

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

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

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### **Overview**

The Community Ownership Fund (COF) re-opened for applications on 15 February and will close on 14 April. The fund helps communities take ownership of local assets at risk of closure and is only open to bids from voluntary and community organisations.

Applicants first need to submit an EOI form and have this approved before being sent a link to the full application form. The EOI form will test whether a project is likely to be eligible through a pass/fail assessment based on the eligibility requirements. Notification on progressing to the full application stage will be provided within three weeks.

To date, the Community Ownership Fund has awarded £16.74m to 70 projects across the UK, with £11.8m allocated across England, £2.0m allocated to Scotland, £1.6m to Wales and £1.3m to Northern Ireland.

### **Objectives and aims**

The four objectives of COF are:

- To provide targeted investment for communities to save and sustain community assets that would otherwise be lost to community use
- To strengthen capacity and capability in communities, supporting them to shape their places and develop sustainable community businesses
- To empower communities in left behind places to level up
- To strengthen direct links between places across the UK and the UK government

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

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.

## Eligible organisations

This fund is for voluntary and community organisations. Common legal structures of organisations that can apply include Scottish charitable incorporated organisations (SCIO); 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 and community councils 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.

## Budget and match funding

Up to £250,000 match funded capital will be available for all eligible asset types. Revenue funding cannot be more than 20% of the capital funding request or £50,000, whichever is smaller.

Some sports-related assets will require greater funding to be saved. For this reason, in exceptional circumstances an increased cap of up to £1 million match capital funding will be available to help eligible applicants secure the community ownership of prominent sports clubs or facilities.

The Community Ownership Fund will contribute up to 50% of total capital required so other sources of funding will need to be secured/identified and evidenced.

Eligible sources of match funding will include funding from public bodies, devolved administrations, charitable trusts, national lottery funders, community shares, social investors and other lenders.

The following 'in-kind' match funding will also count as an eligible source of match funding: donations of goods relevant to the project that would otherwise have been purchased; the value of a discount on a long-term leasehold or freehold, for example as part of an asset transfer; buildings or professional services, including from individuals, community groups, funders and businesses. Volunteer time will not be an eligible source of match funding

## COF projects in Scotland

Project	Local Authority	Grant (£)
Falkirk Rugby Football and Sports Club	Falkirk	115,000
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

## **How to apply**

Applicants can submit an EOI via [this link](#). There are 26 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.

## **More information**

- Community Ownership Fund [prospectus](#)
- COF mailbox: [COF@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:COF@levellingup.gov.uk)
- Scotland levelling-up [case studies](#)

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