

Mayor's Office

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000
Minicom: 020 7983 4157
Web: www.london.gov.uk

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The Baroness Doocey AM

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Dear Dee,

Thank you for your recent correspondence.

The High Street Fund has now closed phase 1 of the funding cycle and has moved onto phase 2.

In response to your point about difficulties raised by local businesspeople in Hackney in accessing funds, once alerted to this I asked staff to investigate (via the administrators of the fund) what the delays were and how they could be resolved.

Jennette Arnold wrote to me about this matter in November, I responded to her on the 15th November 2011 asking her to provide evidence relating to those who were having difficulties. I stated that I would then investigate these delays and make sure that those claimants are dealt with quickly. To date, I have still not received any evidence or details about individual cases from Jennette so I have concluded that these cases have been resolved.

There were some delays, these were where applicants were asked to provide more information as the original documentation they provided had not satisfied the trustees. The application form was designed intentionally to be as easy as possible to enable little bureaucracy. However, because the Fund is making non-repayable grants, of course there are a few key questions that had to be asked to ensure that there are not any fraudulent claims, these include the provision of a crime reference number, identification and financial information which will account for the business who is seeking a grant. The trustees implemented these criteria as a measure which I feel is wholly acceptable for a charitable trust. The Fund has contacted each of the claimants by both telephone (via its helpline) and in writing to request the further information, each outstanding claimant has been contacted and the Fund is still working to close these cases and if satisfied, make payments.

I am delighted that the High Street Fund, as of the 14th December, has made payments to the tune of over £1.5m in London and this figure is rapidly increasing as we enter phase 2.

¹ Phase 2 claims can only be made by businesses who received a grant in phase 1.

550 small businesses in London have applied to the fund with 86% of those applicants having received a phase 1 grant of £2,000. As detailed above, some grants are outstanding where trustees are waiting for further information, 8% in total. Phase 1 payments have been made to businesses across 22 London boroughs; these are annexed at the end of this letter.

Phase 2 grants will continue to be paid until the end of the year when the Fund hopes that all claimants will have received payment. Currently over 40% of those who received a grant in phase 1 have progressed to phase 2, this figure is increasing as new claims are made¹.

At the end of the year, the Fund had already made grants totalling over £2,000,000 through both phase 1 and phase 2, and this are continuing until the Fund has no more resources. London businesses have received over 90% of the contributions from the High Street Fund.

The Mayor has written to the Association of British Insurers and major insurance companies involved in pay-outs to small businesses to ask them to make their payments as quickly as possible and we will be doing all we can to see that this happens.

Yours sincerely



Sir Peter Rogers
Mayoral Adviser, Regeneration, Growth and Enterprise