

**CULTURAL AND CREATIVE
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (CCIP)
APPLICATION GUIDANCE
NOTES 2026**

Closing date: 20 September 2026

Content	Page
1. Programme Overview	3-4
2. Project Brief	4-6
3. Programme Outcomes	6-7
4. Overview of the Grant Programme	7
5. Key Priorities	7
6. Eligibility Requirements	7-11
7. Required Documents	11-12
8. Council Priorities/ Strategic Themes	12
9. Eligible costs - What can be funded	13
10. Ineligible costs - What can't be funded	13-14
11. Procurement	14
12. Marketing and Publicity	15
13. Funding period	15
14. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Arrangements	15-16
15. Submission	16
16. Conditions of Funding	16-18
17. Payment of Grant	19

1. Programme Overview

Sandwell Council is delighted to announce capital funding provided through the West Midlands Combined Authority's Culture & Creative Industries Infrastructure Programme.

This programme will support Sandwell's local cultural and heritage sector to grow and become more sustainable by investing in the adaptive reuse and improvement of locally significant cultural and heritage buildings. Sandwell wants to invest in locally significant cultural assets that support inclusive growth, civic pride, and community wellbeing. This aligns with WMCA's strategic priorities around place-based regeneration and improving access to culture across the region.

The Sandwell Cultural Infrastructure Programme is particularly interested in supporting **locally significant cultural and heritage assets in areas of Sandwell facing economic disadvantage and low cultural engagement**.

These capital grants are designed to deliver tangible improvements in cultural infrastructure that contribute to long-term social and economic outcomes. It supports WMCA's commitment to inclusive growth by creating spaces that foster creativity, community cohesion, and local pride. The programme also complements other regional initiatives in housing, transport, and skills, helping to embed culture as a core component of place-making. Through strategic investment in locally significant projects, the programme will strengthen the region's cultural ecosystem and enhance quality of life for residents

The programme will address the following core objectives.

- Drive economic growth and attract investment in the creative economy: Strengthen the creative and cultural sector as a driver of economic growth and positioning the West Midlands as a nationally recognised hub for creative innovation, talent and investment.
- Support cultural-led place regeneration and civic pride: Animate high streets, town centres and community spaces through culture-led regeneration, enhancing pride in place, stimulating local spending, and improving quality of life through vibrant, accessible cultural infrastructure.

- Promote environmental and social sustainability and inclusion: Enable the adaptive reuse of cultural buildings while embedding net zero principles and ensuring equity and inclusion in the design and delivery of investment; infrastructure and ensure that under-represented communities have equitable opportunities to create, participate in, and benefit from culture and creativity.
- Enhance cultural infrastructure and participation: Invest in locally significant cultural assets to broaden public access, improve the quality and resilience of cultural venues, and increase opportunities for people from all backgrounds to participate in cultural life.

Stacey Anne Bagdi, the Cultural Development Officer for Sandwell Council is holding a drop-in questions session on 25/08/26 between 11-3pm. If you'd like to book a 15-minute chat with Stacey to discuss your proposal, please email Stacey_bagdi@sandwell.gov.uk

2. Project Brief

Develop and deliver a capital works project that supports small-to-medium-scale improvements to locally significant cultural and heritage assets whether owned by local authorities or operated by community and cultural organisations. The fund is intended to unlock underutilised infrastructure, widen access to cultural experiences, and drive inclusive, place-based regeneration through culture

Projects should be ready to proceed, with a clear plan for permissions, procurement, and delivery within the funding period

Definitions of asset buildings:

Proposed asset typology: cultural venues, libraries, heritage buildings/ attractions, community centres and facilities, collections

Definition of equipment:

Proposed typology: software, building services and environmental controls, access systems, digital and IT infrastructure, technical

production equipment, portable hardware, workshop production equipment

What we would like to see in your application:

