

## Fundraising for a theatre capital project

### Summary

This advice note looks at the key elements essential to consider when developing your fundraising strategy, and a range of tips, tools, and relevant funding and investment sources to support your capital project. This note also recognises the importance of aligning capital priorities with revenue priorities, to ensure that the development, and delivery of the capital works is supported by an appropriate revenue model.

### Who is this note for?

This advice note is intended for any community, volunteer, third sector led organisation or group who are working to revive, renovate, or save a theatre in their local community, or carry out a capital project. We also have a variety of other advice notes to support groups and organisations with different aspects of work within their theatre.

[Access our other resources and advice notes.](#)

### Thanks to our funders

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## Introduction

The cost of capital projects can feel overwhelming for any organisation, as the amount of funding and investment usually required is significant. This shouldn't stop you from developing your proposals if you have undertaken robust planning and preparation. Planning and preparation of your project proposal is essential, and this work will include:

- Defining your vision and ambition for the theatre moving forward and your capital project.
- Considering and collaborating with your audience, local community, artists and partners to confirm and further develop engagement opportunities so that they align with and enhance your vision and ambition.
- Undertake buildings and conditions surveys to ascertain the extent of the work required to sustain and/or renovate your building.
- Clarify scope of work required.
- Establish your financial goal / project cost.
- Timetable - decide whether the work needs to be phased alongside an options appraisal / initial feasibility – taking into consideration inclusion, access and participation, sustainability, and future proofing working practices as well as the timings required to secure your funding and investment.
- Recognising that your theatre project needs to be 'more than just a theatre'. Looking at how your building can become the cultural community 'hub' offering a variety of opportunities for individuals and groups alike.
- Effort - ensuring engagement, commitment, and involvement from all staff, trustees, directors, and/or volunteers from the start so that everyone can articulate why this project matters, and understands the amount of time, effort, and resource that will be required.
- Having a designated officer / volunteer / team that can practically lead and develop the proposals and applications, as well as manage the funder and investor relationships.

Sharing the knowledge and responsibility about your project across your organisation will strengthen both the process that you will be involved with as well as the outcome. If everyone is involved from the start, and able to contribute to the work and direction of the project, then there is a shared investment and commitment – which will show when you talk to your audiences, your communities, your partners, and most importantly your funders and investors.

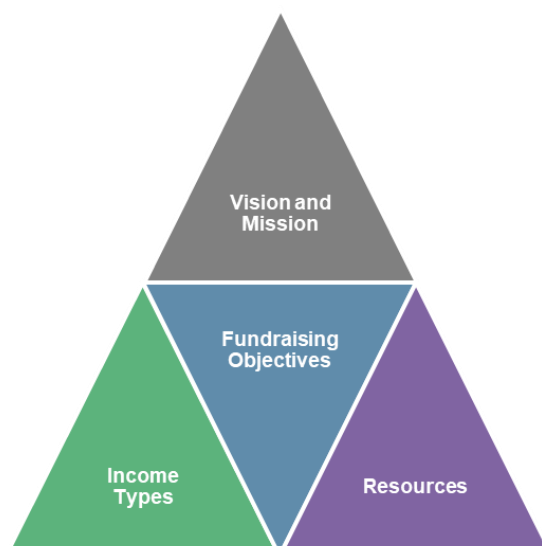
The following sections within this advice note will provide you with essential information to help you to develop your capital project.

## Fundraising strategy

A realistic understanding of what you can raise is essential before progressing too far. Taking into consideration the points above – if you don't know what you are fundraising for then there isn't much point in having a strategy. Your vision, mission, and ambition should directly influence your organisation's overall strategy as will your organisational objectives. This also assists the staff and volunteers to better engage with your project too, as they can see how it supports them to meet their individual goals within their roles<sup>1</sup>. Early conversations with major funders can help test alignment with their priorities, as there is little or no point investing in those early development stages if there is no prospect of securing the funding or investment you require. Once you have done this indicative work more meaningful engagement with prospective funders and investors will require a clear concept, defined beneficiaries, and indicative costs (your case for support – more detail below).

