

## **BRIEFING ON THE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND**

**FROM:** City Development – Funding and Projects

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### **Overview**

Round 3 of the Community Ownership Fund (COF) will open for applications on 31 May and will close on 12 July. The main goals of COF are:

- To support community groups to take ownership of assets which are at risk of being lost to the community.
- To support community groups where the asset is already in community ownership but needs essential renovations to be sustainable for the long-term benefit of the community.

Assets are venues and meeting spaces used by the local community, such as community centres, cinemas and theatres, galleries, museums, music venues, parks, post office buildings, pubs, shops, and sporting and leisure facilities. Some of the ways an asset might be lost include that it; might be closed, might be sold, is being neglected, is at risk of damage or collapse, is not being operated in a sustainable way.

Projects which fulfil one or a combination of the following aims may be funded:

- Acquire a physical community asset at risk, such as land and buildings which deliver a benefit to local people.
- Renovate, repair or refurbish the asset, only where it is a community asset at risk of closure and where this is critical to saving the asset and making it sustainable for long-term community use.
- Set up a new community business or buy an existing business in order to save an asset of importance to the community.
- The purchase of associated stock, collections or intellectual property, where it is associated with buying a physical asset or buying a business to save an asset.
- Move a community asset to a new, more appropriate location within the same community. This might be because a different location offers better value to continue the asset, or because the venue itself is an asset of community value.

Please note that within Dundee's boundaries, the asset does not need to be unique or one of its kind. For example, a community group can apply for funding to take ownership or to renovate a sports club or community centre if there is a risk the asset may be lost or is under threat.

### **Changes to Round 3**

Since COF was launched in 2021, the UK Government has made significant, positive changes following consultation with stakeholders. Some of these main changes are:

- Bringing down the requirement for match funding from 50% to 20%, and further reducing the requirement for projects where they are eligible for in-depth support and have been assessed as having the highest need to 10%.
- Extending the funding cap for all asset types from £250,000 to £1 million, in exceptional cases.

- Allowing parish councils (and their equivalent town and community councils) to apply in the same way that community groups do now.
- Allowing energy inefficiency that threatens long-term sustainable operations as a risk of loss.
- COF now has a dedicated [Development Support provider](#), who will guide applicants through the application process. In Scotland this is DTA Scotland.

### **Eligible organisations**

This fund is for voluntary and community organisations. Common legal structures of organisations that can apply include Scottish charitable incorporated organisations (SCIO); Community Councils; Co-operatives including Community Benefit Societies; Community Interest Companies (CiC); or Not-for-profit companies limited by guarantee. Unincorporated organisations can apply at the EOI stage, but they must be an eligible organisation before applying for the full application stage.

Local authorities are not eligible to apply to COF. However, councils are encouraged to play an active role in supporting their local community groups to apply. Evidence of support from local authorities may help to support an application.

### **How to apply**

Applicants can submit an EOI via [this link](#). There are 34 basic questions and it should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete the form. The UK Government will review the EOI and will reply within three weeks to notify the applicant of the outcome.

The deadline for submitting an application to this bidding window is 12 July 2023. There will be four bidding windows per year, so if interested groups are not ready to apply by July, frequent opportunities will be available until the closure of COF in March 2025.

### **More information**

- Community Ownership Fund [prospectus](#)
- COF mailbox: [COF@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:COF@levellingup.gov.uk)
- [COF Development Support provider](#)

DCC's Major Projects and Funding team can be contacted for further information, advice and application support at [externalfunding@dundee.gov.uk](mailto:externalfunding@dundee.gov.uk)

## Annex – the Community Ownership Fund in Scotland

### COF projects in Scotland

To date, the Community Ownership Fund has awarded £3.1m to 15 projects in Scotland.

Project	Local Authority	Grant (£)
Dornie Community Hub	Highland	280,000
Forres Town Hall - An Enterprising Community Venue	Moray	300,000
Inveraray Pier	Argyll & Bute	44,332
Re-Development of New Farm Loch Community Centre	East Ayrshire	200,000
The Aberfeldy Sports Club	Perth & Kinross	300,000
Falkirk Rugby Football and Sports Club	Falkirk	115,000
Heart of Newhaven Community	Edinburgh	300,000
Langside Sports Club	Glasgow	100,000
North Arran Community Benefit Society – Lochranza Hotel	North Ayrshire	300,000
Vogrie Hall Refurbishment	Midlothian	127,251
Callander Visitor Information Centre	Stirling	124,843
New Galloway Town Hall	Dumfries and Galloway	175,000
Kinloch Rannoch Hub	Perth and Kinross	250,000
The Old Forge community owned pub	Highland	219,096
Whithorn ReBuild Renewing the Old Town Hall	Dumfries and Galloway	300,000