

Version dated 16.11.2023

Sovereign Network Group: Thriving Communities Fund Guidance Notes

What makes us Sovereign Network Group

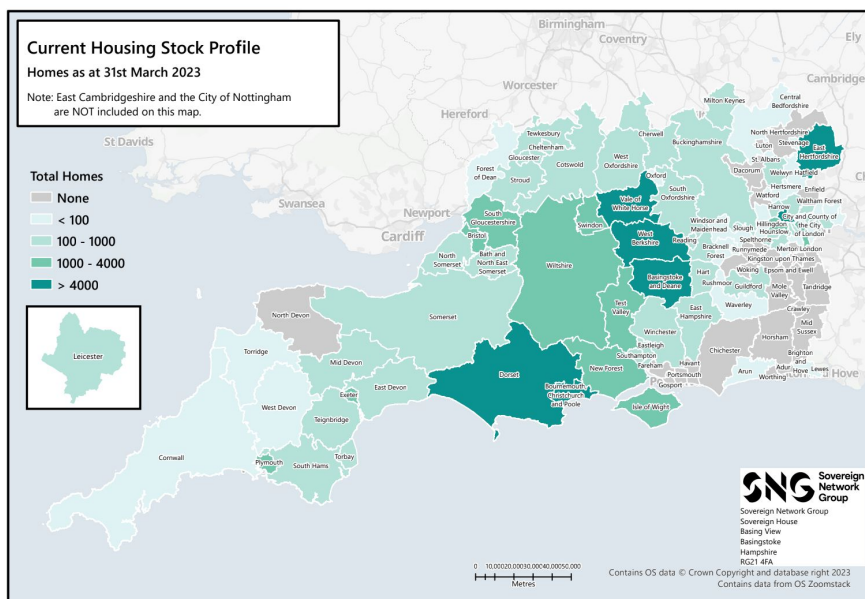
Sovereign Network Group are a leading housing association, striving to provide quality, affordable homes and places, that people love for generations.

We have deep roots in the south of England, with over 82,000 homes focused in a core area covering Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Devon, Wiltshire, the West of England, the Isle of Wight, London and Hertfordshire.

We're driven by our social purpose, with residents at the heart of everything we do. We build homes and provide great services, but our work doesn't stop at the front door – we invest for the long-term, creating great places to live, working with residents and partners to support them in realising their potential. [Read more about who we are.](#)

Where we have homes

We provide homes across London, the south of England and the Isle of Wight and we have a network of regional offices throughout our operating area in order to provide a quality and local service to our customers.



Introduction

Sovereign Network Group recognises the important role that community & voluntary organisations have in delivering key services to our communities. Sovereign Network Group's Thriving Communities fund is aimed at supporting not-for-profit groups and organisations that can clearly demonstrate how their services and projects help deliver cohesive, sustainable, resilient communities.

The Fund

Sovereign Network Group are committed to improving the wellbeing and quality of life of their customers and, contributing to developing thriving and resilient communities collaboratively through their five-year 'Thriving Communities Strategy'. The strategy focuses on place-based development, allowing Sovereign Network Group communities to direct their own projects to create great places and spaces. The plan encompasses three themes Money & Digital, Communities and Employment and Skills.

They are therefore launching the Thriving Communities 2023 fund via Crowdfunder UK. Through the 'Thriving Communities 2023 fund', Sovereign Network Group would like to support as many organisations as possible whose services will benefit Sovereign Network Group residents through themes outlined in the eligibility criteria below.

In order to apply, your crowdfund campaign must be on the [Crowdfunder UK](#) platform. If your application is approved, once you have achieved 25% of your crowdfund target, from at least 10 unique supporters*, Sovereign Network Group will pledge up to 50% of your crowdfunding target, to a maximum of £10,000. You must reach at least 100% of your fundraising target in order to receive the funding. If you are successful, you will be required to go through Crowdfunder UK's verification process, where you will be required to provide identification and follow the authentication process.

Eligibility

Sovereign Network Group wishes to support projects run by not-for-profit organisations that benefit Sovereign Network Group communities through one or more of the themes highlighted below. Sovereign Network Group's decision with regards to making a pledge is discretionary.

To be eligible to apply, organisations must be:

- Local not-for-profit groups,
- Community organisations
- Registered charities

Eligible projects must aim to engage with and benefit Sovereign Network Group residents, within one or more of the localities listed below:

Oxford, Newbury, Reading, North Hampshire and Surrey, South Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP), Dorset, Devon, Bristol, Gloucester, Wiltshire, Hertfordshire and London boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Haringey, Harrow, Islington, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Lambeth, Westminster, Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond, Hounslow. Explore our [map of SNG homes](#) which shows our properties by tenure, across local authorities. If you have a project within these localities but you would like more information about the location of our communities, get in touch with us at - grants@sovereign.org.uk

Projects must be able to demonstrate how their work helps achieve one or more of the Sovereign Network Group priorities and themes as follows:

- **Youth** - projects that encourage and support young people to steer initiatives, achieve their aspirations and transition from where they are to where they want to be.
- **Health and well-being** - projects that help to create communities where people can feel well and live well.
- **Ageing-well** - projects that invest in the development of more inclusive and age friendly communities that respond to the needs of its population and aim to improve quality of life.
- **Social Inclusion and Isolation (including EDI)** - projects that promote equal opportunities, enhance participation and create a positive culture and sense of belonging.
- **Environment & Place** - projects that strengthen capacity and work together to create lasting improvements in local communities.
- **Customer Voice** - projects that create spaces where customer voices can be heard and empower them to influence, take action and make a difference.
- **Employment support** – projects that increase employment and training opportunities including accessing work, better work and vocational qualification.
- **Food Insecurity**- projects that provide access to food for those in financial hardship.
- **Digital Inclusion and skills**- projects that focus on increasing access to digital skills, equipment, and connectivity.
- **Money matters and debt** - projects that focus on developing financial skills, increasing income and reducing debt for those in financial hardship.