- 1) Demonstration through evidence of previous experience of managing small-medium size capital works projects you have delivered within the last two years including demonstrating budget management, staff delivery, risk management and evaluation.
- 2) We will be looking at how your grant project delivers against Sandwell Council priorities.
- 3) Projects should clearly show how the improvements will increase use, access, or quality of the cultural asset
- 4) We will be looking at how your grant project delivers against the four West Midlands Combined Authority CCIP outcomes. See project outcomes below.
- 5) Applications should be clear, realistic, and demonstrate how the project will deliver improvements to the asset and benefit the community
- 6) Projects should be delivered in Sandwell only, utilising organisation's own venues and cultural assets within Sandwell.
- 7) Costs should be realistic and based on quotes or recent price estimates where possible
- 8) Projects must demonstrate realistic delivery timelines, including procurement and obtaining permissions

- 9) Applicants should demonstrate that costs represent fair and reasonable value for money.
- 10) You do not need to have any match funding or in-kind contributions to apply.
- 11) Where applicable, applications must include details of partner organisations.

3. Programme Outcomes

The CCIP aims to support inclusive growth and regional resilience by enhancing the cultural and creative infrastructure of the West Midlands. This grant delivers on enhancing and supporting Sandwell's cultural and creative infrastructure.

The grant project should address the following core objectives set by the West Midlands Combined Authority.

- 1) Enhance cultural infrastructure and participation: Invest in locally significant cultural assets to broaden public access, improve the quality and resilience of cultural venues, and increase opportunities for people from all backgrounds to participate in cultural life.
- 2) Support cultural-led place regeneration and civic pride: Animate high streets, town centres and community spaces through culture-led regeneration, enhancing pride in place, stimulating local spending, and improving quality of life through vibrant, accessible cultural infrastructure.
- 3) Drive economic growth and attract investment in the creative economy: Strengthen the creative and cultural sector as a driver of economic growth by supporting high-potential businesses with equity investment and targeted business support, positioning the West Midlands as a nationally recognised hub for creative innovation, talent and investment.

4) Promote environmental and social sustainability and inclusion: Enable the adaptive reuse of cultural buildings while embedding net zero principles and ensuring equity and inclusion in the design and delivery of investment; widen access to finance and infrastructure and ensure that under-represented communities have equitable opportunities to create, participate in, and benefit from culture and creativity.

4. Overview of the Grant Programme

- Grant value: £2,000 to £5,000
- Purpose: Capital projects that enhance or upgrade cultural and heritage assets
- Location requirement: Projects must take place in Sandwell
- Delivery period: Within 6 months of award
- Deadline: 20 September 2026

5. Key Priorities:

- Improve cultural infrastructure
- Increase access to cultural experiences
- Support regeneration and civic pride
- Contribute to economic growth and inclusion.

6. Eligibility Requirements

Your organisation must:

- Be a voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations operating on a non-profit basis, we welcome applications from small grassroots community organisations.
- Have a constitution/term of reference and bank account
- The applicant's cultural/heritage asset must be based in Sandwell. The organisation does not need to be registered in Sandwell, but it must operate its activities in a Sandwell based cultural/heritage asset that is either owned or rented by that organisation.

- The applicant must have demonstrable experience in developing and delivering cultural and arts projects in Sandwell over the past three years.

Applications will be rejected if these criteria are not met.

Who can apply

Your organisation and your building must be focused on one or more of the following:

- preserving a building of historical significance (a heritage building)
- art/craft
- film
- literature
- music
- performing arts (dance and theatre)
- visual arts
- history/heritage

Your organisation is eligible to apply if it meets the criteria set out in the council's definition of the Voluntary and Community Sector:

Shared Definition of the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Sandwell is made up of collections of individuals who come together to work for the public good. It includes a very diverse range of organisations. To be eligible for this grant you will need to be one of the following types of organisations:

- Voluntary organisations
- Community groups
- Tenants and residents' groups
- Faith organisations and groups
- Housing Associations

- Most co-operatives and social enterprises (provided all profits are retained for the benefit of the members or community served)
- Most sports clubs and organisations
- Grant making trusts

Your organisation must have one or more of the following structures/forms:

- Community Interest Companies limited by guarantee
- Community Interest Companies limited by share (schedule 2 including an asset lock of 100%)
- Not for profit trade associations
- Charitable trusts
- Companies limited by guarantee
- Constituted groups (groups with a governing document which are not incorporated as companies)
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Community Benefit Society with charitable status

The organisation applying for the grant must be the one that will receive and be responsible for the funding.

