

# **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING REQUEST**

Applications are invited for strategic infrastructure projects to be considered for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding.

To bid for CIL funding, you will need to fill out the following application form and submit relevant supporting material, as necessary. Please ensure the information you provide is correct and complete to the best of your knowledge.

Please send your completed application to:

Email: cil@threerivers.gov.uk

Address: Community Infrastructure Levy Officer, Three Rivers District Council, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 1RL

# Please Note

Failure to answer all the questions on this form could impact upon the success of your application.

<b>Section A: Applicant Conta</b>	ct Information	
Name and address of your organisation	Three Rivers District Council, three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, WD3 1RL	
Name and position of main contact	Charlotte Gomes. Landscape and Leisure Development Manager	
Applicant contact details (phone number, email and address)	01923- 776611	
Type of organisation (If a charity, please provide registration number)	Local Government	
Describe your organisation's main purpose and regular activities	Provision of open spaces, leisure facilities and services	
Is the organisation able to reclaim VAT?	Yes	

<b>Section B: Project Overvi</b>	
Project Title	Rickmansworth Aquadrome Pedestrian Bridge Replacement
Summary of the project proposal	This application is to consider the aspect of connectivity for the Aquadrome and to seek to replace the existing pedestrian bridge from Riverside Drive. A recent structural survey has identified the bridge will need to be replaced in the next 2 – 5 years. The purpose of the proposal will also bring it in line with current national shared usage requirements, make it fit for purpose and create a sense of arrival at this significant council asset.
	It therefore meets the stated objective "to provide a sustainable transport link and a safe access route over the River Colne between Rickmansworth Town, Riverside Drive and the Aquadrome Play area with the Aquadrome and further to the canal and Colne Valley".
	In addition, this project also meets the councils vision statement within the Aquadrome Management Plan: "For the Aquadrome to be enhanced, nurtured and protected. To achieve the balance so nature can flourish and visitors can connect with and discover beautiful and unique habitats, whilst understanding the importance of the environmental heritage of the site."
	The replacement bridge project proposal: The design is based on the replacement of the existing bridge with a new structure in the same location. This is in addition to new and enhanced seating, signage and footpath enhancements in the immediate surrounding areas to create an attractive entrance to the site. The design is based on the principal of removing and replacing the existing bridge over the River Colne in its existing location.
	The bridge will run from North to South and be designed to be 4.5m wide to allow shared usage for pedestrian and cyclists, which meets the DfT Design Guidance LTN1/20.
	Currently the materiality of the footbridge construction is in steel, selected for its longevity.
	To the North of the bridge, from Riverside Drive, the existing footpath will be widened to the same width of the bridge, with the existing fencing to the play area retained.
	To the East of the new widened path, the proposal is to create a new area of landscaping to contain benches, seating or similar.
	To the South, again the footpath shall be diverted and widened to match the new location of the bridge, with new seating areas created to the West (following the removal of the existing bridge) and further South of the new bridge and footpath as shown adjacent.
	As part of the works, the existing fence around the bridge shall be removed and replaced with new.

New wayfinding signage is to be introduced along the footpath, with interpretation boards giving details of the ecology and walking routes to be found around the Lake.

#### Background:

Following a survey of the Aquadrome Pedestrian Bridge and as part of the development of the new Rickmansworth Aquadrome Management Plan, Officers commissioned a structural survey to assess the bridge's condition. The outcome of this survey concludes that, whilst currently safe to use, the bridge is in "Very Poor" condition with no clear predication of the life expectancy of the bridge even with short term repairs. In order to establish a realistic asset life expectancy, it would be necessary to undertake further internal assessment of the bridge corrosion, which could in turn result in further, rapid, deterioration of the steelworks. It is expected the bridge will need to be replaced within the next 2 – 5 years.

The Aquadrome Bridge is in a poor state of repair and will require significant investment to repair or replace the bridge. Currently there is no allocation of budget within the Council's MTFP to 2025/26 to facilitate this and it is assumed that over this period ongoing maintenance will be sufficient to keep the bridge in use. However, the recent survey has highlighted that the condition of the bridge may require more significant capital works to repair or replace the bridge within the Council's MTFP period.

