

# **Small Sites for Small Builders: site release fund**

## **Funding guidance**

## **Key information**

Publication type: Funding guidance

Publication date: Monday 11 May 2026

Who can apply: public land owners and registered providers

What this fund supports: site investigations, due diligence and feasibility works for small sites that are intended for housing delivery

Project duration: full grant drawn down by March 2027

Award range: up to £250,000

Application deadline: 10 July 2026, 12pm

[Start new application](#)

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## **Background**

This page provides detailed information concerning the eligibility, requirements and structure of the latest iteration of the GLA Small Sites grant programme.

Please read the page carefully before submitting your application.

## **Eligibility**

Eligible organisations include:

- councils and wholly owned council housing delivery vehicles
- public landowners (including GLA Group)
- registered providers of social housing with small sites in their ownership.

Organisations can apply individually or as part of a consortium and must be qualified as a GLA investment partner to receive funding.

Sites must be in London and meet both criteria below:

- sites suitable for conventional housing under 0.25 hectares, as defined within the London Housing Strategy and the London Plan; and
- sites that can accommodate fewer than 100 homes.

The funding must be spent one or all of the categories below:

- site investigations
- due diligence
- feasibility studies.

Applications will need to demonstrate these are necessary to secure confidence in the suitability of housing delivery at the site.

## **Funding availability and payment structure**

### **Funding availability**

Funding is drawn down in two stages:

- 50 per cent in advance of work being carried out, when funding has been granted
- 50 per cent once site investigations, due diligence, and feasibility work has been completed and demonstrated.

These are the 'payment milestones' in OPS. The final grant will be released on evidence of achieving outcomes and delivering relevant outputs or reports with evidence uploaded to OPS. The payment milestones are set out below.

The GLA reserves the right to claw back funding where progress cannot be evidenced.

## **Funding timetable**

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## **Repayment**

If capital / other delivery funds are identified to progress a project, the GLA expects the grant funding to be repaid. The GLA will be able to recycle the grant to unlock further small sites.

Grant repayment is **conditional** on the project being capitalised. There is likely to be variation in how this is interpreted by different organisations in relation to CIPFA guidance. On OPS, there will be a requirement for bidders to insert the definition of this trigger point locally and define the date by which this milestone is expected to be achieved. Providing a defined point of potential capitalisation is a mandatory part of the application process.

The grant provided is revenue funding, but the GLA will accept capital repayment.

Repayment is expected to be after funding has been drawn down in full but at a stage prior to start on site. Should this milestone not be reached the grant will not need to be repaid.

## **Assessment**

### **Sites**

In order to demonstrate good strategic fit for the purposes of this funding offer, sites should align with at least one of the following considerations:

- Small sites that have a strong likelihood of reaching delivery stage to maximise the chance that grant is repayable, and sites that can be accelerated towards delivery in the short term.
- The strategic nature of the site for the landowner, for example, a site might face a particular blocker to delivery that is replicated across land portfolio leading to enhanced ability to replicate lessons learnt across other sites.

There is no limit to how many sites can be applied for by a single public landowner or RP however each needs to be applied for in separate OPS projects to enable repayment triggers to be site specific.

Applications on GLA OPS must be for individual sites and cannot be bundled together under one submission.

## **Progress**

OPS requires bidders to input bespoke project milestones. Milestones with historical dates should be used to capture any evidence of progress at time of bidding. Milestones with future dates can be used to set out the milestones that will lead a project to delivery stage including site investigations, due diligence, feasibility, governance, planning and procurement requirements.

This will demonstrate how far progressed a site is towards delivery. The GLA will undertake monitoring until the project is abandoned or reaches delivery and triggers repayment of grant.

## **Milestones**

- Project awarded funding [50 per cent of grant allocation].
- Due-diligence consultants appointed.
- Surveys required for the site.
- Completion of due diligence [50 per cent of grant allocation].
- Letter confirming final decision for site.
- Capitalisation of site [triggers repayment of grant].
- Site uploaded to the portal, unless otherwise agreed.

## **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

The programme actively seeks to support new sites for supported and specialist housing provision, diverse approaches to delivery partnerships for housing delivery and SMEs to benefit from these opportunities. Submissions may address any of these points in relationship to the EDI bid criteria.

For clarity, general needs housing is also supported, so bidders looking for support on site intended to support general needs housing are also invited to bid.

## Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed by the GLA against the criteria and weightings outlined below.