Key Requirements

There are a few basic things your organisation will need in place, before you can apply to us. These include:

- To apply your organisation must be not-for-profit and registered in Sandwell.
- A registered address with a Sandwell postcode. You can check your postcode by visiting the government's find your local council webpage
- A governing document such as a constitution setting out the rules for your organisation, the focus of your organisation and that you are not-for-profit
- A committee or board with at least three unrelated members to provide independent oversight and support. We consider people related if they

are married or in a civil partnership, are in a long-term relationship or living together or are part of the same family.

- A bank account in the name of your organisation with at least two unrelated people named on the account who manage money transfers.
- Annual financial accounts and balance sheet. If you don't have any annual accounts because you're a new organisation (less than 15 months old), we'll still look at your application.
- Experience of managing similar projects and budgets
- Funds or a plan to cover any associated revenue costs and ongoing maintenance of the assets renovated, repurposed, improved, constructed or purchased through the grant programme.

Inclusivity and Relevance

You must consider residents and underrepresented groups in the design and delivery of your project, ensuring that the offer of your cultural and heritage building reflects and serves the diversity of the local community.

Successful applicants will need to consider the protection of the environment by:

- minimising waste, air and water pollution and the release of greenhouse gas emissions and other substances damaging to health and the environment
- conserving the use of raw materials, water, energy and other resources
- adopting circular economy and zero waste methods wherever possible, including by using recovered or recycled goods and environmentally friendly production methods
- limiting the project activities' impact on biodiversity and nature
- taking all possible precautions to ensure that any materials used in the project activities do not contain any damaging or hazardous substances unless this is unavoidable

Who cannot apply

We will not accept applications from:

- National organisations (including those with a Sandwell office or base)
- Individuals or sole traders
- Private profit companies (including companies limited by shares)
- Schools, colleges or other educational establishments

7. Required Documents

Latest Annual Accounts or Management Accounts for the last 12 months.

Required to demonstrate financial stability and the organisation's ability to manage and account for grant funding. This supports assessment of financial risk and ensures the organisation can deliver the project and manage public funds appropriately

Constitution or terms of reference

Required to confirm the organisation's legal status, governance arrangements, and decision-making structure. This ensures the organisation is properly constituted and has appropriate oversight in place to deliver the funded project

Certificate of Insurance

Required to confirm that appropriate insurance cover is in place, including public liability where relevant. This ensures risks associated with project delivery are managed and does not expose the Council to liability

Business Plan

Required to demonstrate how the organisation will deliver the project, including objectives, delivery approach, and financial planning. This

supports assessment of project viability, sustainability, and alignment with the purpose of the grant

Risk Assessment

Required to demonstrate that the organisation has identified and planned for potential risks associated with the project, including health and safety risks and risks linked to delivery of capital works. This ensures appropriate control measures are in place and supports safe and effective delivery of the funded project.

8. Council Priorities/ Strategic Themes

Organisations in receipt of grant funding from the Council are expected to deliver projects that contribute towards at least one strategic theme as stated in the Council Plan 2024-27.

Council Plan 2024-27

The Council Plan 2024-27 reflects the things that people have told us are important to them and it contains clear goals that we will work towards over the next few years. Based on feedback from our stakeholders this plan centres around four strategic themes. These are:

1. Growing up in Sandwell
2. Living in Sandwell
3. Healthy in Sandwell
4. Thriving Economy in Sandwell

All underpinned by One Council One Team.

