

### District Management Committee Funding Guidelines (updated October 2022)

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Annually each District Management Committee (DMC) is given a budget to spend in their area
- 1.2 The budget is then allocated to TRAs and sometimes other groups, via a democratic process in which tenants and leaseholders apply and members vote during DMC meetings to accept or reject bids. Camden Council is committed to this process as it

gives communities direct control over resources, allowing resident representatives to work with staff and members to make the budget decisions that best reflect local needs.

1.3 This process has been developed in line with Camden's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

## **2 What can residents bid for?**

2.2 Examples of the types of projects funded:

- Environmental improvements to Camden Council estates or areas
- Improvement or alterations to tenants' halls or rooms
- Relevant equipment needed to support community activities in tenants halls
- Gardening and recycling projects
- Landscape improvements
- Security enhancements (lighting etc.)
- TRA notice boards
- Sports, outdoor gym, play equipment, cycle racks

2.3 Social activities and community events will also be considered. These types of projects should in the first instance be funded via the Tenant Participation Service's special projects grant (as should community trips and days out), but DMCs will on occasion consider exceptional proposals or proposals that benefit a large number of residents or multiple estates or across neighbourhood areas.

## **3 Who can bid for funding?**

3.1 Those who can apply for funding include:

- Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TRAs) registered with DMCs
- TMOs that are registered with DMCs
- Council Officers on behalf of areas or estates not represented by TRAs
- DMC Chairs or vice chairs on behalf of community groups or estates not represented by TRAs

#### **4 How to apply?**

- 4.1 Residents can call their Neighbourhood team on 020 7974 4444 and ask to be sent an application form by post. Alternatively residents can request an electronic copy from their Neighbourhood Housing Officer or download and complete the form online at: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/2782436/www.camden.gov.uk.pdf/de22bf4b-00fe-b526-63ab-326b4c46cf44>

#### **5 When can bids be made and spent?**

- 5.1 Bids may be submitted throughout the year, with the final for in-year spending to be submitted in December DMC. Applications should be lodged with the Neighbourhood Housing Manager at least 20 working days prior to the DMC in order for bids to be collated, assessed by the Neighbourhood Manager and dispatched with the DMC agenda papers. The dates of the DMCs are available on the Camden Council website and at the end of each DMC agenda. Bids can be agreed in principle if, for example further consultation is required or additional quotes are requested by the DMC.
- 5.2 December is the last chance to allocate in year funding. This is to ensure we have robust forecasts and permit time for the money to be spent.
- 5.3 Roll-forward of budgets will be considered on a case by case basis, however this will be at the discretion of Director of Finance and only when certain conditions are met for example;
- On high value schemes >£50k,
  - The DMC can provide clear evidence of a Commitment to spend, or
  - In order to accumulate funds to put towards a larger project.

However, given the financial position of the HRA:

- 1) Late requests might not be granted if it would worsen an overall overspend position.
  - 2) Roll over of funding cannot be held indefinitely, hence if funding is not spent or committed within 2 years this will be released back into the HRA reserve.
- 5.4 March DMCs can start to allocate next year's funding.

#### **6 Procurement**

- 6.1 Procurement of all projects undertaken using DMC funding must be conducted in line with Camden's Financial Standing Orders and procurement process.
- 6.2 Council approved suppliers will be the primary method of providing quotes and delivering projects.
- 6.3 Where Council approved suppliers do not provide goods or services being applied for (or in exceptional circumstances), quotes may be requested from an external supplier.
- 6.4 Comparative quotes are recommended for bids between £5,000 and £25,000, if for any reason the council or one of its contractors is not doing the work. Competitive bids will always be required in cases where Leaseholder (Section 151) consultation is required.
- 6.5 Contracts with a value between £25,000 and £100,000 must be let by inviting at least 3 quotations.
- 6.6 Quotes may be in the form of a letter, email, print out from the internet or photocopy from advertisement and should be attached to the application. Where appropriate the contractor's company registration number should be provided. TRA's are encouraged to use local suppliers and providers where possible to encourage spend in the local community.

## **7 Leaseholder consultation**

- 7.1 If the project includes what are deemed, 'qualifying works' (works on a building or other premises) and is going to cost more than £250 per leaseholder in the area or a long term contract will need to be entered into as a result of the works, then formal consultation will have to be carried out and views of leaseholder's taken account of prior to proceeding. This is laid out in the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 20) and in the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 (Section 151).
- 7.2 There are three main benefits to the leaseholder consultation process:
  - The leaseholder is aware of and can have an input into the plans regarding works;
  - the leaseholder is aware that works are due to be undertaken that will have a financial impact on them and can plan accordingly; and

- Housing Services is able to allocate to and recoup from the leaseholder a fair percentage of the costs incurred for undertaking the work.

7.3 In such cases a Notice of Intention (Section 151 notice) will be served on leaseholders or any Recognised Tenants Associations (Leaseholder Associations established under section 29 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985) and a 30-day consultation period entered into once the scheme has received DMC approval.