You should also consider how a capital campaign will affect your wider fundraising opportunities and prospects. If you have a substantial individual giving % as part of your income mix, a large campaign may often lead to a temporary dip in individual giving so you need to carefully plan to ensure you can balance both restricted and unrestricted income. It is important for you to recognise the importance of revenue support not only for you to maintain your existing operations, but also to ensure you have adequately accounted for any additional revenue required to support your operation once the capital project has been completed.

### Fundraising strategy in context – what supports you to achieve your strategy



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<sup>1</sup> Do an exercise to look at when you have been successful with income generation / funding applications in the past and when you haven't. You will probably find that in general those applying for funds that align with mission, vision, aims and objectives are more successful than those trying to change them to suit funders criteria

## **The funding mix (See below for further details of sources)**

Most capital projects rely on a blend of funding sources, typically including:

- Public funding (Arts Councils, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, and several statutory bodies).
- Central government programmes – e.g. 1.5billion for arts, museums, libraries, and heritage as well as arts everywhere fund, and local growth fund.
- Trusts and foundations – there are a wealth of small and large grants available from trusts and foundations across the UK.
- Individual giving:
  - low level donors
  - major gifts
  - crowdfunding
  - as well as – legacies, point of sale donations, friends of schemes / membership or VIP schemes, community fundraising, challenge campaigns, and restoration levy
- Local authority grants and loans – as well as central government funding local authorities may have a range of funding pots / loans that can be allocated to certain projects dependent on the priorities within Local Authority Strategies and Plans.
- Social investment and bank lending – there are many social investors across the UK who now support a wide range of capital and revenue-based projects for organisations with a range of governance structures.
- Corporate support - looking at a range of sponsorship packages and in-kind support.

With any project it is essential that you research all your potential funders, screen your database of existing supporters, and map your stakeholders, partners, and networks to ascertain your baseline for your project. Your campaign will need people to give the funds, so the bigger your current donor base / existing relationships with funders, the easier it is to get a campaign going. These early commitments build confidence and unlock further support. Public-facing fundraising (e.g. appeals or crowdfunding) often comes later in your capital campaign.

Social investment / loan finance can also help initiate interest in your campaign (if it is slow to get started) or help bridge gaps / final brick funding to accelerate delivery of your project. As this is repayable finance securing the loan will highlight how robust your financial strategy and business plan is, as you will need to achieve a high level of financial due diligence to secure your investment.

Your funding mix will tend to have large lead gifts from public funders, trusts and foundations and individuals at the start of the campaign often alongside local

authority with a more public phase of the campaign through crowd funding, and buy-a-seat style appeals towards the end. Securing those first large lead gifts is crucial as it will give confidence to other funders.

A gift pyramid for a capital campaign will look similar to the one detailed below:

### Indicative Gift Pyramid £6m campaign



#### Case for support

[Please see template resource at the end of this document.](#)

Your case for support underpins all fundraising activity. It is a document which explains clearly and concisely why you need funding and what you plan to do with it. It should clearly explain:

- why you need to do this
- what you are going to do
- how it will change things for those who benefit
- what it will cost
- why your organisation is the best one to do the project



It is both an external tool for funders / investors providing them with the information they require to ascertain the readiness of your project to be funded, and the evidence you provide to highlight this, as well as an internal document to focus your work / projects / campaigns. If you cannot answer the questions above, then your project / campaign is not ready. This type of document is useful to use with your team so that everyone understands what the project is trying to achieve, how they contribute to the overall project, and the importance of the project. It is also a useful tool to help inform your fundraising strategy and can also be used to develop internal

messaging / scripts for all staff and volunteers. There is no correct length for a case for support, but you don't want it to be too long as it then becomes difficult to manage, understand, and disseminate to others. Include visuals (e.g. concept designs) where possible and keep it updated as the project evolves. Remember a case for support needs to be understood by any audience – not just the internal team, so limit acronyms and jargon. Engage your audiences with your case for support, as hearing stories from those individuals and groups that will benefit from the project can help to unlock donor support and investment - authentic voices and real human stories are powerful.

