



Elmbridge
Borough Council
... bridging the communities ...

Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund (ECIF) Guidance Notes

Guidance Notes for Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund Application Form

1 Introduction/ General Information

This document intends to give further information and guidance to organisations completing an Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund Application Form.

If you need any further guidance, advice or support on completing this application form, please do not hesitate to contact the ECIF Co-ordinator on 01372 474385 or corporatpolicy@elmbridge.gov.uk.

Please note the following:

- Use black ink or complete you application form electronically and print and send to Elmbridge Borough Council so it makes it easier to photocopy. Please only return your form once it has been signed;
- Please be as concise as possible, using bullet points if you prefer rather than full descriptions, but we will accept any additional information on separate A4 sheets if need be;
- Your application will be assessed by a scoring system. All questions will contribute to the final score but particular attention will be given to how question 11 is answered and how it meets the aim of the fund. Your application will be checked first and then determined by the decision-making body which will be made up of Chief Officers and/or Members of the Council (depending on the amount of grant applied for) and
- There is no right of appeal against the decision.

Further brief background information to the scheme can be found at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/business/ecif.

1.1 Background

The aim of the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund Scheme (ECIF) is to ensure that the Borough offers an attractive business environment by supporting the maintenance and enhancement of the Borough's village and town centres.

ECIF is a discretionary grant scheme, available from April 2009, and aimed at providing funding for environmental and business projects in Elmbridge including street furniture and street scene improvements, shop front improvements, empty shop improvements and promotional and marketing events or other initiatives, including clean-up projects.

The establishment of the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund (ECIF) was approved by Council on 25th February 2009.

1.2 Who can apply?

The scheme is only open to improvements that take place within Elmbridge. Individual applications from independent retail businesses will be accepted for specific categories of improvements, as will applications from representative business groups (including informal business groups), trade associations and Chambers of Commerce and community organisations.

Priority will be given to projects that enhance the area, are likely to attract business and where the improvement will be long lasting (e.g. 5 years).

1.3 What projects are eligible for financial assistance?

- Street furniture and street scene improvements, including cleaning;
- Restoring or replacing shop fronts in the style appropriate to the building including cleaning;
- Initiatives to improve the appearance or use of empty shops;
- Group promotional events or marketing initiatives which increase the public's awareness of shops, amenities and services available in the town centre, including comprehensive clean up programmes;
- Learning skills and training initiatives and
- Initiatives that promote community improvement projects where there would be a significant benefit to the local economy

Consideration will also be given to initiatives to make properties secure and deter anti-social behaviour, e.g. graffiti but not in conflict with other Council policies.

1.4 What is not eligible?

- It will not be possible to fund projects that require an ongoing revenue cost – should there be an ongoing cost, the applicant must commit to providing that revenue;
- Works that have commenced or have been completed before an offer of grant has been made are not eligible for grant;
- Items of routine maintenance and repair such as painting of existing windows or shop fronts are not eligible;
- It may be determined that some projects or initiatives could be funded by other national grant schemes;
- Professional fees are excluded from the scope of the scheme;
- Initiatives promoting a political party and
- Initiatives that conflict with existing Council policies.

1.5 How much finance is available?

- Grants for between 25% and 75% of the eligible costs could be allowed depending on the type of application, excluding fees. Applicants are expected to fund at least 25% of the total project costs. However, only the minimum amount required to secure the implementation of the project will be approved.

2 Completing the Application Form

2.1 Questions 1 to 5

Ensure you put the full name and address details. Your main contact does not have to be the person signing the application but it should be someone with authority concerning this application and who is available to be contacted during office hours.

2.2 Question 6

Tick appropriate box for type of grant application, which will need to fall into one of these categories.

2.3 Questions 7 to 10

Only complete these questions if you are making improvements to a property – either shop front, cleaning or empty shop usage.

2.3.1 Question 7

We need to know the actual address with postcode of the property to be improved or have a change of use (empty shop usage).