## **8 DMC bids process - Step 1**

8.1 On identifying a project and voting to make a bid for funding to the relevant DMC, the group should discuss the project with their Neighbourhood Housing Officer who will first establish if it is a project that meets the criteria in section 2 of this guidance. The Neighbourhood Housing Officer may provide advice on the feasibility of the project, likely costs, and where appropriate, source cost estimates from Camden contractors and suppliers.

8.2 There may be occasions when items that fit the funding criteria are not supplied via Camden (i.e. TRA noticeboards etc.). It is therefore acceptable to source such quotes externally. In such cases the group should make a brief business case to the Neighbourhood Housing Officer setting out the reasons for not wanting to use a Camden supplier.

8.3 In order to take into consideration rising costs and inflation. When DMCs submit a bid, they could add a project risk contingency of 5% so long as it's clearly labelled. This would then help to cover any unforeseen increases in cost. If that was insufficient, the DMC would have to request a top up from the remaining allocation.

8.4 If the DMC bid relates to a purchase that the Council will be making, using the DMC budget e.g. purchase and install a security gate then the figure should be requested net (i.e. without VAT). This is because at the Council, we pay the VAT but then claim it back so it isn't a cost overall. If in doubt if the project cost needs to be with or without VAT, speak to your Neighbourhood officer.

8.5 DMCs should look favourably on projects that include an element of match funding, particularly where a TRA applying for money for improvements to, or activities in a TRA hall, is already receiving income from letting out the facility.

- 8.6 DMCs should look favourably on projects where a TRA with significant reserves and is willing to make a contribution from funds. DMCs should also assess that where the TRA has significant funds whether the project can be funded by the TRA exclusively.
- 8.7 Applicants need to be confident that there is broad community support for any proposal. It may be agreed that wider consultation is required prior to the application being made.
- 8.8 Neighbourhood Housing Officers are able to advise groups about when and how to consult, including where statutory consultation is required. They may alternatively suggest that for small bids such as community projects, TRA hall equipment or garden project, that consultation beyond the TRA committee is not necessary. Such applications may be logged directly with Business Support.
- 8.9 Initial consultation can be carried out in a variety of ways including:
- By newsletter, (providing a means to respond is included)
  - By letter with an accompanying survey
  - By open meeting and show of hands
  - By door knocking
- 8.10 30 days is a reasonable time to allow for written responses to consultation. Whichever way consultation is carried out, it is important to keep the results / comments, should they be required at a later date.
- 8.11 TRAs should be advised at this stage if section 151 consultation will be required and that this will happen once DMC approval has been received and detailed costs and work specifications obtained.

## **9 DMC bids process - Step 2**

- 9.1 When confident that there is support for the project, completed applications should be sent to the Neighbourhood Manager who will log and acknowledge applications; they will then be reviewed by the relevant Neighbourhood Manager. The Neighbourhood Manager may either:

- Approve the application straight away and add it to the list of applications to be considered at the next DMC meeting. TRAs / representatives will be informed which DMC meeting their bid will be presented to in order for a representative to be present to speak on behalf of their bid.
- Carry out a feasibility study. This is likely to happen in cases where larger scale improvement works are being requested, a planning application is required, a more detailed specification needed, or it is felt that wider consultation of residents is required. Having worked with the group to carry out the feasibility study, the Neighbourhood Manager will advise at this stage if the application is able to proceed.
- Refuse an application. This is likely to happen in cases where the proposed project does not fit the criteria in paragraph 2; where we are not legally entitled to do the work; where it will very clearly not meet Camden's planning guidelines; where substantial opposition from the community has been demonstrated; where there is a clash with Camden's CIP or Better Homes Programme or where considered an inappropriate use of public funds.

## 10 DMC bids Process - Step 3

10.1 At the DMC meeting applicants will be asked to present their bid for approval by members. Prior to voting on whether to award funding, DMC members will want to know:

- Does the project meet the required criteria?
- How did the group consult their members / local people?
- What was the outcome of the consultation?
- How did the group estimate costs?
- Does the group have an alternative source of income or significant funds of their own that they can contribute?
- Is there an element of match funding?
- Does the project offer good value for money?
- Are there any on-going maintenance implications of the works?
- Have other bids been made by the group over the past 12 months?
- Has the group been awarded funding for a similar project in the past 3 years?

10.2 Members may vote to:

- Approve the bid
- Agree the bid in principle (for example if the bid is subject to planning or Section 20 Consultation)
- Defer the bid (Ask the group for more information, further consultation etc.)
- Reject the bid

## **11 DMC bids process - Step 4**

- 11.1 Neighbourhood Housing Officers will support groups to implement projects where bids are approved. Where relevant, Neighbourhood Housing Officers will liaise between the TRA, surveyors, the major Works Team and contractors to agree detailed specifications and final costings. If required, the Neighbourhood Housing Officer will liaise with Leasehold Services around any Section 151 Consultation required and support the group through the planning process, if needed.
- 11.2 The Neighbourhood Housing Officer will ensure that residents directly affected by works are informed about likely start dates and the duration of works, times etc.
- 11.3 The Neighbourhood Manager will write to inform groups whose bids were successful and those who were not successful, outlining why. The Neighbourhood Manager can reject a bid at this stage if the bid is not feasible, requires more information/detail or does not fit into the funding criteria.