### **Phasing your project**

Depending on the size of your project phasing can make it more financially manageable and allow incremental financial and community benefits to be realised earlier, as well as helping to ensure that you do not lose your audiences, other users of the theatre, partnerships / relationships with artists and / or touring companies, as well as other key stakeholders. A staged or phased approach to your project may also be necessary, due to the amount of funding and investment required, as well as what the funding is needed for.<sup>2</sup> Capital works will usually start with feasibility, and project development, then depending on the scale of the project delivery (potentially split into multiple build phases).

However, phasing carries risks: funders may not support multiple stages, and early funding can be harder to secure due to uncertainty as to whether the delivery phase will be achieved. Remember that planning is key to success, and creating accurate cost projections sets realistic funding goal levels. In addition to this you also need to calculate the likely operational costs of the new building, new and / or expanded service or programme costs and associated staff costs – how will you close the gap between current and future revenue needs? Will the campaign start to address this? If your building will be closed during the works, then will you have a presence elsewhere in a partner's building so that you can maintain your profile in the community? Trying to maintain this balance between the work you do on a day-to-day basis as well as the intensive work of managing a capital campaign is difficult. Some funders will provide you with additional funding so you can secure external expertise during this development stage.<sup>3</sup>

### **Remember:**

- operating costs during closure or disruption
- maintaining audience engagement (e.g. off-site programming)

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<sup>2</sup> Some funders and investors will have clear guidelines on what they will and won't fund, so you will need to look at your timelines and how the different elements of your project will be funded.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. National Lottery Heritage Fund

- additional expertise (project managers, fundraisers), which some funders may support

## **Basic Capital Campaign Plan**

Think about these basic elements of your campaign, which are all a part of your campaign planning and development, and will inform next steps.

- Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis
- feasibility study results
- campaign goal - £££
- ongoing and increased revenue need - £££ (understanding of and planning for this)
- timeline and phases of campaign
- case statement / case for support
- ability and commitment of the campaign leadership and volunteer base
- staffing and budget
- campaign fundraising table / board

Now you need to think about where you will secure the funding and investment from, and how you will do it. Use your existing networks, supporters, members, trustees and directors to contribute, network, and advocate for your project. Your existing supporters and organisational team are your campaign ambassadors.

## **Campaign Phases**

Most of the work for a campaign takes place during the planning and quiet phases. This is where you nurture your donors, supporters, and businesses, meet with key funders to ascertain interest and commitment to your campaign.

One of the other key things to do in your planning phase is to talk to other theatres that have gone through similar projects. Some of the best advice can come from your peers – who have been there, done that, and either been 100% successful, partially successful, or failed. Learning from both success and failure helps you to plan what you need to consider and put in place. You can find information about a variety of similar projects our Theatres Trust website Advice pages, Heritage Fund, Arts Council, and Architectural Heritage Fund to name but a few.

1. **Planning** – your case for support, fundraising strategy, feasibility study, your people, your internal capacity, systems, and strategies, your donor / supporter prospects.
2. **The Quiet Phase** – soliciting donors close to the organisation, testing your case for support, securing major donations (aim to reach at least 50% in this stage).

3. **The Public Phase** – the planning and quiet phase inform how well this goes - hopefully reinforcing your case for support with lower-level donors and supporters. The aim is to have reached your goal and expand outreach to engage with a wider audience. You can then use the campaign as a marketing tool to raise awareness of your theatre and advertise what will be available.
4. **Closing the campaign** – maintaining the legacy. A successful campaign should leave you with a substantially enlarged donor pool of individuals and funders. Ongoing stewardship is essential. Keep donors informed through updates, site visits, and events. Recognise contributions appropriately and celebrate milestones, including reopening. Your aim is to keep them involved and interested especially for any future fundraising needs you might have.

