

# Expression of Interest (EOI) for Community Projects

## Guidance Document

This document provides guidance to organisations submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) for community projects to Argyll and Bute Council.

It is structured into 5 sections:

1. Introduction
2. What Projects Can Be Funded
3. How To Apply
4. Assessment Process
5. Completing your Expression of Interest

### **1. Introduction**

Argyll and Bute Council administer a range of external funding programmes. For most of these grant funds, the Council, as the area local authority, needs to be the applicant but we can apply on behalf of other public sector and community organisations, on a competitive basis, for them to deliver projects in their local area. In previous years, applicants have faced short timescales to prepare submissions and deliver projects which has proved challenging for organisations.

To help address this, the Council is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from public sector and community organisations who are looking to deliver large-scale capital projects. By gathering this information early, we can better understand which projects may be suitable for external funds that may become available.

**As there have been no announcements of funding, organisations should be aware that submitting an EOI comes with no guarantee that there will be suitable funding available or if funding becomes available that they will be selected to go forward to application stage.** Those which are selected to proceed to application stage will usually be in a competitive process against other projects across Scotland. By way of example in a call for EOIs for Regeneration Capital Grant Fund in 2025:

- We reviewed 34 projects;
- 6 (18%) were invited to submit a Stage 1 application to the Scottish Government;
- Of the 6, 4 (12%) were invited by the Scottish Government to proceed to Stage 2 applications;
- And we await a decision as to whether any of these submissions will receive funding.

## 2. What projects can be funded:

### Eligible area

Project activity must take place within the Argyll and Bute local authority area.

### Who can submit an EOI?

EOIs will be accepted from:

- Public sector organisations (not associated with Argyll and Bute Council);
- Constituted community groups;
- Registered charities;
- Voluntary and social enterprises;
- Co-operatives and community ownership initiatives;
- Development trusts;
- Not-for-profit organisations based in Argyll and Bute.

### What can be funded?

Organisations are invited to submit **one proposal** and projects must be:

- **Capital** projects being delivered within Argyll and Bute with a minimum value of £50,000 i.e. construction or development projects to improve an asset; 100% of funding can be requested through the EOI but projects which can provide match funding will generally be more favourably considered;
- Projects which are delivering significant regeneration or economic benefits to their community i.e. they should be creating new facilities or expanding existing to enable them to offer new facilities or services;
- Projects which can demonstrate a community need and support e.g. through community survey, plan or local place plan;
- Projects which can be delivered (i.e. construction started) in either the 2026/27 or 2027/28 financial year;
- Projects which will be self-sustaining and viable in the long-term and where the proposals include plans for the operation and ongoing maintenance of the capital investment.

Unfortunately, we are unable to consider revenue and maintenance type projects however you can search for other funding on the [Grants and Funding](#) page.

### **3. How to apply:**

You can apply by completing our online form: [Argyll and Bute Council website](#).

If you are unable to complete the online form or if you wish to see all the questions to help you prepare the information, please see the Microsoft Word version of the form.

Please complete all sections of the form to ensure we have the information required to assess your project. Unfortunately, we will not have the opportunity to come back to organisations to ask for further information ahead of the initial assessment therefore please ensure that you have included all relevant information within the form. Guidance on completing the form is included within section 5.

If you are completing the Microsoft Word version of the form, please return it to [investinargyll@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:investinargyll@argyll-bute.gov.uk).

Organisations will be given the chance at the end of the EOI to submit 1 document (up to 3 pages long) of supporting information. We advise that you have this ready before you complete the online form. Supporting information could include drawings, photographs and other information to help us to understand your project and why it is needed.

Your EOI must be submitted by **Monday 30 March 2026 at 10:00am**.

You can only submit one EOI per organisation.

Any submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. If you are having difficulties submitting your Expression of Interest, then please contact us before the deadline.

In submitting an EOI, organisations should be aware that it is likely that a further competitive application process will be required if they are selected to proceed. Organisations should ensure that:

- There is approval through the organisation's governance to proceed with the project;
- They have the resources available to prepare, with support from Council officers, any required application forms (likely over spring/summer 2026);
- They have the resources available to progress and deliver the project in line with any timescales associated with funding. This may include progressing design work, consenting, other funding applications etc. ahead of any decision on funding through this process.

