



Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF)



Contents

Welcome 04

**What is the Customer and
Community Improvement Fund?** 06

Who can apply? 08

What makes a successful bid? 12

Application process 14

What happens next? 16

Scoring the bids 18

Network map 20



We are delighted to announce the launch of the first Southeastern Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF). An exciting new initiative aimed at supporting projects that enhance and make our local rail services more sustainable, promote development and well-being through equal opportunities, and help reduce economic and social inequality.

At Southeastern, we are committed to building a better, more reliable and sustainable railway and a thriving future for our region. Our Social Value commitment is to work together to secure a thriving future for our railway and the communities we serve. As part of this commitment, we became UK's first rail operator to publish Social Mobility Action Plan, clearly setting out our work to date as well as the future opportunities to do more.

This handbook outlines what the CCIF is, the type of projects that we are aiming to support, plus the ones we cannot support, the application process and next steps.



What is the Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF)?

Southeastern's Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF) is our latest initiative dedicated to supporting projects that bring about local rail improvement, foster social mobility, and deliver social value to the communities we serve.

Our 2024 CCIF scheme is designed to fund projects that can be completed by 31 March 2025, and to develop a list of proposals to be considered for funding in the 2025/26 financial year that must be delivered by 31 March 2026.

A successful bid should clearly demonstrate how the project will achieve at least one of the following goals:

- Foster growth and development by enhancing local skills and employment opportunities.
- Build healthier, safer and more resilient communities.
- Improve and make our local rail services more sustainable.
- Achieve equality through diversity and inclusion.
- Support Railway 200 – a yearlong programme of events celebrating 200 years of railway history throughout 2025.

Additionally, bids should both demonstrate strong community involvement and support and explain how the proposed benefits will continue after the project ends.

Social Value is the value created by an organisation through its financial and non-financial day-to-day activities in terms of the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital created and the environment.

Social Mobility promotes fairness and social progress of people through equal opportunities, regardless of the socio-economic background of their parents, their gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, birthplace, or other circumstances beyond their control (OECD, 2024).



Who can apply?

We welcome applications from Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs), councils, societies, rail user groups, registered charities, schools, colleges and universities, voluntary organisations, business partnerships, community interest companies and community groups, and other types of not-for-profit organisations.

We are looking for initiatives that benefit communities served by one or more of our stations. Please see our route map on page 20.

Funding Areas

Proposed projects must align with one or more of the following categories:

1. Local skills and employment

Projects that promote growth and development opportunities and ensure that everyone has access to opportunities to develop new skills and gain meaningful employment.

Ideas for possible projects: promoting the rail industry as a positive career choice, vocational skills training for young people, local next generation talent development, supporting people experiencing disadvantage in the job market, etc.

2. Healthier, safer and more resilience local communities

Programmes building stronger and deeper connections with the local community. Increasing awareness of rail safety, promoting well-being and mental health, reducing anti-social behaviour, fostering relationships and encouraging active collaboration within communities.

Ideas for possible projects: Eco Cycle Hub to encourage exercise and healthier living, cookery lessons to foster healthier nutrition, improving wellbeing of elderly people, youth outreach programmes to target young people at risk of antisocial behaviour or suicide around train stations, etc.

3. Sustainable railway

Ensuring the places where people live, and work are cleaner and greener, and helping secure the long-term future of our planet. Promoting rail travel and walking and cycling links to/ from stations, improving information/ wayfinding to make using rail easier for customers, and ways to encourage carbon reduction

Ideas for possible projects: Information Points to promote public transport use, creating networks of ecosystems around trains stations to improve air quality, provide a new habitat for wildlife, enhance biodiversity, programmes for habitat restoration and for promoting a local culture of nature connection, cycle hubs, etc.

4. Inclusion and diversity

Programmes to promote groups that are under-represented in the southeast or wider rail industry workforce. Improving the rail experience of people with disabilities and other specific needs. This includes both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.

Ideas for possible projects: forum theatre for young adults with disabilities, self-esteem course for vulnerable women who would like to go back to work or education but suffer from low confidence and self-esteem, supporting vulnerable women leaving prison, family outings for disabled children, etc.

