Original October 2017; Updated July 2020 to focus on two criteria; Draft June 2026 limiting maximum grant to £10K

Stronger Communities Fund – Funding Policy

What we fund

Proposals must meet one or both of the funding criteria of the Stronger Communities Fund:

- **Developing stronger neighbourhoods and communities**

Proposals should actively support local community based projects within the City of London and its Housing estates across London. The projects you put forward should enable more people to become involved in their communities and encourage a broader understanding of the diverse needs of these communities. Projects may either promote a higher take up of existing projects or services or encourage new and innovative ones.

- **Promoting community health and wellbeing**

Proposals should contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities and should be able to demonstrate positive outcomes that address the Health and Wellbeing priorities set out in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/health-and-wellbeing/about-the-public-health-team).

Where we fund

Grants issued through the Stronger Communities Fund will be awarded to projects or services that are being delivered for the benefit of communities or beneficiaries:

i. Within the City of London (the Square Mile)

And / Or

ii. On City of London Corporation managed housing estates across London. A current list is available at: https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/housing-and-homelessness/housing-estates

Value of Bids

Main grants: The main grants scheme is available for requests over £3,000 to a maximum of £10,000.

~~The minimum grant award permitted will be £500, and the maximum £10,000 for projects that take place over a 12-month period. Grants of up to £20,000 will be considered in exceptional circumstances if the project takes place over a 2-year period. Exceptional grants will be those that demonstrate how greater funding over a longer period will make a demonstrable difference to the community they work with.~~

Small Grants: A small grant scheme is also available for grants of £500 to £3,000. The minimum amount that can be applied for is £500.

Who can apply

Applications are welcomed from:

- UK Registered charities
- Registered Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisations
- Charitable companies (incorporated as a not-for-profit)
- Exempt or excepted charities
- Registered charitable industrial and provident societies (IPS) or charitable community benefit society (Bencom)
- Constituted voluntary organisation and resident associations

The Stronger Communities Fund welcomes applications from both established organisations and new organisations of initiatives.

Proposals that support individuals can be accepted. However, individuals wanting to make an application, must apply for funding through a City based constituted group or organisation, residents association or a charity who will be able to support and countersign the application and will be accountable for the grant.

Application Deadline

Applications to the Stronger Communities Fund are submitted online and are accepted on a continuous basis. Funding decisions are made through officer delegation. For Main Grants, decisions should normally be made within a maximum of 12 weeks from the receipt of a valid application. For Small Grants, decisions should normally be made within a maximum of 8 weeks from the receipt of a valid application.

Application Advice

The Central Funding and Charity Management Team provides pre-application advice and support to all applicants. Requests for advice should be emailed to grants@cityoflondon.gov.uk However, the Central Funding and Charity Management Team cannot provide assistance with project management or delivery of schemes funded through the Stronger Communities Fund. The Central Funding and Charity Management Team can also provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Supporting Documents

The following supporting documents are required in relation to all applications:

- A copy of the organisation's constitution (or another governing document).
- If the applicant is a newly constituted organisation (established in the last 18 months) they should submit management accounts and a financial forecast for the first 12 months of operation.
- For applications for a Small Grant, a budget for the current year.
- For applications for a Main Grant, a budget breakdown identifying the full project costs, other income and grant requested from the Stronger Communities Fund.
- If the organisation works with children or vulnerable adults, a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy.

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants can only hold one Stronger Communities Fund grant at any one time.
- Applicant organisations should have a clear set of governing rules and governing document appropriate to their legal status.
- Applicant organisations must have a minimum of three unrelated members on their governing body who do not live at the same address.
- Newly constituted organisation (established in the last 18 months) must submit management accounts and a financial forecast for the first 12 months of operation.
- Applicants should have robust financial procedures in place to ensure that funds are used appropriately. The applicant must have an ordinary business bank account and all cheques from the bank account must be signed by at least two individual representatives of the organisation who are not related to one another and who do not live at the same address.
- Applications will not be accepted from political parties or organisations involved in political lobbying.