### **Remember:**

- Planning is key.
- It will take time to develop plans and get ready.
- Don't publicise a campaign too early.
- You may have several abortive attempts – it's all learning (but ideally internal learning).
- Keeping people on board is key.

Campaigns take time and face many issues which is part of the process – hence the need to manage expectations both internally (with staff, senior leaders, internal stakeholders, and volunteers), but also externally (with audiences, friends, press, funders, investors, partners, stakeholders).

### Sources of funding

Funding opportunities for capital projects can be dependent upon your building type, geographical location, and type of work required as well as whether there have been any recent national funding announcements (very ad hoc, and usually either with tight deadlines, or managed via your local authority / mayoral combined authority). Some funders will also only fund theatres which have a heritage aspect to the building.

It is very unusual for you to be able to source all your project funding via one funder / investor, and thus you will find that most projects will be funded via a mixed income portfolio i.e. a mix of grants, donations, social investment, existing unrestricted or restricted income, and corporate support. How this funding and investment is split across the project is dependent on the funder / investors / donor criteria as well as being dependent upon the timescales of the project too. Some of the differences may include:

- Funders will fund a mix of capital and revenue – project only with a % of core / on-costs (Full Cost Recovery). Some funders will fund operational costs too.
- Funders will only fund a specific element of your project – and want to fund only this element and nothing else.
- Donors / investors tend to fund things that mean something to them personally or something that aligns with their company's Corporate Social Responsibility. Though some donors may be happy to fund a general campaign pot (if you consider crowdfunding – you can raise funding for the whole campaign – and potentially offer rewards for donors).
- Social investors are extremely flexible when it comes to investing – if they get their loan repaid (with interest), and you can generate profit/surplus to do so. Some social investors also provide a mix of grants / loans dependent on the amount of investment you require. As mentioned above – securing social investment is a good way of knowing that your financial profile / projections and business plans are realistic and robust.
- Members / friends of / alumni / patrons / ambassadors – as they are your existing contacts and supporters you should be able to utilise their support to 'kickstart' other investment and interest.
- Corporate support – as above but also remember to ensure that the company you have secured donations from aligns with your organisation's mission, vision, and values. Ensure you have an ethical fundraising policy so that you can mitigate any potential support / sponsor risks to your reputation. Corporate support can also take the shape of in-kind support via employer supported volunteering, in-kind equipment etc...

Remember, not all funders and investors will be appropriate for your organisation and / or your project. By planning your project well, you can ensure that you avoid "mission drift": do not reshape your project solely to fit a funder or investor's priorities if it compromises your core purpose.

## **National Lottery and statutory funding**

### **Arts Councils**

- [Arts Council England](#)
- [Creative Scotland](#)
- [Arts Council of Wales](#)
- [Arts Council of Northern Ireland](#)

All four nations offer capital and development funding (availability varies). Early engagement with local officers is strongly advised so that you can discuss in more detail about your project and put a 'marker' down with the relevant regional officer. Webinars and guidance sessions are valuable when preparing applications, and Arts

Council does have a variety of resources, and guidance notes to assist you with your applications. It is also worthwhile to look at previous/current Case Study information too.

## **National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)**

### [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

Offers grants from £10,000 to £10m+ for heritage projects, including theatre buildings. The process is competitive and structured, with clear guidance and deadlines, particularly for larger grants. Early-stage development funding is also available. As above, it is advisable to contact your local engagement officers at NLHF. You can find details on the 'in your area' page – London and South, Midlands and East, North, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales. Like Arts Council above NLHF has a variety of Good Practice Guidance you can use when you are considering applying to them, as well as a variety of Case Studies you can look at to inform your application development and potentially assist you with best practice. The NLHF officers also attend local funding fairs / meet the funder workshops in different locations so you can meet the relevant officers and discuss your project with them.