This Plan will detail how we will deliver on these strategic themes and how we will measure our success. The full version of the Council Plan can be found [here](#)

9. Eligible costs (Capital)– What can be supported

We will support projects that:

- adapt or improve cultural and heritage buildings
- purchase or construct assets for long-term use that will benefit cultural and heritage buildings. This includes equipment.
- Some project examples include:
 - increasing the physical accessibility of a cultural venue
 - developing creative workspaces in a culture or heritage building
 - purchasing exhibition display cases for a heritage building or film equipment for a studio

10. Ineligible costs (Capital) -What cannot be supported

The Sandwell Cultural Infrastructure Capital Funding Programme cannot support:

- Projects that take place outside of Sandwell Council area
- Projects that are not due to be fully completed within 6 months of award date.
- Revenue activities – these must be funded from other income sources
- Professional fees and salaries of staff not exclusively dedicated to designing or implementing the capital project such as planning and design costs, and construction/installation/delivery charges
- Activities or services that have already taken place or will take place before we can decide on your application
- Cash prizes and gifts
- Fundraising
- Projects that make a profit - Your project will not be eligible if your project budget includes surplus income that is not being spent within the project
- Activities of a political or exclusively religious nature; including paid for lobbying

- Costs of materials for delivery of activities such as stationary or stock (items that are constantly changing)
- Repairs, maintenance, replacing like for like, remedial works or renewal (these are considered revenue spend and are not eligible)
- Short-term assets that will not last for more than 1 year

11. Procurement Requirement for spend up to £5,000

- For all purchases funded through this grant, organisations must demonstrate value for money. For purchases exceeding £500, at least one written quotation must be obtained.
- Ensure the expenditure is eligible and directly supports the funded activity
- Obtain a minimum of one written quotation or equivalent price evidence and seek additional quotes where practicable to demonstrate value for money
- Ensure the price is reasonable, competitive, and consistent with market rates
- Select the supplier based on price, quality, and ability to deliver
- Direct award may be used where justified, including where there is only one suitable supplier, continuity is required, or urgency applies; any justification must be recorded
- Declare and manage any conflicts of interest before proceeding
- Obtain appropriate internal approval in line with delegated authority before committing expenditure
- Maintain a clear audit trail, including quotations or price checks, the rationale for supplier selection, approvals, and invoices
- Put in place appropriate ordering or contractual arrangements setting out scope, cost, and delivery requirements
- Comply with applicable procurement legislation and the organisation's own contract procedure rules where these set higher requirements
- Organisations must not procure goods or services from trustees, staff, or connected parties without full transparency and prior approval

12. Marketing and Publicity

- All promotion material **must comply** with WMCA: Cultural & Creative Industries Partner Branding Toolkit.
- All promotional materials must include the Sandwell Council Logo and must clearly state the project is “funded by Sandwell Council”.

13. Funding period

Grant spend should be completed within 6 months of award.

14. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Arrangements

- Monitor delivery of the project to ensure it is progressing as planned
- Provide quarterly updates on progress against activities and milestones, how funding has been spent, and any risks or issues
- Attend regular review meetings to discuss progress and performance
- The Council may carry out site visits as part of monitoring and compliance checks
- Provide more detailed quarterly reports to support funding payments and demonstrate delivery against milestones
- Provide evidence of expenditure and delivery, including financial records and supporting documents when requested
- Evidence may include photographs, invoices, receipts, and documentation demonstrating outputs and outcome
- Keep accurate and up-to-date records of all expenditure and retain these for audit purposes for at least 6 years
- Keep an asset register of all items purchased or improved through the funding, including description, cost, and location
- Provide a final report at the end of the project confirming outputs, outcomes, and use of funding
- Cooperate with audits, reviews, and evaluation activity and provide access to relevant information
- Inform the funder promptly of any delays, risks, or issues that may affect delivery.

- The Recipient will, during the Grant Period co-operate with the Funder and any third party evaluator by responding to requests for information about the Funded Activities, participating in Evaluation activity and providing access to those of its Representatives involved in the Funded Activities.