- Applications will not be accepted from City Corporation teams or divisions.
- Applicant organisations should have a safeguarding policy that ensures the organisation provides a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with it, including beneficiaries, staff and volunteers. Applicants seeking funding for activities with or for young people and vulnerable adults must have a robust safeguarding policy in place which outlines procedures, training, incident reporting and safeguarding risks.
- Applications should not include expenditure for any spending commitments made before the date any Stronger Communities Fund grant is awarded.
- Applicants should not apply to the Stronger Communities Fund for any part of a project that is already funded.
- Applications that include a request for funding towards a post where the post holder will work more than 17.5 hours per week must submit a job description to outline the key roles and responsibilities of the post, the hours and the pay rate/salary.
- We are a Living Wage Friendly Funder. Any post paid for in full or part by a Stronger Communities Fund grant must be paid the London Living Wage as a minimum.
- Applicants who withdraw their application during the assessment process or whose application is rejected may reapply to the Stronger Communities Fund at any time.
- New applicants must be endorsed by a referee who knows the work of the organisation but is independent of it. This could be a local councillor, another funder or an officer of the applicant's local Council for Voluntary Services, Volunteer Bureau, local authority or umbrella body. It should not be a member of the applicant's Committee, someone who uses the applicant's services or a member of the applicant's family.

What do we not fund

The following are ineligible for funding through the Stronger Communities Fund:

- activities that have already taken place or start before we confirm our grant
- activities or any part of a project that is already funded
- any costs the applicant incurs when putting together their application
- fundraising activities for the applicant organisation or others
- items that are purchased on behalf of another organisation
- loans or interest payments
- projects that actively promote religious or political activities
- purchase of alcohol

Assessment

Once we have received an online application and supporting documents the application will be allocated to a Funding Manager who will lead the review of the proposal. As part of this assessment process, the Funding Manager will undertake a number of due diligence checks in relation to the organisation's governance, history, safeguarding and finance. As part of the assessment process the Funding Manager will arrange an assessment discussion with the applicant to talk in more detail about any questions that may have arisen and to find out more details about the project.

Receipt of an application will be acknowledged within 10 working days of it being received. If an application is not complete it will be returned and the applicant will have a further 10 working days to send in the missing information.

Awards Process

Proposals will be reviewed and approved by Officers from the City Corporation under delegated authority, with decisions being reported to the Communities & Children's Services Committee.

If an application is successful, an initial offer letter detailing the level of grant awarded will be issued. This may contain special conditions relating to the grant award or pre-agreement grant conditions.

Grant acceptance terms and conditions will also be issued which should be signed and returned within 20 working days.

Grantees cannot start their project or incur any grant related expenditure until the City of London Corporation has received, checked and approved all the information that we have requested.

Where a grant has been awarded, grantees have up to one year from the date of the grant offer letter in which to begin to draw down funds. The grant offer may be revoked where the grant is not drawn down as outlined above unless an alternative timescale has been agreed in writing. The City of London Corporation will monitor delivery of projects, including taking action to ensure that projects are delivered on time, or seek to recover funds if projects do not proceed within agreed parameters.

Governance Process

Due to the limited budget available and the number of applications for funding received, the City of London Corporation unfortunately cannot provide funding to every applicant that applies for a grant. Grants are therefore issued on a discretionary basis, there is no appeal process and the decision of the City of London Corporation is final.

Continuation Funding

Grantees may reapply for funding to deliver a continuation of the same project. However, organisations cannot hold more than one grant at any one time. Current grant holders will need to have satisfactorily met all the City of London Corporation's grant monitoring requirements before re-applying.

Complaints Process

Any applicant wishing to complain or express dissatisfaction about the conduct, standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Central Funding and Charity Management Team during the assessment of their application should follow the City of London's simple three-stage procedure outlined on the Corporation's website at: Feedback - City of London. At Stage 1 complainants should contact grants@cityoflondon.gov.uk upon which a review of their complaint will be undertaken by the Head of Central Funding and Charity Management Team. A full response should be provided within ten working days. At Stage 2 a complaint review will be undertaken by the Chief Officer of the Department or a nominated Senior Officer (Deputy Town Clerk). A full response should be provided within ten working days or the complainant will be advised of any delay. At Stage 3 complainants should contact complaints@cityoflondon.gov.uk upon which a complaint review will be undertaken by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive or a Senior Officer acting on his/her behalf. A full response should be provided within ten working days or the complainant will be advised of any delay.