



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government



Homes &  
Communities  
Agency

# Housing Infrastructure Fund

Forward Funding: Online Expression of Interest guide



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# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose of this document.....	1
Responses .....	1
Changes to information .....	1
Format of responses .....	2
Eligibility of Applications.....	2
Accuracy of Information .....	2
<b>Expression of Interest online form .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Format.....	2
Bid details.....	3
Contact details .....	4
Scheme details .....	4
Delivery milestones .....	4
Financials .....	5
Development Profile.....	6
Options Appraisal.....	7
Strategic Approach .....	7
Plan Status.....	8
Approach to Delivery KIRK .....	8
<b>Summary screen .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Saving your bid .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Attaching documents .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Submitting your expression of interest.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Ranking your bid .....</b>	<b>11</b>

# Introduction

## Purpose of this document

This guide is for those Local Authorities interested in submitting Expressions of Interest (EOI) for 'Forward Funding' schemes as part of the Housing Infrastructure Fund. It provides support and guidance to complete the online Expression of Interest form. The document accompanies the 'Quick Start Guide' and the EOI online form.

This guide should also be read in conjunction with the prospectus and the detailed guidance document for Forward Funding which sets out more detail on the bidding process and timetable. These documents can be found on the Housing Infrastructure Fund [webpage](#) or by searching for 'Housing Infrastructure Fund' via [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

The EOI online form seeks to obtain information to enable the assessment of the suitability of the proposed scheme to identify a shortlist of proposals to take forward into co-development.

The deadline for submission of your EOI is **11:59pm on 28<sup>th</sup> September**.

If you have any queries, you should contact us at 0300 1234 500 or email [HIF@hca.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HIF@hca.gsi.gov.uk).

## Responses

Before completing and submitting their responses, applicants should read the prospectus, supporting guidance for Forward Funding and all instructions contained within this document carefully as these relate to key information to be submitted through the online form.

Failure to comply with these requirements for completion and submission may result in a non-compliant bid and rejection of the application.

It is recommended that applicants complete their Outline Delivery Plan prior to completing the online form to ensure that the data submitted is consistent between the two. Where the two are not the same, the data entered in the online form will take precedence.

Applicants must ensure that they respond carefully and in full to each of the questions asked to enable a completed online form to be submitted. The application must include a response to each question in the format prescribed in accordance with the prompts. Where incomplete or invalid information is entered, appropriate prompts will be displayed to aid verification of the input error.

Bids can only be submitted via the online form only which is available through the HCA Partner Portal. Guidance on how to access the Portal can be found in the Quick Start Guidance on the Housing Infrastructure Fund [webpage](#).

## Changes to information

If changes occur after the EOI has been submitted but before the deadline, then you will

need to contact us via the email address [HIF@hca.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HIF@hca.gsi.gov.uk) as you will not be able to access your EOI once submitted. We will 'unsubmit' your EOI so that it can be amended as required and resubmitted. Upon your EOI being 'unsubmitted' by us, you will receive an automated email notifying you that you can make changes and re-submit. You do not need to complete and send in another online form.

If changes are notified after the EOI submission deadline, the Agency reserves the right not to accept any late alterations.

## Format of responses

Applicants are requested to submit one online form and supporting documentation per proposal. There are no limits to how many proposals will be accepted however not all proposals will be assessed. Initially only 'rank 1' bids will be assessed against our criteria. We may then assess the authority's lower priority bids in ranked order. Further details on bid ranking can be found in the 'Ranking your bid' section of this document.

The required supporting documentation will be requested throughout the online form and will include:

- site plan(s) for the proposal
- site valuations (if available)
- confirmation of local support
- Outline Delivery Plan

All EOIs submitted will receive an automated email to acknowledge receipt.

## Eligibility of Applications

Expressions of Interest from local authorities will be accepted providing they meet the eligibility criteria set out in the prospectus, which is available on the Housing Infrastructure Fund [webpage](#).

## Accuracy of Information

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all the information supplied in their response is up-to-date and accurate. Failure to provide clear and unambiguous information may result in the application being considered as incomplete or ineligible. Applicants should ensure that data in the Outline Delivery Plan and other supporting documents are consistent with that completed via the online form. Where there is any inconsistent data, the data entered in the online form will take precedence.