## **12 The role of the Neighbourhood Housing Officer**

- 12.1 The Neighbourhood Housing Officer will work closely with the resident representatives to advise on the suitability of the proposed project, ensure that the majority of residents who have responded agree with the improvements / project and assess the possible maintenance implications of the proposal.
- 12.2 Prior to the application being made, the Neighbourhood Housing Officer will meet on site with resident representatives and (if required) a Surveyor to discuss the feasibility and agree details about any improvement scheme.
- 12.3 The Neighbourhood Housing Officer will support the group in acquiring quotes if required.
- 12.4 The Neighbourhood Housing Officer will advise the group on potential sources of alternative funding.



- 12.5 The Neighbourhood Housing Officer will be able to advise the group and if required support the consultation process and inform the group if Section 20 consultation or planning permission might be required at a later stage.
- 12.6 On project approval, the Neighbourhood Housing Officer will work with residents and relevant staff and contractors to facilitate successful delivery of the project.
- 12.7 The Neighbourhood Housing Officer, TRA representatives and Surveyor (if required) will meet on site on completion of the work to quality check.

### **13 The role of the Neighbourhood Manager**

- 13.1 On receipt of the application, the Neighbourhood Manager will liaise with the Neighbourhood Housing Officer to carry out an application assessment to ensure process has been satisfied and decision made in line with the guidance.
- 13.2 In carrying out the assessment, the Neighbourhood Manager will:
  - Ensure that the bid complies with the above rules and Camden's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
  - Decide if additional quotes are required
  - Carry out a basic check of any external suppliers of goods / services
  - Check that applications for events and activities are inclusive and open to all
  - Ensure that appropriate consultation has been carried out and take account of responses to the consultation
  - Obtain planning advice where appropriate. (Please note, planning is both time consuming and has costs attached, taking up to 8 weeks).
  - Consider any on-going maintenance implications of the works (Any scheme should not lead to increased maintenance costs to the Housing Revenue Account unless a specific budget provision for increased maintenance costs can be identified).

- Consult with the Better Homes and Regeneration Teams to ensure no duplication of planned improvements
- Obtain professional advice of colleagues Sometimes building control approval may be needed. This has a cost and requires properly prepared drawings
- Assess bids for health and safety / safeguarding
- Advise on alternative funding
- Take account of financial circumstances of TRA where money for a TRA hall is being requested and the TRA already receives an income
- If a TRA is holding significant reserves, the Neighbourhood Manager may propose that the group contribute a portion of the cost of the project

13.3 Neighbourhood Managers will work with the TRA at the application stage to resolve any issues that arise and assist in obtaining additional information where required.

13.4 The Neighbourhood Manager will provide comments on the application request that should be made available to DMCs at decision making meetings.

13.5 Where bids fail at assessment stage, at DMC or following section 151 consultation, Neighbourhood Managers will provide feedback to applicants.

13.6 The Neighbourhood Manager will monitor DMC spend in their area, request receipts where appropriate and monitor community projects and events against their original stated outcomes. They will provide a quarterly report to DMCs on spend against the budget and provide details about any bids rejected prior to presentation at DMC.

## **14 Role of the TRA and Financial Compliance**

14.1 The TRA will ensure that there are no undeclared financial conflicts of interest with their bid. For example, the employment or proposed commission of a company or business employing a family member or close associate of a TRA or DMC member in that District must be declared for transparency purposes.

## 15 Review process

15.1 The Tenant Participation Service will work with Landlord Services and TRAs to assess the success of these guidelines. Success will be measured via resident satisfaction and understanding of the DMC funding process, allocating the spending in a timely way and the perceived benefits of DMC schemes.

## 16 Complaints about the implementation of these guidelines

16.1 If any person believes that they have not been treated in accordance with the guidelines, or they are unhappy about anything related to the guideline, they may complain in accordance with Camden's Complaints Policy.

## 17 Guidelines author

Name	Role	Department
Graeme Beedham/ Hugh Boatswain	Head of Tenant Participation / STPO	Housing

**London Borough of Camden  
DMC budget request form**

Name of Tenants and Residents Association or group	
Address of group	
DMC area	
Group contact about application	
Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Name of project	
Description of project	

Why is the project needed?	
Funds held in TRA account	
Method of consultation	
Number of residents consulted	
Number of responses	
Summary of responses (those in favour and against)	



Neighbourhood Manager's Comments			
Estimated cost of project	Quote 1	Quote 2	Quote 3
Source of quote(s)			
Signed and dated			
Date submitted to DMC			