

Community Infrastructure Fund 2026-2027

Guidance & Criteria

1. Any application to the CIF will be scored against four key areas which are:

- Solves a persistent problem
- Improves safety
- Benefits the community
- Adds value

2. All projects are scored against this criteria between 1 and 4 giving a maximum score of 16. The top scoring projects will go onto a shortlist for funding which is put to Delegated Decision each March.

3. The project shall be undertaken in exercise of a function for which both parishes and Milton Keynes City Council have powers (incl. s.137 powers of the Local Government Act 1972)

4. The project shall be for investment in public realm assets, adhere to MKCC design principles and involve and provide a permanent benefit to the parish. Public realm is defined as 'something that is provided for the use of the community'.

5. Locations should be:

- MK City Council owned
- Parish/Town or Community Council owned (or available for parish acquisition)
- Long Term Lease (If the building is occupied on a long term lease, the terms of the lease will need to be reviewed prior to award of grant funding)*

*If under an MKCC lease at the time of allocation, the relevant permissions must be sought from the City Council's Estates and/or Legal team.

6. Parish, Town and Community Councils will be responsible for ensuring local residents are consulted on project proposals.

7. The maximum contribution from MK City Council will be £20,000 per parish (£40,000 total project value).

8. Each Parish, Town or Community Council will be entitled to submit up to a maximum of 3 applications for projects, up to the value of the maximum contribution. You must indicate your preference for each project marking as 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice on the application.

9. MK City Council's share of the cost of the project will be no greater than 50% excluding VAT (75% for very small councils those with a tax base of less than 200 /band D equivalent) or the lower of the following figures: the lowest quotation; or the maximum award approved by MK City Council.

10. Any works carried out on an MK City Council asset, building, or land must be undertaken by MK City Council.

11. The project, once completed, should not involve any additional ongoing maintenance or running costs, other than any costs that are to be met by the Parish, Town or Community Council. MK City Council will only carry out maintenance in line with the relevant departments or service areas policies and procedures, if it is an MK City Council asset or land.

12. Applicants must provide outline costs for works at the application stage.
13. Parishes should state how their 50% contribution is being funded. Parish match funding cannot be from any other part of MK City Council's funding e.g., Section 106 or from another grant application.
14. Approved projects for the 2026-2027 CIF must be completed within the 2026-2027 financial year and must not exceed this deadline unless in exceptional circumstances and with approval for an extension from MKCC.
15. Parish, Town and Community Councils will, prior to submitting an application, check whether any planning permissions or any other relevant permissions or consents are required and ensure that such permissions/consents etc. are in place upon application. Evidence must be included with the application. The costs of any planning permissions that may be necessary can be included as part of the costs.
16. Before applications are submitted, applicants will be required to provide evidence that the project/s have been discussed with relevant MK City Council departments and have obtained permissions in principle.
17. Parish, Town and Community Councils should present three quotes at the application stage for the work that will be undertaken by the Parish, Town or Community Council, to demonstrate the principles of Best Value.
18. If three quotes are not available, applicants are required to advise of the reasons when applying for the council's grant(s) e.g., conservation requirements are for specialist contractors which may be limiting choices.
19. A Delegated Decision will be made by the relevant Cabinet Member or Council Leader following an assessment of applications for funding by MK City Council officers.
20. Where schemes do not proceed or are at risk of not delivering within agreed time frames, the amount allocated must be returned immediately to MK City Council for re-allocation. Funds cannot be transferred to another project.
21. Funding can only be used for the projects for which they are approved by the MK City Council.
22. Release of funds will only be made upon the completion of the works and they have been checked and approved by a relevant MKCC Officer. This officer will provide a written confirmation that the project has been delivered as per the approved application. A copy of the invoice and presentation of three quotes for the work that has been undertaken by the Parish, Town or Community Council to demonstrate the principles of Best Value.
23. The fund cannot be used for normal running costs i.e. officer salaries, energy bills or rent.
24. MK City Council will monitor the progress of projects; this could involve site visits if appropriate. Applicants are required to provide evidence of completion of all projects; photos are required at application and completion stage ("before" and "after" pictures).
25. The Parish, Town or Community Council will be required to maintain a minimum of £5 million insurance for public liability and provide the evidence to the MK City Council together with their application.
26. The Parish, Town or Community Council is required to comply fully with relevant, current UK Health and Safety legislation and regulations.
27. If a grant is used to buy a significant item of equipment or asset, we will advise that it must be recorded in the accounts that MK City Council has an interest in it. If the asset is to be disposed of (sold), MK City Council must be contacted before the disposal is made. MK City Council may require a share of the proceeds in relation to the original contribution.
28. CIF funding is Capital funding and therefore it cannot be used to fund revenue works related to landscaping services. However it can be used for the enhancement of an existing asset or building something new. The future revenue implications of any Capital works will need to be minimised where possible. If parishes are devolved, they can self-deliver or use MK City Council contractors.

Type of projects

To give you an idea of the type of project that may be applied for under the CIF, here's some examples of public realm projects that we have completed over the last few years. These are just some examples, if you need any help, ideas or advice please contact your Highways Liaison Officer or email highways.liaison@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Verge protection

Parked vehicles can cause damage to verges which is both unsafe and unsightly. Ascot fencing prevents vehicles from parking or mounting the verge. Costs depend on the length of the verge sections you want to protect and whether any utilities are in the ground. After an assessment, we can provide a bespoke quote. Any post and rail fencing installed would need to be maintained at parish expense.

Gateway signs

These provide a dual use - they draw motorists attention to the entrance to a village or hamlet and the change in the speed limit. There is a standard design that we use for any gateway signs for MK which can be adapted to include a short message 'Welcome to [name]' or 'Please drive safely' with a speed limit roundel.

Flood Prevention

Hydrosnakes, pumps, flood diverters or hydrosacks are some effective alternatives to sandbags. These can all be kept in special storage containers in the local area so they are easily accessible whenever needed. Contact the Flood & Water Management Team to see what options are best for your location at LLFA@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)

SIDs are a good way to alert motorists to their speed as they enter a residential area. They are most effective if moved on a regular basis around three locations. SIDs may display the drivers' speed and a smiley or sad face, or they may display a 'Slow Down' type message.

There are several models available to suit local needs and budgets. For help and advice about SIDs, contact road.safety@milton-keynes.gov.uk

We recommend SIDs are used as part of a wider speed awareness campaign including Community Speedwatch. If you wish to install SIDs, make sure you also include the cost of any pole installations in your application. Existing defunct poles are unlikely to be suitable or in the best location.

Play area flooring or equipment

Most MK estates have several play areas which may need new equipment or replacement wet pour flooring. You may want to install some new or accessible items to a play area.

Our Parks and Open Spaces officer, Phillip Snell (phillip.snell@milton-keynes.gov.uk) can provide advice and guidance if you would like to include play area equipment or surfacing as your CIF project.