



Southwark Council funding prospectus a guide for the voluntary and community sector

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Foreword

We are proud of the diversity and richness of our community sector. It is a defining feature of Southwark and part of what makes the borough so special.

The council's commitment to our community sector is demonstrated by the amount that we invest through our range of grant programmes. We invest over £22 million in a year in funding services and activities delivered by the local voluntary and community sector (VCS). Between 2017 and 2022, the council invested £82.4 million.

The new council delivery plan sets out our ambitions for the next period. We need to close the gap by reducing inequality, and tackling racism and racial inequity and supporting our communities to tackle climate change. We know how important our community sector is in our neighbourhoods and communities, on our estates with long established historic organisations and new and emerging ones providing support, services, meeting spaces and so much more. This prospectus is a guide to how and what we fund. It also sets out how our approach will help us to work with you on making the changes that you told us need to take place to make the borough fairer and more equal.

Councillor Stephanie Cryan,

*Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities and Finance,
December 2022*



Invest over
£22 million



Between **2017** and **2022**,
the council invested

£82.4 million

What is changing in the way give out and monitor funding?

In 2021, reviews of council funding to the VCS were carried out and many of you told us about difficulties and challenges you have in getting funding from the council and other funders. We know things need to change.

In response to these concerns, our new commitments to funding applicants are set out in this prospectus. Much of this may be familiar to you already. We have brought the information together in one place. Council grant funding is an investment in our communities and in people powered neighbourhoods.



- We will monitor funding to our Black, Asian and minority ethnic led organisations across our grants programmes, and where there is evidence of gaps we will target funding for those groups and work to close the gap
- There will be a £400k Equalities Grants programme in 2023 with £200k ring-fenced for Black, Asian and minority ethnic led organisations
- We commit to ensuring there is funding support to our disabled, LGBTQ+, and other communities with protected characteristics
- We have started to collect information that will tell us whether organisations applying for funding are led by people from our diverse communities. This will help to ensure that funding reaches organisations that reflect the population of the borough
- We will still collect information that tells us which communities VCS organisations are working with
- We will ensure that there is support to organisations to apply for funding who have not received council funding before
- We will ensure that assessment panels for grant making include community representatives from outside the council

What difference will funding changes make?

We will know whether our funding is reaching organisations that reflect the diversity of the population of Southwark. If not, we will be able to put in place measure that change this. We will be able to target our funding effectively at organisations that reflect our diverse communities.

Once an organisation has been awarded funding, we will monitor that funding in a way that is more about us working together for the benefit of residents, than about bureaucratic hurdles. We will take an 'assets-based' approach. This means that instead of looking for problems to be solved we will look at opportunities to be harnessed and brought to life. The involvement of community representatives should result in funding decisions that are more targeted and effective in addressing local inequalities.



Regular council funding programmes

The council will continue to invest in each of the programmes set out in the table below:

Funding programme	Annual budget Please note grant amounts are set every year and may change	Criteria
Common Purpose	£817,000	• 2 year community engagement grants: meeting the diverse needs of different communities, and bringing communities together • 4 year strategic partnership grants: strategic borough wide role, support to grassroots orgs Outcomes relating to health, wellbeing, a greener borough; digital inclusion, volunteering, independence
Neighbourhoods Fund	£630,000	• Local action by communities • Bringing different people together • Making neighbourhoods come to life Grants usually £500 up to £5,000 maximum Neighbourhoods Fund - Southwark Council
Community Safety	Approx. £300,000	Funding from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime administered locally in Southwark for • Gangs, exploitation and safe accommodation work • Integrated offender management • Early intervention • Violence against women and girls
Positive Futures for Young People	£542,301	Organisations funded to deliver activities for children and young people 11yrs to 25yrs, to meet outcomes of activities for children and young people as outlined in Youth New Deal.