5. Railway 200

In 2025, Railway 200 celebrates the 200th anniversary of the modern railway. To support this cross-industry initiative, we are including a special category for projects that help us tell the story of rail's remarkable past, its role today, and inspire its exciting and sustainable future. To find out more information about this initiative, please visit the Railway 200 website.



Ideas for possible projects: organising a local Railway 200 inspired art exhibition, community story telling projects to unearth and creatively share stories about the railway, day trips to explore 200 years of rail history, etc.



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What makes a successful bid?

To be eligible, projects must:

- **Location:** Benefit communities served by one or more of our stations. Please see our route map on page 20.
- **Benefit:** Deliver a tangible benefit to customers or the community and align with one or more of the categories outlined previously. Projects addressing multiple categories will be viewed favourably.
- **Timeline:** Be realistically deliverable and completed by 31 March 2025. When preparing your delivery plan, ensure you include adequate time for project initiation, including start-up agreements and, where relevant, have obtained any necessary permits and permissions.

For projects proposed for the 2025/2026 financial year, please work to a 12-month delivery window. All work would need to be completed no later than *31 March 2026*.

The CCIF will not fund projects that:

- Provide a commercial return to Southeastern or the bidding organisation.
- Create direct revenue for Southeastern or develop something that Southeastern is expected to deliver under its service agreement contract with the Department for Transport.
- For the 2024 scheme, require ongoing funding beyond 31 March 2025 and for the 2025 scheme require ongoing funding beyond 31 March 2026, unless committed from elsewhere
- Support organisational overheads, including ongoing salary costs not directly related to project delivery
- Develop feasibility studies for new services, new railway lines/routes or new stations
- Sponsor events or award evenings

Funding amount:

You can apply for a grant between £1,000 and £50,000. The total funding available for FY2024/25 is £125,000. Match funding isn't a requirement but will be looked at favourably for schemes with a higher overall value



Application process

Applications open 15 July 2024 and will close at 23.59 on 31 August 2024. Any applications prior to and after the deadline are not accepted.

1. Eligibility Check:

- Ensure your project aligns with one or more of our funding areas.
- Review what can and cannot be funded.

2. Prepare Your Proposal:

- Project description – 1500 characters (including spaces)
- Project scope – 3000 characters (including spaces)
- Project objectives, activities, deliverables/KPIs, and risks
- Main beneficiaries
- Budget outline. Breakdown of the total cost of the project, even if the total amount of the project is not covered by this fund
- Project timeline. Breakdown month by month of the key activities and timescales over the timeframe of the project

3. Submit Your Application:

- Fill out and submit the online application form.

4. Review and Decision:

- Applications are reviewed by our Assessment Committee.
- These will be shared with the Department for Transport, for final approval.
- Bidders will then be advised of the outcome of their application.



What happens next?



Applications will be reviewed and shortlisted by an assessment committee from Southeastern. These will then be shared with the Department for Transport to confirm final project selections.

Bidders will then be advised whether they have been successful.



10

Scoring for bids

We will use the following criteria to evaluate funding bids:

- **Alignment with CCIF categories** – The project should bring improvements and benefits for one (or more) of the defined categories
- **Addressing social value** – Bids should identify who in the community will benefit and how their project will deliver social value
- **Level of community engagement/support** – Bids should identify how well supported the project is from members of the community and its beneficiaries
- **Accurate costings** – Bids should have itemised de-livery costs. These can be estimates but should be as accurate as possible
- **Deliverability** – Bids should have clear objectives and a plan of action outlining how the objectives will be met and how the project will be delivered within the funding period
- **Legacy** – Bids should identify, where possible, any lasting benefits to the community or individuals in-volved