# Expression of Interest online form

## Format

The accompanying 'Quick Start Guide' sets out how to register on the HCA Partner Portal – and how to create an Expression of Interest.

As per the prospectus only the **uppermost tiers** can apply for Forward Funding – this

includes: The Greater London Authority, Combined Authorities and single and upper tier authorities, where they are **outside London and combined authority areas**.

The online form is in sections which must be completed in full before being submitted, namely:

- Bid details
- Contact details
- Scheme details
- Delivery Milestones
- Financials
- Development Profile
- Options Appraisal
- Strategic Approach
- Plan Status
- Approach to Delivery

It is recommended that questions are answered in the order they appear. This is to avoid generating error messages. Please ensure all mandatory fields are completed - this will require you to enter "0" in some fields where no value is relevant.

If you wish to see an overview of your bid at any stage of writing your bid you can do so by clicking 'Summary' at the top right of any screen. Further details on the summary screen are detailed in 'Summary screen' section of this document.

Please email us via [HIF@hca.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HIF@hca.gsi.gov.uk) or contact us on 0300 1234 5000 if you have any queries about how to complete the form.

## Bid details

This section is intended to ensure the Local Authority is eligible to apply for the funding type and whether the bid is being made jointly between a number of local authorities. Local authorities are encouraged to submit joint bids where they will unlock additional housing at scale.

If the option to select 'Forward Funding' is greyed out after selecting your authority, your authority is not eligible to make a bid of this type. For Forward Funding, the bidder must be the uppermost tier as referenced above. If you are a constituent member of a combined authority then the combined authority, you are in is the uppermost tier. For non-constituent members, the combined authority will not count as your uppermost tier.

The online form can be completed on behalf of an eligible authority **providing** it has the consent of that authority. In these instances, it is expected that a letter of support will be attached from the eligible authority in the 'Strategic Approach' section of the online form.

### Joint bids

All joint bids require a single local authority to be identified as the lead bidding authority ('lead bidder'). The lead bidder must be eligible for the type of funding being requested and must be selected as the authority making the bid on the form. Other authorities that are party to the bid can be entered on the form (detailed below). The identified lead bidding authority will be responsible for determining how to rank the proposal in order of priority with any other bids they make.

To list the other members of the joint bid, please select 'yes' to the question 'Is it a joint bid with other authorities'. You will then be able to select which local authorities these are by typing the name of the local authority and clicking 'Add', you are able to add multiple local authorities through this process.

## Contact details

Please provide contact details for the lead contact making the bid. As a default the fields will be populated with the contact details provided when registering with the Partner Portal. You will have the ability to update your details if these are not correct.

If you are an agent or consultant, applying on behalf of a local authority, you will need to indicate as such here, and provide details of a named contact at the local authority.

## Scheme details

In this section, applicants are required to provide some headline summary information about the proposal. As part of our assessment of your Expression of Interest, it is critical we can understand: what your proposal is (through a brief summary); what infrastructure government is being asked to fund; and where the scheme is located.

**Polygons** – please indicate where the scheme is located using the map tool. It is especially important that if the scheme crosses local authority boundaries that this is made clear in your polygon(s). You are able to draw multiple polygons if you wish.

To use the polygon please follow the below guidance:

- Before drawing, use Pan and Zoom to get you to the right location:
  - Pan by holding the cursor down and dragging the map
  - Zoom by using the + and – icons in the top left hand corner
- When you're ready to draw, a left mouse click will begin your boundary line. To complete the shape and save it, either double-click on the last point of the line, or click once on the first point of the line.
- If you want to stop whilst drawing, a right mouse click will stop drawing and delete the line.
- When your shape is completed, you can edit the points in the boundary line by selecting each one and dragging to a new position.
- To add more sites, repeat the above process.
- The 'Clear polygon' function will delete all shapes from the map.

**Attachments** – using this box, you will be required to attach a site plan of the infrastructure proposal. You will have the opportunity to review this attachment later, and make any changes if necessary. You will be able to attach multiple site plans if required.

