes for walls and floors to help those with visual impairment.
WC facilities	All shared amenities should be designed so they are accessible to all. Consider the different users of the space. Allow for the provision of wheelchair accessible unisex toilets. You should also consider government guidance around the provision of "changing places" toilets. Wherever possible we encourage the installation of changing places toilets and the provision of separate space for baby changing.
Outdoor space	Think about whether the space feels safe and welcoming to all. Is it easy to navigate through, with supportive signs and places to rest and shelter? Have you thought about how the space might reflect the users and the wider community? Could you introduce sensory features or create spaces for outdoor exercise, play or growing.

Help and Support

You may wish to seek further help and guidance of organisations who are experienced in supporting inclusive design projects, such as:

- Action With Communities in Rural England (ACRE)
- Centre for Accessible Environments
- Changing places
- Sensory Trust
- Design Council: Inclusive Environments
- Local Authority Building Control
- Landscape Institute
- The National Register of Access Consultants
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

This list is not exhaustive and there are many more organisations and professionals that can help you plan your inclusive design and accessibility.

Finally, we are here to help and if you would like to speak to us then please get in touch with your Funding Officer who can arrange some additional help with this.

Appendix B

The Carbon Savings Plan

Introduction

We are committed to supporting ideas that help to tackle climate change. We recognise that damaging carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions associated with developing and operating places and spaces can be significant compared to other projects we support, and so, we ask that you submit a Carbon Savings Plan, which sets out the measures you plan to take to minimise the environmental impact of your proposals; the plan could help you save money as well.

We don't have a template for the plan as we recognise that there is no 'one size fits all' solution for the wide range of ideas that we fund. So, we ask you to develop your own plan and expect it to be proportionate to the scale and type of your proposals. We would also recommend that the Carbon Savings Plan is something you consider together as a committee or with a selection of your members and or beneficiaries so that the plan is viewed by a diverse group of people, to inspire discussion and ownership.

Key Requirements

We recognise that the considerations set out here won't be applicable to all projects, but we do ask as a minimum your plan addresses the following:

- the proposals will help to save energy and subsequently lower carbon emissions
- for all projects, please explain how your project supports your commitment to promoting low carbon behaviour in your organisation

Key considerations

Here are a few areas that you may wish to think about when developing your plan:

Environment and Energy Efficiency Policy

Do you have an Environment and Energy Efficiency Policy setting out your aims, objectives and procedures to instil low carbon behaviour at the heart of your organisation? It might include things like waste management, using a green supplier for your energy , recycling, travel via low carbon forms of transport like cycling walking or car sharing, use of renewable fuels amongst other things.

Conserving Water

It is helpful for us to conserve water, have you considered how you might use less and re-use water? A good way of doing this is by re-using 'grey' water from sinks, baths and washing machines to flush toilets. You could also 'harvest' rainwater for re-use by installing water butts or other larger forms of water storage. You may also consider the use of low-flush fittings on toilets and flow-restrictor settings on taps, as well as regular maintenance to stop leaks.

Reducing your energy demand

One of the best ways of reducing the energy demand is to take a 'fabric first' approach by improving the fabric of your building; it's walls (including windows and doors), floor and roof. Have you considered a survey to assess your building's current condition and identify the most effective measures to improve the energy efficiency? These might include retrofitting insulation, more efficient glazing and better doors or heating controls to allow the zoning of internal spaces.

Zero Carbon technologies (LZC's)

We have traditionally created heat by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil or gas, but these fuels produce high amounts of CO_2. Have you considered low or zero carbon technologies such as heat pumps or solar panels, to produce the energy needed for your building? These technologies use renewable fuels like the wind, the air or the sun.

Please note that if you are considering an LZC for which you intend in the future, to claim the Government grants, you must not use our grant to pay for the initial installation costs.

Using sustainable materials

When planning your project, you may choose to use materials which have low 'embodied carbon'. This term refers to the greenhouse gas emissions that arise during the materials extraction, manufacture, transportation and assembly. The embodied carbon used in constructing a building can be as much as the carbon emissions that come from operating the building over its entire lifetime.

Landscape improvements

Outdoor spaces provide an opportunity to deliver services, save carbon and reduce pollution. It is worth getting specialist advice about how planting trees, shrubs, wildflowers, reducing water run-off and noise, can all combine to create a beneficial micro-climate around your venue or neighbourhood. Your landscape could help with off-setting carbon, whilst contributing to biodiversity and the well-being of your users.

Help and Support

You may wish to seek further help and guidance from organisations who are experienced in supporting projects to save energy, such as:

- The Energy Savings Trust
- The Building Research Establishment
- National Energy Action
- Association for Environment Conscious Building (AECB)
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
- Community Energy Scotland
- Community Energy Wales
- The Sustainable Energy Communities NI (SEC NI)
- Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Sustainable Wales
- Action With Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

Finally, we are here to help and if you would like to speak to us then please get in touch with your Funding Officer who can arrange some additional help with this.