

Stockport Climate Action Now

CAN Fund Update for Stepping Hill Area Committee

June 2022

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of progress of the Stockport Climate Action Now (CAN) Fund since it launched in November 2021.
- 1.2. Within the CAN strategy, the Climate Friendly Borough workstream sets out that the council will work with residents and communities across the borough to enable and grow climate action, supporting the aims of the CAN strategy. The CAN Fund forms a part of this workstream.
- 1.3. As of 10th June, there have been 38 applications to the CAN Fund. 26 of these have been approved by councillors and 24 have received funding (the remaining are being processed by council CAN and finance teams). £13,917 has been spent across the borough so far. Some highlights of the fund to date include:
 - Upgrading 3 community buildings with insulation, LED lighting and other energy-saving devices
 - Supporting 2 groups to go completely petrol-free in their activities
 - Funding 14 school projects, including 9 different fruit and vegetable growing schemes
 - Kick-starting 3 awareness-raising and behaviour changing campaigns within local communities
 - Planting over 150 trees across Stockport on both public and private land
- 1.4. This report provides an overview of how the funding scheme works (see section 2), eligibility for funding (section 3), details of how the fund has been allocated and where (section 4) and how Members can help promote the take-up of the CAN Fund (section 5). Some examples of projects supported by the CAN Fund can be found in Appendix A.

2. Background

- 2.1. In March 2019, the council declared a climate emergency, and Full Council agreed that Stockport should become carbon neutral by 2038, therefore committing to reduce the amount of warming greenhouse gases (GHG) such as carbon dioxide that are released into the atmosphere.
- 2.2. The Stockport CAN strategy was developed to underpin this agreement, which was approved by full council in October 2020. The strategy sets out our aims to ensure that Stockport achieves carbon neutrality by 2038, in order to support global efforts to prevent global warming above 1.5°C.

- 2.3. The CAN strategy includes a wide-reaching programme of engagement in which the council works with residents across the borough to take climate action. Through education, advice, and engagement, this workstream aims to encourage businesses and communities to work differently and to inspire individual behaviour change in residents.

Funding brief

- 2.4. The Stockport CAN Fund was launched at the Stockport CAN Summit on the 9th November 2021.
- 2.5. The aim of the CAN Fund is to encourage communities, schools and residents across Stockport to engage with the CAN strategy. The funding supports projects that directly reduce or mitigate local carbon emissions and the biodiversity crisis and will enable residents to work together to impact carbon emissions in their community.
- 2.6. The fund aims to reach new groups who do not usually apply for funding by highlighting the co-benefits of climate action, such as health and wellbeing, financial savings and community development.
- 2.7. There is £9,000 available per ward for groups applying to the fund. The funding scheme will remain open until 31st December 2022 or when the funding is spent in that ward, whichever is first.
- 2.8. Any group of residents can apply for up to £500 to support projects. To widen participation and make the fund more accessible, applicants do not need to be part of a constituted group to apply for up to £500. This opens up the fund to informal groups. However, applicants must demonstrate that they are part of a group (i.e. a minimum of two residents from two households).
- 2.9. In April 2022, a second “upper” tier to the CAN Fund was announced for projects that require funding over £500. Applicants to this upper tier must first get in touch with the CAN team to discuss their project, and projects are considered on a ward-by-ward basis. Only constituted groups with an organisation bank account can apply for the upper tier. Projects supported by the upper tier are required to be high-impact in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Overview of funding process

- 2.10. Applicants apply to the fund via an online form and are asked to explain how their idea will impact on GHG emissions. The application form can be found in Appendix C.
- 2.11. The applications are assessed by the CAN team administrators and given a score out of 25 based on impact on GHG emissions, biodiversity enhancement and reach (how many people are impacted). For more details on how applications are scored, please refer to Appendix B, the CAN Fund Guidance for Members.
- 2.12. Applications are then sent via email to Councillors of the ward(s) in which the project will take place. Councillors are asked to decide whether the application is successful, unsuccessful, or needs review at Area Committee, and to relay that decision by email to the CAN team.
- 2.13. Once a decision has been made, the CAN team administrators then relay the decision to the applicant. Feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants. Successful applicants are asked to provide financial details and must agree to a Terms Of Use document in order for the grant to be paid.
- 2.14. Applicants are asked to keep all receipts from project spend. This is so that the CAN team can do spot-checks to ensure all money is being spent as described in the applications and as agreed by councillors.