Timelines for your application

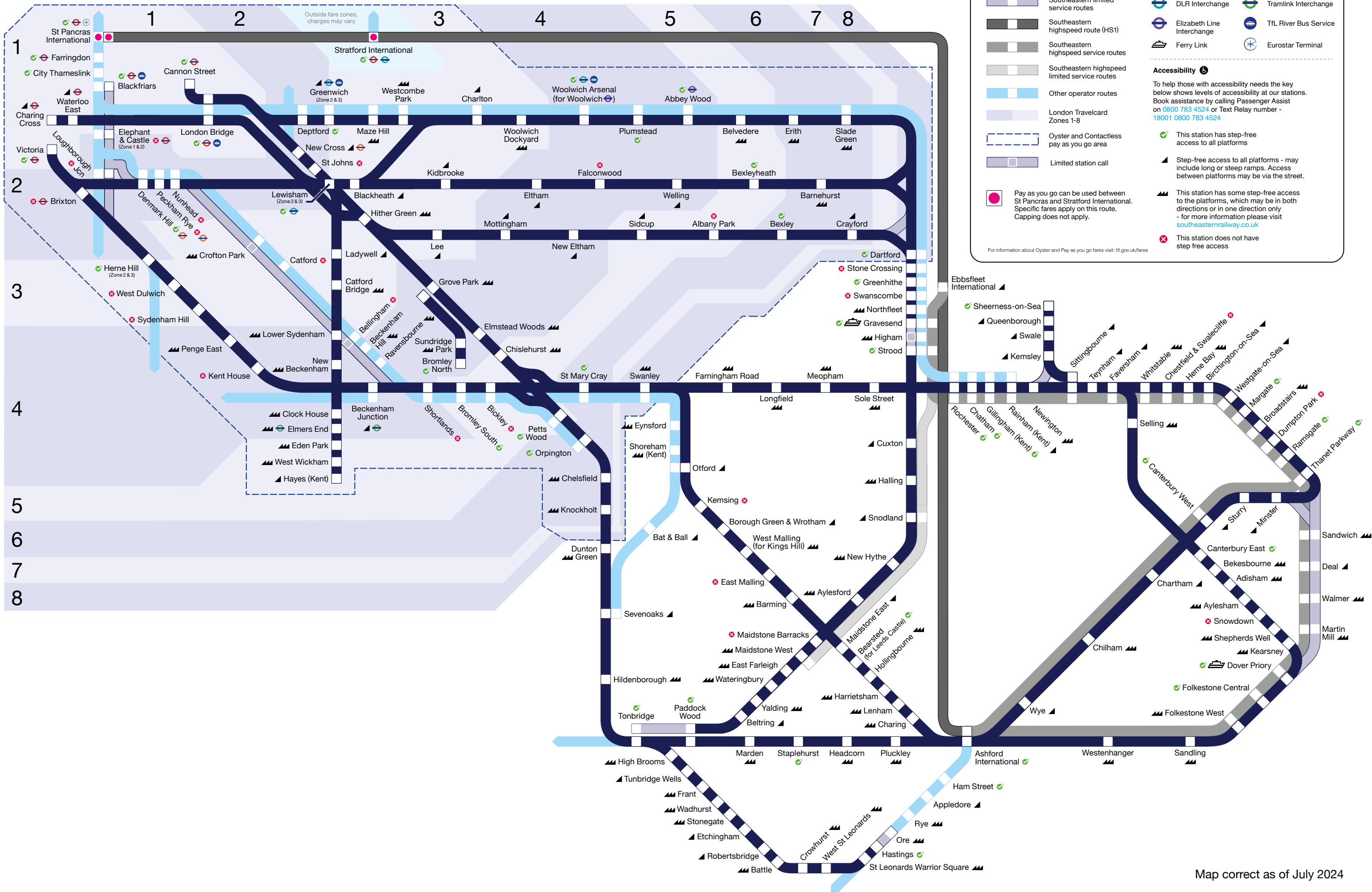
- Applications open: 15 July 2024
- Applications close: 31 August 2024 at 23.59 BST
- Bids reviewed: September 2024
- Recommended schemes submitted to DfT for ap-proval: September - October
- Successful bids informed: October
- Funding spent and fully committed: 31 March 2025

Need help?

We look forward to receiving your innovative proposals and working together to create a lasting positive impact on our communities.

Our team is ready to assist with any queries you may have throughout the application process. If you have any questions, you can contact laura.rondon@southeasternrailway.co.uk

Southeastern network map





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