

Cultural Infrastructure Capital Grants 2026-27

1. Introduction

Coventry City Council is launching **Coventry Culture & Creative Capital Grants 2026-27** to support local cultural and creative organisations to invest in small-scale capital works and/or assets in Coventry. This funding is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority Culture and Creative Infrastructure Programme.

We want arts, culture and creativity to play a key role in the lives of Coventry's residents. We also know that there are many ongoing challenges in the cultural sector, including limited access to capital funding. We therefore want to help our cultural organisations with capital expenditure, so that they can continue to deliver high quality services, spaces and programmes for the benefit of the city.

This funding primarily delivers against the Cultural Engagement & Opportunity outcome of the Coventry Cultural Strategy Delivery Plan 2026-27: ***Coventry has the required spaces and places to support cultural & creative activity through good quality cultural infrastructure.***

In addition, some projects may also contribute to other outcomes as outlined in the plan:

- ✓ **Economic Prosperity**, including improving financial performance and innovation of cultural organisations or creative industries businesses
- ✓ **Health and Wellbeing**, where capital investment could support improvements to creative health delivery or improve spaces used for creative activities to support wellbeing of residents
- ✓ **Environment and Social Justice**, including adaptive reuse and works to improve environmental sustainability of buildings or activities, and/or cost savings

- ✓ **Lifelong Learning and Skills**, where capital investment or assets could improve delivery of skills development activities
- ✓ **Cultural Engagement and Opportunity**, where capital investment could broaden public access, improve the quality and resilience of cultural venues, and increase opportunities for everyone to participate in cultural life. This could also include arts and creative spaces contributing to culture-led regeneration and improved civic pride.

For more details about these objectives, please visit our website:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/coventry-cultural-strategy/4>

The grants will be distributed through an open application process and is aimed at arts, cultural or creative organisations based in the Coventry Local Authority area. This includes heritage organisations and creative industries businesses, where their primary function is to deliver artistic and creative activities. This could include:

- Providing arts and creative engagement opportunities for residents
- Arts and creative skills development programmes or projects
- Creative health programmes
- Arts and creative community projects
- Provision of creative workspace
- Events, festivals or other arts activities that promote the development of the sector, as well as Coventry as a cultural city
- Creative industries businesses, where they contribute towards the Coventry Cultural Strategy Delivery Plan 2026-27

Overall, the purpose of this capital grant is to support arts, cultural and creative organisations in Coventry to make sustainable improvements to their physical spaces and infrastructure. These investments should enhance long-term resilience, improve environmental performance, and unlock new opportunities for cultural participation, production and growth.

2. How much can I apply for?

The total budget for the funding is **£247,000** and we are inviting applications between **£20,000 and £50,000**. We are looking to fund between 5-10 projects in total and expect there to be a high demand for this fund. This might mean that we are not able to fund all projects.

There is **no match funding requirement** for this grant.

If you are successful with a grant, you can however use it as match funding for other funding applications, where the project aligns with the outcomes of this grant programme. However, if the additional funding is not yet secured, you will need to ensure that you can still **complete works relating to this grant** even though you would not be successful with any other applications. All the activities must be completed by 30 September 2027.

3. What can you apply for?

This grant is for **capital expenditure**. Capital expenditure essentially relates to the purchase, enhancement and/or improvement of significant fixed assets including land, buildings and equipment which will be of use or benefit in providing services for more than one financial year.

Fixed asset refers to long-term, tangible physical resources, owned by a business or organisation to generate income, lasting longer than one year. This could include land, property, machinery, vehicles, furniture and certain type of other equipment, just to mention a few.

For **improvement work on buildings or land to be eligible**, the work undertaken must lead to at least one of the following outcomes:

- A. Lengthen the useful life of the asset – beyond the current assessment of its useful life.
- B. Increase the market value of the asset – if the asset were valued after the works substantially higher than prior to the works.
- C. Increase the extent to which the asset can or will be used.