## Delivery milestones

In this section, applicants are required to provide details of the planning status for the

infrastructure works related to the proposal and indicative dates for achieving key milestones related to the proposal. If a milestone has already been achieved, please provide this date.

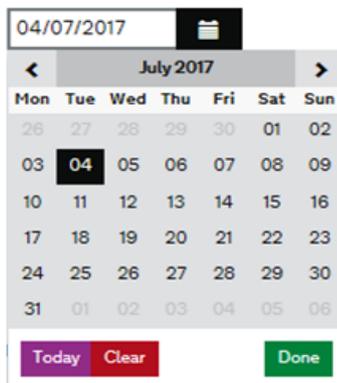
If your proposal requires multiple infrastructure planning permissions, please indicate the date when the last relevant permission will be achieved.

### Inputting dates

When inputting a milestone date you will either be able to type the date into the box or you can use the calendar function on the right hand side of the date box.

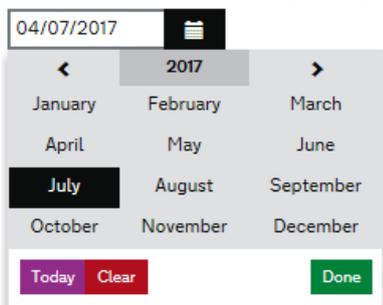
You can use the date box as follows:

Development partner appointed (Housing)



The calendar pop-up will show the current month at first – you can then click the right or left arrows to move between months.

Development partner appointed (Housing)



If the date required is further than the next one or two months, a quicker way to find the date is by clicking the Month/Year box at the top of the calendar (in this case 'July 2017'). Once clicked, this will then take you to the whole year overview. By clicking the right or left arrows you will be able to move between the years. You can then choose a specific date within the month by clicking on the relevant month.

Development partner appointed (Housing)



Again if the date required is further than the next on or two years, you can click the top middle box (in this case '2017') which will take you to the years in a 20 year range. By clicking the right or left arrows you will be able to move between 20 year periods. You can then choose a specific date by clicking on the relevant year, then month within the year.

## Financials

This section will cover all details of project financials relating to your application, including: funding requirement from the Housing Infrastructure Fund; the total costs of the infrastructure; funding sources and considerations around recovery of the funding (to be retained locally).

### Total Costs

When providing details of costs related to the proposal please only include **infrastructure costs** and not any relating to housing development.

### Other public funding applied for

Please detail any other public funding applied for and the status of the application – whether it is still being considered, rejected or confirmed/received.

### Funding Sources

When filling out this section, you will need to highlight how much of the funding sources has been secured (this includes committed). For example, if the proposal includes £10 million of funding from the Local Authority, of which £5m has been committed the please fill in as follows:

	Total amount	Amount secured	Not applicable
Local authority investment	£10,000,000	£5,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Funding Recovery

The Housing Infrastructure Fund will enable local authorities to recycle the funding for other infrastructure schemes, please provide details of how any recovered funding will be used.

## Development Profile

In this section, applicants are required to provide details of the sites and subsequent housing that will benefit from the infrastructure provision.

### Location of homes

Please provide a breakdown of the lower or single tier local authorities where the homes will be delivered. This may be different to where the bidding entity is – for example where another authority is meeting another’s housing needs. The denominations given must add up to the total number of homes being delivered within the site(s). The total calculation will be done automatically and is not editable.

### Planning Status

Please provide either outline or detailed planning references for the housing if achieved. Multiple references can be given.

### Projected housing delivery

Please provide details of the number of homes delivered in the given ranges (these should not be cumulative).

### Explanation for homes delivered without HIF funding

Please provide supporting commentary of how many homes could be delivered without HIF funding. For example, this may be due to planning restrictions limiting the amount of homes without further infrastructure provisions.

### Site Valuations

Specific site valuations are not mandatory – you can attach these if you have them available to support your proposal. If specific site valuations are not available or not sufficiently robust, the Department’s published estimates are to be used in calculating land value uplift. This will form part of the value for money assessment of your proposal.

## Options Appraisal

In this section, the applicant will be required to demonstrate the rationale for requesting funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. This will include why the funding is required, what other options or funding streams have been considered and what would happen if your bid is not successful.