A repair option is considered within the Business Case at Appendix A, however it is not seen as a viable option due to: the unknown costs of repair, that it would continue to not meet the required standards for pedestrian and cycle use and that any repairs made cannot be confirmed as extending the life expectancy of the bridge.

An opportunity has arisen to secure funding from the Department of Transport's "Paths for Everyone" funding programme to replace and enhance the existing Rickmansworth Aquadrome Pedestrian Bridge and Riverside Drive entrance into the Aquadrome.

The Paths for Everyone funding programme presents an opportunity to bring forward the work on the bridge and to consider a more ambitious solution, rather than repairing or replacing like for like, that would enhance the bridge, reflecting the fact that it forms part of the National Cycle Network.

Potential projects, eligible for the Paths for Everyone funding, are being led and supported by Sustrans and they have confirmed that the project would be eligible. Tranche 8 of the funding is currently open to applications and would require project delivery during the 2024/25 financial year. It is also worth noting that the DfT have very recently reduced their Active Travel budget - it is unclear what impact this will have on the funding programme at this stage, however the advice has been to continue with the project submission. Officers therefore feel applying to tranche 8 if possible and not delaying to tranche 9 may prove to be more successful due to the funding cuts.

Sustrans would conduct a risk meeting to assess and longlist projects for funding in 2024/25, which will take place in early summer 2023 and confidence in deliverability is key to being successful.

Confidence on deliverability would be increased by:

- Three Rivers having 25% match funding
- Meeting all Sustrans design criteria (LTN1/20 standard)
- Having planning approval
- Ecology and Tree surveys completed, with any concerns addressed and mitigated against
- The completion of an EA Flood Risk Permit (if required).

Beyond the practical need for the replacement bridge and the opportunity to access funds, is the consideration of the current over all condition of the entrance. The condition is poor, with narrow, deteriorating paths, no directional or welcome signs, poor seating and a lack of any sense of arrival. There is an opportunity to enhance this entrance so that it not only meets health and safety requirements, future proofs the accessibility but becomes an attractive, well-designed entrance offering the residents and visitors so much more.

# Estimated project cost (including breakdown of the overall cost and what the CIL funding requested will cover)

The estimated cost considers hard landscaped improvements/necessities to the Riverside Drive entrance, as well as the area immediately on leaving the bridge on the lake side.

Improvements/necessities include a wider splay for the entrance/exit of the bridge, improved signage and interpretation, wider pathways on the Riverside Drive side of the bridge and enhanced seating on both sides.

	Estimated full costs	Potential D of T funding % and £	Request to CIL % and £
Full replacement	£1,282,096	75%	25%
of the 4.5m bridge		£961,572	£320,524
in steel			

This design and costs have regard to the following:

- Reduced impact on existing trees
- Minimise disruption to the wider Aquadrome site and the footprint
- Extended life expectancy of the bridge with steel construction
- Improve the overall sight lines and accessibility of the Aquadrome
- Minimise impact on existing facilities, with less excavation work (there is the potential to utilise existing footings, subject to surveying)
- Reduced impact on the play area
- Opportunity to create attractive screening around the water ski club compound
- Reduced maintenance costs with a new bridge structure
- External funding can potentially be secured to deliver the project

	<ul> <li>The design meets all Sustrans design criteria (LTN1/20 standard)</li> <li>Relocating the storage containers</li> </ul>
Full address of project location	Rickmansworth Aquadrome Frogmore Lane Rickmansworth WD3 1NB
Project partner (if applicable)	The pedestrian bridge plays an important role in the connectivity of the site.  It is part of the National Cycle Network and as such Sustrans have included the need to replace the bridge for a fit for purpose one within their programme of works. This project will therefore work in partnership with Sustrans regarding design and funding, also with Countryside Management who have been instrumental in the Management Plan. It will be project managed by TRDC.  NB: Sustrans is a United Kingdom-based walking, wheeling and cycling charity, and the custodian of the National Cycle Network. Its flagship project is the National Cycle Network, which has created 12,763 miles of signed cycle routes throughout the United Kingdom including 5,273 mi of traffic-free path

#### **Section C: Strategic Case**

How does the project help address the demands of development in the area. What evidence is there to support this? The Aquadrome is a very popular destination for the local community and visitors. The bridge is one of the primary connections and arrival points into the site. In its current state, it is not fit for purpose, and presents a poor-quality entrance to one of the Council's key open spaces.

