

Chelmsford Transport Poverty Grant Guidance

Chelmsford City Council is inviting applications to the **Transport Poverty Grant Scheme**, a targeted funding scheme designed to help local organisations address transport-related barriers that may prevent residents from accessing existing services, activities, and opportunities. This guidance explains the purpose of the fund, who can apply, what we can support and how the application process will work.

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1. Overview

Transport poverty refers to the barriers people face in accessing the places, services, and opportunities they need because transport is unavailable, unaffordable, unsuitable, or difficult to use. These transport-related barriers can limit people's ability to reach healthcare, employment, education, food provision, community activities and other opportunities that support health and wellbeing, and often have the greatest impact on people already experiencing disadvantage.

Transport is a key wider determinant of health. Where people cannot travel easily and affordably, they may miss appointments, struggle to access employment or training, become more socially isolated, or find it harder to take part in everyday activities that support good health and independence.

The Transport Poverty Grant Scheme is being delivered as a pilot scheme to test community-led approaches to reducing transport-related barriers in Chelmsford. The

grant is intended to invest in Chelmsford's communities by supporting local organisations to deliver practical responses to transport-related barriers.

1.1 Chelmsford Health and Wellbeing Plan

The Chelmsford Health and Wellbeing Plan sets out a shared strategy for improving the health and wellbeing of residents across the City, including urban areas such as Danbury and South Woodham Ferrers, as well as rural communities.

The Plan is informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which highlights the importance of prevention and the need to address the wider determinants of health, such as access to services, employment, education, and social connection, that significantly influence health outcomes and inequalities.

The Transport Poverty Grant Scheme directly supports these priorities by addressing one of the key practical barriers to good health and wellbeing: access to affordable and reliable transport. By enabling community-led projects that improve access to essential services and opportunities, the scheme helps to reduce inequalities, support preventative approaches, and improve residents' ability to live healthy and connected lives.

In this way, the grant scheme contributes to the Plan's overall ambition by translating its strategic goals into targeted, local action, and by supporting partners to work collaboratively to tackle the root causes of poorer outcomes across Chelmsford.

1.2 Thriving Places Index

The Thriving Places Index (TPI), developed by the Centre for Thriving Places, provides a nationally recognised framework for understanding and measuring the key drivers of wellbeing. It brings together a wide range of indicators into an accessible "dashboard," enabling areas to benchmark performance against national averages and comparable local authorities.

The TPI framework is particularly valuable in supporting a more integrated and preventative approach to improving wellbeing. By drawing together data from across traditionally separate policy areas, it helps partners to better understand how factors such as transport, health, environment, and economic opportunity are interconnected.

The Transport Poverty Grant Scheme aligns closely with this approach. By focusing on improving access to affordable and reliable transport, the scheme directly contributes to several of the core conditions for thriving identified within the TPI. Transport is a critical enabler of access to employment, education, healthcare, and social networks, factors that underpin multiple TPI domains.

Through this lens, the scheme helps address the three key questions at the heart of the TPI framework:

- Creating the right conditions for people to thrive by enabling residents to access essential services and opportunities
- Ensuring equity: by targeting support towards those experiencing transport disadvantage and reducing inequalities in access
- Supporting sustainability: by encouraging community-led, place-based solutions that contribute to longer-term system change

Analysis of relevant TPI indicators, alongside local insight, has informed the design of the grant scheme and its objectives. This ensures that funded projects are not only addressing immediate needs, but also contributing to wider, measurable improvements in wellbeing across Chelmsford.

1.3 Chelmsford Food Plan

The Chelmsford Food Plan recognises that food poverty is influenced not only by income, but also by wider barriers such as limited access to transport, which can affect people's ability to obtain healthy, nutritious, and affordable food.

The Transport Poverty Grant Scheme directly supports the aims of the Food Plan by addressing one of these key barriers. For many residents, a lack of affordable or reliable transport can restrict access to supermarkets, food banks, community meals, social supermarkets, and other sources of low-cost, nutritious food. This can particularly impact those living in more isolated areas, or those with limited mobility.

By funding community-led solutions to transport challenges, the scheme helps to improve physical access to food provision and supports more equitable access to healthy food options. In doing so, it complements broader efforts within the Food Plan to tackle food insecurity and promote healthier diets.

More broadly, the scheme contributes to a more joined-up, preventative approach by recognising the link between transport, food access, and overall wellbeing. It enables local organisations to develop practical, place-based responses that help residents overcome everyday barriers and better meet their basic needs.

2. Fund objectives

The overarching objective of this grant is to support community-led activity that reduces transport-related barriers and improves access to essential services and opportunities for people living within the Chelmsford City Council area. In particular, the fund aims to support activity or interventions that:

- Improve access to healthcare, employment, education, food, and wellbeing opportunities
- Reduce inequalities experienced by residents facing transport-related disadvantage
- Support preventative and community-led responses that improve independence and reduce social isolation
- Generate insight and learning to inform future commissioning and investment decisions

Funding is intended to support practical, preventative, and community-led responses that help residents overcome transport-related barriers and improve access to services and opportunities. We are particularly interested in projects that can demonstrate clear local need, benefit priority groups, and offer learning that may inform future work in this area.

