

Cultural Action Area (CAA) Grants Programme

Applicant Information and Guidance

Birmingham City Council's (BCC) Cultural Development Service is delighted to announce new grant funding that will establish or extend **Cultural Action Areas (CAAs)**. These areas were formerly called Cultural Action Zones and are still known as that outside of Birmingham.

Investing in Culture can play a major role in driving place-based economic recovery by re-animating our local centres with a diversified cultural and heritage offer. Even small investments can make a big difference.

This commissioning programme is based on a successful two-year pilot of nine Cultural Action Zones run by Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership between 2020-2022, which established and tested a wide range of activities.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Please read this guidance document whilst completing the grant application form as it provides important information about the grants programme and additional information to clarify the application form questions.

Our friendly team will be offering individual advice sessions, networking events and presentations to groups to give applicants the best possible chance of success.

Please email art.grants@birmingham.gov.uk if you would like to:

- Speak to a member of our team about this funding
- Book an individual advice session
- Find out about networking events and presentations

Have a look at our [CAA Call page](#) for other downloadable documents to support you in applying for this funding.

Access Support

We want to make sure everyone can apply for our funding.

If you need any of this information in a different format or language or have any questions, please email art.grants@birmingham.gov.uk We will be happy to help you.

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Programme Overview

The Cultural Action Area programme is being run by Birmingham City Council's Cultural Development Team and funded through its Enterprise Zone to test a wide range of initiatives and activities that will establish Cultural Action Areas for longer-term economic and social benefit.

Cultural Action Areas will play a major role in driving place-based economic recovery by re-animating high streets and local centres with a diversified cultural and heritage offer, new uses for retail spaces and under-utilised buildings, improved access to community activities alongside improvements to facilities. They also improve community cohesion, business resilience and improve life chances for Birmingham citizens, such as through volunteering.

The fund seeks to support consortia of local stakeholders and leaders with a shared vision to re-animate these local centres, drive footfall, economic growth and provide social benefits to citizens in the community.

With over 70 urban centres and more than 100 local parades CAAs can operate at various scales, from city centre to local high streets, can be run by a wide range of lead partners, from business improvement districts to arts organisations, and can involve a wide range of actions such as:

- Reconfiguring the use of high street retail spaces, e.g., by establishing community hubs
- Establishing new community, business, and stakeholder groups to work together to develop the short and long-term potential of their locality
- Piloting and establishing new festivals, markets, and other activities
- Testing traffic re-routing and other activities
- Making better use of heritage and unique features like natural resources and green spaces
- Installing street art, furniture, facilities, temporary buildings, more greenery and other attractions
- Capital improvements and fit-out that increases the impact and functional value of local facilities
- Improving the evening & night-time economy
- Developing branding, tourism, and communications, including VR/AR and other apps
- Supporting young people, eg. providing access to opportunity and skills development for communities.

Cultural Action Areas have five broad aims. An element of each needs to be included in all applications:

1. Re-animate local places with a new and diverse mix of cultural, experiential, community activities and neighbourhood improvements to drive footfall and improve community and visitor experience and strengthen the economy of the area.
2. Empower a consortium of local stakeholders and leadership around a long-term shared vision so they can develop sustainable activities, improve community cohesion, reshape the identity of their place and develop a legacy plan.

3. Provide opportunities for citizens to participate, volunteer, develop their skills and improve their wellbeing and future life chances.
4. Improve the sustainability, impact and revenue generating capacity of local businesses, community, cultural and other organisational groups.
5. Strengthen the reputation of our local places because of improvements in facilities, cultural offer, community activities, safety alongside an overall increase in pride for the local area.

This funding is not like other cultural programmes or Arts project Funding. It does not focus on a specific organisation and their development, nor is it centred on creating a time limited participatory programme of cultural events. **Instead, it revolves around the development of the whole ecosystem of a place, ensuring that opportunities and resources are maximised for the benefit of everybody.** This means that a wide range of existing, planned or expected additional programmes or activities funded elsewhere can be included within your CAA proposal.

CAA grant funding can seed strong local collaborations and enable lasting change for the benefit of local citizens, visitors, businesses, and community groups by acting as a catalyst bringing stakeholders together to:

- Find new ways of developing their local cultural and/or heritage offer to re-animate their locality
- Identify and pool existing activities, strengths, funded programmes and other resources to make the most of what already exists
- Develop new partnerships, collaborations, and ways of working that will enable change so that, e.g., new festivals or markets can be sustained long term
- Work together to pool existing resources or funding to compliment CAA funding as well as apply for future funding and develop new business plans

Applicant Guidance

The CAA programme is being run by Birmingham City Council's Cultural Development Team and funded through its Enterprise Zone.