The Rickmansworth Aquadrome Bridge is a busy, well used sustainable transport link between the Aquadrome and the wider Rickmansworth area. It forms part of Route 6 of the National Cycle Network (NCN) connecting the Aquadrome and wider Rickmansworth Town area (and beyond), including the popular Aquadrome play area. It is also used frequently by local families and school children walking between the west of Rickmansworth to the local primary school on the east of the Aquadrome.

The Riverside Drive entrance is also highlighted as the northern gateway to the Colne Valley Regional Park and is seen as a strategic walking and cycling route into the wider Colne Valley and the canal towpath.

Visitor observations were carried out in June 2022 in six, two-hour periods in the morning, lunchtime and in the afternoon, during weekdays and weekends. Summary data is detailed below showing the popularity and high usage of the green space:

Visitors within 2 hours	Minimum no. of people	Maximum no. of people
Weekday	358	428
Weekend	600	957

In addition to being used by cyclists and pedestrians, the bridge also acts as a conduit to deliver a recently installed power supply from Riverside Drive to the Water Ski Clubhouse and Public Toilets. This allowed for the removal of an expensive, inefficient diesel generator.

Do you have planning permission in place to carry out the works?
If so, please provide the application number

The project has not sought planning permission.

Planning approval would be required to progress the funding application and to provide confidence of deliverability to the DfT. The DfT will require planning approval in advance to show the project is viable. This is then in the public domain and could show TRDC's commitment to the project which would raise public expectations and interest.

TRDC would look to submit a Planning Application: May 2023 (8 weeks)

# Why is CIL funding being sought and who are the likely beneficiaries of the project?

To be considered for funding from the DfT, the application will be given greater consideration if 25% of the necessary funds have been secured. A replacement bridge is at the heart of the site's infrastructure.

If there are no CIL funds available, the application to the DfT can not proceed with any strength. If there is a delay in the planning application, this could result in missing tranche 8 and having to submit to tranche 9 were the funding budget has been reduced.

If the DfT are not able to fund the replacement bridge, a replacement bridge remains the preferred option however a narrower bridge will be considered and proposed.

The beneficiaries to improving the infrastructure are the residents and visitors – in their thousands. It also has the possibility to enhance the footfall into the town centre and its shops, and to offer the gateway into the Colne Valley Regional Park and the canal tow path. This in turn offers residents and visitors a greatly improved access point into these areas.

# Would the community support the project?

The community are aware of the poor condition of the bridge and have recently tolerated bridge closures for repairs with no complaints. As a team we now have experience of managing a bridge closure to minimise disruption.

The current width of the bridge is 1.5m and with a low height restriction, making it a difficult shared pathway and carries risk at times with the heavy footfall. A new bridge including enhancements to the entrance and off lake side will be welcomed. It would be sympathetically designed to enhance the site and improve the visitor experience.

In place for the wider Aquadrome project, is a Steering group who are connected into the community and into their professional bodies. This group will be fully consulted and includes:

Countryside Management Services

Lead TRDC Councillors

**Batchworth Community Council** 

Sustrans

Affinity Water (River Restoration)

Environmental Agency,

Affinity Water (Biodiversity)

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust

Colne Valley Regional Park

Three Rivers Museum Trust

Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative

**Canal River Trust** 

Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

In addition, community consultation has taken place in May 2022 over the new Management Plan 2022-27. Over 321 responded and over 600 comments were submitted. The overwhelming comments for the