#### 4. Assessment process

Argyll and Bute Council officers will review all EOI submissions received by the deadline against the expected criteria of potential external funds. From this exercise we will create a shortlist of projects which could be suitable for application. The funds which we envisage may be available include the Scottish Government's Islands Programme, Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and Carbon Neutral Islands Fund, and Crown Estates Funding. **Even where a project might be shortlisted, there is no guarantee that funding will be available or that, if invited to apply, they would be successful in securing funding.**

EOIs will be assessed on how organisations demonstrate:

- Local needs, local Support and community involvement
- Deliverability
- Long-Term Viability

We will also consider how the anticipated **outputs and outcomes** from the projects will match with the likely objectives of the potential funding. As no funding has been announced at this stage it isn't confirmed what these will be but we would expect it could include regeneration and economic outcomes associated with job creation, population growth and retention, community wealth building, environmental improvements and climate change measures.

When considering projects which might be suitable for the Carbon Neutral Islands (CNI) Capital Fund, should it be announced in 2026/27, we will also take into account projects put forward by the Steering Group for the Carbon Neutral Island project on Islay. Projects which contribute to the [Islay Community Climate Action Plan](#) are strongly advised to discuss their proposals with the [Islay CNI steering group](#).

#### **Local needs, local support and community involvement**

You should demonstrate how the project meets local needs, how it is supported by the local community and that there has been a high degree of public involvement in the planning, development and delivery of project. Evidence to support this would include community-led action plans, recent consultation/surveys, user feedback, social media polls, letters of support, newspaper or social media articles, petitions etc.

#### **Deliverability**

You should demonstrate the project's feasibility, readiness and practicality.

Projects must demonstrate that they are viable and can be delivered (i.e. construction started) in either the 2026/27 or 2027/28 financial year as this is likely when funding could be made available.

Points to include:

- Robust and realistic delivery milestones;
- Confirmation of resources within the organisation and any previous Experience in delivering similar activity;
- Confirmation of landownership or landowners' permission in place;
- Planning and other relevant consents in place or being progressed;
- Evidence of match funding or plans to secure, where required;
- Procurement plans in place; and
- Outline any risk assessment that has taken place and how risks are being mitigated.

### **Long-Term Viability**

You should demonstrate how the organisation will maintain the asset/property project and meet any additional running costs post-completion.

Points to include:

- How the organisation will support the long-term maintenance of the new or improved asset;
- Options for future financing, grant support and income/revenue generation;
- Steps taken to ensure the sustainable usage of new infrastructure including on-going contribution to environmental sustainability and carbon reduction;
- How on-going community involvement will be achieved.

### **Who will see my application**

Please read our Data Privacy Notice here: [Expression of Interest for Community Projects - privacy statement | Argyll and Bute Council](#).

## 5. Completing your Expression of Interest

This section is to provide guidance to questions within the Expression of Interest Form. Please ensure that you answer all questions as fully as possible within the word limits set down. Please provide information in a clear and succinct way to help officers understand what your proposal is, why it is important to the local community and how it will be delivered.

### Section 1: Gateway Criteria

The following questions must be completed. If you answer 'No' to one or more of these questions, your project will not be explored further by Argyll and Bute Council at this stage as these are necessary requirements to confirm project eligibility.

1	<p>Confirm that you are either a public sector organisation (not associated with the council) or a community organisation – such as a constituted community group; registered charity; voluntary and social enterprise; co-operative and community ownership initiative; development trust; or not-for-profit organisation based in Argyll and Bute.</p> <p><i>Unfortunately, we cannot accept applications from individuals or private sector organisations although you may be able to get assistance from our <a href="#">Business Gateway Team</a>.</i></p>
2	<p>Confirm that your project is for capital funding.</p> <p><i>Capital funding is used to purchase, build or upgrade fixed assets and buildings. Running costs associated with assets/buildings are not eligible. As there are a number of different potential funding sources, each with their own specific eligibility requirements, restrictions on where funding could be spent will vary however most prefer not to fund fixtures, fittings or removable items.</i></p> <p><i>Funds may be able to support professional service fees associated with capital projects.</i></p>
3	<p>Confirm that your project will provide something new or additional that is currently not offered.</p> <p><i>Unfortunately, we are unable to consider revenue and maintenance projects as they will not usually meet the requirements of the funds.</i></p>
4	<p>Confirm that your project is deliverable (i.e. construction started) in either 2026/7 or 2027/8.</p> <p><i>We anticipate that funding will need to be claimed in either 2026/27 or 2027/28 depending on the funding which is made available. Construction and delivery</i></p>

