# Thames Freeport

## Skills Community fund 25/26 Invitation to Tender (ITT) - Fund explanation and application form

### Purpose of the fund

The overarching aim of the fund is to support community engagement and capacity building to enhance and connect the skills and employment opportunities within Thames Freeport to local communities.

It will support in the funding of new initiatives and provision, facilities and enable providers to develop new and innovative community interventions.

### Invitation to tender

Thames Freeport are now inviting proposals from community providers, based in the Thames Freeport area or who are prepared to operate within this area, who, alongside at least one other partner are seeking to address social issues and reduce barriers and enhance the connection to skills and employment. Proposals are welcomed from third sector organisations. Providers can submit more than one proposal.

### Funding

This funding has been made available as a direct result of the establishment of the Thames Freeport. It is intended to help develop or deliver proposals that will benefit the wider community and help local businesses grow through improved skills supply and training provision. Funding is available for programme delivery projects and capital projects, or both.

Thames Freeport will provide up to 100% of total eligible project costs. The minimum bid size is £20,000, and the maximum is £50,000 per delivery project - to help develop or deliver proposals that will have wide social benefit and will help local communities to benefit from skills and employment interventions.

All eligible proposals will be included in a Thames Freeport Skills Fund pipeline list.

Projects in the pipeline list will be prioritised on a frequent basis and funding will be provisionally allocated to projects by the Thames Freeport (TFP) as funding becomes available.

Thames Freeport reserves the right to decide which projects it will fund. Meeting the eligibility and assessment criteria does not guarantee funding.

**Geographic coverage**

Projects must be delivered within the Thames Freeport area, specifically in the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Thurrock. Within this, there is flexibility for applicants to focus their activities on specific neighbourhoods or communities depending on the project design.

### Who can apply

Applications are welcomed from community organisations, employers, schools, colleges, higher education institutions, independent training providers and other organisations in the Thames Freeport area or prepared to operate within it.

### Strategic priorities

Projects will be prioritised based on:

* Impact and benefit to the community - proposals must demonstrate their potential for achieving impact and unlocking community skills and employment growth.

### Project requirements

Projects must be outcomes focused. Applicants must clearly articulate the specific challenges they are seeking to address, and what measurable difference their programme will make. They must show:

* A strong rationale for the proposed intervention.
* Clear and measurable outcomes
* Value for money, including a high-level breakdown of how funding will be used and disclosing how delivery partners will maximise funding granted by Thames Freeport
* A plan for sustainability or legacy beyond the funding period
* Projects should clearly demonstrate why they require investment

### Project outcomes

### Monitoring and KPIs

Applicants are required to propose Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to their project. These may include, for example:

* Project to engage underrepresented groups in advice and employment support.
* School engagement, enhanced careers education activity and careers events.
* Community competitions.
* Skills and jobs fairs.
* Community engagement activity such as event sponsorship.

Applications will be particularly welcomed that promote TFP locally, share skills pathways, support inclusive growth, or boost local enterprise, especially where aligned to Net Zero, inward investment, or enhanced community engagement with TFP skills. Proposals should also reflect local priorities such as improving employment access for underrepresented groups, supporting youth transitions, and fostering entrepreneurship.

Applicants should ensure that KPIs are specific, stretching but achievable, and demonstrate how they will track and report performance.

### What we will fund

The Thames Freeport may fund activities associated with the categories listed below. Please note that the examples within each category do not constitute an exhaustive list and are intended to give an indication of the type of costs that may be funded. The Thames Freeport Skills Team is open to discussions around scope.

* Administrative costs associated with lead applicant or project lead provider activities, including administration of payment and reporting arrangements.
* Costs associated with projects delivery staffing.
* Collaboration and co-ordination activities cost
* Staff and employer time to support development, or to design new webpages, etc.
* Awareness raising activities and events, costs associated with marketing and promotion of new programmes including promotional materials, and web page design and development costs.

### What we will not fund

Provision or capacity building that does not align with Thames Freeport priorities and activities that duplicate those already funded by government, unless the proposal clearly adds new value or enhances outcomes.