2.3.2 Question 8

If you rent or lease the property it will be necessary to include the landlord's written consent to make the improvements. Evidence of freehold and leasehold interest may also be required in certain circumstances.

2.3.3 Question 9

An initial check will be made to ensure that business rates are not outstanding.

2.3.4 Question 10

Applicants will have to secure all the necessary statutory consents such as building regulations, environmental health licences or planning permission prior to the submission of an application. Please also note that it may be necessary to contact statutory undertakers to get necessary consent for installing street furniture and other fixtures. Statutory undertakers are the various companies and agencies with legal rights to carry out certain development and highways works – e.g. gas, water, electricity, telecommunications and other 'cable' companies.

2.4 Question 11

Provide a description of your proposal, why you are seeking the grant, how the funding will be used, whether the funding is to contribute to a project/ fully fund a project and the benefits it will bring to the local economy including how it meets Elmbridge's Vision and priorities:

Vision 2008-2013 'Building on excellence'

Our aims:

We will work in partnership towards an Elmbridge:

- with safe and healthy communities, vibrant town centres and a strong local economy
- with high quality community services and affordable housing, and efficient public services
- that integrates all sectors of the community in a thriving and inclusive borough
- where those with extra needs can better access support from their communities

- which leads in promoting environmental responsibility, and adapts to the challenges and opportunities of climate change
- which retains its attractive, green and unique character

Our top priorities for 2009-11 are our commitments to:

- better services for our residents
- value for money
- our community
- our staff and volunteers
- the environment

(Also online <http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/Council/information/statements.htm>)

Also refer to the information required depending upon your type of application, which is shown in the table in Appendix A. If you are asked to provide information on outcomes, please include any targets for your project as these will be used to monitor your project should your application will be successful (the council will therefore be monitoring your organisation on what you said you will do).

An additional criterion to bear in mind is whether the benefit can be classified as long lasting.

If you need to continue on a separate A4 sheet, please do so by attaching pages to the application form – please head your page question 11 and number them so it is easier to photocopy.

2.5 Question 12

List all drawings, plan numbers (planning application reference numbers), plans and project documents that you are including as part of your application.

Please see appendix A for the information required based on the type of application you are making and ensure that you include these documents.

It may be necessary for us to contact you further if these are not included, but this is likely delay processing your application.

2.6 Question 13 – Shop Front or Empty Shop improvements only

Please provide some more detailed information on the project costs, including any professional fees, which cannot be funded by the scheme and therefore will need to be excluded when determining the level of grant.

Please make sure you include budgets and quotes for the work as appropriate (outlined in Appendix A).

2.7 Question 14

Please indicate the amount of money you would like to apply for from the fund. Let us know if there are any contributions from third parties – i.e. other organisations or grant schemes or individuals and then show what contribution you or your organisation/business are putting in to the project / improvement. You may wish to refer to Appendix A to verify whether or not your figures match the funding required from your contribution together with any third party contribution.

Reserves are pots of money which organisations have “put to one side” for either specific reasons dictated by their own future plans or by funding restrictions or for use in emergency

situations. Having reserves is usually a sign of good financial planning and viability. If you have an reserves, please attach a separate A4 sheet headed "Reserves" indicating how much were "Restricted funds" – funds that can only be used for specific purposes, imposed by the funder and how much of your reserves are "Unrestricted Funds"; these are funds that are available for general use within your organisation. You will also need to indicate how much of your unrestricted funds were "designated" – i.e. those that are put aside for a specific reason and indicate why they were put aside (e.g. repairing roof) and when they will be spent.

You need to let us know if you are applying for funding from any other organisation as this might affect the amount of funding awarded. You will need to let us know if you receive any funding from other parties whilst we are processing your application. Failure to do so may result in withdrawal of funding or a request to return any funds awarded.

2.8 Question 15

Please just provide full name of person and position within Elmbridge, if known.