## **National Lottery Community Fund**

### [National Lottery Community Fund](#)

Funds community projects with four community-led missions to help communities come together, help children and young people thrive, help communities be healthier, and help communities to become environmentally sustainable. They have a range of funding opportunities across the UK from £300 - £20m funding revenue and capital elements, but your project must have an extremely strong community focus. As above, it is recommended that you discuss your project with their officers first so that you can make an informed choice as to whether your project will fit their criteria and strategic missions.

## **Historic environment bodies**

- [Historic England](#) – fund a broad range of activities for Heritage including – places, people, research, and places of worship. Grants range from £1,000 to £500,000. For place grants your building needs to be either Grade I or Grade II listed, or an asset of significant historic or architectural interest within a conservation area. There are exceptions linking with their Corporate Plan and/or their regional area of focus. By contacting their customer services team or submitting an expression of interest form online you can find out if your project is eligible.
- [Historic Environment Scotland](#) – grants and funding support for projects that promote and protect the historic environment in Scotland. The Heritage and

Place Programme supports projects that have a combination of activities and is a 2-stage application process. There are several resources, templates and tips to help you with your submission, as well as the opportunity to contact the grants team to discuss your project with them.

- [Cadw](#) – provides a variety of advice, guidance and information regarding the protection of the historic environment of Wales. You can also contact their grants team to ask about any open grant funding opportunities that may align with your projects
- [Department for Communities \(Historic Environment Division\)](#) – provides a range of advice, information and tips on arts, culture, and the historic environment as well as grant opportunities through their Historic Environment Fund.

All the funders above encourage organisations to contact them to discuss their project proposals, and provide a variety of advice, guidance, tips on planning your projects. They will also provide you with advice, guidance, and information about other useful contacts, funding search engines, tips to help you plan and develop your project.

## **Central Government funding**

Funding streams from central government change regularly, but it is always useful to search [government grants service](#) for an up-to-date list of open grants. Current National funds include:

- [Local Growth Fund](#) – targeting 11 city regions across England.
- [DCMS](#) – providing information and updates about funds, news and information from the department.
- [Local Government Association](#) (LGA) – in addition to National Government opportunities you can also keep in touch with the LGA to get information relevant to your local authority (if you haven't already got a useful contact at your Local Authority (LA)).

Even if a funding pot does not require you to work with your local authority, it is best practice to have a useful contact within your relevant LA department, as well as be on the radar of your local MP and councillors.

## **Trust and Foundations**

### **Large-scale capital funders**

There are several trusts and foundations that will fund large scale capital projects. As mentioned earlier on in this Advice Note, please ensure that you research each relevant trust and foundation you are considering applying to ensuring that you align

with their eligibility criteria, and wherever possible talk to their grants / advice officers so that you can discuss your project with them in detail before initial submissions. What you don't want to do is waste time, effort, and energy on applications if you have not done your research. The aim of getting in touch with funders before you apply is to not only put your project 'on the map' with the funder, but to also develop your relationship with them. Look at the submission dates, and timelines for processing your application to ensure this aligns with your planning. While some of these funders will approve large grants, they will pro-actively encourage you to already have some match funding in place, as this shows your commitment to the development of your project. Please make sure you know what additional match funding commitment your funder requires before you submit your application to them. The list below provides you with a few funders that support the planning, development, and delivery of capital projects, but please do check them out to see whether their funds align with your project. There are many more funders available across the UK, so this list represents a small number of them. See below to find out where you can search for relevant funders and funding.

UK-wide funders include:

- [Architectural Heritage Fund](#) – provides a mix of grants and/or social investment across the UK for anything from feasibility grants, professional fees to major projects that lead to the sustainable reuse and management of historic buildings. Grants include: the heritage revival fund, reach fund, harnessing heritage. Loans include heritage impact fund, general fund, community builders fund. They also have investment and grants officers who can support you with your project and assist you to find out whether an application to AHF is right for you.
- [Wolfson Foundation](#) – has a main grants programme available to fund new build, refurbishment and major equipment linked to training and education with a usual grant range of £50,000 - £150,000. You will need, as with all other grant opportunities, to check the deadlines and timelines for application processing. If your stage 1 application is successful you will be invited to stage 2.
- [Garfield Weston Foundation](#)
- [Pilgrim Trust](#)
- [Esmée Fairbairn Foundation](#)

There are also some funders that work specifically in certain nations and not across the whole of the UK. One of these funders is:

- [Gannochy Trust](#)

Environmental and sustainability-focused projects may also attract support, advice, guidance and peer support via networks such as the [Environmental Funders Network](#).