There are also specific rules around **equipment** as capital investment, where the total value of the equipment **must exceed £2,000**, the equipment will have to have a useful life of **over one year** and consist of **tangible assets**. For example, one chair worth £300 would not be eligible, but purchasing a lot of chairs over the value of £2,000 would qualify.

It can sometimes be difficult to determine if expenditure is capital or revenue. You can apply for any combination of purchase or improvement of capital assets/equipment, where the conditions above are met. Below are some examples of eligible capital activity.

- ✓ Improvements to buildings or creative spaces that enhance sustainability, accessibility, or operational functionality
- ✓ Purchase or installation of specialist equipment essential for cultural production, participation, or organisational growth (minimum of £2,000)
- ✓ Digital infrastructure upgrades (e.g. ticketing systems, content production equipment, IT hardware) that strengthen financial resilience or audience engagement
- ✓ Small scale capital works including upgrades to environmental performance (e.g. insulation, lighting, energy efficient systems) where this leads to reduced carbon impact and long-term savings
- ✓ Whilst repairs, like-for-like replacements or remedial works are normally considered revenue expenditure, we have a special permission from WMCA to allow these types of works to take place as part of grant delivery.
- ✓ Purchase of buildings or land, where this will meet the overall aims of the grant

Note that for any building-based works, you must either **own the asset or have a lease arrangement for a minimum of 2 years** from the point of application. We cannot support any costs relating to planning permissions and you are responsible for ensuring that any works comply with the local planning regulations and you have all the required permissions in place.

Applicants may apply for multiple capital items within one application. Your application must include a clear breakdown of intended expenditure with evidenced costs, quotations, or well researched estimates. You will need to clearly explain:

- why this capital investment is essential for your organisation
- how it will address a defined need
- how it will contribute to the sustainable enhancement of your creative space.

We recognise that every organisation operates within different contexts, and we therefore do not want to be overly prescriptive about how the grant should be used.

Please note that you can only submit one application / apply for one project.

However, due to the limited funds available, we must ensure that awards have a meaningful, tangible impact and are directed towards organisations and communities with the greatest need. Assessment will take into account levels of local cultural investment and infrastructure gaps, using evidence from the Coventry Cultural Place Profiler, Cultural Infrastructure Mapping, Joint Cultural Needs Assessment and objectives of [The plan for Culture in Coventry: January 2026 to December 2027](#).

For any questions about eligible expenditure, please email artsdevelopment@coventry.gov.uk

4. Timeline – Key Dates

- Applications open: **18 May 2026**
- Applications closing date: **22 June 2026**
- Applicant notification of outcomes*: Week beginning 29 June 2026
- Delivery period: All activity and evaluation delivered by 30 September 2027

*Dates subject to change

5. Who can apply?

- Constituted in the UK as an arts, cultural or heritage organisation (or a registered association with a clearly defined Memorandum of Articles), with an address within the Coventry Local Authority District

- Constituted as a community organisation but delivering/planning to deliver arts and creative activities, or providing space for arts & creative organisations
- Creative industries businesses with a Companies House address within the Coventry Local Authority District. Note that we are primarily aiming to support not-for-profit organisations in the arts and cultural sector but can consider projects from creative industries businesses where this would support the wider arts, heritage or cultural sectors, and align with the aims of this programme. An example could be e.g. a project developing low-cost creative workspace for artists, or assets supporting skills development opportunities.
- Organisations with a dedicated bank account requiring at least two signatories at different addresses
- Organisations who have been trading at least 12 months when applying. We need to see evidence such as a recent set of audited annual accounts (or other evidence, such as budget documents signed by an accountant or detailed business account bank statements displaying income and expenditure)
- Applicants must be over the age of 18 and authorized to submit an application on behalf of their organisation