### Assessment and Evaluation

A separate guidance document will outline the scoring methodology and evaluation criteria. All applications will be assessed against criteria including:

* Strategic fit with Thames Freeport priorities
* Clarity and credibility of outcomes
* Deliverability and readiness to proceed. Priority will be given to those partners that are able to promptly mobilise projects and commence delivery.
* Value for money
* Strength and relevance of partnerships

Successful applicants may progress to a competitive procurement process, direct award or grant agreement, subject to legal and commercial review.

Being included in the pipeline does not guarantee funding.

**Market Engagement**

This procurement round does not include structured pre-market engagement due to timing constraints. Clarification questions are invited via email and responses will be shared transparently.

### Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Stage | Indicative dates |
| ITT launch  | 14 Aug 25  |
| Clarification question deadline | 20 Aug 25 |
| ITT close date | 29 Aug 25 - Noon (1200hrs) |
| Evaluation and moderation | 29 Aug 25 - 4 Sept 25  |
| Skills subcommittee sign off | 23 Sept 25 |
| Award notification  | 24 Sept 25 |
| Contract mobilisation | 30 Sept 25 |
| Programme delivery start | 30 Sept 25 |

Future prioritisation dates will be published on the Thames Freeport website.

### Conflict of interest and declarations

Please confirm the following by signing below;

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no known or perceived conflicts of interest relating to this application.

I understand that submission of this ITT does not guarantee funding, and that Thames Freeport may request further information or enter into a separate procurement or grant process.

I understand that all intellectual property developed or created using TFP funding shall remain the sole property of the TFP.

Name –

Signature –

Date -

# ITT application form

### 1. Lead applicant details.

Organisation name.

Organisation type.

Address.

Contact name and role.

Email and phone number.

### 2. Project summary.

Project title.

Sector and programme delivery outcomes.

Programme description including type and duration of delivery,

Total funding requested.

Delivery location(s).

### 3. Project rationale, outcomes and strategic alignment with Thames Freeport objectives.

Describe the specific economic or skills based problem the project is seeking to address, and how the project will reach new / different participants or deliver improved outcomes.

Describe the outcomes the project will deliver, including considering hard and soft impact measures.

Explain how the project aligns with the aims and sector priorities of the local authority

(max 400 words)

### 4. Delivery capability and relevant track record.

List the relevant credentials and experience of the lead organisation and delivery partners, including organisation type and role in the project.

Provide examples of when organisations have delivered relevant similar programmes, and the outcomes and impact these delivered.

(max 400 words)

### 5. Delivery plan

Outline the key activities you will undertake, delivery timescales, and how you will ensure effective implementation.

Describe how you will quality assure the delivery of the project, including how you ensure the positive experience of project participants and how you will manage the delivery of the planned outcomes.

Provide a project plan showing how your will deliver the planned outcomes / timeline.

Provide a summary of the key risks you expect to encounter delivering the programme and how you will mitigate and manage these.

(max 400 words, separate project plan and risk log can be provided).

### 6. Budget and value for money

#### a. Cost breakdown

Provide a clear, itemised breakdown of all anticipated project costs (e.g. staffing, delivery, equipment, administration), including total cost and cost per participant where relevant.

b. Value for money statement (written response – max 300 words):

Provide a summary of anticipated costs and explain how your project offers value for money. Your response should include commentary on cost-effectiveness, efficiency of delivery model, and how you will maximise the impact of Thames Freeport funding.

Provide a summary of anticipated costs and explain how your project offers value for money.

Provide a breakdown of the overall project cost.

Provide a cost per participant.

(max 300 words)

### 7. Social value

Describe how the project will deliver social value, including benefits of the project will continue beyond the funded period.

(max 300 words)

### 8. Payment schedule

You will not be scored for this question.

Payments will be made at agreed milestones and on outcomes. Please outline;

The milestones you breakdown for your planned project.

What outcome is being measured at each milestone.

The evidence that will be supplied at each milestone to demonstrate the outcome.

The percentage of the overall funding per participant at each milestone.

(max 300 words)

### Declarations and conflict of interest

Please confirm any known or perceived conflicts of interest.