### **Small-scale capital funders**

There are a wide range of local trusts, landfill community funds, people's postcode trust funds, local supermarkets, local business support funds, and funding via renewable energy farms that often provide grants from £5,000 to £50,000.

It is advisable for you to look at sourcing information on smaller funding opportunities from organisations like Community Foundations. The lists below provide you with information about the Nations Foundations, and there you will be able to find information about your local community foundation which will have local funds, information, training, tips, and tools you can access.

- [UK Community Foundations](#)
- [Foundation Scotland](#)
- [Community Foundation NI](#)
- [Community Foundation Wales](#)

You should also contact your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or Voluntary Action (VA) organisation in your town or city, as they will have useful information, advice, guidance, and potential support on fundraising too. You can find your local organisation by checking out details on the websites below:

- [NAVCA \(England only\)](#)
- [SCVO \(Scotland\)](#)
- [WCVA \(Wales\)](#)
- [NICVA \(NI\)](#)
- [Third Sector Support Wales](#)

Each county may have community foundations which are geared to supporting charities in their region too, for example [Kent Community Foundation](#).

### **Where to find these sources of funding?**

Listed below are some useful weblinks to organisations that provide you with funding information, and specific funding search engines. These are only a few of those available:

- [Heritage Funding Directory](#)
- [GrantNav](#)

- [My Funding Central](#)
- [Grantfinder](#)
- [Directory of Social Change](#)
- [Funds Online](#)
- [Funding Wales](#)
- [Community Matters Yorkshire](#) – providing some free & low-cost guides, tools, and funding search offers
- [Charity Excellence Framework](#) – a free online platform with advice, guidance, and funding search engine

In addition to the above also check out your local authority to see what grants and funding they advertise, as well as newsletters and updates from the Heritage Network, The National Archives, and your regional Museum Development Network as they usually provide a range of advice, guidance, and funding that may also be useful. Social Media posts from funders and social investors – via X, LinkedIn, Facebook will also provide you with up-to-date information about new funding launches or opportunities.

## **Individual giving**

Your campaign will be made up of different phases<sup>4</sup>.

### **Planning and Quiet Phase Funding**

#### **Large lead gifts**

Capital campaigns are usually made up of larger donations rather than smaller ones, which usually happen during the public phase of the campaign. These donations are usually secured via your contacts / warm leads / current supporters and donors as well as your Board's, patrons, ambassadors, partners and stakeholders' 'address books'. Remember these individuals and organisations already support you and have made a commitment or have agreed to promote, publicise, and advocate for the work you do, therefore asking them to become your donor ambassadors just takes the relationship one step further. These larger initial donations often provide the kickstart and impetus needed to launch your capital campaign, and like crowdfunding require you to do detailed preparatory work and planning to secure the donors and donations before you launch, thus increasing the interest and excitement for others to get involved – the 'fear of missing out' factor. Included within this work is the need to have a compelling 'case for support' for your major donors. Even though they are probably known to you, you still need to be able to evidence why they should support your campaign, the difference it will make, how their support will help

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<sup>4</sup> Check out CAF's Report on UK Giving 2026 - <https://www.cafonline.org/insights/research/uk-giving-report>

to engage other donor support etc. Remember, cultivating new donors can take time and resources to develop the relationships, so using your existing relationships helps you to begin that process, whilst also validating your campaign.

