

COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME – Member Led Grant Rules

These ground rules set the criteria in awarding grants from the Community Grant Scheme. The Community 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 and 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, and to come up with innovative and effective solutions to make the necessary improvements.

2. The Community Grant Scheme

The Community Grant Scheme 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.

The application process is outlined in Appendix A.

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, and
- facilitate creative partnership approaches to helping people in need at the earliest opportunity.

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 (who haven't received funding within the last two years).

The Panel will meet in accordance with the rules in Appendix B. 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 the 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
- Supports the Council's priority areas

Priority will be given to projects which have secured match funding externally to the Council.

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

The funding must be used by the community group during the 12 months following receipt. The council reserves the right to request that any funding be returned if the project has not been completed.

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 Broadland District 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, 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 defibrillators 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 Communities Manager will be responsible for resolving disputes and act, including withdrawal of funding where appropriate.

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

Members and officers will work with those awarded funding to complete a brief evaluation of the project to verify spend, promote the project and the community outcomes. This will be undertaken within 12 months of the award of funding.

4. Governance

There must be a transparent audit trail in respect of decisions. In compliance with the legislation, the Panel is responsible for ensuring a record is made in writing of any decision or action it has taken.

Following the Panel and written confirmation of decisions made the Finance team will process payment of the grant, officers in the Finance team have 5 working days to process the payment.

The fund will be renewed each financial year, and all applications will be considered at the Community Grant Fund Panel which meets up to twice a year (first between July and October and the second before 31st December if needed).

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)
If two or more members wishing to support the same project or activity should fill in one application form jointly.
Panel meets
Members who submit applications may be asked to attend the panel meetings and answer questions related to their application.
Decision
Officers will advise members of the outcomes of the application, it is the member's responsibility to advise the organisation of the outcome. The decision will be recorded by committee services with the reasons for approval or refusal and this can be used by the member to send to the group to ensure consistency and accuracy around decision making
Payment
Officers will make the payment to successful organisations within five working days of the decision.
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 within one year of offer. Members will submit a brief evaluation within 12 months and inform the communities team of any concerns or failures with the project / activity.

Appendix B: Rules of the Panel

- a) All applications will be considered at the Community Grant Scheme Panel which meets up to twice a year (date to be confirmed by 1st April of the same financial year).
- b) The chair of the panel may reject submissions prior to the panel if they do not meet the criteria. Specific reasons will be given for rejection.
- c) 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.
- d) The Community Grants Panel consists of:
 - Portfolio Holder Communities and Housing
 - Portfolio Holder Finance
 - Chair of the Council
 - Two other members to achieve political balance

The following officers are also in attendance at panel meetings, but not voting members:

- Assistant Director Individuals & Families
- Communities Manager OR relevant substitution

A minimum of two members must be present at the Panel for it to be quorate.

The voting members will make recommendations for allocation of the grant monies; the final decision will be with the Assistant Director Individuals & Families to ensure this is enacted.

- e) Members who submit applications can attend the panel meeting and answer questions on behalf of their application if requested.
- f) 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.
- g) The maximum limit to the amount awarded at any one Panel is the total budget available. Any underspend after a maximum of two panels will be carried forward to the next financial year's panel.
- h) All funding allocations and outcomes achieved will be made public on the Council's website and will be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee through monitoring reports once a year (July meeting looking back on previous year).
- i) Those recipients of funding towards a physical asset are encouraged to place a Council plaque or sticker on the asset to recognise the funding contribution