

South Norfolk Council Member-Led Grant Rules

MEMBER WARD FUND

These ground rules set the criteria in awarding grants from the Member Ward Fund. The purpose is to be flexible and responsive to local decision-making; therefore, members are encouraged to make quick, sound decisions which support groups or initiatives that meet identified local need.

1. Role of members

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 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.

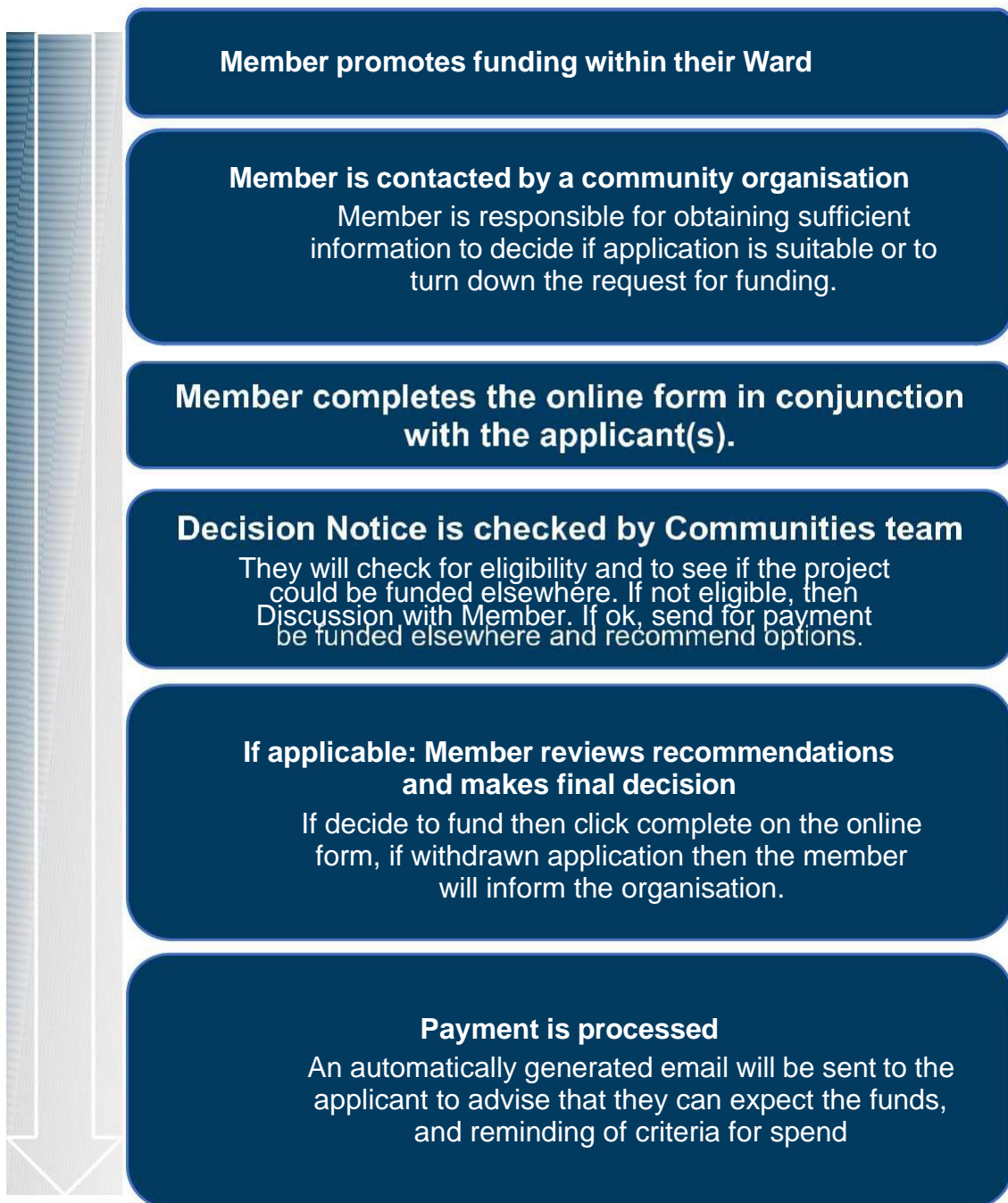
1.4 Each member will be allocated a budget (the Members' Ward Fund) to:

- increase levels of community capacity at a very local level;
- allow flexible and timely funding of very small initiatives within communities;
- enable communities to help themselves, as early as possible; and
- enhance the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the community.

1.5 Each member is accountable for making decisions to allocate funding from their budget. The decisions must meet the following criteria:

- The payment must be over £100;
- The funding will normally go to a community group, it 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 the funding is for a specific activity and will not imply an ongoing commitment by the Council nor have a revenue implication;
- The activity being funded:
 - Has not already taken place (retrospective funding is not permitted);
 - Could not easily be funded elsewhere
 - Does not cover costs of routine maintenance
 - Can demonstrate support in the community
 - The specific activity has not received member-led Council funding over the past 2 years. (Projects that have received funding in the past 2 financial years but delivering a new or addition to the activity originally funded, would be eligible for the new or additional element).
- The project or activity must promote communities working together and enhance the quality of life of people living or working in the Ward, this may be within the Ward boundary or beyond.
- The funding can be used by the community group during the 12 months following receipt.
- The funding cannot be used to support any specific activity more than once in financial years.
- 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.
- The funding must not replace funding previously provided by other statutory agencies such as the County Council.
- 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 authority's precept. Examples of what could be funded include defibs and major refurbishments.

Member Ward Fund: allocation of funds



2. Follow Up

2.1 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 taking action, including withdrawal of funding where appropriate.

2.2 Members are requested to ensure funded projects and activities are delivered as agreed by visiting the group/activity between 6 and 12 months after funding is allocated. The Member will be provided with a 'Funded by South Norfolk Council' plaque (where appropriate) and very brief evaluation form by the Communities Team. The plaque can be presented with appropriate promotional material captured and the evaluation completed. The evaluation form will be returned to the Communities Team and used to compile monitoring reports for the Scrutiny Committee.

2.3 If a grant has been used for the purpose that it was not originally intended or has not been spent within the given time 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.

2.4 Twice a year, grants awarded will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for review, including outcomes achieved using the evaluation forms referenced in 2.2. The Scrutiny Committee will hold members to account, and can request that members present their reasons for funding projects to the panel for scrutiny.

3. Governance

3.1 There must be a transparent audit trail in respect of decisions. In compliance with the legislation, the individual member is responsible for ensuring a record is made in writing of any decision or action she or he has taken. The online member Ward Grant Notice of Decision Form will form both the request to process a payment and also the record of that decision and reasons for it.

3.2 Following submission of the online decision form the Finance team will process payment of the grant. From the point that the form and all supporting evidence is received, officers in the Finance team have 5 working days to process the payment.

3.3 The fund will start on 1 April each year, and must be spent by 1 March the following year. The only exception is in an election year, when the fund will start the day after the election, and close on 1 March.

3.4 Any member ward underspend will be rolled over into the following years' Community Action Fund

