



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Our Town First: Future High Street X-Fund

Prospectus

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August 2012

ISBN: 978-1-4098-3621-6

Ministerial Foreword

Up and down the land local people are hard at it, bringing new life to their once forlorn and neglected town centres. From Berwick to Braintree, from Leamington to Liverpool, you'll find new markets springing up, buildings coming back from the brink, neighbourhoods clamping down on crime and vandalism and high streets getting facelifts to bring business flooding in.

I've talked to many determined local people busily turning their neighbourhoods around. And what convinces me they will succeed - far beyond their energy and enthusiasm, beside even their enormous capacity for creativity and hard work, is the sheer size of their ambition. There's only one thing that Government can do in the face of such ambition. Help it succeed. I want to see enterprise scaled up not scaled down, innovation blooming not being pruned back, aspiration forging ahead not being put off its stride.

To help make sure that happens I announced in March this year a £1 million Future High Street X-Fund so that town champions from across the country can receive their due reward. If you think your schemes have got what it takes to be the best of the best then read on and make sure you give careful thought to your nomination.

One or more winning locations will be picked out by an advisory panel of independent judges. Who knows what will catch their eye? Will it be the plan that turned an empty shop into a thriving community centre? The parking initiative that gave the young mum more shopping choice? Or the schemes that brought evening shoppers to what used to be a no-go area after dark? More than likely it will be something so innovative, so unexpected, no-one has thought of it before.

Now while I expect any winners to be unique, I am certain they will share one thing in common. A boundless appreciation of the unlimited potential of their town centres. An unquashable desire to make the most of that great treasure at the centre of its neighbourhood. And that's why our aim, through this Fund, isn't simply to reward the ambition of our local town heroes. It is to inspire a generation to follow in their footsteps. So they too can re-energise the high street in their midst and revive the beating heart of their own local community.



GRANT SHAPPS MP

Introduction

1. High streets are a visible indicator of how well a local community and economy is doing. They are important hubs of social interaction and cohesion, as well as providers of employment and local commerce. However, in order to thrive today and in the future, as they have in the past, civic leaders, communities and businesses must take positive action to ensure they evolve.
2. The Portas Review (www.communities.gov.uk/portasreview) made a number of key recommendations aimed at identifying what government, local authorities, businesses and communities could do together to promote the development of new models of prosperous and diverse high streets.
3. As part of the Government's response to the Portas Review (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/portasreviewresponse>), we announced a £1 million Future High Street X- Fund, to reward those areas delivering the most effective and innovative plans to bring their town centres back to life. The £1 million prize fund will recognise and reward the location or locations who have undertaken the most outstanding transformations allowing them to strengthen and extend their achievements.

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Future High Street X-Fund

4. We invite nominations of locations with exemplary, innovative schemes implemented since May 2011, by **6 December 2012** from local authorities, partnerships or consortiums to receive prize funds under the Department for Communities and Local Government's £1 million Future High Street X-Fund.
5. An independent advisory Panel comprised of industry and community development experts with specialist knowledge of high street regeneration will recommend the winning scheme or schemes to the Department based on an assessment against the award criteria – innovation and effectiveness. The Panel may choose to visit some areas or seek additional information in coming to their recommendation.
6. The Panel will make recommendations on the number of locations to be rewarded and the level of each award, based on their assessments of nominations against the criteria, in order to reward the most outstanding, within the total £1 million available.
7. Prize funding will be awarded to the nominated area or areas in England that are judged to demonstrate the best fit with the award criteria. This will be paid through section 31 unringfenced revenue grant, paid directly to the relevant local authority. Each nomination will, therefore, need to identify an Accountable Body (local authority) to receive the grant, if they are not, themselves, a local authority¹.
8. Winning nomination forms will be published and winning locations will be expected to participate in events and workshops organised by the Department or its partners to share their good practice. Information from all nominations may be shared with the Department's delivery partners. We will not be able to provide individual feedback on nominations.
9. Nominations must be made electronically using the template at **Annex A** (which is available in Word form on the Department's website). Nominations will be judged against the following criteria:

Innovation

10. The fund will reward the location or locations with the most innovative high street regeneration schemes that have demonstrated an effective transformation. We consider that schemes could address a variety of issues, including (but not limited to) empty shops, parking, accessibility, public realm, and the evening economy. This could be through a range of measures including the use of incentives e.g. business rates discounts, cheap or free parking, creating opportunities to improve employment and

¹ Parish and town councils are not able to act as an Accountable Body.

skills, increasing community participation, or through technology, marketing and events. Nominated areas should:

- a. demonstrate that their schemes are innovative in responding to the areas challenges – i.e. new or bespoke ideas that have not previously been undertaken elsewhere, and
- b. set out how they could help other areas learn from their experience and how their innovative schemes could be replicated elsewhere

Effectiveness

11. The fund will reward the location or locations who can demonstrate the most effective schemes in transforming their high streets, for example this could be by having increased footfall or turnover, improved skills or employment opportunities, or put empty spaces back into use. Nominated projects should:

- a. provide evidence that they been effective in transforming their areas through schemes implemented since May 2011. Evidence of the effectiveness of the scheme may be quantitative and/or qualitative
- b. provide evidence of the schemes costs and value for money
- c. explain how they would use potential prize funding, for example to extend or strengthen their high street schemes, and what impact it would be reasonably expected to have

How to apply

12. We have sought to make the nomination process as simple as possible, while ensuring decisions on applications will be fair, transparent, and soundly based, having regard to the nomination form and a supporting video supplied by the applicant. Please do not supply additional information unless requested.

13. Nominations should include a link to a supporting video submission of 2-4 minutes, setting out why your area should be awarded a prize. This should be short, to the point, and, most importantly, not professionally made.

14. All nominations must be received electronically **on or before 6 December 2012**, and must conform to the requirements set out below. Please do not send hard copies.

Information required

15. Please complete the **nomination form** at Annex A, which ensures we are able to understand:

- Who will be the Accountable Body

- How your nomination meets the two criteria
 - How your area will deliver transparency in the use of the grant
16. Nominations should include a letter from the local authority confirming its intention to act as the Accountable Body. Nominations including a Youtube link to a supporting video; and a confirmation letter from the Accountable Body should be submitted electronically to the following address:
highstreetfund@communities.gsi.gov.uk
17. Nominations will be assessed with a view to announcing the winners in **March 2013**. If you have any questions about the process, please e-mail highstreetfund@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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Annex A

Nomination Form

An electronic version of this nomination form is available in Microsoft Word format on the DCLG website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/x-fundprospectus>

Please ensure you fill in ALL sections of this form.

SECTION ONE Organisational details		
1.1 Organisation name		
1.2 Contact name and main role		
1.3 Address		
1.4 Telephone number (a) organisation (b) contact	(a)	(b)
1.5 Email address of contact		
1.6 Website address (if any)	http://	

SECTION TWO Accountable Body	
2.1 Who will be the Accountable Body? (Please attach a confirmation letter) This needs to be a local authority, not a parish or town council.	
2.2 Please explain (maximum 300 words) how you will ensure information about the use of the grant, decisions made, and outcome of the projects, are made publicly available.	

SECTION THREE

Criterion One: Innovation

We are looking to reward the location or locations with the most innovative schemes that have demonstrated an effective transformation of their high street.

3.1 Please explain how nominated schemes are innovative in responding to the areas challenges, how they could help other areas learn from their experience and how their schemes could be replicated elsewhere.
(maximum 600 words)

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SECTION FOUR

Criterion Two: Effectiveness

We want to reward the location or locations with schemes that can demonstrate they have made an effective transformation of their high street. Schemes must have been implemented since May 2011.

4.1 Please set out when the schemes were implemented, provide evidence that they been effective in transforming the area, provide evidence of the schemes costs and value for money; and explain how potential prize funding would be used and what impact it would be reasonably expected to have. (maximum 600 words).

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SECTION FIVE

Youtube video link

5.1 Please insert a link to a Youtube video of 2-4 mins in length in support of your nomination.

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