Funding programme	Annual budget Please note grant amounts are set every year and may change	Criteria
Culture Together	£152,000	Project grants that support arts and cultural organisations in celebrating or achieving equality and representation in one of four focus areas: • Audiences • Governance • Workforce • Artistic content
Cultural Celebrations	£65,000	Events funded through this programme should be free of charge and community-focused, and must support the aims of the Creative Southwark cultural strategy and deliver against the Fairer Future commitment of creating a vibrant Southwark.
Black History Month	£30,000	Funding for events to take place during Black History Month (October) that honour the achievements, culture and history of African, Caribbean and diaspora communities.
Public Health	Approx. £900,000	A number of grant programmes including: • Holiday activity and food grants • Cancer screening uptake grant • Health improvement grant • Vaccine uptake grants
Cleaner Greener Safer Capital Fund	£1.88m annually divided equally between 23 wards	Annual funding programme for capital improvements. Eligible ideas must result in a permanent, physical improvement in the public realm to be eligible. Majority of funding is awarded to projects managed by council officers in consultation with the local community.
Resident Participation Fund	Total budget £905,000. This includes the Getting Involved Grants: £248,000	Grants to Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) only, on rolling basis throughout year. Contributes to social regeneration and participation. Getting Involved grants are available to TRAs and Tenant Management Organisations for projects and activities aimed at improving the wellbeing of people who live in council homes.
Devolved Highways Budget	Variable	Solving highways related issues as identified at a ward level
Community Infrastructure Levy	Funding is triggered by building developments in the borough – not possible to give an annual budget figure	This is a charge that the council can set for new building developments in the borough. The funding can be used to fund infrastructure such as health and social care facilities as well as grant making through the neighbour element of the levy.

1. Principles, commitments and purpose

Our principles: Will be driven by the vision to transform Southwark through our work to close the opportunity gap, be people powered and support thriving neighbourhoods

Our funding will:

- Connect our communities
- Create fairness and equity for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and other disadvantaged communities
- Be open and transparent

Our commitment to you as a grant applicant

We welcome and value all applications for funding that will make Southwark a better place

- We will explain our funding criteria (requirements) clearly
- Our application forms and guidance will be in plain English and will be sense checked with community members
- We will only ask for information that we need
- We will publish our timetables and stick to them. If we need to ask you for extra information we will give you a reasonable amount of time to provide it. When we make decisions we will let you know the outcomes as promptly as we are able
- If we are not able to fund you, we will explain the reasons clearly. We will offer you advice to help give you a better chance of being successful next time

- We will listen to what organisations tell us about their challenges in applying for funding and take responsibility for working with them to overcome these challenges, to make our funding processes fairer
- We will collect information on who is applying for funding so that we can map who from our different communities are successful in funding applications, to make sure we are not creating barriers
- We will keep a database of Black Asian and minority ethnic led organisations in the borough these will help us reach out to organisations, and track who among those groups are applying for funding and who aren't
- We will act positively to encourage and support Black Asian and minority ethnic led groups, who have not had council funding before to access funding, in particular core funding
- We will work with community partners to provide support for organisations and networks representing our different communities
- We will actively seek to attract to our programmes organisations who haven't been funded before as well as to enable smaller organisations who are successful in applying for small grants to move on to securing larger amounts should they wish to
- We will continuously review the way we give grants, to tackle barriers for particular groups, and learn from good practice elsewhere
- We will welcome any feedback you have and seek to act on it
- The recommendations about who to fund in each programme will be made by a diverse evaluation panel that will include relevant representatives from outside the council

Our purpose: What can the funding be used for?

The purpose of the funding depends on the funding programme. All funding from the council should help Southwark and its communities and residents to be some or all of the following:

- **Safer** – at home, and when out and about in the borough
- **Less inequality** and close the opportunity gap
- **Healthier** – at all life stages, in both mind and body
- **Greener** – together we are tackling the climate emergency and increasing the biodiversity (wildlife) of the borough
- **Engaged** – making the most of volunteering opportunities; having your voice heard
- **Vibrant** – thriving small businesses and a dynamic arts and cultural sector



2. Grants

Our eligibility requirements

Organisations applying must:

- Be a **not for profit** organisation (there may be exceptions, such as the Local Economy Team's small business grants; or the Culture Team's grants to individual artists). The kinds of organisations we fund include:
 - Registered charities
 - Registered not for profit companies
 - Community interest companies
 - Industrial and provident societies
 - Unincorporated associations and grassroots community groups

We welcome applications from faith groups; however, the funding should benefit those in need regardless of whether they have any faith or none, and should not be used to promote a particular religion.

