

# CRITERIA

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## The Luton Citizens' Fund

A participatory budgeting fund administered by

**Bedfordshire and Luton Community  
Foundation**

On Behalf of **Luton Council**

who are committed to equitable funding through The Fairness Taskforce



**Luton**

## PLEASE ENSURE YOU READ THIS SECTION AND MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS BEFORE YOU CONTINUE:

- You are **not-for-profit constituted group** with clear charitable aims and objectives to make a real difference to the people within the community.
- You have a **constitution or other governing document**.
- You have a committee of **at least three unrelated Trustees/Directors**. The majority must be unrelated individuals with no financial interest in the organisation.
- You are **not** applying for **retrospective costs**.
- You will be **supporting residents in at least one of the wards** in the area you are bidding for.
- You **are not** looking for a **direct replacement for your statutory obligation** and public funding.
- You **do not hold** a significant amount of free **financial reserves**.
- You **are not** using the funds for an **appeal, sponsoring, or raising funds** to redistribute to other causes.
- You are an organization with **under £250,000 budget per year** (excluding educational establishments)

If you've answered 'NO' to any of the questions above your organisation or proposed project is not eligible for this fund. You may want to get in touch with us on 01525 306 690 or [administrator@blcf.org.uk](mailto:administrator@blcf.org.uk) to see whether we can support you further, including offering advice or signposting you towards funds that you may be eligible for.

## INTRODUCTION

The Luton Citizens' Fund is administered by the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation (BLCF), on behalf of Luton Council (LBC) who are committed to equitable funding through The Fairness Taskforce.

The fund observes the principles of **Participatory Budgeting (PB)** which is a form of citizen participation in which citizens are involved in the process of deciding how public money is spent. Community involvement is at the core of its design and this fund will enable local residents to decide which community organisations should receive funding. For more background information please see Appendix A.

Through the fund **awards of up to £4,000** can be considered for organisations working to address themes linked to the Luton 2040 plan.

**Each of the 20 Wards in Luton will be split into 1 of 5 Areas, as outlined below:**

- **Central:** Beech Hill, Biscot, Dallow, Saints
- **North:** Barnfield, Bramingham, Northwell, Sundon Park
- **East:** Round Green, Stopsley, Wigmore, Vauxhaull
- **South:** Central, Farley, High Town, South
- **West:** Challney, Leagrave, Lewsey, Poets

## AIMS

Luton 2020-2040 is a town-wide vision built around a shared ambition that by 2040, **Luton will be a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.** For more information on the plan please visit Appendix B. One of the three underlying commitments at the heart of the **vision is to tackle inequality and build the town on fairness and social justice.** BLCF are working alongside the Fairness Task Force to identify and overcome structural barriers and enable all parts of the community to make a real difference by delivering this Participatory Budgeting programme.

BLCF are members of the Funders for Race Equality Alliance<sup>1</sup> network and as part of our commitment to being an equitable funder, we have agreed that all **eligible organizations serving communities experiencing racial inequity<sup>2</sup> and are also led by members of those communities (majority board and management staff)** will be fast-tracked to the participatory budgeting event days.

The Luton Citizen's Fund has 5 key thematic areas for 2023/24 which organisations can apply to:

- 1. A town built on Fairness and Social Justice**

This theme is for projects supporting and promoting equality, diversity and social inclusion.

- 2. Improving health inequalities**

This theme is to support groups who are working to improve health inequalities and the root causes of poverty across the town. This includes, but is not limited to, projects supporting people with their mental health and activities aimed at reducing obesity.

- 3. Improving the lives of Children and Young People**

Projects which help children and young people have an improved quality of life through education, play and home life. Some funding for this area has also been provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire and projects which empower young people to seek positive change can also apply.

- 4. Working towards carbon net-zero**

Funding will be made available to support groups in achieving net-zero carbon emissions and to support environmental projects.

- 5. A town that works for everyone**

Funding will be made available to support groups working in the work and skills sector, to improve access to work and educational attainment.

If your organisation is delivering multiple activities across the town, please speak to us on 01525 306 690 and we can advise.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.equallyours.org.uk/resources/funding-audit-current-practice-in-racial-justice-funding/>

<sup>2</sup> Communities experiencing racial inequity (Communities that experience inequity as a result of their race or ethnic group. Ethnic group refers to the group that people self-identify with, which may be related to their national/geographical origin, skin colours, and other identities [DEI Data Standard | Funders' Collaborative Hub](#))

## WHAT CAN THE GRANT BE USED FOR?

The grant can cover costs relating to the organisation of your activities, paying people who manage the work, volunteer costs, materials or equipment, advertising and promotional activities, costs associated with making the service/activity accessible and training. NB. If you are applying for core costs, for example utilities and rent, **this can only account for up to 10% of the overall project budget**. For example, if you are applying for £4,000 only £400 can be allocated to pay for core costs. If you are unsure about this, please contact us.

