



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Town Teams support package

Prospectus

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Prospectus

1. This prospectus invites applications by 16 January 2013 from eligible organisations or partnerships of organisations, for grant funding to provide a support package to Portas Pilots and other town teams.
2. Grant funding for the period February 2013 to March 2015 will be awarded after a competitive process, for which this prospectus sets out the criteria.

Purpose

3. The aim of this grant is to fund a package of support to the town teams awarded funding as part of the Portas Pilot and Town Team Partner programmes. We are putting particular focus on supporting the Portas Pilot town teams. This is because of the greater scale of effort and challenge corresponding to their larger funds from central government.
4. The support package should help drive and secure momentum in all town teams and create a community-led movement to develop high streets of the future, that do not rely solely on retail and that meet the needs of local people. The support should enable town teams to develop a self-sustaining local vision for their area to meet their long-term outcomes.
5. Our main priority for the support package is for it to help the Portas Pilots deliver their stated aims and in doing so to get their 'lessons learned' shared with the Town Team Partners. The key here is to improve the quality of each Portas Pilot's leadership team, help them get an effective business plan in place (where these do not already exist), and support them operating an effective and active board. The types of support required are varied so we encourage bidders to ensure they are able to deliver all aspects of the support package, and in doing so they may wish to consider partnership bids.
6. The support package should be available to and promoted among town teams so we are looking to see evidence of impact. It should align with support from other delivery partners in order to form a joined-up and coherent package from the town teams' point of view. The delivery partners include the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM), which has provided the initial period of support to all town teams and made an assessment of the town team capabilities. It also includes Business In The Community (BITC) who are co-ordinating and managing business support and engagement with the Portas Pilots until the end of August 2013. We envisage secondments and mentoring and a joined-up offer with BITC's plans for business engagement would form an important part of delivering the improved leadership in the Pilots.
7. The support package should ensure high streets and town teams can readily understand the powers and tools available to local authorities. This should take the form of an online guidance document or similar. We welcome innovative approaches to getting this information used.

8. We want town teams to be able to learn from each other and from the expertise provided as part of the support package. This would likely comprise some sort of online tool that highlights good practice and provides a forum for discussion between town teams. The aims are to improve town team capability, help them to achieve some of their original aims, and improve relationships with local communities, including local businesses and local government. Strong civic and business leadership is key for town teams to be able to set and drive their vision.
9. As part of the shared learning, we would like the support package to include two products in particular. Firstly, an emerging findings report by April 2013, focusing on the Portas Pilots. This should set out what the Pilots have done, which recommendations they are testing, common issues they face, and how they identified the opportunities and tackled the barriers. This should highlight **good practice and lessons learned**, using brief case studies where helpful, including from Town Team Partners if appropriate.
10. Secondly, we would like a more thorough appraisal of the Portas Pilots by Autumn 2013, though the focus again will be on the learning and the appraisal should be an appropriately light-touch evaluative piece of work. Both the April and Autumn appraisals should be suitable for wider dissemination.

Context

11. In May 2011, the Prime Minister commissioned Mary Portas to do an independent review of the future of the high street. The Portas Review was published in December 2011 and contained 28 recommendations. These were not just focused on retail, and covered what government, local authorities, businesses and communities can do together to help high streets to be vibrant and successful. For example, use business rate discounts, encourage free parking, promote business improvement districts, and help new market traders.
12. Portas Pilots were a key recommendation from the Portas Review, where strong 'town teams' are established by local businesses, landlords, community and public sector representatives to manage local high streets. There are now 27 Portas Pilots: the first 12 Portas Pilots were announced in May 2012, and 15 more were announced in July 2012 (of which three were funded by the Mayor of London). They each received up to £100,000 and a package of support, including business support from Business In The Community (BITC).
13. The competition to become a Portas Pilot received over 400 applications. To keep up the initial momentum and enthusiasm shown by these town teams in August 2012 the Department invited all of those who were unsuccessful to sign a national pledge to become a Town Team Partner. Over 330 Town Team Partners were announced in October. Each Town Team Partner receives £10,000 and a support programme to help them put key elements of their plans into action. Town teams had to get the support of their Local Authority and MP in order to get Town Team Partner status.
14. In August 2012 the Department awarded the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) a grant to deliver the initial part of the town team support role, funded until January 2013. The support that the successful town teams could expect

to receive was published as part of the Town Team Partner offer and in the subsequent press release.

15. To date this support has included:

- an advice line and a network of advisers as well as key informative events;
- direct mentoring and visits from a range of retail experts;
- meetings with other town teams to share lessons learned, tips and ideas; and
- an online community to receive advice and information from retail experts.