Considerations in this section should be given to:

- Why HIF funding is right for the proposal - what the market failure is that has resulted in funding being required.
- Other options available – HIF funding should not displace other sources of funding available. Bids should demonstrate what other alternatives have been looked at and why these are not suitable.
- Why the scheme could not happen without the support of the Fund.

## Strategic Approach

In this section, applicants are asked to set out how their scheme meets the strategic ambition for the Fund. Applicants should use the information in the supporting documents and prospectus to inform their answers.

We recognise that an ambitious approach will look different for every area. Therefore, applicants should demonstrate evidence-based understanding of the local housing needs, and how this bid will support the delivery of an ambitious housing solution for their area.

### SME definition

For the purpose of defining an SME we use the EC definition:

*A small or medium-sized enterprise, is defined as a business or company:*

- *that has fewer than 250 employees; and*
- *has either (a) annual turnover not exceeding €50 million (approximately £40 million) or (b) an annual balance-sheet total not exceeding €43 million (approximately £34 million); and*
- *of whose capital or voting rights, 25 per cent or more is not owned by one enterprise, or jointly by several enterprises, that fall outside this definition of an SME. This threshold may be exceeded in the following two cases: (a) if the enterprise is held by public investment corporations, venture capital companies or institutional investors provided no control is exercised either individually or jointly, or (b) if the capital is spread in such a way that it is not possible to determine by whom it is held and if the enterprise declares that it can legitimately presume that it is not owned as to 25% or more by one enterprise, or jointly by several enterprises, falling outside the definitions of an SME*

### Evidence of support

You are encouraged to provide relevant evidence of support from the named parties. Where evidence is not available (as it has not been sought or is being awaited), we encourage you to provide further details. You will not be required to provide reasoning if you believe the named party's support is not relevant to the scheme – for example, if your scheme is not of a scale where the Local MP might be expected to provide written support.

As a combined or county authority, we would like to see support from the lower tier authorities that the infrastructure and housing would impact. For joint bids, we would

expect to see evidence of support from the other local authorities involved in the proposal.

We are not prescriptive in the form of evidence required to be attached but examples could include written letters of support, scheme promotion material demonstrating how you are working with the local community, collaboration agreements with other relevant local authorities or communication between supportive development partners.

**To note: The maximum attachment size is 5MB per document – there is no limitation on the cumulative size of attachments.**

## Plan Status

In this section, applicants are required to provide information regarding the plan status (either a development plan or spatial development strategy) in the area where the housing will be built.

If an adopted plan is more than five years old, you will be required to provide further information on what is being done to review the plan.

If a plan has not been submitted or adopted, you will be required to describe how funding will release otherwise undeliverable sites, and how that will speed up getting the plan in place

## Approach to Delivery

In this section, applicants will need to outline how they propose to deliver the infrastructure and homes. Through this and other sections of the business case, you will be able to address the following points set out in the Supporting Document for Forward Funding:

- the strength of the overall development strategy;
- the progress made to date;
- the position around land ownerships and control;
- the planning status;
- the strength of active commitment from key partners and delivery bodies;
- the project management and governance approach;
- the understanding of key delivery risks and their mitigations;
- the number of critical dependencies, especially those outside of the local authority's direct control; and
- the nature of the local housing market and why the proposed delivery approach suits that market.

You should also attach an Outline Delivery Plan as part of your supporting documentation.

### Outline Delivery Plan

The Outline Delivery Plan should set out the overall plan for delivery of the infrastructure and homes, progress to date, including details of any engagement with government departments, the proposed delivery team and any other relevant information. This document will be a key part of the assessment of deliverability. The template is available on the HIF [webpage](#) on GOV.UK.

**To note: we will only accept an Outline Delivery Plan completed in this format.**

## Summary screen

You will be able to see an overview of your answers at any stage of the process through a bid summary screen which can be accessed by:

- Clicking on 'Summary' (top right of the screen) from any screen of an open bid;
- Clicking on the bid reference number from the 'Your enquiries' screen for open and submitted bids. Details of this screen are available in Submitting your Expression of Interest.

Through the summary screen, you will be able to access each part of the form to view or make changes by clicking on 'Change' to the right hand side of each section. Pages that have all the necessary information have a green checkmark  next to them. Unfinished pages will have a red cross .