This programme can only support projects in locations with a **Birmingham City Council postcode**.

Who Can Apply?

Cultural Action Areas are led by multi-faceted stakeholder groups with local leadership.

We are inviting new and established Birmingham based consortia (a group/collectives/partnership) with a minimum of three organisations to apply for funding to establish or develop a Cultural Action Area.

For non-constituted consortiums one organisation must act as the lead applicant. If the application goes on to be successful, the lead applicant would then be accountable for the grant.

The lead applicant must be based in Birmingham with a Birmingham post code. The lead applicant can be:

- a registered charity
- a Community Interest Company (CIC)
- a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- or a limited company with a not-for-profit constitution

The lead applicant must have a:

- bank account in its own name and be able to receive the grant
- committee or board with at least three unrelated members to provide oversight
- governing document confirming that the organisation is not-for-profit

The following are not able to be the lead applicant but could be part of the consortia/group or work closely with the consortia/group:

- National organisations (including those with a Birmingham office or base)
- Organisations focused on making profits and sharing these profits privately
- Individuals or sole traders
- Organisations or groups based outside of Birmingham City Council area. You can check whether project activity locations have a Birmingham City Council postcode by visiting <http://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

If you have any questions about this, please email art.grants@birmingham.gov.uk

Previous recipients of Cultural Action Zone (CAZ) funding from Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) are encouraged to apply.

What is not in scope for this funding programme

CAA funding cannot be used solely for community activity (without an element of culture) or entirely health focused projects. It cannot be used to fund religious groups and their activities

or any sort of closed events or school trips. Although school activity can be a part of a broader CAA offer.

Grant Funding

In total this programme will distribute £1,435,000 across six rounds of grants ending in March 2029. The programme aims to make up to 5 awards per round, 30 awards in all. The first two rounds will run in 2024 and will distribute £550K to around 10 Cultural Action Areas

This programme can only support projects in locations with a **Birmingham City Council postcode**.

Dates for Funding Call Rounds

Round 1 is now closed

Unsuccessful applicants for round 1 are able to apply for round 2. Please email art.grants@birmingham.gov.uk to get advice and guidance before re-applying.

Round 2

£325K to be awarded to up to six projects. This includes £245,000 of capital and £80,000 of revenue.

Applicants can apply for just capital (max £100,000), just revenue (max £30,000) or a mix of both. Applicants can request between £20,000 to £100,000 in total within their application.

The closing date is NOON on Mon 17th June 2024, with awards announced by 12th July 2024.

Grant funding must be spent within 12 months of your project starting.

Successful Round 1 applicants can not apply to Round 2 but can apply again for Round 3 which is planned for Spring 2025.

Your initiatives and activities to establish a Cultural Action Area will often be the same ones that you are or could be resourcing through other funding streams (these can be regarded as match) such as WMCA Commonwealth Games Legacy, UK SPF, community monies, Arts Council England, etc to increase your CAA's capacity, sustainability and ambitions.

All initiatives and activities must:

- a. Take place in locations with a **Birmingham City Council postcode**. Before applying, please double check that your project activity locations have a Birmingham City Council postcode by visiting [the gov.uk find your council postcode checker](#)
- b. Focus on establishing a new Cultural Action Area or developing an existing Cultural Action Area (formerly known as Cultural Action Zones) with a shared long-term vision
- c. Include additional cash, income or in-kind resources (also known as match) . A wide range of complimentary programmes or funding streams can be used as match, along with asset spaces and selective donations of time and expertise. Organisations with limited match will not be scored less favourably than those with more match. The Balancing Factors panel will decide the final awards using a number of criteria, one of

which will be to ensure that the aggregate total of match across funded projects will achieve the programme's overall match requirement of at least 28%.

We are keen to see that applicants:

- Are paying people fairly and valuing your own working time
- Want to support the wellbeing of the people working on your project
- Have planned your project in a way that it will benefit lots of different people (so it is "Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive")
- Have tried to make your project as environmentally sustainable and climate friendly as possible

Application Form Questions with Guidance

Birmingham City Council has a responsibility to ensure that any public funding it provides is used for its approved purposes and that when an organisation receives funding it is used appropriately. This includes the operation of suitable management, employment and financial policies and practices.

The details provided in your application will be added to our Grants Management Database to help us track, monitor, and audit grant applications made and issued.

Please note that our service does not have a specific postal address, so we are only able to accept electronic applications and supporting documents.

Some questions say a number of words or minutes in brackets: these are to help you know how long your answer should be.

1. About your consortium or group

In this section we would like to know:

a) Who is in your consortium or group?

