

# City Living Local Life:

CITY LIVING  
LOCAL LIFE

a quick start guide for councillors



Making City Living, Local Life happen  
in your ward in three easy steps

## Step one: What is City Living, Local Life?

Launched in 2011, City Living, Local Life is a councillor led, ward-based initiative committed to building stronger connections between people in local areas. It enables residents and community groups to take a lead role in bringing about practical, positive change in their neighbourhoods. The aim is to build on what is already going on in communities, encouraging local people to come forward with their experiences of neighbourhood issues and working with ward councillors to come up with solutions.



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# The five aims

Councillors are at the heart of City Living, Local Life from consultation to delivery, working closely with residents to achieve the scheme's five aims:

- A.** enhance **understanding** of local areas (including history, geography, demography, local assets and community resources)
- B.** build stronger **connections** and **relationships** within communities (networking within and beyond ward boundaries)
- C.** identify, assess and prioritise **improvements**
- D.** devise **practical** solutions that **engage** and **involve** local people
- E.** work with local people and organisations to **deliver** those solutions (funding, organisational support, experience, training, project planning, coordination and monitoring)

Each three-member ward will have access to up to £20,000 each year, with two-member wards being able to access up to £14,000. The money is not intended to be 'enough' to solve all problems, but rather to kick-start community ideas, and can often act as 'seed-funding' to allow projects to seek additional support from other sources.

This provision also ensures that a variety of groups can apply for City Living, Local Life funding.

There is no limit to the number of projects that may be funded and there is no maximum or minimum that can be allocated to a project, providing it does not exceed the total available ward budget.

## Case study: community consultation

### Holland Ward

In order to foster a sense of resident ownership over community activity, councillors in Holland Ward commissioned a survey of residents in order to gather views on local priorities and ideas for projects. This was also an opportunity to collect the contact details of residents in the ward who were interested in being involved in the initiative.

Residents were given the option of completing a questionnaire on paper, online or from their Smartphone. The results of the survey allowed Holland councillors to identify community gardens, community events and outreach to older people as priorities within the ward, helping to shape ward spending.

Community consultation ensures that spending decisions reflect the needs of the local area, bringing councillors and residents into working partnerships to respond to local priorities.

A toolkit on organising and holding resident engagement events is available from the Community Engagement Team website.





# Step two: How does it work?

**Supported throughout by Council officers, the allocation of funding typically follows this process:**

Councillors consult with their ward residents to identify needs, key community issues and local goals which could be addressed as part of City living, Local Life.

This can take place through ward surveys, public meetings and events or by encouraging residents to approach their ward councillors with ideas and suggestions.

A resident or community group approaches their ward councillor or the Community Engagement Team with an idea for project.

With guidance from City living, Local Life support officers, the resident or organisation submits an application form either by post or online.

The completed application form is assessed by City Living, Local Life officers and ward councillors, according to its sustainability, how well it meets local priorities and the five aims of the initiative.

Once all two or three ward councillors have approved the application via e-mail or signature, the project is funded.

Once projects have been funded, groups are expected to keep records of how the project or activity is running, including expenditure, and to provide officers and councillors with updates on their progress.

**For more information on support and guidance, please see back page.**



## Multi-ward projects

Councillors may wish to collaborate across ward boundaries where this offers the best way to address local issues and priorities. For example, a project may be delivered in multiple wards, or it may affect residents from neighbouring wards.

There are a number of benefits in applying for multi-ward funding, such as economies of scale, access to more resources and infrastructure, and the ability to expand or adapt projects more easily.

Multi-ward applications can be complex and more time-consuming than single ward applications. More guidance is available from the Community Engagement Team.

## How can the money be used?

Projects and initiatives supported by City Living, Local Life funding should meet an identified need in the ward, as demonstrated by evidence gathered through local consultation.

In 2013, City Living, Local Life contributed around £195,000 to fund 141 projects across 17 wards, reflecting differing circumstances at ward level, including:

- life coaching for local residents in **St. Charles**
- washing machines installation at a drop-in centre for the homeless in **Royal Hospital**
- St. Helen's Community Festival in **Notting Barns**
- IT training courses for Moroccan women in **Golborne**
- a review of a conservation area in **Abingdon**
- young person development programme in **Norland**
- a series of social activities to tackle isolated older people in **Campden**

For more detailed case studies of recently funded projects, take a look at the Annual Report 2013.

City Living, Local Life funds shouldn't be spent on any politically motivated projects, or on any projects at odds with general Council policy and procedures.

## Communication and accountability

Councillors are accountable to local voters for the ways in which their City Living, Local Life funds are spent. An important part of this accountability is effective communication through:

- an annual report and public events for residents and stakeholders
- update reports to relevant Council meetings
- an online, fully searchable, up-to-date account of all ward spending to date
- regular updates on City Living, Local Life activity through a dedicated website ([www.citylivinglocallife.org](http://www.citylivinglocallife.org)), Twitter account, eNewsletter ('Community Cuppa') and Community Noticeboard blog
- invitations to the public for open enquiries and requests for information
- regular updates in the Royal Borough newspaper, Council literature and external publications





# Step three:

## How do I get started?

The Community Engagement Team is here to support councillors in getting started with the City Living, Local Life. Councillors can take a look at the dedicated City Living, Local Life website ([www.citylivinglocallife.org](http://www.citylivinglocallife.org)) and contact one of the officers in the Community Engagement Team.

There is a range of information material and sources of support to help you get going, as highlighted below:

### Support Officers

Each ward is linked with a support officer, who can come from any department of the Council. These officers help councillors to identify, define and realise their ambitions to fully utilise City Living, Local Life.

### Annual Reports

Annual reports for 2012 and 2013 are available from the City Living, Local Life website, giving a flavour of the types of projects the initiative has supported.

### 'How To' guides

These are available on the City Living, Local Life website, and offer guidance ranging from digital inclusion to engaging young people.

### City Living, Local Life Core Team

A small core team of Community Engagement officers experienced in administration, policy development, communication, budget monitoring, project management and community engagement can offer more intensive and specialised support.

### Fellow councillors

The Cabinet Member for Voluntary Organisations and Resident Engagement approves key decisions and supports colleagues in the promotion of the initiative across the borough.



# Three Top Tips for getting going

## 1. Get to know your ward

- Ask your City Living, Local Life support officer for a ward profile
- Map local organisations and community groups
- Talk to local residents and voluntary groups
- Take a ward walkabout with your support officer or frontline Council staff

## 2. Find out what other wards have done

- Read the City Living, Local Life annual reports
- Speak to returning councillors to get a sense of how City Living, Local Life works in practice

## 3. Utilise officer support

- Set up a one-to-one meeting with the Head of the Community Engagement Team to discuss your City Living, Local Life aims and objectives
- Meet with City Living, Local Life core officers and your dedicated ward support officer to develop an action plan

**Contact the Community Engagement Team** for support by phone, e-mail or in person:

**T:** 0207 598 4633 | **E:** [locallife@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:locallife@rbkc.gov.uk) | **W:** [www.citylivinglocallife.org](http://www.citylivinglocallife.org)