A top-up grant of £500 is available to groups who wish to opt in to creating a carbon-reduction plan. Organisations will work alongside the climate emergency team at Luton Council to produce and monitor their plan going forward. See Appendix C for more information.

## ELIGIBILITY

**We are only able to consider applications from not-for-profit constituted groups that have clear charitable aims. Applications from the following types of organisations/groups will be considered:**

- Registered UK charities, including charitable incorporated organisations.
- Constituted Community groups and small non-registered charities.
- Companies Limited by Guarantee with clear charitable aims and without share capital.
- Community Interest Companies Limited by Guarantee without share capital, social enterprises and community benefit societies (please review our guidance around CIC's and Social Enterprises before applying)
- Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs/PTFAs) and schools and nurseries where the funding is for extra-curricular activities and not replacing statutory funding.
- Churches and other religious organisations (if the funded activity is not for religious purposes)

If you are applying in partnership or as part of a consortium, the organisation that submits the bid will be known as the lead organisation and must be an eligible entity from the list above. This organisation will manage the funds and the outcome monitoring if successful. The lead organisation should have a signed partnership agreement with all the other organisations in the consortium. Please speak to a member of the Grants team in the first instance if you are looking to apply as a consortium/partnership.

You must be able to make a strong case for support or have evidence of need. N.B. Projects can only apply to one area and one themed funding area. Projects which demonstrate that they seek to build sustainable partnerships with others will have a better chance of success.

## INELIGIBILITY

**This fund is not open for applications from:**

- Applications where those benefiting do not live in the areas, as defined within this document above.
- National charities and their affiliates that are not providing clear local benefits.
- Individuals.
- Private Businesses, Commercial ventures, and 'Community Interest Companies limited by Shares'.
- Organisations or activities that promote political parties or the propagation of religion or conduct

of worship. (Religious organisations may apply for activities that demonstrate wider public benefit.)

- Organisations or activities which are inconsistent with public policy, i.e., the promotion of terrorism or of sectarian interests.
- Projects that should be funded from statutory sources.
- Applications from Local Authorities, Parish and Town Councils.
- Organisations that can't fully complete all sections of the grant application form, provide all other requested information and documents or who do not answer any subsequent questions put to them.
- Organisations that do not have a building society or bank account in the name of the organisation
- Organisations not based in Luton.
- Organisations with over £250,000 budget per year, excluding educational establishments like schools and nurseries.

Projects cannot apply for match funding from different pots within the Participatory Budgeting (PB) programme. Nor can projects apply for more than one pot of PB funding.

## **WORK THAT CANNOT BE SUPPORTED**

- Projects that were funded last year through the Luton Citizen Fund / Community Recovery Fund
- that are not substantially different.
- General appeals or sponsorship
- Work normally funded from statutory sources or undertaken by or on behalf of statutory bodies.
- Work undertaken by/on behalf of schools, colleges or universities as part of their statutory curricular activities.
- Work where the main beneficiaries are animals, and the project does not benefit people (e.g., horse-riding schemes for disabled people might be considered)
- Work which does not directly benefit people living in the area of benefit.
- Holidays, trips, or expeditions in the UK or overseas
- Retrospective grants i.e., for items already purchased or activity that has already started.
- Medical research and equipment for statutory or private healthcare
- Applications that support the furtherance of any one religion or political party
- Projects that cannot prove the public benefit (for example a project in a school which won't engage the wider public)

## **PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS AND EVENTS**

For grants of £1000 or under, funding decisions will be made by a community panel and members of the public will ratify the outcome. All applicants will be required to give a short, informal presentation (unless the request is for £1000 or under). A representative of each group **must be able to attend the public decision-making day related to the ward in which the project will take place**. Failure to do so will constitute removal from the process. The days will be co-chaired by 2 ward councillors who will be democratically elected by the members.

Each member of the public will be required to vote for a minimum of 5 projects for their vote to be valid. Individual votes will be cast electronically and privately. If you have concerns regarding attendance or presenting at these public events please speak to the BLCF Grants Team on 01525 306690 or Scott Griffwood on 07394 405 055.

## KEY DATES

|  |  |
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| Wednesday 6th September '23              | Call for applications  |
| Wednesday 13th September '23             | Online applications open                                       |
| Sunday 22nd October '23                  | Application submission deadline                                |
| W/C Monday 11th December '23             | Applicants invited to the appropriate PB decision-making event |
| Saturday 20th January '24                | Decision Days – either AM or PM                                |
| W/C Monday 29th January '24              | Applicants notified of outcomes and agreements sent out        |
| Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2024    | Terms and conditions to be returned and funds paid accordingly |
| Monday 15th July '24                     | Interim monitoring report due date                             |
| By Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> December '24 | Deadline for funds to be spent                                 |
| Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> January '25      | Final Monitoring report date                                   |

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS



The following supporting documents must be uploaded with your application alongside a **copy of the full budget breakdown for the project/activity:**

If you do not have an Equal Opportunity or Safeguarding policy, please get in touch before applying. If you are a start-up entity, please provide a draft set of accounts to date clearly showing income and expenditure. Your bank statement must be dated within the last 3 months and clearly show your sort code and account number. In case your organisation does not have a bank account, please contact BLCF in the first instance

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Successful organisations will be required to complete interim and end-of-project reports. We will be asking how the grant was spent, outcomes achieved, the difference the project has made, and any key issues and lessons learnt.