Submission instructions

Please submit your completed application form to Skills@thamesfreeport.com by 29 August 2025 using the email heading ‘Skills fund – application’

Name

Role

Signature

Date

# TFP Skills fund

## Scoring Matrix (0-4)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score | Evaluation | Description |
| 0 | Unsatisfactory | The response does not meet any of the requirements or no response has been provided. An unacceptable and / or non-compliant response with serious reservations, demonstrating no understanding of the requirement. |
| 1 | Poor | The response has met some, but not all elements of the requirements, which poses a risk that the proposal will not meet the deliverables required. The response does not demonstrate a full understanding of the requirements posing major concerns. |
| 2 | Good | The response is acceptable and meets all the basic requirements. However, the response is not sufficiently detailed to minimise risk and / or the proposed approach may require additional support.  |
| 3 | Very good | The response fully meets all requirements with detail provided minimising risks to delivery. The response is comprehensive and unambiguous, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the requirements and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full. |
| 4 | Outstanding | The response exceeds all requirements with detail provided minimising risks to delivery. The response is comprehensive and unambiguous, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the requirements and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full. The response also demonstrates an outstanding standard of added value and innovation. |

### Scoring criteria (%)

Each criterion has a weight - representing its importance to the overall success of the programme:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criteria | Weight |
| Project rationale, outcomes and strategic alignment with Thames Freeport objectives | 25% |
| Delivery capability and relevant track record | 25%  |
| Budget and value for money\* | 20% |
| Delivery plan | 20% |
| Social value | 10% |

\*
 The 20% budget and value-for-money score will be calculated as follows:

### Budget and value for money (20%)

#### Combined Commercial Score (20%)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Component | Weight | Calculation |
| Budget (total cost) score | 10% | (Lowest cost / bidder cost) × 10 |
| VfM narrative score | 10% | (Raw score / 4) × 10 |
| **Total commercial** | **20%** | **Sum of above two elements** |

#### Commercial evaluation -10% for Budget (total cost)

Lowest compliant total cost submitted will receive the full 10% weighting 10%. Other bids scored proportionally using:

* Lowest cost / bidder's cost × 10

Example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bidder | Total cost (£) | Calculation | Weighted score (out of 10%) |
| A | £80,000 | (£80,000 / £80,000) × 10 = 10.00 | 10.00% |
| B | £100,000 | (£80,000 / £100,000) × 10 = 8.00 | 18.00% |
| C | £120,000 | (£80,000 / £120,000) × 10 = 6.67 | 6.67% |

#### Commercial evaluation - 10% for value for money narrative

As part of the commercial assessment (20%), bidders are required to submit a written Budget and Value for Money statement (max 300 words) to explain how their proposal delivers strong economic value, efficient use of resources, and maximises impact per pound spent.

Evaluated against a 0-4 qualitative scale:

0 - No evidence of value for money.
1 - Limited explanation or feasibility concerns.
2 - Acceptable explanation but lacks specificity.
3 - Clear, credible cost-benefit justification.
4 - Outstanding demonstration of cost-effectiveness and innovation.

Score calculated as:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (Raw Score/4) × 10 Bidder | Narrative Score (0–4) | Calculation | Weighted Score (10%) |
| A | 4 | (4 ÷ 4) × 10 = 10.00% | 10.00% |
| B | 3 | (3 ÷ 4) × 10 = 7.50% | 7.50% |
| C | 2 | (2 ÷ 4) × 10 = 5.00% | 5.00% |

### Process for calculation:

#### To calculate the weighted score

Multiply the score (out of 4) by the weighting for those criteria

#### Example calculation

A provider scored as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Score (0-4) | Weight (%) | Calculation | Weighted value |
| Project rationale, outcomes and strategic alignment with Thames Freeport objectives | 4 | 25% | (4 ÷ 4) x 25 | 25% |
| Delivery capability and relevant track record | 3 | 25% | (3 ÷ 4) x 25 | 18.75% |
| Delivery plan | 3 | 20% | (3 ÷ 4) x 20 | 15% |
| Budget and value for money | 3 | 20% | (3 ÷ 4) x 20 | 15% |
| Social value | 2 | 10% | (2 ÷ 4) x 10 | 5% |
| **Total**  |  |  |  | **78.75%** |

##### This provider would have scored 78.75%.

In justification for distribution of funds:

* Each partner is scored against the same criteria for consistency
* Decisions can be justified for transparency
* Evidence can be provided against the scoring matrix to show what mattered to the overall decision-making process