You will need at least three organisations

b) Why do you want to establish or develop a Cultural Action Area?

In this section we want you to tell us about your consortium's motivation and intent for establishing or developing a CAA. For example, the way you will combine the collective effort of stakeholders making use of different funding streams and programmes to create a rich and diverse mix of sustainable activities that will increase footfall and better support citizens and businesses. You don't have to have everything in place from day one, it's OK to have a mix of confirmed and unconfirmed programmes and activities that over time will mean the CAA gets established.

c) How establishing or developing the CAA will make things better for other people in your community or area

In this section we want you to tell us the ways your CAA will impact a wide range of different stakeholder and user groups across your locality. It should be reaching far beyond the initial consortium and have the potential to grow in its impact over time.

2. About the lead applicant

This section will help us to check the eligibility of your application and to learn a little more about the lead organisation.

3. Getting in touch

The contact details you provide should be for the individuals that will act as the main and additional contacts for the grant if awarded. Please include name, job title, telephone number, and email address

4. Application Summary

This summary should give us a quick overview of your application.

- a) Cultural Action Area Name
Please provide a short name for your Cultural Action Area that gives us a sense of where your CAA will be operating.
- b) Cultural Action Area Location
Please describe the CAA location including the local centre the CAA with support where possible providing a postcode (as near as possible). To help identify the location you can also use what3words by visiting the [what3words website](#)
- c) Project Dates
Start date
The start date you give must allow enough time for us to decide on your application. Round two awards will be announced by 12th July 2024, so could be contracted from early August.

We cannot fund any goods or services that you have been bought, ordered or contracted before we make a decision on your application and you have received, signed and returned a COGA (Conditions of Grant Aid document).

If your application is successful, we cannot make payments immediately. We will first let you know that your application has been successful and wait for you to accept the grant, authorise your bank details and consider any material to meet the conditions we have set. This can take two weeks or longer, depending on the circumstances. You should allow for this when choosing your start date.

End date

The grant must be spent and activities delivered within 12 months of the project start date.

Please note that it is intended that initiatives and activities are part of establishing or developing a Cultural Action Area which will continue to be supported through a variety of emerging relationships, resources, partner resources etc.

- d) A short, clear overview of the initiatives and activities that will establish your Cultural Action Area
A description which enables the reader to understand what will happen if the grant is awarded (the assets you may develop, networks you establish, and activities of all sorts you may bring together)
- e) The funding you are applying for and how much
Applicants are able to apply for just capital (max £100k), just revenue (max £30k) or a mix of both, up to a maximum budget request on your application of £100,000.

We want to know how much CAA capital and CAA revenue funding you are applying for and how much your total project will cost including other financial support (cash income from other sources) and in-kind contributions. There is less revenue available than capital so we ask you to think carefully about ways you could use capital more effectively to create longer lasting assets and use revenue more sparingly.

Please check this information matches the information in your application budget before submitting your application.

5. Delivery against Cultural Action Area Aims

Cultural Action Areas have five broad aims. An element of each needs to be included in all applications. These five questions will be assessed and scored and form the basis of our decision-making Process (see our [How We Make Decisions](#) document on our website)

a) Scored Question 1

Describe your CAA proposal and how it will satisfy Aim 1: Re-animate local places with a new and diverse mix of cultural, experiential, community activities and neighbourhood improvements to drive footfall, improve community and visitor experience and strengthen the economy of the area.

This grant funding is to establish and test a wide range of initiatives, activities and asset improvements that will establish Cultural Action Areas for longer-term economic and social benefit. We should be able to understand from this answer what the money will be used for and what activities, spaces, facility improvements, testing and so on will be undertaken. You should include anything funded from elsewhere that will contribute to the overall activity and impact of your CAA as it develops.

We want to know what sort of benefits you envisage from the project for your locality, stakeholder groups, including businesses, and community. It is important that you make it clear what will exist at the end that did not exist before the activities, interventions or asset improvements were started.

b) Scored Question 2

Describe the consortia or group, how it will work together and satisfy Aim 2: Empower local stakeholders and leadership around a shared vision so they can develop sustainable activities, improve community cohesion, reshape the identity of their place and develop a legacy plan.

We want to know about the people or organisations you will work with to establish or develop the Cultural Action Area and how they will work together to make the CAA happen.

