

## **NESFLAG COASTAL COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE FUND**

### **PROGRAMME GUIDANCE**

To be eligible to apply to the Coastal Communities Challenge Fund, the following criteria must be met:

#### **1. Applicants**

Applications can be made by any of the following organisations:

- SMEs (limited companies, partnerships or sole traders)
- Public sector organisations
- Co-operatives
- Charities registered in Scotland
- Constituted community groups or not-for-profit groups

Individuals, unconstituted groups and political or campaigning groups are not eligible for funding. Religious groups will not be ordinarily eligible, unless broad community benefit can be demonstrated.

Applicants must provide the following as part of their application:

- Constitution or memorandum and articles of association
- A recent bank statement covering a period of 3 months
- Most recent 3 years' annual accounts
- Organisational policies where relevant (e.g. equal opportunities, health & safety, child protection, environmental)
- Other relevant documentation (where applicable) as listed in Section 8 of the application form

#### **2. Location**

The eligible area will be Aberdeenshire's Coastal Zone, as defined in the Local Development Plan, and any settlement which borders this. Projects taking place outside of this area and up to two miles from the coastline may be considered where they can demonstrate a strong and tangible link with the coast or sea.

#### **3. Priorities**

Funding will be targeted towards activities or infrastructure which support the following priorities:

- 1) Supporting the development of active travel routes along, to and from the coastline
- 2) Developing the coastal economy, workforce and sustainable tourism
- 3) Creating or enhancing community, leisure and recreational facilities

- 4) Safeguarding, restoring or enhancing the coastal environment

Projects must demonstrate a tangible link to the coast (either by location or theme).

#### 4. Timescale

Projects must be fully completed and draw down all Coastal Communities Challenge Fund grant funding by 30 September 2026. As such, all applications must be fully-costed (supported by quotes as per the NESFLAG Procurement guidance) and have all appropriate permissions approved (e.g. planning permission, lease, building warrant) and a match funding package identified at the time of approval.

#### 5. Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be taken into account when determining funding awards:

- 1) **Strategic Fit** – To what extent does the project align with the priorities of the framework, Aberdeenshire Council, Locality Plans and Community Action Plans?
- 2) **Cross-Cutting Themes** – Can the project demonstrate a neutral or positive contribution to the following themes?:
  - a. Equalities
  - b. Fairer Scotland Duty
  - c. Town Centre First Principle
  - d. Sustainability
  - e. Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing
- 3) **Legacy and Sustainability** – Will the project deliver a lasting legacy beyond its lifetime and be sustainable once grant funding has ended?
- 4) **Project Need and Demand** – Is there sufficient evidence that the project will meet an unmet demand?
- 5) **Need for Grant** – Is the grant requested the minimum amount required for the project to proceed and have other sources of match funding been adequately explored?
- 6) **Capacity to Deliver** – Does the delivery organisation have sufficient capacity (financial and people) to complete the project as set out and on time?

#### 6. Costs

The following thresholds for grant will apply to challenge fund applications:

- Minimum grant - £10,000
- Maximum grant - £49,999
- A minimum contribution of 10% match funding for community, voluntary sector and public sector projects with wider community benefit.
- A minimum contribution of 50% match funding for commercial projects.

All match funding secured from other sources for the project activity must be transparently declared in grant applications and any changes to this funding package notified to the Council. Match funding from the Coastal Communities Challenge Fund cannot be used to match Area Coastal Communities allocations or vice versa. The level of match funding provided will be taken into account in the evaluation of bids, with projects demonstrating greater leverage of match funding viewed favourably.

Both capital and revenue projects may be supported. All costs must be:

- **Essential** – All project costs must be essential for the project to be successfully delivered
- **Additional** – All project costs must be additional to core organisational costs which would be incurred even if the project did not go ahead
- **Best Value** – Applicants must demonstrate that project costs are value for money and provide evidence to support this
- **Actual** – Costs will be paid out on the actual amount incurred by the organisation up to the maximum contractually agreed amount

The following costs are ineligible for support:

- Costs formally committed to or spent prior to the project start date
- Costs incurred or invoiced after the project end date
- Costs involved in winding up a company or organisation
- Bad debts, fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation
- Payments not supported by invoices and/or documents proving expenditure
- Recoverable VAT – organisations with partial VAT exemption will be treated as able to recover VAT and arrangements must be made to cover this cost.
- Alcohol

## 7. Grant Claim Process

- A grant claim form is issued to the project sponsor. This includes information on project finances, progress, outputs and outcomes
- The project sponsor completes the template and submits it to [coastalcommunities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:coastalcommunities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) along with the required supporting documentation
- Supporting documentation as a minimum must show evidence of spend through to bank statement for all project costs
- Where costs have not been paid out, grant may be paid on a proforma invoice provided that this would not breach the retention limit. Bank statements

showing payment of the proforma invoices claimed must be supplied before a further claim template will be issued.