6. Who cannot apply?

- Individuals
- Organisations who are registered in Coventry, but whose activities and services are mostly taking place outside the city, or where the capital asset is located outside the Coventry Local Authority District
- Organisations or capital assets based outside the Coventry Local Authority District
- Organisations that don't deliver arts, cultural or creative industries activities as part of their core offer.
- Universities, schools, colleges or other organisations delivering statutory education, **unless** their project is specifically aimed at unlocking artist and/or creative workspace (non-student use) in Coventry for the long-term.
- Coventry City Council services

7. Grant eligibility – what we won't fund

- Any capital investment in buildings or spaces where ownership or lease/tenancy agreement (minimum two years) cannot be demonstrated
- Any capital investment in buildings or spaces where you do not have the permission of the owner to undertake these works and/or don't have the required permissions in place
- Purchases or activity that has already taken place, or for which contracts are already signed/purchase orders issued. We cannot fund any retrospective costs.
- Purchase or installation of specialist equipment totalling less than £2,000
- Operational costs such as rents, utilities, routine maintenance and wages
- Payments for work or activities which the grant recipient has a statutory duty to undertake or that are fully funded by other sources
- Any revenue costs, including feasibility studies, delivery of creative activities, advertising, communications, consultancy, auditor fees, accountancy or marketing
- Using the grant to further invest, for example in stocks or shares, or towards interest payments or service charge payments for finance leases
- Lobbying, entertaining, expenses or activities aimed at influencing legislative or regulatory action
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties
- VAT reclaimable by the Grant Recipient from HMRC
- Payments for activities of a political or exclusively religious nature
- Bad debts, depreciation, amortisation or impairment of assets
- Duplicate funding

8. Application Process

- Go to www.coventry.gov.uk/culturalcapitalgrants
- Complete and return an **Application Form** as soon as possible, but no later than midday on **22 June 2026**.

- Submit your application and all requested documentation to artsdevelopment@coventry.gov.uk
- Please send us your application form and documents in either Word or PDF formats. Please **do not** send links to cloud storage locations (for example Google Docs/Drive) or embed images and links in your application form. You can include website addresses but please write them out fully (not hyperlinked) and make sure they are accessible to the public
- If you have any queries about the application process please read the FAQs at the end of this document, or drop us an email to artsdevelopment@coventry.gov.uk.

Please note that the mailbox is only monitored through standard working hours.

9. Accessibility

- All applicants are welcome to contact us before submitting an application for an informal conversation or to answer any questions
- If you have access needs and wish to discuss ways in which we can help with completing your application (for example providing the application form in a different format), please contact us by email and we will be pleased to assist you

Please make sure you read the application guidance carefully and check that you have included all the documents. If your application is missing information, we may not be able to consider it for funding. Please also respect the word/time limits – we will only consider text up to the maximum word limit.

10. Data protection

Coventry City Council complies with the Data Protection Act and the UK GDPR and is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as a Data Controller.

For full details of how and why we collect personal data please view our privacy notice at <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/privacynotice>

11. Frequently Asked Questions

What do you define as an 'arts or cultural organisation'?

We will accept applications from organisations working in the following areas:

- Arts, including performing arts such as music, dance, circus and theatre
- Arts, including visual arts and any type of artistic creation
- Literature and spoken word, poetry
- Crafts (limited to artists/makers working by hand within a craft medium)
- Heritage, museums and galleries
- Libraries and archives
- Cultural education (excluding statutory education, further education, or higher education)
- Combined arts
- Community organisations providing arts and creative activities
- Digital art and film/video art
- Photography
- Independent publishers
- Arts and/or artist management, producing

What do you mean by creative industries?

We have adopted the DCMS definition of creative industries sub-sectors which include:

- Advertising and marketing
- Architecture
- Crafts
- Design and designer fashion
- Film, TV, radio and photography
- Museums, galleries and libraries
- Music, performing and visual arts
- Publishing
- IT, software and computer services (includes video games)

What is a constituted organisation?