2.9 Question 16

We do not expect all small businesses to be able to provide all of this information, but please ensure that you include either your business or project plan and audited accounts where possible. If you are holding an event, you may need a specific licence or certificate for it and we will need evidence of this. If you are making improvements to a property then we will need to ensure you have the correct planning permission, have met building regulations and have provided a lease/freehold document and permission to carry out works from the Landlord where necessary.

2.10 Question 17

We particularly encourage you to inform your ward councillor of your intention to apply to the fund. There may be an opportunity to join up with other applicants and put in a joint application. You can find out your local ward councillor by entering your postcode (or the postcode of the property) into the search box under "My Elmbridge" on the front page of Elmbridge's website – www.elmbridge.gov.uk.

2.11 Question 18

Please make sure you read the declaration carefully, sign the form and return it as directed on the cover sheet to the application form.

3 What Happens Next?

You will receive an acknowledgement that we have received your application form by email if you provide an address or by letter.

Your application will be assessed against our existing criteria and scored. If applications do not meet the existing assessment criteria they will still be reviewed thoroughly to ensure an ongoing review of the scheme.

It may be necessary in some circumstances to ask for further information from the applicant and you will be contacted by email or letter.

Shop Front /Empty Shop Improvements

In addition to the initial assessment criteria, we will probably undertake a site visit to assess the scope of the eligible works/costs.

- Undertaking a site visit to assess the scope of the eligible works/costs, which should be clearly explained to the applicant;

The application, scoring and any additional information will then be presented to the decision-making body.

Applicants will be informed of the decision in writing.

There is no right of appeal.

4 When will the grant be paid?

Grants will normally only be made following:

- A site visit to confirm the completion of the works.
- A summary report of promotional event or evidence of marketing material.
- The submission of verifiable invoices.

APPENDIX A

Table 1. Assessment Requirements

CATEGORY	ELIGIBLE WORKS OR PROJECT	INFORMATION REQUIRED	ELIGIBLE COSTS
Shop front improvements		<i>These are the minimum requirements</i>	%
Frontages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning brickwork, stonework etc. • Restoring traditional detailing • Restore/replace joinery, iron & stonework. • New shop fronts, fascia etc. • Remove redundant or unsightly features. • Major permanent structural improvements. • Enhancing private forecourts. 	Scale drawings; Design in keeping with surrounding area; At least 2 estimates; statutory permissions; and landlord's written consent.	Grant up to 75%
Security measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened glass-higher security shop fronts • External Security systems & lighting (not in conflict with existing Council policies) 	Scale drawings; At least 2 estimates and landlord's written consent.	Grant up to 75%
Empty Shops Initiative	Measures to reduce the impact of one or more empty shops.	Description of works; and 1 estimate and landlord's written consent.	Grants up to £500
Street Scene and Street Furniture Improvements			
Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep cleaning of streets and pavements 	Description of works and 2 written estimates	Grant up to 75%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanging baskets (excluding maintenance which needs to be undertaken by those bidding) • Lighting • Signage 	Description of works and 1 written estimate of cost (further quotes may be required depending on likely cost)	Grant up to 75%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seats • Bins • Trees and planters 		
CATEGORY	ELIGIBLE WORKS OR PROJECT	INFORMATION REQUIRED	ELIGIBLE COSTS
Marketing & Promotion			
Business area Promotion	Events or other activities, including clean up projects, promoting town centre, village or shopping parade as a whole organised by a group of retailers	Statement of aims with details of event and responsible body/organisers, budget showing adequate financial provision for proposed scale of event, sources of income and measurable outcome of the event (value for money) plus risk assessment and adequate insurance provision as appropriate	Grant up to 75%
Learning skills and training initiatives			
	Variety of learning skill and training initiatives to boost local economy	Statement of aims with details of initiative, budget, sources of income, measurable outcomes and include whether any employment gain expected locally	
Community Improvement Projects			
	Projects that are of benefit to the local economy or attract people to services	Statement of aims with details of initiative, budget, sources of income, measurable outcomes	Grant up to 75%