- Be based within the borough of Southwark – or based outside, but providing services to Southwark residents
- Provide a recent set of annual accounts that have been audited (for those with an annual income of over £1m) or independently examined (those with an annual income of over £25,000). For smaller or newly formed organisations that don't yet have annual accounts, we may ask for a bank statement or simple set of accounts
- Across the council grant programmes, we support many organisations, projects and activities. There are 402 grants and 62 contracts with the smallest grant £500 and the largest contract over £6m

How applications are assessed

- Officers check that applications meet the basic eligibility requirements explained above
- Eligible applications are reviewed by a panel of officers and community representatives. Each application will be judged against the funding criteria set out in the programme

402
grants

62
contracts



smallest
grant
£500

largest
contract over
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Our decision-making

- The panel makes recommendations to the decision maker as to which grants to fund
- **We publish reports on applications and recommendations on our website.** If you apply for funding you will be sent the link to the report after it has been published
- A **Cabinet member** then makes the decision if the grant value is more than £2,500. For grants under £2,500 the decision is taken by a service manager. This report is not published but will be sent to you for your information. There are some exceptions, such as Neighbourhoods Funds , Cleaner Greener Safer and Devolved Highways grants, where the ward councillors make the decisions.

Letting you know the outcome of your application

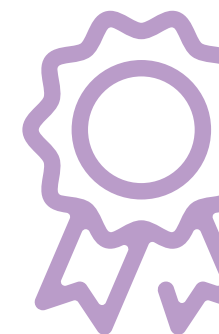
- We aim to let you know whether you have been successful or not as soon as possible in line with decision-making above
- If you have been unsuccessful, we will write to you explaining why. We will give you details of how to get support with future applications and we may give you details of other funding opportunities we think might be relevant to you. We are also happy to have a telephone conversation with you if you think that might be helpful
- If you have been successful, we will write to you to confirm the amount of funding. It may be less than the amount you applied for. This could happen if organisations have applied for more funding than is available. If the amount is less than you applied for, we will be realistic about what you will be able to do with it. We will ask you to send us a new breakdown of costs, showing how you will spend the reduced amount of money

Conditions of grant funding

- There are **conditions attached to all council grants are under our Common Purpose grants information.** All organisations who receive grant funding from the council must comply with these conditions

Paying your grant

- The council usually pays grants in advance and usually in instalments
- Your grant will be paid into your organisation's bank account. Before we can pay it, we will check if your organisation is already listed as a vendor on the council's accounting system. If you've been paid by the council before, it's likely you will be listed as a vendor. If you've never had a payment from the council before, we will ask you to give details of your organisation's bank account and full contact details on a company letterhead. You can send this electronically as a pdf. We will send this to the council's Finance department who will check the information before they set you up on the council's accounting system. This can take two weeks or more
- Whenever you apply for a grant you will be asked to provide your organisation's bank account details, even if the council has them already, in case you have changed your bank account



Monitoring and evaluation

- The grant will be monitored to check that the money is being spent on what we have agreed. We need to be sure that your organisation is keeping to the Conditions of Grant Funding
- During the period of the grant, we will keep in touch with each other. You will have a key contact in the council who will be your link officer and will be available to help with any queries or concerns you may have
- Different council grant-giving teams have their own monitoring systems. When they award the grant to you, they will let you know what they will need from you during the period of the grant. This could include:
 - Visiting your organisation, at an agreed time
 - Attending your AGM (annual general meeting) or other event(s) that you organise
 - Asking you to send in reports on who has accessed the funded service. This could include numbers of clients, and numbers of clients from particular groups (outputs). We will also ask about what difference it has made to people's lives (outcomes). The amount of information you are asked to provide will differ depending on the size of the grant
 - Documents such as accounts, policies, annual reports and minutes of trustee meetings (you can blank out any confidential information in trustee minutes). The amount of information you are asked to provide will depend on the size of the grant. We will explain why we need the information; we won't ask you for information that we won't use and we will only ask for it once, even if you get more than one grant from the council