### Main submission

Evaluation: 80 per cent and discretionary pass/fail

Table - Main submission evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria	Questions in OPS blocks	Weighting
<b>A) Strategic fit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• site overview</li> <li>• proposal</li> </ul>	2	30 per cent
<b>B) Deliverability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery strategy</li> <li>• progress to date                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• milestones</li> </ul> </li> <li>• project costs</li> </ul>	3, 4, 5	40 per cent
<b>C) EDI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• successful consideration of key issues and integration with project delivery</li> </ul>	6	10 per cent

### Financial submission

Evaluation: 20 per cent

Table - Financial submission evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria	Weighting
<b>D) The lowest tender (L) will receive the maximum price score of 100. All other tenders (Ln) will receive a price score relative to the lowest tender (L/Ln x 100). The final score for all tenders will be according to the weighting (20 per cent x price score).</b>	20 per cent

Example of financial scoring:

Table - Financial scoring example

Tender	Price (£)	Price Score	Price Weighting	Final Financial Score
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Tender 1	150	90	20 per cent	18
Tender 2	200	67.5	20 per cent	13.5
Tender 3	250	54	20 per cent	10.8
Tender 4	135	100	20 per cent	20

## Scoring criteria

Table - Scoring criteria

Score	Grade	Criteria
1	Poor	Submission lacks relevance or understanding of strategic fit. Very limited or no evidence provided. Key areas not addressed or misunderstood.
2	Fair	Basic understanding evident but weak or unclear in several areas. Some relevant evidence provided, but lacks depth or breadth. Limited insight provided.
3	Good	Meets expectations. Provides relevant and competent evidence. Shows a working understanding of all elements of the project.
4	Very Good	Strong evidence provided. Demonstrates clear insight, relevant experience, and strong alignment. Good understanding of all elements of the project.
5	Excellent	Outstanding submission. Fully addresses all areas with excellent, relevant, and detailed evidence. Demonstrates exceptional strategic thinking, cross-sector leadership, and governance acumen. Inspires confidence in ability to deliver project effectively.

## Contract and legal considerations

### Grant agreement

Successful projects will be required to enter into a standard form of grant agreement with the GLA for delivery of projects supported by this fund.

The form of grant agreement is non-negotiable. Proposed milestones and outputs provided by organisations as part of their bids will be incorporated into funding contracts. In addition to formal reporting on GLA OPS, the grant recipients will commit to attending regular meetings with the GLA to report on the progress of the due diligence surveys and update on any emerging risks or issues.

If sites are progressed through capitalisation/direct delivery or disposal, GLA will monitor the planning application and outcome, the S106 agreement and the progress of build on site. The grant recipient will commit to providing this information when requested on a reasonable basis.

### Know your customer (contract stage)

Know Your Customer (KYC) checks will be required prior to entering into grant funding agreements.

‘Know Your Customer’ checks ensure the GLA is dealing with genuine individuals and organisations and help identify suspicious behaviour or practices.

Depending on the level of grant awarded to a grant recipient there may be additional checks that comply with GLA’s guidance of Due Diligence principles.

Grant recipients must comply with all KYC requirements and other due diligence requirements that the GLA asks for.

## **Subsidy control (contract stage)**

Prior to entering into grant funding agreements the GLA is required to check whether you will have received subsidies which, when combined with the proposed Funding (but excluding subsidies given in compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 other than under section 36 and/or section 38 of the Subsidy Control Act and/or Article 364(4) and Article 365(3) of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union, European Atomic Energy Community and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, exceeds the MFA threshold of £315,000 cumulated over this and the previous two financial years.

Please note if you are part of a group of companies your declaration will need to relate to all subsidy or public funds received by all entities within that group for these purposes.

## **Small Sites Small Builders Revenue Funding Agreement template for 2026-27**

127.13 KB

[Download PDF](#)

## **Questions**

If you have any queries prior to the Open Project System (OPS) launch, please email [smallsites@london.gov.uk](mailto:smallsites@london.gov.uk).

Once bidding is opened on OPS, clarification questions should be made through the relevant section of the platform.

## **Questions submitted for clarification**

Below are the questions we have received since opening the grant programme in May. The questions and answers have been edited for clarity and to avoid overlap and duplication.

**How much funding is available per site? Is it £250k per site or is the £250k to be spread across several sites?**

£250k is the total value of the programme. The GLA does not prescribe exactly how much funding is available per site. However, we have issued value for money guidance in the applicant information webpages and urge prospective applicants to keep this in mind when submitting their applications.

Historically, projects have received approximately £20k per site, depending on the number of surveys and complexity of the site. The exact level of funding is expected to vary from site to site.

