

South Norfolk Council Member-Led Grant Rules

COMMUNITY ACTION FUND (CAF)

These ground rules set the criteria in awarding grants from the Community Action Fund. The Community Action Fund is aimed at empowering communities by providing funding to enable community organisations to help themselves.

1. Role of Members

The Council supports its Members in meeting the ambitions of the community plus identifying and delivering local solutions, which in turn support the Council's corporate priority areas and the way in which we work.

All Members should take a central role in identifying and delivering improvements to the quality of life of people in their communities. Members are expected to be active in consulting with the community, identifying local needs and working with the communities to identify how best to achieve these needs.

This means combining and utilising all the experience, knowledge, skills and networks of the Members to understand what goes on in their communities and what the important issues are for local people in order to come up with innovative and effective solutions to make the necessary improvements.

2. The Community Action Fund

The Community Action Fund (CAF) is in place to support groups who require a larger amount of funding than the Members Ward Fund can support. District Councillors are responsible for receiving, considering and proposing applications for funding between £1,000 and £15,000. For 2026/27 only, the CAF will consider applications of up to £40,000. Any submission over £15,000 must have a minimum of 25% match funding secured. The application process is outlined in Appendix A.

Each member is responsible for receiving, considering and proposing applications for funding from the allocated budget. Funding can be used for new or existing projects.

The aim of this funding is to:

- build capacity within communities so that groups are enabled to be self- sustaining without ongoing practical and financial support from the Council,
- stimulate local economic growth, and
- facilitate creative partnership approaches to helping people in need at the earliest opportunity.

The applications must meet the following criteria:

The funding will normally go to a local community group, but may be awarded to social enterprises, businesses, charitable organisations or other public agencies if the aims are being met - but **NOT** to an individual.

The granting of funding is for a specific activity and will not imply an ongoing commitment nor have a revenue implication for South Norfolk Council.

The activity being funded:

- Has not already taken place (retrospective funding is not permitted)
- Could not easily be funded elsewhere
- Can demonstrate how it meets a local need and provides support to the community
- Does not cover costs of routine maintenance

- Clearly demonstrates how the funding will be spent, with submitted evidence showing evidence of the costs/proposed expenditure.
- Supports the Council's priority areas.
- Has not received Member-Led funding from the Council within the last financial year.

The Grants and Awards Panel will meet in accordance with the rules in Appendix B.

Priority will be given to projects which have secured match funding external to Council funds on a sliding scale based upon project strength and percentage of secured funding.

The project or activity must promote communities working together and enhance the life of local people.

The funding can be used by the community group during the 12 months following receipt. Longer periods of 2-5 years are acceptable for larger projects with consent from the Panel, such extensions to be made when funding is requested via the CAF. Priority will be given to projects which can be delivered more quickly using a sliding scale. The Council reserves the right to request that any funding be returned in the event the project is not likely to be delivered in good time.

The funding cannot be used to support any activity more than once in a two-year period.

As far as the Member is aware, making the payment to the recipient would not result in fraudulent or illegal activity or any practices which would bring South Norfolk Council into disrepute. This would include ensuring that all recipients have any required permissions in place.

Precepting authorities raise their own budgets and therefore funding must not go to another local authority such as County, Town or Parish Council for projects / services that they are required to fund through their own precept, are a service that they normally fund, or that the precept could cover. Examples of what would not be included are village signs, parish notice boards and general maintenance.

Funds may be provided for additional services where the local authority is not required to fund or is a substantial investment that could not be normally covered by the local authorities' precept. Examples of what could be funded include defibs or major refurbishments.

Members should also be satisfied that the project or activity being funded would increase community capacity and enhance the quality of life for residents. They should also be clear that it will promote sustainable development in the area (that is, it balances social, economic and environmental objectives and does not cause damage in any of these areas).

3. Follow Up

It is the Members' responsibility to ensure that the funded projects and activities are delivered as agreed. Where that is not the case, the member, together with the Community Enablement Manager will be responsible for resolving disputes and taking action, including withdrawal of funding where appropriate.

If a grant has been used for a purpose that it was not originally intended or has not been spent within the given time period then the Community Enablement Manager will work alongside the Member who awarded the funds, to follow the Corporate Debt Policy to recover the funds from the community group.

It is the Member's responsibility to work with those awarded funding to complete a brief evaluation of the project using the provided template in order to verify spend, assess outcomes and enable scrutiny.

4. Governance

There must be a transparent audit trail in respect of decisions. In compliance with the legislation, the Grants

and Awards Panel is responsible for ensuring a record is made in writing of any decision or action it has taken.

Following the Grants and Awards Panel, with written confirmation of decisions made and evidence to confirm the organisation's bank details, the Finance team will process payment of the grant promptly.

The fund will be renewed each financial year, and all applications will be considered at the Grants and Awards Panel which meets up to twice a year.

Appendix A: The Application Process



Member is contacted by a community organisation

Member is responsible for obtaining sufficient information to decide if application is suitable or to turn down the request for funding.

Member should complete the online application form in conjunction with the applicant(s).

Two or more members wishing to support the same project or activity should fill in one application form jointly. Any additional information should be sent directly to the communities team (e.g. quotes, permissions and confirmation of bank details)

Panel meets

Members who submit applications may be asked to attend the panel meeting and answer questions related to the application

Decision

Officers will advise members of the outcome of the application, it is the members' responsibility to advise the organisation of the outcome.

Payment

Officers will make payment to the successful organisation.

Follow Up

It is the members' responsibility to follow up to ensure the grant has been spent in accordance with the decision of the panel and in good time. Members will return a brief evaluation within 12 months and inform the Communities Team of any concerns with the project or money that needs to be returned.

Appendix B: Grants and Awards Panel Rules

All applications will be considered at the Grants and Awards Fund Panel which meets up to twice a year.

The Panel will consider all eligible applications to reach a decision as to which projects should receive funding, and how much. In some cases, the Panel may make a recommendation to assign a proportion of the total monies requested to ensure that the budget is optimised.

The Grants and Awards Panel terms of reference will give details of the panel's membership/officer attendance and state the quorate.

The voting members will make recommendations for allocation of the grant monies; the final decision will be with the Assistant Director for Individuals and Families (or substitute) who will consider the views of voting members of the Panel. The voting Members will use a scoring system to ensure consistent assessment. These scores will inform but not pre-determine decisions. The scoring system will be published on the Council's website along with guidance for applicants.

Members who submit applications can attend the panel meeting and answer questions on behalf of their application if requested.

The Panel cannot defer an application. It is either awarded or rejected at the meeting. If it's refused due to insufficient information, the application can be resubmitted at the next Panel meeting. However, an application cannot be submitted more than twice. If it is refused twice, a period of 12 months must pass before being submitted again.

The maximum limit to the amount awarded at any one Panel is the total, unspent annual budget available; Any underspend after a maximum of two Panels will be carried forward to the next financial year's CAF and must be spent in that period.

All funding allocations and outcomes achieved will be made public on the Council's website and will be reported back to the Scrutiny Committee through monitoring reports up to twice a year.

Where appropriate, those recipients of funding towards a physical asset are encouraged to place a Council plaque or sticker on the asset to recognize the funding contribution.