3. Criteria

- 3.1. The CAN Fund aims to support actions that will reduce or mitigate the causes of climate change and/or to enhance biodiversity in Stockport. It is hoped that funding for actions such as those listed above will support the CAN workstream 'Climate Friendly Borough'; to influence residents of Stockport to join in the fight against climate change and biodiversity destruction.

Eligible Projects

- 3.2. There are lots of actions that individuals and groups can take to impact GHG emissions and enhance biodiversity, and so potentially there are a wide-range of activities that could be eligible for the fund.
- 3.3. Four areas of action that can have the biggest impact on GHG emissions are:
- Energy use – energy used in homes (heating and electricity) is the largest contributor of GHG emissions in Stockport at 40% (Anthesis study 2017). Proposals to the CAN Fund which reduce energy use might include draft-proofing, energy-saving devices and insulation for a school, community centre or place of worship, or an actions-focussed campaign such as a group pledging to reduce energy use or source energy from renewable sources.
 - Transport – 30% of GHG emissions in Stockport stem from transport (Anthesis study 2017) so proposals to tackle this area might include safety equipment to enable walking and cycling (active travel), bike repair in a community or encouraging public / collective transport.
 - Food – reducing food waste, growing and using local, seasonal food and eating less meat and dairy can all decrease the amount of GHG emissions produced by what we eat. Proposals connected to food might include equipment for community-based fruit and vegetable growing such as raised beds and peat-free compost. Proposals that reduce food waste might include community cooking workshops or creating a waste-reducing digital recipe book.
 - Goods and services – on average, 90% of an item's carbon footprint is emitted before it is bought. Proposals in this area might enable repairing and reusing items such as furniture, clothes and electronics, which can reduce GHG emissions by reducing the need to produce new products. Proposals in this area might include purchasing equipment for repair cafes, DIY toolkits, and running repair workshops and education sessions.
- 3.4. Sharing knowledge and sharing skills with friends, family and the wider community can create a ripple effect and will inspire others to take climate action. So, funding projects which help raise awareness about any of the actions above or educational projects are very much eligible for CAN funding.
- 3.5. There are many ways that the CAN Fund could be accessed so the above examples are not an exhaustive list of what may be eligible. Planting projects may be eligible for the Fund but not all planting projects have a high impact on greenhouse gas emissions (see below for restrictions).

- 3.6. The fund is also open to projects that will increase the biodiversity of an area in Stockport. Whilst it is important to distinguish that loss of biodiversity is a consequence of climate change, rather than a cause of it, projects such as wildflower planting and creating habitats for animals are eligible for funding. However, these projects will be low-scoring as they do not have a significant impact on reducing GHG emissions.
- 3.7. It is encouraged for applicants of the CAN Fund to contact the CAN team prior to applying to receive advice so the CAN team can work with potential applicants and advise them what would make a strong application, or how an application might be improved. The contact email is stockportcanfund@stockport.gov.uk