3. Funding availability

- The total budget available for this pilot scheme is **£14,000**.
- Applicants may apply for up to **£1,500** per project.
- The scheme will operate through one funding round only.
- We may award less than the amount requested, or fund only specific elements of a proposal, where this offers best value for money and fit with the aims of the scheme
- A breakdown of projects costs must be provided to support the grant amount requested.
- Funding is limited, and submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Please do not start your project until funding has been confirmed.

4. Eligibility criteria / exclusions

Applications are welcomed from organisations that work with, support or provide services for Chelmsford residents and can demonstrate how the funding will help reduce transport-related barriers to existing services, activities, or opportunities.

Eligible organisations include:

- Voluntary and community sector organisations
- Registered charities
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Community interest companies or social enterprises

- Health, care or wellbeing providers, where the proposed activity is additional to statutory or commissioned provision
- Public sector or statutory organisations, where the proposed activity is additional and does not fulfil a statutory duty
- Partnership applications led by an eligible organisation

Applicants must:

- be able to deliver activity within the grant period, between **1 November 2026 and 31 October 2027**;
- demonstrate how the project will reduce transport-related barriers experienced by people living within the Chelmsford City Council area;
- provide proportionate monitoring information on activity, reach, and outcomes; and
- have all relevant licences, insurance, permissions, and policies required to deliver the proposed activity.

All proposed activities must:

- be delivered for the benefit of people living within the Chelmsford City Council area;
- provide practical, proportionate support that helps residents overcome transport barriers to existing services or opportunities; and
- address unmet need or gaps in transport accessibility rather than duplicate existing provision.

To support a broader range of local transport solutions and increase overall community capacity, organisations currently delivering established district-wide community transport provision funded or commissioned through other arrangements are not eligible to apply for this grant programme.

The fund is intended to support complementary and additional transport solutions where unmet need and access barriers remain for residents.

The grant cannot fund:

- statutory transport provision or activity fulfilling a statutory duty;
- organisations already receiving dedicated funding to address transport barriers through existing commissioned arrangements;
- large-scale or long-term transport service delivery that cannot be sustained beyond the funding period;
- capital expenditure, including vehicles, buildings, or infrastructure;

- retrospective costs or activity that has already commenced;
- contingency costs;
- the cost of obtaining planning permission, licences, or consents;
- direct individual payments without appropriate organisational governance and oversight; or
- projects that duplicate existing commissioned transport provision.

All grants are discretionary and subject to the availability of funding. Successful applicants may be required to publicly acknowledge grant support, and information relating to grant awards may be published for transparency purposes.

Examples of the types of activity we may support include:

- Community-based projects that help residents attend health appointments or access treatment and support services
- Local initiatives that improve access to employment, training, education, or volunteering opportunities
- Short-term interventions that reduce social isolation by improving access to community activities and wellbeing support
- Small-scale practical measures that remove or reduce transport barriers to existing community, health, food, wellbeing, or advice provision.

This list is not exhaustive; we encourage applications that clearly show how transport barriers will be reduced.

5. How to apply

Applicants will be asked to complete an application form setting out the need for the project, who it will support, the activity proposed, delivery timescales, and a breakdown of costs.

Applications will be assessed against the aims of the scheme, local need, deliverability, and expected impact.

The fund will operate through **one funding round only**. Applications will open on **15 September 2026** and close on **9 October 2026**. Funding awards will be made by the end of **October 2026**.

Application forms and guidance will be made available through <http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/transport-grant>

- If you are having difficulty completing the online application or have communication needs, please contact the Public Health team: publichealth@chelmsford.gov.uk.
- You will receive a notification after submission of the application to let you know we have received your application.
- We may contact you if we need to clarify any information
- If your application is unsuccessful, we will send you an email. We offer feedback on request to unsuccessful applicants. All decisions are final, and we cannot revisit any decision.
- If your application is successful, we will send you an email with an offer letter outlining the terms and conditions of your grant and the next steps. We will ask to see any additional documents/policies to support your application at this time.
- You should spend the funding the way you said you would in your application.
- Grant terms and conditions: if your application is successful, we will ask you to agree to our terms and conditions.

6. Timeline and Milestones

The Transport Poverty Grant Scheme will be delivered through a single funding round between September 2026 and October 2027. Applications will open on 15 September 2026 and close on 9 October 2026, with funding awards expected to be made by the end of October 2026.

This approach will support a clear and proportionate application process, allowing time for review, moderation and decision-making before funded activity begins.

Funded activity may take place between **1 November 2026** and **31 October 2027**, providing flexibility for organisations to respond to local and seasonal needs. Applicants must maintain appropriate records of spend, activity and outcomes throughout the funded activity period.