	Plan have been positive. The Plan spoke of the need to make improvements to the accessibility and connectivity including to review the future of the bridge with regards to replacing or repairing it.
	Local ward councillors and lead members supported the Management Plan and it gained Council approval at Leisure, Environment and Community Committee on 12 October 2022.
Would the project lead to any income generation?	Replacing the bridge would not lead to any direct income generation.
Please provide details of any supporting policy from the Local Plan	The proposal to replace the pedestrian bridge and by so doing, improve the connectivity of the site supports many local strategies and policies:
Local Plan	Corporate Framework It will support the achievement of the Corporate Framework under the following objectives: Three Rivers will be a district: •where local infrastructure supports healthy lifestyles and addresses health inequalities •that supports and enables sustainable communities •that can achieve net carbon zero and be climate resilient This project will enhance and improve the local infrastructure, supporting sustainable transport links and health lifestyles  Responsive, responsible, local leadership: •Promote greater collaboration between organisations across and beyond the district This project aims to work in partnership with Sustrans to secure funding from the Department of Transport for a replacement bridge – the preferred option for this business case identified in Additional Information.  A great place to do business: •Develop and raise the profile of our local cultural and wider visitor economy Rickmansworth Aquadrome is a key visitor attraction to the Three Rivers District as identified by the visitor observation study. Enhancements to the sustainable transport link across the River Colne will support the
	<ul> <li>movement of people and visitors between the Aquadrome and the wider Rickmansworth Town Centre.</li> <li>Sustainable communities:</li> <li>Physical environments that are clean green and safe are a critical factor in the sustainability of our communities.</li> <li>We will continue our ambitious work to ensure that the Rickmansworth Aquadrome has a sustainable future which balances the needs of the community with those of the natural environment.</li> <li>Maintain and, where possible, expand our leisure and cultural offer</li> </ul>

This project will enhance sustainable transport links within the district, along with improved access to the Aquadrome from the Riverside Drive entrance. It further supports the aspirations of the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Management Plan to "facilitate the design and implementation of sustainable, low carbon, infrastructure"

#### With reference to the achievement of performance indicators:

- •CP02/EP16 Satisfaction with Parks and Open Spaces investing and improving the Riverside Drive gateway to the Aquadrome and replacing the existing bridge will likely increase satisfaction with the Aquadrome as a busy and well used Local Nature Reserve.
- •LL39 To Maintain Accreditation with Green Flag Green Flag assessment considers how welcoming a place is to the local visitor and improvements to the entrance and bridge will support the scoring in this area for achieving Green Flag.
- •LL39 Number of new trees planted by TRDC Trees and Landscapes Officers consideration will be given to the opportunity for tree planting within the landscape plans to the entrance of the new bridge structure.

#### The Rickmansworth Aquadrome Management Plan 2022-27

Replacing the bridge will support the key priorities and themes within the Management Plan:

Over the next five years, the key priorities for the Aquadrome include:

- •enriching biodiversity and sustainability
- improving accessibility throughout the site
- managing the risks of flooding
- creating a site identity

This new 5 year plan is an opportunity to protect and enhance nature, alongside creating a green haven for the community so that wellbeing can be promoted.

The Aquadrome project is the practical application of the Management Plan and will look to deliver through as series of themes of:

- Habitat
- Connectivity
- Visitor Experience

#### Colne and Crane Valleys Green Infrastructure Strategy

Replacing the bridge will support the key focus on improving the green infrastructure and connections within the Colne Valley Regional Park:

The Colne and Crane Valleys Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out how developers, local authorities, and statutory bodies design planning proposals and inform their planning and mitigation obligations. It has a particular focus on improving the green infrastructure already in existence – including the Grand Union Canal – and improving connections within the Colne Valley Regional Park.

The vision in the Green Infrastructure Strategy 'is for the Colne and Crane valleys to be a valued, connected network of open spaces for nature, recreation and wellbeing by 2050.'