Ineligible Projects

- 3.8. There are some activities that are not eligible for the fund. These include:
- 3.9. **Litter picking and recycling:** Litter picking and recycling waste have a limited impact on GHG emissions. Projects that focus on buying fewer new things and producing less waste (such as repair cafes or tabletop sales) are eligible and have a higher impact on emissions.
- 3.10. **Planting for beautification:** Planting annual or biennial plants and flowers in flower beds and similar locations does not mitigate against GHG emissions. This is because plants are often taken out to be replaced every few months or years, which means both the soil and the plants are being disrupted and can't sequester carbon from the atmosphere. Planting for restoration of natural habitats, such as wildflower meadows, is a better option as this allows the plants and soils to develop over a longer period of time. Planting trees is a higher-impact option as one mature tree will absorb 21kg of carbon dioxide every year.
- 3.11. **Projects on public or private land that do not have a land use agreement:** The council are unable to grant permission for activities on land that the council does not own or control unless evidence of permission is supplied. The CAN team require all projects which use land to show proof of land use permission. In the case of activities on public land, such as parks, the CAN team can arrange permission from the council's parks team where relevant and necessary, but it is preferable that an applicant has an agreement in place with the council already before applying to the CAN Fund.
- 3.12. **Projects that include religious or political content:** The council is unable to fund projects that include any religious content or political content.
- 3.13. **Projects submitted by Councillors:** Whilst Members are encouraged to support groups in their area to apply to the CAN Fund, Members themselves cannot apply directly for funding as this would create a conflict of interest at the decision-making stage.
- 3.14. **Applications to the CAN Fund with an ineligible component that constitutes less than half of the project spend will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the CAN team.** For example, if a group asks for £350 to start a community gardening project, which consists of £300 for equipment to start a fruit and vegetable garden and £50 on litter picking equipment to clear the garden area before planting, this will be allowed as the ineligible part (litter picking) is less than half of the project spend.

Eligible Groups

- 3.15. The CAN Fund aims to encourage groups that do not usually apply for funding or are new to climate action. With this in mind, the fund has been designed to be as accessible as possible whilst balancing security checks that need to be carried out when distributing public money.

- 3.16. Applicants must be Stockport residents to apply for the fund, and must be part of a group, which means two or more residents from different households. The groups can be informal or constituted. Eligible groups include (but are not limited to):
- Groups of residents who live on the same street or nearby to each other
 - Shared interest groups, such as sports clubs, walking groups or a group of parents
 - Community and voluntary groups and not-for-profit organisations
 - Faith groups and religious organisations
 - Schools and Colleges
- 3.17. Applications for funding up to £500 do not have to be made by a constituted group and funds can be paid into personal bank accounts. Applications to the upper tier (over £500), must be made by a constituted group and must have an organisation bank account. The CAN team will make verification calls to all upper tier applicants to verify applicants' identities.

Ineligible Groups

- 3.18. The funding cannot be used for private benefit. This means groups not eligible for the funding include:
- Individuals
 - Single households
 - Businesses

4. Update of CAN Fund to date

- 4.1. This section of the report provides an overview of projects funded by the CAN Fund to date. All details accurate as of 10th June 2022.

Group type

- 4.2. Of the 38 applications, 16 have been from a community group or organisation, 14 from a school, 6 from a group of residents, and 2 from charities.

Project type

- 4.3. The table below summarises applications by type of project.

Project type	Number of applications	Applications
Fruit and veg growing / sustainable cooking	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Bridge – a sustainable community cooking scheme • St Philips RC Primary School – equipment for fruit and veg growing • St Anne's Voluntary RC Academy – equipment for fruit and veg growing • Chatty Wednesdays – equipment for fruit and veg growing • Hursthead Junior School – equipment for fruit and veg growing • Stockport School – equipment for fruit and veg growing and litter picking • Ladybrook Primary School – equipment for fruit and veg growing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greave Primary School – equipment for fruit and veg growing and gardening • Reddish Vale Nursery School – equipment for fruit and veg growing • St Christopher’s Catholic School – equipment for fruit and veg growing and gardening • Friends of Hesketh Park and Mellor Green – planters for fruit and veg growing • St Mary’s Catholic Voluntary Academy – equipment for fruit and veg growing
Tree planting / enhancing biodiversity	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Hesketh Park and Mellor Green – tree planting • Bramhall in Bloom – planting displays for biodiversity alongside an education project • Woodley and Bredbury Community Garden – equipment for a community garden and tree planting • Dial Park Primary School – tree planting and litter picking • Chester’s Croft Residents Association – tree planting and gardening equipment • Bredbury St Marks CE Primary School – tree planting and gardening equipment • Woodley Cricket Club – bat, bird and bee boxes • Love Heaton Norris – community garden development
Awareness raising and education	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pebble Enterprises / Age UK Stockport – “Your Change Matters” eco awareness starter pack • Sustainable Living in the Heatons – a carbon reduction campaign in the local area • Sustainable Living Romiley – sustainable food campaign and competition • Kingsway School – purchasing microbots for sustainability lessons
Energy reduction	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Heatons Sports Club – replacing tennis court lighting with LED lighting • 2nd Heald Green Scout Group – purchasing ceiling insulation and energy efficient heating • Friends of Marple Memorial Park – replacing petrol-driven equipment with battery powered tools • Unity Café – purchasing energy-saving devices
Reducing waste	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockport Together – table-top sales and veg growing activities for children
Sustainable travel	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marple Sports Club – materials for a sustainable travel club and competition
Other	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodley Primary School – natural play area for Forest School Lessons and tree planting
Ineligible / retracted application	7	These will not be listed to ensure unsuccessful applicants remain anonymous.