### **Public phase of the campaign**

Towards the end of your project reaching out to your audience database, your local community, and / or existing user groups, and members to secure low level / mass giving donations not only helps to boost your financial target, but also again 'connect' you and your campaign with your audiences and the local community. They, like your board and patrons to become your campaign ambassadors promoting your campaign to their contacts and networks, as well as potentially undertaking different 'challenge' campaigns and community fundraising to support you. You can also offer them additional 'rewards' for their support by incentivising their donations. This might include:

- name a brick campaign
- recognition on your website
- recognition via Social Media posts
- recognition via mentions in your programmes / newsletters
- name a seat campaign
- name recognised in future performances / tickets for opening night
- behind the scenes tour

There are a range of opportunities you can offer your smaller donors, and by incentivising and recognising and thanking them you can also potentially secure their financial support longer term (as with major donors). If they can also see the difference that their donation is going to make to you that also encourages further engagement (£5 will enable us to do X, £10 provides a community group with Y etc).

These smaller donations are similar to developing a crowdfunding campaign to secure mass giving for a specific element of your project or the 'final financial piece' of the campaign jigsaw. So, you will need to decide whether you want to go for a more public appeal for individual giving, or whether you are better suited to developing a crowdfunding campaign. It is very unlikely that you will run both for the campaign, but you may look at developing one further down the line for another project, campaign, or activity.

### **Crowdfunding**

As with all aspects of your main campaign crowdfunding is all about planning and preparation. Most of your work will take place before you launch your campaign, and you will also want to secure at least 10 – 30% of your target before you even launch. The reason for this is that you can then highlight what a fantastic response you have had in the first 24hrs of your campaign – again to 'hook' new supporters. You will also need to engage all your existing staff, volunteers, supporters, members, board,

partners and stakeholders to contribute and promote the campaign so that it gets the traction that will be essential to reach the widest audience possible. You will also need to ensure that you maintain regular updates about your campaign across social media platforms, as well as your website, emails and the crowdfunding platform so that you keep your audiences engaged. You will need to decide whether you want to go for an all or nothing platform, or a platform that allows you to keep whatever you have raised even at the end of your campaign. All platforms will have admin/financial fees you need to pay, so choose which platform works the best for your campaign. Do a search on 'Crowdfunding Comparison UK' to get details about different platforms and what they support. Most crowdfunding platforms also have associated good practice resources, tips, and tools you can use to help you to plan and set up your campaign too. Look at how you can incentivise your donors by offering them rewards for their financial support, like the Mass Giving examples above).

A few platforms include:

- [Crowdfunder](#) – for UK based community / social projects.
- [GoFundMe](#) - personal, social, and charity donation-based fundraising.
- [JustGiving](#) – charity fundraising.
- [Indiegogo](#) – for tech / innovation.
- [Kickstarter](#) – for creative projects.

Make sure you check to see whether you are able to secure gift aid on your donations – [gift aid eligibility](#).

### **Local authority grants and loan finance**

Despite financial pressures, local authorities may support capital projects that deliver economic, cultural, or wellbeing benefits that align with their Corporate / Strategic / Cultural Plans as well as align with their Combined Mayoral Authority Plans. As mentioned earlier it is advisable to develop a relationship with the relevant Local Authority Officers as soon as you can, as well as your Local Authority Councillors, especially those with a portfolio on culture, heritage and tourism or regeneration and economic growth. Many Local Authorities liaise with national funders and national government regarding funding opportunities, so these relationships may provide you with early updates and information about new financial and resource opportunities relevant to your project development.

They may offer:

- Grants (usually dependent on what funding has been allocated, and where the Local Authority priorities are).
- Loan finance via the Public Works Loan Board. Like Social Investors, some Local Authorities will offer more flexible rate loans if they feel that your project

aligns with their priorities, and that you can comfortably repay the loan and interest back (see below for social investors too).