From this screen, you will be able to save down, or print a copy, of your application by clicking the 'Export to PDF' button at the top right of the screen and a PDF version of your bid will be generated. This can be done whether your bid is open or has been submitted.

## Saving your bid

As you complete the online form, it will automatically save when you press 'continue' at the bottom of the screen. At that point, it will save all details input on the screen, providing there are no validation errors highlighted. Pressing 'Save and exit' will take you out of the bid and enable you to go back into it later.

The enquiry form will 'time out' 20 minutes after each new page is loaded. The system will autosave any information entered on the screen at the point of timeout. However, it is recommended that you 'Save and exit' your bid if you will not be actively filling in your enquiry for a prolonged period of time.

You can click "Save and exit" on any screen (apart from the submission page) which will take you to a list of your bids ('Your enquiries').

Bids can be amended any time up until the point of submission. Please ensure that you are happy with the content of your bid before you proceed to submission (see the 'Changes to information' section for further details).

## Attaching documents

You will be prompted throughout the form to attach required supporting documents for the sections.

To upload a document, you can drag a document straight into the box 'Drop new files here or click to select' or click on the box which will open up a window from where you will be able to search for and attach the required document. You will need to name your upload and click the 'Add' button before your document can be uploaded.

**To note: your document will not have uploaded unless 'Add' has been clicked.**

You will have the ability to view and amend the attachments, if needed, at the end of the form. All bids must include the mandatory documents listed below; you will not be able to submit your bid without these.

- site plan(s)
- Outline Delivery Plan

You are also encouraged to support any relevant supporting documentation as part of the 'Strategic Approach' section of and site valuations (if available) in the 'Development Profile' section.

**To note: The maximum attachment size is 5MB per document – there is now limitation on the cumulative size of attachments.**

## Submitting your Expression of Interest

You will not be able to submit your bid until all sections of the form have been completed. You should also ensure that you have attached all the supporting documents that you wish to submit alongside your online form. It should be noted that attachments cannot be made or amended after the bid has been submitted. The system will highlight any omissions or errors in your form and these will need to be addressed before the submission is completed.

To submit your EOI, please tick the box entitled 'Please tick to confirm you are happy to submit this bid based on the above' and press 'Submit enquiry'. By ticking the box, you are confirming that you meet the core eligibility criteria defined and that you accept the terms detailed in the prospectus and supporting documents. You will not be able to submit your bid until this box is checked. Please note: this is an irrevocable action so you should check your bid thoroughly before submission as once submitted no further edits are possible.

All EOIs submitted will receive an automated email to acknowledge receipt.

You can view your submitted application(s) by logging back into the bidding system via the HIF [webpage](#). Once logged in, you will be able to see an overview of all bids you have made (whether submitted or started) on the 'Your enquiries' screen. Please note: only the bids made under the specific Partner Portal ID will be visible and not any made by the same Local Authority.

To view the submitted bid, you will need to click the bid reference on the left hand side where you will be taken to a summary page of your bid ('View your answers'). You will be able to view the individual screens by clicking 'view' on right hand side of the relevant section. To save down, or print a copy, of your submission click the 'Export to PDF' button at the top right of the screen and a PDF version of your bid will be generated.

You can also view and download the attachments you have uploaded in your application by going into the relevant screens via the 'View your answers' page.

To view any other bids (either open or submitted), please click the 'Your enquiries' button on the top left of the 'View your answers' screen.

## Ranking your bid

If local authorities put in multiple bids they will be required to rank the bids they submit in order of priority. When we assess bids against our criteria, we will look at the highest priority bid first. We may then assess the authority's lower priority bids in ranked order.

**Guidance of how you will be able to rank your bids will be made available on the Housing Infrastructure Fund [webpage](#) on GOV.UK.**

**To note: For Forward Funding bids, it is the uppermost tier's responsibility for ranking all the bids in their area. If you are a constituent member of a combined authority, then the combined authority you are within will be responsible for ranking all Forward Funding bids under. For non-constituent members the combined authority will not be responsible for ranking and it will be the responsibility of the uppermost tier.**

***YOU ARE REMINDED THAT YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 11:59PM ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2017.***