They state this strategy is necessary to ensure that there is greater investment in green infrastructure which will yield the following benefits:

- boosting health and well-being through active leisure and lifestyles;
- promoting recreation within a natural living environment;
- promoting active travel;
- natural water management to reduce flooding;
- · protecting precious water resources;
- improving air quality;
- providing carbon sequestration;
- enhancing biodiversity and ecological resilience;
- · fostering community cohesion;
- improving quality of life

#### Hertfordshire County Council Active Travel Strategy

Replacing the bridge will support the ambition to increase the numbers of people walking and cycling in Hertfordshire:

The Hertfordshire County Council Active Travel Strategy sets out how the County Council and its partners will identify, deliver and promote interventions to increase the numbers of people walking and cycling in Hertfordshire. Key objectives include enhancing economic growth, improving public health, improving quality of live, and reducing carbon emissions.

The Strategy includes a list of key toolkit interventions that could overcome the barrier to active travel within the County. Recommendations that this project can help deliver on includes:

- Developing a cycle network that directly links key destinations in urban areas (in conjunction with the National Cycle network being developed by Sustrans);
- Provide easily accessible information to the public on existing walking and cycling infrastructure and alternative routes. This should preferably be self service online;
- Develop and promote use of off road recreation/parkland routes;
- Encourage promotion of canal paths for Active Travel;
- Provide cycle hire facilities where they are likely to be used;

- Clear, accurate and robust route signage for walking and cycle routes (Signings with timings to access by walking/cycling maps);
- Secure and accessible public cycle parking;
- Installation of facilities for cycle storage, including showers, lockers and secure covered storage areas at employers, schools and key public destinations;

### **Section D: Financial information**

Please show in the table below the amount of CIL funding being sought and any other contributions that may have been allocated for this scheme

	Amount	Detail
Please indicate total cost of project	£1,282,096	
Please provide a detailed breakdown of the costs for the project	£1,015,723 £266,373	Build costs for steel bridge replacement and hard landscaping Contingency Budget
Please provide a detailed summary of the total CIL funding required, including phasing	£320,524	Requested from CIL if the application to the DfT is successful
How much funding does the project currently have?	£0	
Are there any revenue costs (i.e. day-today running costs, maintenance cost) associated with the project and if so how will they be funded and has that funding been secured?	Maintenance is ongoing within several Services including: Grounds Maintenance, Properties and Trees and Landscapes budgets.	

Please indicate in the table below the source of additional funding that has been secured/ is being sought.				
Source	Amount	Conditions Attached	Use by Date	Funding Confirmed
Department for Transport	£961,572	Secure 25% of total costs	June 2023 to confirm	
		externally	external funding to DfT	

Does the CIL funding help secure the release of additional funding?	Yes	х
	No	

# **Section E: Delivery Timescales**

What is the delivery timescale for the project?

Officers are working towards the following outline timetable, should the application to the DfT move forward:

- April May commission surveys
- April submit CIL application for 25% match funding.
- From 8 May 2023 submit the planning application.
- 12 June Policy and Resources Committee (consider the CIL application).
- 22 June or 13 July Planning Committee.
- June/July submit funding application to the DfT/Sustrans.
- Summer Sustrans/DfT risk meeting.
- Early 2024 outcome of funding application.
- April 2024 procurement process.
- Autumn/winter 2024 project installation.

#### **Section F: Additional Information**

Is there any additional information that may support the application?

Two documents are included as additional information:

- 1. <u>Aquadrome Bridge Outline Business Case</u>. At point 5 the options are detailed, including costs, risks, opportunities and any potential benefits.
- 2. The Bridge Feasibility study, undertaken by consultancy firm "AHR" to assess the bridge replacement: please click <a href="here">here</a> to access the Feasibility study

#### **Section G: Declaration**

When you have completed the application, please sign this declaration and submit the application form as directed

To the best of my knowledge the information I have provided on this application form is correct.