## **Social investment and bank lending**

As mentioned earlier on in this advice note social investment can be extremely useful for any capital campaign – whether to ‘kickstart’ your campaign for donations, last brick finance to bridge the gap left by all your other funding and investment, or as a bridging loan whilst you are waiting for other funding to be released. Social investment can only work for your project if you are able to generate income that will in turn be used to repay the loan plus interest back. Many social investors will only lend to organisations that have an asset that the loan can be secured against, though some will lend on a smaller scale without this. You need to have robust financial management systems in place that clearly show you can service the loan, and repay the debt as identified within your contractual agreement. To secure a loan your financial business model will be scrutinised robustly by the lenders to ensure that they are happy with the proposal before it goes for ratification by their credit panel. This is a good thing for any organisation, as it shows how responsible and financially due diligent you are. Some social investors will also offer a percentage of grant alongside the loan, dependent on lender and the size of the loan. Some social investors will also offer interest only holiday periods depending on your circumstances. As with the funders it is advisable to have detailed conversations with potential social investors first to find out whether they are a good fit for your project and organisation, as well as ensuring that you are getting the best deal possible.

Social investment opportunities have dramatically increased over the past few years as more funders / government departments recognise the positive impact social investment has as a key part of a mixed funding portfolio – showcasing that organisations are able to generate profit / surplus that then provides them with increased financial flexibility. Some social investors are listed below:

- [Charity Bank](#)
- [Unity Trust](#)
- [Keyfund](#)
- [CAF Venturesome](#)
- [Big Issue Invest](#)
- [Triodos Bank](#)
- [Architectural Heritage Fund](#)
- [Arts and Culture Impact Fund](#)

## **Corporate giving / local companies**

While not known for being a major part of a capital campaign funding mix engaging with identified business and companies that align with your mission, vision, and values whilst achieving their own Corporate Social Responsibility / Environmental

Social Governance priorities is a good move to make. As with major donors this type of relationship takes time to develop and nurture before it translates into financial support, unless the financial support is transactional – i.e. adverts in programmes / on your website etc. Corporate support is usually a supplementary bonus and can also provide you with in-kind support (skills, materials, volunteering) as well as finance. You will need to consider the ‘What’s in it for Me?’ principle of any company you are looking at, and identify how you can enhance, support, and compliment the work they do at their company – whether that be through:

- Increased reach into a new or existing target market
- Enhanced staff skills / knowledge / expertise
- Enhanced staff health and wellbeing
- Enhanced public profile
- Enhanced financial gains

As mentioned earlier you do need to make sure that you are not compromising your values and organisational objectives to secure corporate support, thus it is essential that you develop and maintain an ethical fundraising policy to keep you covered and protect your reputation.

Some companies who might not be able to offer cash could offer volunteers to help you with your building project. There are also organisations such as [Volunteer It Yourself](#) that match organisations with people who want to develop specific skills by working on community projects.

### **Naming rights**

Some organisations choose to offer naming rights for larger donations such as naming the auditorium, the foyer and education studio spaces. These need to be given a value that is appropriate to your organisation and can be discussed with the potential donor. 10 to 25 years tends to be the length of time offered rather than in perpetuity as you have to assume that in that time period you may need to undertake additional works to the building.

## The role of the Theatres Trust

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres.

We offer:

- Advice on capital projects and fundraising
- Support letters for funding applications
- Small grants programmes

[Contact us through our website.](#)

# Case for Support Template

## Need

- What is the issue/problem you are looking to address?
- Why is it important? Why this particular area?
- What if nothing was done?
- How do you know there is a problem?

## Solutions

- What are you going to 'do'?
- What would funds received pay for?
- When will these things happen?
- Who will be involved?
- Who do you intend to benefit from this work?
- What will be your key achievements?

## Impact

- How can you change things?
- What will be different as a result of your work?
- How will you know if you have achieved this?

## Budget

- How much will the work/project cost?
- What are the key areas of expenditure?
- Where are you planning on getting your funding from?

## Added Value

- Why you / your organisation/project?
- What is your track record / past experience?
- What do you / does your organisation/project bring to the work?