- A grant retention limit of 10% of the total approved grant will be applied. This means that 10% of the total grant amount will be withheld until all conditions of grant have been met.
- Grant will be paid out at the agreed % intervention rate for all claims except the final claim. The final claim amount will be calculated at total eligible costs minus match funding. This calculation, or a change request, may result in an adjustment to the final grant amount due.

## **8. Change Process**

- Project sponsors may submit a change request to amend project costs, match funding, timescales or activities. A change request template will be provided.
- The project sponsor completes the template and submits it to [coastalcommunities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:coastalcommunities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) along with the required supporting documentation
- For changes to project costs, supporting documentation as a minimum must show evidence of the minimum procurement process having been undertaken
- For changes to match funding, supporting documentation as a minimum must show match funding letters/grant agreements from funding bodies
- Change requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure that any proposed amendments comply with programme requirements and are in line with the originally-approved application.
- If approved, a contract variation will be issued. If not approved, an explanation as to the reasons why will be provided.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The following outputs and outcomes will be monitored:

- Number of new facilities created
- Number of existing facilities enhanced
- Number of jobs created (in Full Time Equivalent @ 37 hours)
- Number of new products/services created
- Number of volunteer opportunities created
- Length of active travel routes enhanced or created (km)
- Number of new visitors or customers (annual)
- Increase in revenue to sustain and grow the organisation (£ per annum)
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) per annum)

Any assets funded by the project grant must be maintained in good condition, adequately insured and used for the purposes set out in the grant agreement for a minimum of 5 years after the project end date.

Project sponsors will be required to provide regular progress reports towards agreed targets and a final report at the end of the project setting out what was achieved.

## 10. Procurement Guidance

For all goods and services that you intend to apply for as part of your project, you need to send whichever of the following you have:

- **Quotes that a supplier of the product or service sent to you** - the number of quotes you need to send depends on the value of the product or service. See below.
- **Screenshots of catalogue or website listings for products.** The required numbers of screenshots must be provided according to the value of the product, see below.

The screenshots must contain the specification of the item which can be compared across the evidence supplied. They must contain a price and all should be either inclusive or exclusive of VAT as applicable.

The screenshots must be from accessible catalogues or websites that can be easily verified (including URL link).

- **Email quotes** - Email quotes can be accepted however either the body of the quote or the attachment must follow the general quote guidance and contain the company name and address, date, name of the individual within the company supplying the quote, company number etc. Quotes that don't meet the requirements set out will be rejected.
- **Documents that prove you've issued a formal tender**, scoring and decision making details.

These documents will all be used to show that you're getting the best value for money in your project.

### Public and private procurement (Quotes requirements)

Different rules apply to different applicants when obtaining quotes for projects. The rules for public applicants such as public authorities and government organisations and the rule for private applicants such as private businesses are below.

Individual Items With a Value (excluding VAT) of:	Number of Quotes or Tender
Over £0 and up to £1,500	Single written quote.
£1,500.01 and up to £5,000	At least two quotes must be provided. If at least two quotes have <b>not been provided</b> , then an explanation why must be provided.
£5,000.01 and up to £60,000	At least three quotes must be provided. If at least three quotes have <b>not been provided</b> , then an explanation why must be provided.
Equal to or over £60,000.01	<p><b>Public applicants</b> – A formal tender is required, you can contact us for advice on this before you go to tender. Evidence must be provided that a tender has taken place, including evidence of the evaluation system used, details of the chosen tender and scoring. The tendering must follow public procurement rules.</p> <p><b>Private applicants</b> – 3 quotes or evidence of tender including evidence of the evaluation system used, details of the chosen tender and scoring.</p>

Travel & Subsistence is granted and paid in line with Aberdeenshire Council rates. If this applies to your project then please contact:  
[coastalcommunities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:coastalcommunities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

In certain circumstances there may be only one supplier that can provide the goods or services, this could be because;

- It is the only provider who has the necessary skills or equipment to undertake the work,
- The provider owns the exclusive rights required to deliver the goods or service.

In this case a breakdown of the costs, an outline of any value for money considerations, reasons for not procuring in the usual way and any relevant supporting documentation must be provided.

The quotes and tenders you send must:

- come from suppliers that trade independently of each other and don't share any ownership
- be from the last 6 months, or justification if older,
- be comparable in terms of the quality, size, quantity, and type of product, if you're using multiple quotes to show you'll get value for money when buying a product

They must include:

- a detailed and itemised breakdown of costs
- the supplier's address, phone number and a contact name
- the supplier's VAT number (if applicable) and whether VAT is included within the price
- the supplier's company registration number, if they're a limited company

All quotes must come from independent companies and may be verified. Don't send quotes or tenders that come from suppliers you're related to or that your business is linked to.

Aberdeenshire Council reserves the right to seek independent advice on the validity and value for money of quotes and tenders supplied. Aberdeenshire Council may contact your suppliers directly.

### **Suppliers**

You must make all of your suppliers aware that they are quoting for a NESFLAG CCCF funding application. This responsibility for this lies with you and verification checks will be made by Aberdeenshire Council.