	<i>work can continue after this date if required due to the scale or nature of the project.</i>
5	<p>Confirm that your project demonstrates community need.</p> <p><i>This should be documented through community surveys and plans.</i></p>
6	<p>Confirm that your project meets at least one of the outcomes in the Council's <a href="#"><u>Argyll and Bute Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-34</u></a>.</p> <p><i>Outcome 1: Transport Infrastructure</i></p> <p><i>Outcome 2: Housing</i></p> <p><i>Outcome 3: Community Wellbeing</i></p>
7	<p>Confirm that your project meets at least one of the four pillars in the Council's <a href="#"><u>Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy</u></a>.</p> <p><i>People, Place, Planet, Prosperity</i></p>
8	<p>Confirm that you have considered the long-term viability of your project and have plans to maintain the asset beyond project completion.</p> <p><i>The funds we deal with will cover capital costs only and revenue costs will need to be secured from other sources.</i></p>
9	<p>Confirm that you have any no outstanding debts to the Council.</p> <p><i>We will be unable to consider an EOI from any organisation which has outstanding debts to the Council.</i></p>

## Section 2: Organisation Details

1	<p>Provide your organisation name.</p> <p><i>This should be your registered organisation's name and any trading as names which are used.</i></p>
2	<p>Provide the registered address.</p>
3	<p>Provide the lead contact for this Expression of Interest, and their position in the organisation.</p> <p><i>This is the person that we will contact about whether your EOI has been successful or not. It should be the person that we can liaise with should your organisation be invited to submit an application. They should be appropriately authorised to provide us with any further information as may be necessary to support an application.</i></p>

4	<p>Provide the lead contact's e-mail address.</p> <p><i>Most correspondence will be issued by email therefore please ensure that this is monitored regularly.</i></p>
5	<p>Provide the lead contact's phone number.</p>
6	<p>Tell us what type of organisation you are and provide registration numbers if applicable.</p> <p><i>Please provide confirmation of your governance structure e.g. charity, constituted group etc. including any charity or business registration numbers.</i></p>
7	<p>Tell us whether your organisation have a <a href="#">Fair Work First</a> policy in place.</p> <p><i>It is a requirement that any organisation which receives public funding has a Fair Work First policy in place, this includes paying employees the real living wage and ensuring that there is policy in place for them to raise issues. Organisations are asked to commit to following Fair Work First criteria in a way that is relevant and proportionate for the organisation. If an organisation doesn't have Fair Work First Policies in place but is committed to doing so please provide details on the EOI proforma.</i></p>
8	<p>Briefly describe your organisation's main purpose and main activities (100 words max)</p> <p><i>Please use this section of the proforma to help us to understand briefly the purpose and activities of your organisation, this will set a context for your project proposal. You can provide links in this section to your website and the organisation's plan.</i></p> <p><i>This section will only allow 100 words.</i></p>

## Section 2: Project Details

9	<p>Project title.</p> <p><i>This should be the name that you have used on any applications for funding.</i></p>
10.1	<p>Project location.</p> <p><i>This should be sufficient to enable us to identify the exact location of the project including a postcode where available. You can also provide a location map within the supporting documentation.</i></p>
10.2	<p>Is your project on the mainland or an island?</p>

	<p><i>As some funding is only available to island communities please confirm if your project is based on the mainland or an island.</i></p>
11	<p>Brief description of the Project</p> <p><i>Provide a description for your overall project. This should detail what will be delivered by the project. You should outline the proposal for the asset/property; how this asset could be used and what capital work is required to enable this. Please also tell us who your beneficiaries will be. Please be as specific as possible within the word limit available, including quantities where available, to help us understand what the outputs will be from the project.</i></p> <p><i>This section will only allow 500 words max.</i></p>
12	<p>What community need will this project address and how have the community been involved in the development of your project?</p> <p><i>Provide a description of how your project aims to address local identified needs and how it addresses it. You should reference any community engagement undertaken to identify the need, when this was undertaken and the response levels. Evidence to support this would include community-led action plans, recent consultation/surveys, user feedback, social media polls, letters of support, newspaper or social media articles, petitions etc.</i></p> <p><i>Tell us how you have used input from the local community to plan, develop and deliver your project i.e. how they have helped to inform the proposed solution to the identified need.</i></p> <p><i>This section will only allow 500 words max.</i></p>
13	<p>How will your project consider or help to achieve net-zero targets?</p> <p><i>Please provide a short summary on how your project is contributing towards the target of net-zero emissions by 2045. Whilst not all projects will be specifically focused on net zero activities building to energy efficient designs, incorporating renewable or low carbon energy generation or incorporating climate change mitigation or adaptation into a project could help to reduce carbon emissions and/or running costs for the organisation.</i></p> <p><i>This section will only allow 250 words max.</i></p>
14	<p>How will your project be maintained after completion?</p> <p><i>Provide a summary of how you will maintain the asset and how you will meet additional running costs post-completion. This may include options for future financing, grant support, and income/revenue generation.</i></p> <p><i>If you have a business plan which demonstrates how the project will be taken forward, then please include reference to it.</i></p>