- We do not expect you to share confidential client information with the council
- We will use the data and intelligence you give us to look at the needs of people in the borough and how they are changing. This will help us target funding better in the future, to meet those needs

How to apply for funding

- **The council's grants and funding section advertises regular opportunities**
- Applications are made electronically and not on paper documents. **Most council grant funding teams now use the council's Funding portal.** If you haven't used the portal before you will need to create a log-in. This is simple to do. It is a good idea to make sure that others in your organisation have details of the log in email and password



Where to find funding information and support

Council grants programme are normally advertised for a fixed period of time, usually a minimum of six weeks. You can find out about funding opportunities using these links. It may be worth bookmarking them and returning to them regularly.

- **Council grants and funding webpage**
- **The council forward plan gives a longer term view of funding opportunities**
- **Fundraising help is available from Community Southwark** who offer one-to-one advice, training sessions, fact sheets and publish a funding newsletter
- **United St Saviour's Guide to Funding in Southwark** (lower down this page under 'summary reports and publications') United St Saviours are an independent charity and funder, based in Southwark

Support for individuals and informal groups to access funding

Southwark welcomes and encourages residents to be active in their communities. Usually, grants programmes require applicants to be a constituted organisation. However, some of our funding programmes have accepted applications from individuals and/or informal groups in the past, including:

- Neighbourhoods Fund
- Getting Involved grants
- Black History Month
- Cultural Celebrations Fund



To receive funding directly, individuals and informal groups are required to comply with Conditions of Grant Funding and at minimum to hold a bank account with at least two signatories. Alternatively, some of our funding programmes will support applications sponsored or 'hosted' by a constituted local organisation, who will receive the funding on the applicants behalf and administer funding for the project.

If you would like to set up a constituted group, Southwark Council and allied organisations provide support for individuals and informal groups to do this. **Find out how to set up a no TRA in your area if there isn't one.**

For those interested in setting up another kind of constituted organisation, Community Southwark can provide support.

What to do if the project isn't going to plan

When we fund you it is because your idea is a good way of responding to community needs. We want you to succeed. We recognise that things don't always go to plan. If you have concerns about the project then get in contact and talk to your link officer. We will have a conversation to try and resolve the issues together.



3. Contracts

The council enters into contracts with external providers for goods, works and services that it does not deliver in-house. These are managed in line with the council's Contract Standing Orders:

Contract standing orders

All procurements also have to comply with the procurement law, currently the Public Contract Regulations (2015). The Fairer Future Procurement Framework also sets out the core considerations and ethical considerations relating to procurements, especially where these are of higher value: [southwark.gov.uk](https://www.southwark.gov.uk)

Procurement is one of the three parts of Community Wealth Building. The government's procurement regulations are due to change in 2023. In line with this, the council is reviewing how it can make it easier for local organisations to do business with the council.

Organisations can propose to work with others as a partnership to support their capability and capacity to deliver contracts.

Organisations can register for free with the online procurement system we and many other London boroughs use.

The eProcurement system used by the council is Proactis.