15. Submission

Complete your [Application Form](#) by 20 September 2026.

If you would like to discuss your project ideas or have any queries before submitting an application, please email Stacey_bagdi@sandwell.gov.uk.

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

16. Conditions of Funding

Please note that an organisation may forfeit its right to receive any further funding from the Council if the following conditions are not complied with:

- The Council will **NOT** consider applications for funding in retrospect, and no funding will be approved for anything not included in the application
- Projects must not begin before a formal Grant Agreement has been issued by the Council
- The funding must be used as outlined in the Grant Agreement Offer (successful applicants only). Any change in the use of the funding must not take place without obtaining authorisation from the Council in advance.
- The Council must also be informed of any risks, issues, or delays affecting delivery
- Payments may be made in stages and may be linked to milestones or evidence of delivery. Payments may be withheld where satisfactory monitoring information is not provided
- Council funding must **NOT** be utilised as personal spending money or for any items not associated with project activities
- Funding must not duplicate or replace other funding for the same activity

- The funding must **NOT** be transferred or passed to another organisation without prior approval from the Council
- You must declare on the application if you are delivering with a partner organisation. Failure to do so will result in withdrawal of your grant
- Where projects are delivered in partnership, a lead organisation must be identified and will be accountable for the funding. Partnership arrangements should be clearly set out
- Conflicts of interest must be declared and managed appropriately
- Funding must not be used for political, lobbying, or religious activities
- Any assets acquired with the assistance of the funding must **NOT** be sold, transferred, or otherwise disposed of without prior approval from the Council
- An asset register must be maintained for all items purchased or improved using the funding. Assets must be retained for a minimum period of 6 years and used for the agreed purpose. The Council must be notified of any proposed changes and may require repayment
- All capital works must comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, including building regulations and health and safety legislation
- Organisations are responsible for obtaining all necessary permissions before works begin, including planning permission, listed building consent, and landlord approval where applicable
- The Council is not responsible for any cost overruns or additional expenses beyond the agreed grant amount
- Organisations in receipt of funding are responsible for ensuring the safety of their provision. This includes appropriate health and safety arrangements, safeguarding measures, accessibility and inclusiveness, and risk assessments, which must be in place throughout the duration of the project
- Organisations must ensure appropriate insurance is in place to cover delivery of the project
- Organisations must ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place for project delivery, including any capital works, and include contingencies for delays or cost pressures
- Any partners, contractors, or suppliers involved in delivery must comply with the same funding conditions

- Projects should demonstrate environmentally responsible approaches, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, or use of sustainable materials where possible
- The Council will monitor all projects in receipt of funding at **any** time during the funding period, including without advance notice
- The Council reserves the right to carry out compliance checks and request evidence of expenditure, including invoices, receipts, and procurement records
- The Council may request evidence of spend, delivery, and outcomes at any time, and organisations must retain records, invoices, and supporting documentation for audit purposes
- Records relating to the project must be retained for a defined period for audit and assurance purposes
- Any unspent funding must be returned to the Council at the end of the project or if the project does not proceed as agreed
- The Council reserves the right to withhold, reduce, or recover funding, including recovering all or part of the grant where funds are not used for the agreed purpose, project delivery is not completed, or conditions of the grant agreement are breached
- All promotional materials must include the Sandwell Council logo and must clearly state the project is funded by Sandwell Council
- The decision of the Grant Scoring Panel is final and cannot be appealed.

17. Payment of Grant

Payment of the grant is subject to compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement

- Payments will be made in line with an agreed schedule and may be made in advance or in arrears depending on the type of funding
- Evidence of expenditure must be submitted in the required format and within the specified timescales
- The Council may require supporting documentation, including invoices and proof of spend, before releasing payments
- Payments may be withheld if previous payments have not been used correctly or evidenced
- There is no additional funding available for overspend beyond the agreed grant amount

- Any incorrectly paid funding must be repaid
- Payment is subject to availability of funds