	<p><i>It is important that the benefits achieved through the capital phase of works can be maintained, projects should demonstrate that they are sustainable and viable in the long-term as revenue grant funding can be difficult to obtain.</i></p> <p><i>This section will only allow 250 words max.</i></p>
15	<p>How much will your project cost?</p> <p><i>Provide the total cost for the project, this should be all your costs to deliver the capital phase i.e. from design through to opening and using the asset. You should ensure that this includes costs associated with any consents required, design costs, utility costs and contingency as well as construction fees. Please note that we are only looking for project proposals with a minimum of £50,000.</i></p>
16	<p>What is your grant request?</p> <p><i>Provide the total grant requested through this EOI. Whilst projects could be 100% funded through a single grant source, they will normally be more positively received if they can demonstrate that other funders are supporting the project, including the organisation itself. There is no maximum grant amount set.</i></p> <p><i>Where the grant amount is less than 100%, please ensure that you detail match funding under question 17 as we will be unable to support projects which appear to have large funding gaps.</i></p>
17	<p>Has match funding been identified? If yes, please detail.</p> <p><i>Tell us if you have identified where match funding will come from.</i></p> <p><i>If yes, please detail the confirmed or potential amount of match funding and the source of match funding. If funding sources have been identified but not yet applied for, please include those.</i></p> <p><i>For each source of funding it would be helpful if you could confirm the funder, amount requested/to be requested and an actual/likely decision date.</i></p> <p><i>Please note that projects that can demonstrate match funding will be looked on favourably.</i></p>
18	<p>Provide the start and end date for the project.</p> <p><i>This refers to the start and end of construction. The start should be after July 2026 and not later than March 2028. The end date can extend beyond March 2028.</i></p>
19	<p>How will you deliver your project by the dates outlined above?</p> <p><i>Provide a description of how your project will be delivered in either the 2026/27 or 2027/28 financial year. These timescales must be robust and realistic. Please confirm your organisation has capacity and capability to deliver this</i></p>

	<p><i>project. You may want to refer to your governance structure and how the project will be managed. If you have previously delivered similar activity, especially publicly funded, then please outline in this section and explain previous experience in delivering capital projects. You can include how you will measure progress, manage risk and deal with any issues arising.</i></p> <p><i>We have suggested you include answers to the headings below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Project delivery milestones such as when consents will be in place, when procurement will be undertaken, when construction will start and end;</i></li> <li><i>• Project management arrangements;</i></li> <li><i>• Consents required and what progress has been made in gaining these;</i></li> <li><i>• Procurement;</i></li> <li><i>• Risk assessment and mitigation.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>This section will only allow 500 words max.</i></p>
20	<p><i>Does your organisation own the asset/property associated with the project?</i></p> <p><i>Please tell us if the organisation is the owner of the asset/property associated with the project. If not, please detail who is the owner and any formal arrangements in place to allow the project to proceed. Where the organisation does not own the asset and doesn't have agreement of the owner to proceed then this is likely to raise concerns about deliverability of the project.</i></p>
21	<p><i>Does the project require statutory consents (including Council, SEPA, Crown Estates)?</i></p> <p><i>It is the responsibility of the applicant to check whether any statutory consents are required, and to secure these prior to works. Applicants may need Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent, a Building Warrant or consents from another relevant body such as Argyll and Bute Council, SEPA or Crown Estates. The costs and time required to obtain these consents should be included within the funding and milestone information of the project proposal.</i></p>
22	<p><i>If your project requires statutory consents, please list these here and their status (Granted, Submitted or Not Submitted). Please provide reference numbers if applicable.</i></p> <p><i>Please advise which consents are required (Council, SEPA, Crown Estates) and the tatus of your statutory consent. If you have reference numbers, please provide these.</i></p> <p><i>If your project does not require consent, please leave blank.</i></p>

## Supporting Information

Confirm if you have provided supporting information or not.

*Applicants can submit up to 3 A4 pages of supporting information. This can include letters of support, extracts from community plans, photographs, drawings, petitions, newspaper or social media articles etc. The information submitted should help to explain your project, why it is needed and how it is supported by the community.*

## Declaration

*Please read the Data Privacy Notice and declaration carefully, and sign and date the form before submitting the application. For EOIs submitted via Microsoft Word form please forward to [investinargyll@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:investinargyll@argyll-bute.gov.uk).*