Wards

- 4.4. In total, £13,917 has been awarded. The distribution of applications for wards in the Stepping Hill Area Committee is in the table below.
- 4.5. Please note that any leftover monies at the end of the scheme will be absorbed back into the CAN budget.

Ward	Applications (total) <i>Total number of applications to the CAN Fund received</i>	Applications being processed <i>Number of applications that are being processed</i>	Successful applications <i>Number of applications that have been approved by councillors</i>	Funding remaining <i>Amount of funding remaining per ward (max. £9,000)</i>
Area Committee: Stepping Hill				
Hazel Grove	1	0	1	£8,500
Offerton	2	0	2	£8,000
Stepping Hill	1	0	1	£8,600

Promotion

- 4.6. Members are encouraged to promote the CAN Fund to community groups, residents, schools and other appropriate organisations within their wards.
- 4.7. The CAN team have also made promotion of the CAN Fund a priority and have so far promoted the fund in the following ways:
- Report and presentation at area committees (September 2021 and June 2022)
 - Internal briefings and communications including Members' E-Brief, Chief Executive's briefing to all staff, council and partnership boards and various senior team meetings
 - Targeted adverts on social media – specifically targeting wards with no applications to date
 - Featured in the Review Extra and the Sector 3 newsletter (twice)
 - CAN team have attended network meetings such as the VCFSE Forum (twice), Youth Council, Active Communities Board, Social Value Steering Group and the Stockport Family Partnership Board.
 - Direct targeting of community groups, networks and organisations
 - Direct contact with every school and college in Stockport alongside Schools Climate Assembly promotional materials
- 4.8. Any ideas or further suggestions for promotion of the CAN Fund would be welcome.

5. Role of Members

5.1. There are two ways Members can help with the CAN Fund:

Role of Members in funding process

- 5.2. Applications are processed by CAN team administrators and a score based on the impact on GHG emissions and the amount of people impacted is attributed.
- 5.3. The CAN team send a copy of the application via email to Members from the ward in which the application will take place.
- 5.4. Members read through the application and decide as a group whether to approve funding for the project or reject funding for the project. If members are undecided or require further input from Area Committee, Members must notify the CAN team who will add the application to the agenda of the next Area Committee meeting.
- 5.5. If a ward member has a conflict of interest with an application, they are expected to notify the CAN team upon receiving the application and recuse themselves from the decision. The remaining two councillors will then come to a decision.

Role of Members in promotion of CAN Fund

- 5.6. Members are asked to promote the CAN Fund to community groups, residents, schools and other appropriate organisations within their wards. If Members are uncertain about whether a group or a project is eligible for the CAN Fund, groups can be directed to the CAN Fund email address (stockportCANfund@stockport.gov.uk) for more advice.
- 5.7. A poster can be found in Appendix D which can be used by Members to promote the Fund via email or shared via social media.
- 5.8. The webpage with more information for applicants is: www.stockport.gov.uk/CANfund

Contact: stockportCAN@stockport.gov.uk

Supporting documents:

Appendix A – Examples of Funded Projects

Appendix B – Stockport CAN Funding Guidance for Members

Appendix C – Application Form

Appendix D – CAN Fund Poster