- The rules for how contracts are awarded are set by the government rather than the council
- But – we can look at how we can support smaller organisations grow and build their capacity to get themselves into a position where they can bid for contracts and be successful
- This could be in partnership with other organisations

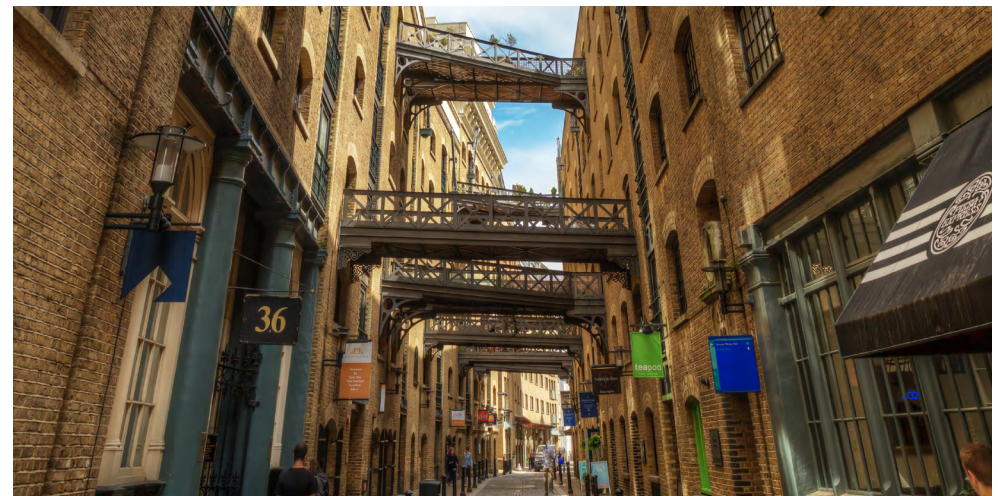


This table summarises the key differences between grants and contracts

Comparison		
Key Characteristics	Contracts	Grants
Legally Binding	Yes	No
Level of protection to the council in the event of a breach	Maximum - Council can take legal action for breach	Minimum - can withhold future funding and attempt to clawback paid funding
Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Guidelines apply	Yes	No
General principles of transparency, accountability and fair dealing apply	Yes	Yes
Eligible for Gift Aid	No	Yes
Subject to VAT	Possibly	No
Fixed term	Yes	No
Annual renewal	No	Maybe
Standard terms and conditions	Yes - contract, quotation and tendering documents	Yes - standard Conditions of Grant Funding are available
Decision Makers	Depending on the contract amount the decision may be taken by the council's Cabinet, an elected member, a chief officer of the council or a chief officer may delegate the decision to director / manager of the council	Elected member of the council's Cabinet for grants over £2,500
External Advertising	Required for contracts over £75,000	Good practice

4. Glossary of terms

- **AGM (annual general meeting):** The AGM of a company or organisation is a meeting which it holds once a year in order to discuss the previous year's activities and accounts. These meetings may be required by law or by the organisation's constitution or governing documents
- **Black Asian and minority ethnic led:** The council's definition is those organisations where 75% of the governing body (Board of Trustees or Management Committee), and 50% of the senior staff of the organisation ie key decision-makers, self-identify as being from that specific community or identity
- **Capital improvements:** Funding for the purchase, refurbishment or renovation of buildings or land. It can also include the purchase of equipment such as vehicles, computers and computer systems, and other software such as for marketing or accounting
- **Community Wealth building:** Is a progressive approach to economics and economic development. It seeks to change the way that our economies have come to function by aiming to retain more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people. It achieves its aims by harnessing the economic and social power of locally rooted institutions
- **Commissioning:** The cycle of assessing the needs of people in an area, designing and then securing an appropriate service
- **LGBTQ+:** Is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer. The + recognises that there are more ways to identify and describe gender and sexuality beyond the acronym. While the above are common terms used to self-identify gender and sexuality in the English language, the world is and has always been a place of diverse sexualities and gender identities
- **Procurement:** The process, by which an organisation buys the products or services it needs from other organisations. Part of the wider commissioning process the cycle of assessing the needs of people in an area, designing and then securing an appropriate service
- **Voluntary and community sector (VCS):** The VCS includes larger registered organisations that may operate on a local, regional or national level; and smaller community groups who run local schemes such as food banks, community hubs or mutual aid groups



This prospectus has been produced by:
VCS Commissioning Team,
Communities Division

Email Southwark Council's VCS Commissioning Team

Get further information on Southwark Council's support for voluntary and community sector organisations.