Applicant and monitoring data will be collected by BLCF. Contact details and some additional information will be shared with Luton Council as required in order for contact to be made about other events of interest and the development of activities under this programme, as well as for communications about the Climate action uplift fund.

All groups will be required to attend a Luton Citizen Fund Showcase in the autumn of 2024. More information will be circulated nearer that time.

Funded organisations should be willing to discuss the progress of the project over the phone as and when necessary, and to host visits from Luton Council and BLCF members of staff that will assist with learning and best practice. Before beginning the project, we suggest you consider:

- Who will write the end of grant monitoring form report
- What your aims and objectives are and how will you track progress against these
- What information you will collect

## ADDITIONAL INFO

All applications will be reviewed and are subject to basic assessment and relevant due diligence checks to determine eligibility by BLCF. A member of staff from BLCF may contact you to obtain further information if needed. We reserve the right to decline or accept any application in line with our grantmaking policy.

We would encourage all applicants to investigate other sources of funding and where possible seek match funding, this could be through their own fundraising efforts or via grants from other charitable trusts and organisations.

Your local CVS will be able to provide advice and guidance around alternative funding available, for Luton based organisations please visit [www.cvsbeds.org.uk](http://www.cvsbeds.org.uk) Only requests for funding made via the official online application form will be considered. The form can be accessed via our website under the appropriate grants tab: [www.blcf.org.uk](http://www.blcf.org.uk)

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities and to valuing diversity regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion/belief, culture, language, disability, learning difficulty, sexual orientation, marital status, economic status, health status, or any other discriminatory grounds. We expect your organisation to also be committed to the promotion of equality, cohesion, and inclusion.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

Participatory Budgeting (PB) was introduced in circa 2011 to Luton Council. Since then, successful decision day events have been held consistently with residents on an annual basis at ward and area levels. These have enabled local residents to decide which community organisations should receive grant funding to deliver community projects and services in their neighborhoods. PB has formed a key element of the ward councillors programme currently under the banner of 'Your Say, Your Way'. Most decision days, particularly in the earlier stages of the programme, have achieved a range of consistently positive outcomes:

- Providing support to smaller, local, grassroots VCS organisations and projects
- Positively involving a more diverse range of local citizens in local decision making
- Positioning Ward Councillors as community leaders and enablers and providing new for a where residents can learn about and connect with the Council's priorities.
- Offering funders and partners a direct means to include and involve residents and community organisations in their programmes.

Due to the pandemic, PB did not take place in 2020. LBC took the opportunity to **devise a new approach** to make better use of the participatory model, provide the required outcomes, use resources effectively and maximize outputs for the investments, and deliver on Council priorities.

### **Appendix B**

During the summer of 2020, residents and organisations in Luton and the surrounding areas were consulted through virtual consultation sessions and on-line surveys. The consultation raised several important points for strengthening the vision, including a greater focus on aspiration and inclusion by broadening the focus from no-one in poverty to one of thriving and prosperity for all and a greater emphasis on the short-term objectives of the vision. The vision document sets out how Luton Borough Council (LBC) will lay the foundations for our journey from 2020 to 2040 over the next five years. LBC will work together with residents and partners across Luton and the wider region to overcome the economic and health impacts of COVID-19, while beginning to deliver on our overall ambition for no-one in poverty by 2040.

### **Appendix C**

The Climate action uplift fund will provide an extra £500 per eligible organisation to create a carbon reduction plan as an additional element of this programme. A maximum of 30 grants are available and if more than 30 successful grant awardees have requested this uplift, a prioritization process will be used by the Council for selection.

Groups who are successful in being awarded the uplift will be invited to a 1-day session at end of February 2024 to discuss plans, best practice and receive hints and tips on creating a carbon-reduction plan with the carbon reduction team at Luton Council. They will then go away, produce a plan from the learning and this will be reviewed by the climate reduction team, and they will be invited for a 1-2-1 chat. Following agreement of the plan, it will start to be implemented alongside their Luton Citizen Fund



work. It isn't expected the full plan will be completed within this period, however, work should have started, and a reasonable amount completed, for groups to report back at a meeting convened by the Council in November 2024. The plan should be continued by the organisation post the closure of the fund.

Learning and findings of the participants will be created into a "how to" guide to be shared more widely to support others to reduce their carbon footprints.