A constituted organisation is a formally registered organisation with its own written constitution. This may take a number of different not-for profit forms, including charity, company limited by guarantee or a CIC (Community Interest Company). We will also accept applications from registered community associations with a clearly defined Memorandum of Articles.

Why can't individuals or freelancers apply?

This is not allowed within the grant guidance we have received from WMCA.

Individuals/freelancers may find guidance and support for business development through the Council's Business Investment team <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/support-services>

Why do you need our financial information?

As a public authority we need to exercise due diligence in the use of public monies. This will include checks on the eligibility of your organisation with Companies House or the Charity Commission, and inspection of your financial information.

Please note that personal bank statements will not be acceptable, please do not send them to us.

What are the Cultural Strategy Priorities

Coventry's Cultural Strategy (2017–2027) has been refreshed with input from the cultural sector, freelancers, residents and the Coventry Culture Works Collective, to form [The plan for Culture in Coventry: January 2026 to December 2027](#). These priorities outline what the city aims to achieve over the final two years of the strategy. Applicants should explain how their project will make a difference for Coventry and its residents by contributing to one or more of the following priorities:

- **Economic Prosperity:** Strengthening Coventry's cultural and creative sectors to support freelancers and organisations, grow the local economy, attract talent and investment, and enhance culture and heritage as drivers of tourism.

- **Health and Wellbeing:** Using arts and culture to improve health outcomes, reduce isolation, support mental wellbeing and promote active lifestyles, ensuring opportunities are accessible to all communities.
- **Environment and Social Justice:** Supporting climate action through cultural activity that inspires behaviour change, promotes sustainability, and connects communities with Coventry's green and heritage spaces.
- **Lifelong Learning and Skills:** Expanding access to arts, digital creativity and skills development for people of all ages, with clear pathways into creative careers and strong support for diverse and emerging talent.
- **Cultural Engagement and Opportunity:** Increasing participation in culture through community-led activity, improving access to creative spaces, and celebrating Coventry's diverse cultural identities, including global craft.

How will applications be assessed?

Application assessment will be based on:

- The eligibility of your organisation and your planned grant expenditure
- Whether you have fully completed all required parts of the application and provided any additional information or documents requested
- Your ability to deliver the project, including your governance, capacity, skills and experience – based on the detail you have provided
- The detail, quality and accuracy of your proposed budget and plans
- The amount requested in relation to the available budget
- If required, a balancing criterion based on geographical, demographic and cultural engagement data

Once initial eligibility and due diligence checks have been carried out on your organisation, an assessment panel will score applications to arrive at its preliminary decision. If further questions are required before a decision can be made, shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

Preliminary decisions will be scrutinised by additional individuals not part of the assessment panel before final decisions are made.

What happens if I am successful in my application?

If successful, you will:

- Receive a confirmation letter by email, followed by a grant agreement outlining terms and conditions
- Be issued with a purchase order with which to invoice for your grant payment

How will the grant be paid?

We wish to provide the majority of the grant straight away to enable you to implement your plans with minimal financial risk. Grants will be paid in two instalments:

- 80% following acceptance of award
- 20% at end of delivery period following completion of funded activity and submission of your evaluation report

Please note that it may take up to 28 days from receipt of invoice until payments can be made. You will therefore need to consider how you will cash flow works. Remember, you need to have the grant agreement signed by both parties **before** you can start your project.

How long do I have to use the grant?

You will have up to **30 September 2027** from the date of payment to complete your funded activities. The exact timelines will be confirmed in your grant agreement.

Will I have to report on how the grant has been used?

An evaluation report will be required at the end of the delivery. Full details of evaluation requirements will be discussed with successful applicants. As a guide, this may include:

- A full budget breakdown showing how the grant was spent
- How the grant has delivered on intended outcomes - what difference it made to your organisation's resilience
- The employment benefits from the project
- What benefits were delivered for Coventry residents

This is essential to receive the final 20% of your grant.

In addition, there will be informal check-ins during the delivery period to offer support, answer questions, and ensure your funded activity is progressing as planned.