16. The Portas Review, the government's response to it, and subsequent announcements on policy including the launch of the Town Team Partners, are available from the government website www.gov.uk, (see the section on improving high streets and town centres¹).

Funding

17. This prospectus invites eligible organisations or partnerships of organisations to bid for a grant from the Department for the financial years 2012 -13 (remainder thereof), 2013 - 14 and 2014 -15. The grant funds are for up to £250,000 for the remainder of the 2012-13 financial year and up to £550,000 per year for the following two years. You are not required to bid for the full amount available. Any funding provided must be legitimately spent in the year it is allocated, so your bids must include a reliable profile by financial year.

Assessment criteria

18. The bids will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- **the support package** that will be provided and the outcomes it would achieve. The bids should demonstrate how they will deliver the aims of the programme, in particular:
 - how you will deliver improved leadership in Pilots including helping them get a full business plan and active board in place
 - how you will deliver improved Town Team Partner capability
 - the menu of proposed support
 - partnership working to meet the varied needs of the town teams
 - plans for promoting and assisting with shared learning and the spread of best practice
 - delivery of the evaluations **and guidance on powers and tools available to local authorities**
- **experience**, in terms of:
 - expertise in understanding the high streets and town centres sector and the challenges facing town teams
 - experience of stakeholder engagement with a range of business, charity and public sector partners/organisations in town centres and other relevant sectors

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-high-streets-and-town-centres>

- experience of successful delivery of this type of work, both the support package and the evaluative aspect
- communications and marketing experience, i.e. ability to engage with and bring about well-informed, capable, self-sustaining and networked Pilots and town teams
- **capacity to deliver**, including:
 - advice and resources to be made available to town teams
 - ability to make a quick impact
 - delivering the package of support in an innovative and creative manner, that can inspire town team to consider new ways of thinking and working
- **value for money** in the support package offered. A schedule of likely costs, with a detailed breakdown, will be asked for as part of the application, to clearly show/explain all costs in the bid.

19. Applicants will need to confirm that the work we would be paying you to do would not be done by you or another organisation in the absence of this Grant. You will also need to set out what activities you are carrying out in relation to high streets that is being funded by another party.

Eligibility

- 20. An organisation is eligible to receive the grant if it is a corporate body or has a formal constitution if not incorporated.
- 21. We consider as eligible applications from partnerships, where the lead partner organisation meets all the eligibility criteria of the fund in its own right, on the basis that the level of funding applied for were to be provided to that partner alone.
- 22. Our financial policy is that we do not in general provide funding to a value of more than 50 per cent of the last year's income of an organisation. However, we would consider exceptions to this rule on a case by case basis.

How to apply

- 23. Applicants will need to complete the application form to demonstrate:
 - what support package you propose, and how your bid meets the assessment criteria;
 - a proposed timetable of planned activities and costs across the entire funding period, for purposes of considering value for money;
 - your organisation's current plans in the absence of any grant from the Department to pursue activities in relation to high streets and town centres;
 - what difference receiving financial assistance from the Department would make to the scale and range of activities your organisation would undertake;
 - capacity to deliver - including confirmation that you will be able to start delivering support immediately from February 2013.

24. In addition, we will need to receive copies of your organisation's accounts for the last three accounting years. If the accounts are not available your organisation will need to provide a statement, agreed with its auditor, explaining the situation.
25. The information we ask for is to ensure that we understand the nature of the organisation, including any partnership structure, and the organisation's background in terms of suitability to deliver the proposed support package, and so that we can be confident that a grant would not be an unlawful state aid.
26. Application Forms are available from the Department's town centres and high streets pages on www.gov.uk or upon request if you email the DCLG high streets team: HighStreets@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

How your application will be handled

27. We will acknowledge receipt of applications. The process will be to first assess completeness and eligibility of the applications, then to assess the relative quality of the applications from eligible organisations. This stage will assess the relative merits of the applications, having regard to the criteria set out above.
28. The application best meeting the criteria laid out in this prospectus will be recommended to the Secretary of State for approval.
29. We expect to notify applicants of the result in February. At this stage the monitoring and reporting arrangements to the Department will be agreed. We anticipate these being quarterly activity reports.
30. Once the selected organisation or partnership of organisations have accepted the terms and conditions on which the financial assistance is to be provided, the Secretary of State will confirm their selection and they can start delivering in line with the bid (or funding agreement, if this supersedes the bid). The Department will reimburse valid expenditure as set out in line with the bid, on a schedule to be agreed with the winning bidder (likely to be quarterly). We intend to provide the financial assistance until the end of the 2014-15 financial year, as described in this prospectus, subject to the organisation's satisfactory performance as judged through the agreed monitoring arrangements.
31. Applications, and any queries, should be sent electronically to HighStreets@communities.gsi.gov.uk.