Our grants are for revenue costs and direct service delivery. We will consider funding capital items essential to your delivery as long as they form less than 20% of your funding request.

The following organisations are not eligible:

- Private Businesses
- Organisations set up as trusts (including charitable trusts)
- Individuals

We are also not able to support the following

- National appeals
- Activities which are of a wholly and exclusively political or religious nature, or organisations supporting political activism
- Retrospective funding of activities/projects/equipment

You will be required to provide the following documentation and evidence of your organisation's eligibility:

- All applicants must comply with the relevant permissions/licensing/insurance/documentation (constitution)/policies
- Every not for profit group/ organisation should have a constitution which includes a formal decision-making process

Crowdfunder project set up

In order to be eligible to apply, your project must be set up in Crowdfunder as a “keep what you raise” or an “all or nothing” project.

Post-campaign reporting

Sovereign Network Group require successful applicants to complete quarterly impact reporting about your project from when the project you are crowdfunding for begins. We may also request additional information throughout and after your campaign. You may also be asked to take part in a short interview about your experience of the fund. You agree for your contact details to be passed on to us for this purpose and to supply any information requested in a timely manner.

Successful applicants will be allocated a member of the SNG Community Investment Team, who will contact you once you have been informed of the outcome of your application. You will be invited to attend a webinar as a guide to completing reporting for the SNG Thriving Communities Fund. Your allocated member of the Community Investment team will also offer support with this monitoring and evaluation process. They will be your main point of contact and will support you throughout the duration of the project, if needed. They will also be happy to discuss any future partnership opportunities with your organisation and further support offers available to you at SNG.

Communications and branding

Successful applicants must acknowledge financial support of Sovereign Network Group in its documentation and publicity material by following our communications protocol and brand guidelines. To see a copy of these please email grants@sovereign.org.uk

Selection process

All projects that meet the criteria set out above will be assessed to determine which projects will be selected for the fund. Project owners will be notified whether their application has been successful or not. [The offer of match funding will be valid for [4] weeks after the date of notification, if you do not launch your crowdfunding campaign within this period, the offer will be rescinded.]

At the time the application is submitted, to enable Sovereign Network Group to assess applications fully, all sections must be completed with all the information you wish considered together with all the documents requested.

We will focus on ensuring funding is distributed equitably, particularly in terms of geographic location and types of beneficiaries. A range of projects will be selected to achieve this.

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis within a reasonable timeframe. Before a pledge payment can be approved and released to the applicant, all checks will need to be completed in respect of relevant permissions, policies, documents (constitution) and insurances. Sovereign Network Group's decision with regards to making a pledge is discretionary and no appeals process is available.

Match funding criteria

If your application is approved, you'll be offered match funding of up to 50% towards your initial crowdfunding target, up to a maximum of £10,000.

Following approval for funding, if you wish to make any changes to your campaign target, or any significant changes to your rewards or other page content you must notify us.

Applicants must not change the use of the matchfunds for which it was approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing by Sovereign Network Group.

To secure a pledge from the Fund, you will need to do the following:

1. Apply to, and be approved for, the Fund.
2. Receive a provisional pledge from the Fund, by reaching at least 25% of your fundraising target from at least 10 unique supporters*.
3. Receive the Fund pledge by reaching at least 100% of your fundraising target.

*The provisional pledge which will be for 50% of your target (up to £10,000) will be made on to your crowdfunding campaign once you have raised at least 25% of your initial target from the required number of unique supporters and will count towards your target. This means in most cases the campaign will then be at 75%. You must then raise the remaining 25% from your crowd, to achieve 100% of your funding target and receive the Sovereign Network Group Thriving Communities Funds. If you are concerned that you are unable to reach this target, please contact SNG at grants@sovereign.org.uk who will be able to discuss this with you

To verify whether Supporters are unique we will take account of information including, but not limited to: name, address, email addresses and payment card used.

If the project fails to reach 100% of the target the provisional pledge will be cancelled. The Project owner will be encouraged to review what went wrong and, if appropriate, to attempt to crowdfund again.

Sovereign Network Group reserves the right to vary these match funding criteria; projects will be notified if their match funding criteria will vary from the stated terms above.

Additional Requirements

Project Owners or the campaigning organisation pledging to their own campaign is allowed, however this should not be a significant amount unless discussed before the pledge is added. Small offline donations that have been collected may also be added, however you may be required to evidence the origin of these pledges (receipts, letters of support, copies of cheques or bank statements etc.)