If Three Rivers District Council agrees to release funds for the specified project, these funds will be used exclusively for the purposes described. In such an event, I agree to inform the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Coordinator of any material changes to the proposals set out above. When requested, I agree to provide the Council with all necessary information required for the purposes of reporting on the progress or otherwise of the identified project. I recognise the Council's statutory rights as the designated CIL Charging Authority, which includes provisions to reclaim unspent or misappropriated funds.

decision making. The information on this form will be stored in the Council's Infrastructure Spending Board manual filling system and summarised in the Council's ICT system for the sole purpose of fund processing, analysis and accounting. Information about the project may be publicised on the Council website and in public material for publicity purposes. Personal data will not be disclosed without any prior agreement of those concerned, unless required by law. For further information on the Council's privacy policy, please see: <a href="https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/privacy-notice">https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/privacy-notice</a>
Signed: C Gomes
Organisation:Three Rivers District Council
Date: 18.04.23
All organisations involved with the application will need to sign and date the form.
Signed:
Organisation:
Date:

Privacy Notice: By signing this form, the applicant agrees to Three Rivers District Council checking all supplied information for the purposes of informing

## Section H: Officer Comments/Recommendation May 2023

Rickmansworth Aquadrome Pedestrian Bridge Replacement

Regulation 59 (1) of the CIL Regulations state that CIL can be spent on the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure/ to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing infrastructure if that is necessary to support development.

The Regulation 123 List (which was approved by Council following the independent examination of the CIL Charging Schedule) sets out the types of infrastructure that CIL will be spent on and includes open spaces, play areas, and sports and leisure facilities. Although the Regulation 123 List was superseded (in 2020) by the Infrastructure Funding Statement it still provides the Council's approach.

The application supports the Corporate Framework, achieves performance indicators, is in line with the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Management Plan 2022-27, The Colne and Crane Valleys Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the Hertfordshire County Council Active Travel Strategy.

In particular, one of the key priorities of the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Management Plan 2022-27 is to improve accessibility throughout the site.

The most up to date OSSR 2018 identifies the quality criteria for open space of which two points are:

- Access-social, e.g. appropriate minimum entrance widths
- Maintenance and cleanliness, e.g. condition of general landscape & features

and the value criteria for open space:

- Level of use (observations only), e.g., evidence of different user types (e.g. dog walkers, joggers, children) throughout day, located near school and/or community facility
- Ecological benefits, e.g., supports/promotes biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- Amenity benefits and a sense of place, e.g., attractive places that are safe and well maintained; helping to create specific neighbourhoods and landmarks

The Open Space Assessment gave a quality score of 86.40% and value score of 63.60% back in 2018 so the scores will undoubtedly be lower now due to the deterioration of the bridge. (Table 5.2 of the report refers). It was observed as being generally attractive form of provision, and perceived to be well used and provide ecological, educational and social value.

Rickmansworth Aquadrome is also an LNR with diverse habitats. It is the highest scoring site for value, featuring a variety of facilities including wooded walks, lakes, a play area, toilets, ample car parking and a café. This provides economic value as well as social and amenity benefits. Furthermore, it frequently hosts sporting activities such as public runs, fun days and watersports. It is also one of the three Green Flag Award sites in Three Rivers.

As a result of the above the Aquadrome provides excellent provision of all open space facilities and fits the criteria of many of the Councils policies and goals.

The Corporate Framework 2023-26 identifies the need for sustainable communities. To support and enable sustainable communities Three Rivers DC will:

- Improve the wellbeing of our residents by reducing Health Inequalities and bringing health services into the heart of the communities
- Maintain and, where possible expand our leisure and cultural offer

A survey of the bridge has been undetaken and the outcome concludes that, whilst currently safe to use, the bridge is in "Very Poor" condition and will require significant investment to repair or replace the bridge.

This entrance is heavily used by the public approaching from all directions around Rickmansworth. If the bridge is allowed to deteriorate further it will be unusable and will prevent essential public access resulting in a detrimental effect for all. The site is a successful and high-profile facility within the district. The bridge replacement will allow the continuation of the high standards set by Three Rivers.

#### **Recommendation:**

The total cost of the project is stated as being £1,282,096. DfT funding of £961,572. to be granted leaving the balance of £320,524. to be provided from Three Rivers DC.

The infrastructure meets the legal definition and new/improved facilities relate to the development within TRDC.

CIL monies of £320,524. can be used for the following: Rickmansworth Aquadrome Pedestrian Bridge Replacement

#### Additional Note:

Please note the cost of the project is estimated and there could be a % rise/fall depending on when the project is implemented.