Please tell us the names and email addresses of all consortium partners and include a letter of support from a minimum of 2 consortium partners

We should be able to understand:

- who is part of your core consortia
- how the consortia is constituted and will be managed
- how the consortia partners will collaborate on your Cultural Action Area, e.g. will some of them provide in-kind project support?
- how the consortia will develop suitable local leadership and a shared vision with a wider and growing stakeholder group that includes local businesses, cultural & community organisations, and citizens.

c) Scored Question 3

Describe how the initiatives, activities and asset development will be managed and resourced, including how they will satisfy Aim 3: Provide opportunities for citizens to participate, volunteer, develop their skills and improve their wellbeing and future life chances.

We should be able to understand the way you plan to manage and deliver all elements of your CAA; from asset and network development to your activity programme.

You should set out the ways you will provide opportunities for others, e.g. through paid work, contracts, micro-grants or volunteering opportunities.

Note: This grant funding programme allows your consortium to run a micro-grant programme within your CAA. For example, you could put out a simple call offering £500-£1000 grants for creative freelancers to run participatory events to attract footfall. This proved very effective in the pilot programme.

d) Scored Question 4

Describe how the initiatives and activities engage with or build on previous or existing projects, activities and/or funding. Include how it satisfies Aim 4: Improve the sustainability, impact and revenue generating capacity of local businesses, community, cultural and other organisational groups.

We want to see that you have thought about the strategic fit of the initiatives, activities or asset development to ensure the CAA will engage with, build-on or compliment previous or existing programmes; such as from UKSPF, Commonwealth Games or the Cultural Action Zone pilot.

Set out how your CAA will improve sustainability, for example, how an asset you develop may provide lower cost flexible space for events, thus reducing your requirement for long-term revenue grant funding. Include any environmental benefits that will accrue from your CAA.

State clearly if the CAA is being established or developed in an area that has previously not had cultural and/or community investment.

Note: We are particularly interested in establishing/developing CAAs in places with historic cultural under-investment.

e) Scored Question 5

Describe how your established Cultural Action Area will be developed in the future i.e. after the initial 12 months of funding. Include how the consortium will contribute to Aim 5: Strengthen the reputation of our local places because of improvements in facilities, cultural offer, community activities, safety alongside an overall increase in pride for the local area.

We want to see that there is a vision for the future of your Cultural Action Area and an idea of what will happen next after the funding. This can be aspirational but

should have some specific ideas and actions in place to (hopefully) turn these plans into reality.

Tell us the ways that your CAA will be strengthening the reputation of your local places and the impact of, for example, the assets you have developed.

6. Milestones

Please list when the different parts of the initiatives and activities will happen with provisional dates. Include sufficient timescales for any permissions or licences you may require.

Note: You might include establishing your steering group, completing the collaborative design of the CAA, hiring key personal, finalising contracting, advertising contract/micro-grant opportunities, starting to run a new market or series of events or key construction and fit-out milestones on the capital expenditure.

Grant funded activities must complete within 12 months of the project start date. The lead applicant will be required to write a short evaluation report at the end of the 12-month funding period.

Please note: Awarded grants are to support activities that will establish a Cultural Action Area (CAA) which is founded on a long-term vision for a geographical area/locality therefore successful applicants will be required to report outputs and outcomes for at least 12 months beyond the end of the funded activities (grant delivery period) so that the impact of the CAA can be measured.

Please add extra rows or additional information as needed in the milestones table.

7. Outputs, Outcomes and Measuring Success

Overall, Cultural Action Areas provide strong tailored outcomes and legacy, alongside improved wellbeing, and pride amongst local people. They are also a strong connector, as their partnerships act as a catalyst to bring in further funding and support.

Outputs and Outcomes

Select the key outputs and outcomes from the lists in the application form that will best measure the success of the Cultural Action Area. Please ensure you only select those which will be applicable to the proposed initiatives and activities.

If your application is successful, Birmingham City Council's (BCC) Cultural Development Service will work with you to agree a final set of measurable outputs and outcomes.

In addition to the outputs and outcomes listed you can add your own specific measures; this is optional. Please use the table provided.

We also want to know how the CAA initiatives and activities will contribute to the outputs and outcomes your consortium have selected or identified. Please use the table to insert the number allocated to each output and outcome and use the space on the right to describe how they will be achieved or met.

e) Measuring Success

We want to know how and when the consortium will measure the success of the initiatives and activities against the outputs and outcomes e. g. audio interviews with participants, paper feedback forms, social media polls.

Tell us how the consortium will benchmark outcomes at the start of the initiatives and activities to measure success.

When will you measure the success of your initiatives and activities? (eg. every month during delivery and then one month after the initiatives and activities finish)

Note: The lead applicant will be required to report on the outputs, budget spend to date and overall project progress during regular grant monitoring meetings with Birmingham City Council's Cultural Team. Successful applicants will be required to report outputs and outcomes for at least 12 months beyond the end of the funded activities (grant delivery period) so that the impact of the CAA can be measured

The lead applicant will be required to write a short evaluation report at the end of the 12-month funding period. You will also be asked to optionally report on cumulative outputs and outcomes 2 years and more after funding.