**Do we batch applications on GLA OPS or submit the sites individually?**

We require the sites to be submitted individually, regardless of which teams submit them. We are doing this because of feedback from boroughs that sites under the same OPS entry were more difficult to manage and cause delays in drawing down cash for sites that have been delivered, when combined with sites that had delays. We will not dock points if there is repetition of the narrative between applications.

**Is the funding only for sites that we own, and then must dispose of? Or can we use it on sites we own and want to develop ourselves for social rent?**

The programme was initially designed for the disposal of sites through the Small Builders Portal. This was done to ensure that we could support the creation of a marketplace linking small builders and land typically suitable for them to develop. However, we recognise that sometimes councils will want to undertake direct delivery, for example to create TA or social rent etc. We have allowed this in the past, but ask then for evidence that there is a strategy in place for supporting SMEs.

By doing this, we are still able to ensure that we meet both our programme objectives of supporting residential development and strengthening the SME sector.

**If the site is disposed of and developed by a 3rd party, would we still be eligible to receive the grant funding?**

Yes, sites developed by a third-party following disposal is eligible – disposal through the GLA small sites portal for disposal is the core use case of the programme.

A key aspect of the SSSB programme is the disposal of sites through the portal to support SME builders. Your application should therefore show consideration, evidence or targets linked to how the GLA funding the extension of the licence would benefit SME builders. E.g. would a number of sites still be disposed of through

the portal or are there other levers you have to ensure SMEs are included through the project.

**For the 2026 small sites funding round, are mixed use proposals acceptable? Or are you looking at 100% housing projects only.**

You may submit proposals that are intended for mixed used as long as residential developments are present in the proposal. The programme will evaluate, as set out in the criteria, how many homes are proposed. However, we will also look at the wider strategic fit of the development in the council programme.

**We have sites where we need to instruct surveys urgently. Can we apply for funding for sites where we've already instructed surveys?**

You can apply for funding, but we would expect a strong narrative for the value add of us funding these sites over other applications, if work has already been instructed. Consider how this will feed into your value for money argument.

**Are we able to use the grant to pay for a Renkap subscription to assist with the commissioning of surveys?**

We are open to funding this through the SSSB programme, however, we would need to be convinced of a strong VFM argument, linked to number of sites that would be disposed of through the portal, and therefore supporting SMEs.

**The guidance states that full grant draw down is expected by March 2027. What work has to be completed to fulfil this requirement? And can the other milestones be later in the capitalisation survey?**

The March 2027 milestone refers to the completion of the technical surveys and due diligence, but not the capitalisation or disposal of the site. We will announce the outcome of the grant in September and will expect all surveys to be completed over a 6 month period. Should there be any delays, we will work with the boroughs to renegotiate the timelines. Deliverability to the timescale is one of the factors we will look at when moderating.

When completing your application on GLA OPS, you can and should input milestones for capitalisation and completion after the March 2027 point, as we do not expect final decisions to be made at this point.

**The way capitalisation is described seems to be more focused on direct delivery of a site. What is the moment of capitalisation?**

We will expect the repayment to be at capitalisation or point of sale, whichever is sooner. In the GLA OPS application we ask applicants to report how capitalisation is defined locally in their organisation, recognising that organisations manage their budgets differently.

**If there is a delay in reaching the repayment milestone, is there an ultimate point after which capitalisation is not expected anymore (eg after 5 years or so), even if the project continues after this point?**

There is no set end date, but please refer to the timelines indicated on the webpages and the template contract. The GLA reserves the right to claw back funding if sites are not delivered in accordance with the contract.

**What evidence would the GLA expect to see if the site is developable and therefore grant is repayable? Similarly what evidence would the GLA like to see if not developable?**

If a site can't be brought forward due to the surveys finding it undeliverable, we will consider the requirement fulfilled. However, if the site isn't brought forward for example due to changing priorities by the council etc. we will either ask for the council to identify a replacement site and carry our due diligence and disposal, or we can ask for the funding to be returned. This will typically happen through a discussion with the landowner.

The evidence required to be uploaded to OPS is:

- The surveys executed as part of the programme
- Paper trail of internal decision making, e.g. cabinet/programme papers.

The decision on whether the site is developable will be reached jointly. Due to the complex range of surveys and due diligence that's in scope for the programme, it's impossible for the GLA to predefine what constitutes "developable". We will act in good faith and discuss the progression jointly with the borough through our check in meetings. However, it's worth noting that a change in priorities, e.g. political council decisions or a desire to use the land for non-residential development does not constitute the site being "undevelopable".

**And in the event of a nil-receipt, will you still require repayment of the grant?**

If an organisation disposes of the site nominally, we will still require the repayment of the grant. The purpose of the grant is to de-risk the expenditure on surveys should sites not be deliverable.

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