8. Managing the Delivery, Risks and Challenges

Managing the Delivery

- a) Tell us about the governance arrangements for the Cultural Action Area consortium. Where does accountability lie? What decision making processes have you put in place?

Note: It is a minimum requirement to have a committee or board with at least three unrelated members to provide oversight

- b) We want to know who will manage the delivery of the initiatives and activities day-to day and their experience managing similar delivery. This will help to demonstrate that your consortia has the skills and resources to lead and manage the initiatives and activities.

It will be helpful to understand what expertise the consortia already has, and what additional expertise if any it will bring in for the initiatives and activities specifically.

c) Risks and Challenges

Tell us about any obstacles to the CAA starting/developing that will need to be sorted before your CAA can proceed or any risks to the initiatives and activities being successful delivered.

Obstacles could include conflicting plans, a lack of meeting spaces, securing DBS checks, availability of key people, planning permission and licences etc

Risks could relate to successful delivery of proposed activities as well as the achievement of outputs and outcomes. Any risks that have a high likelihood of occurring and a severe impact need special attention. We want to know how the consortium will make sure risks are mitigated in some way so they don't arise, or in the event that they occur that there is a contingency plan to reduce their overall impact.

9. Project Budget

Budgets which are realistic, provide good value for money and include other income and/or resources beyond the grant being applied for demonstrate a strong commitment to the establishment of a CAA. We recommend completing the budget as fully as possible before submitting the application form.

If you need to, please add extra rows or additional information below the budget tables. For example:

- [type of cost] [details and working out] [£...]

Please make sure your total project costs match your total project income. The total value of the project is the total project income or cost plus the total value of in-kind contributions.

The application must include additional cash, income or in-kind resources (also known as match) .

It should be clear from the written elements of the application how the expenditure items will support the establishment of the CAA and its longer-term vision for the locality.

Expenditure: Capital items

Capital items can include building renovation, painting (including street art), fit out costs, equipment such as kitchen facilities, staging, public address systems & lighting, anti-terrorism measures, security and safety systems, etc.

Expenditure: Revenue items

Revenue items can include people's time, hire costs, micro-grants and other non-capital expenses such as insurance, legal fees, personal access costs, volunteer costs etc.

d) Paying People

All paid individuals must be paid the Birmingham Living Wage. All individuals must be paid the Birmingham Living Wage. To find out about the Birmingham Living Wage please visit [Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility and the Living Wage](#)

Please tell us if you have used any recognised industry standards to work out how to pay creatives and professionals involved in your activities and initiatives.

e) Managing the budget

As the grant recipient the lead applicant will be responsible for managing the grant funding on behalf of the consortium. Tell us about your experience of managing similar budgets. If you have not managed a budget of this size before, tell us who included in this application will support you. Tell us how you plan to manage the budget.

Supporting Information and Documents

Lead applicant management/committee

Please answer the questions about the management/committee for your organisation with a yes or no

UK Subsidy Control

The UK subsidy control regime is a flexible, principles-based approach that sets a clear, proportionate and transparent set of principles and rules for awarding subsidies to achieve public policy objectives, whilst also limiting the negative effects of subsidies on domestic and international competition and investment.

To make sure that this funding opportunity is following the Subsidy Control regime, please tell us the amount of any state aid (grants) you (the lead applicant organisation) have received over the last three financial years (which includes the current financial year).

Note: The total sum shown should include the potential award you will receive from this CAA application.

To help you identify if there a possibility that potential state subsidy issues might arise from your project please read Step 1 of [the government's subsidy control rules quick guide to key requirements for public authorities](#)

Policies and Procedures

Please indicate which policies and procedures you (the lead applicant) have in place and which you may need some further information about.

Supporting Documents

Please ensure that you provide the documents requested when you submit your application. If you are unable to provide these documents, please email art.grants@birmingham.gov.uk to let us know.

Declaration

Please complete and sign the declaration; we can accept simple electronic signatures.

The most common example is a wet signature scanned by an electronic device and then inserted into a document; another example would be scanning or photographing a hand-signed paper document and sending it by email (ensuring the signature is clear and legible).

For the application to be considered you must email it to art.grants@birmingham.gov.uk by the funding round closing date.

What Happens Next?

We will confirm receipt of your emailed application within two working days. If you don't receive a receipt, you must email art.grants@birmingham.gov.uk as soon as possible.