

South Norfolk Council Member-Led Grant Rules

COMMUNITY ACTION FUND

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

- 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.

2. The Community Action Fund

- 2.1 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 £500 and £15,000.

The application process is outlined in Appendix A

- 2.2 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.

- 2.2 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.

2.3 The Panel will meet in accordance to 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
 - Has not received Member-Led funding from the Council funding over the past 2 years.
- Priority will be given to projects which have secured match 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
- 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, 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, 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).

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 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.

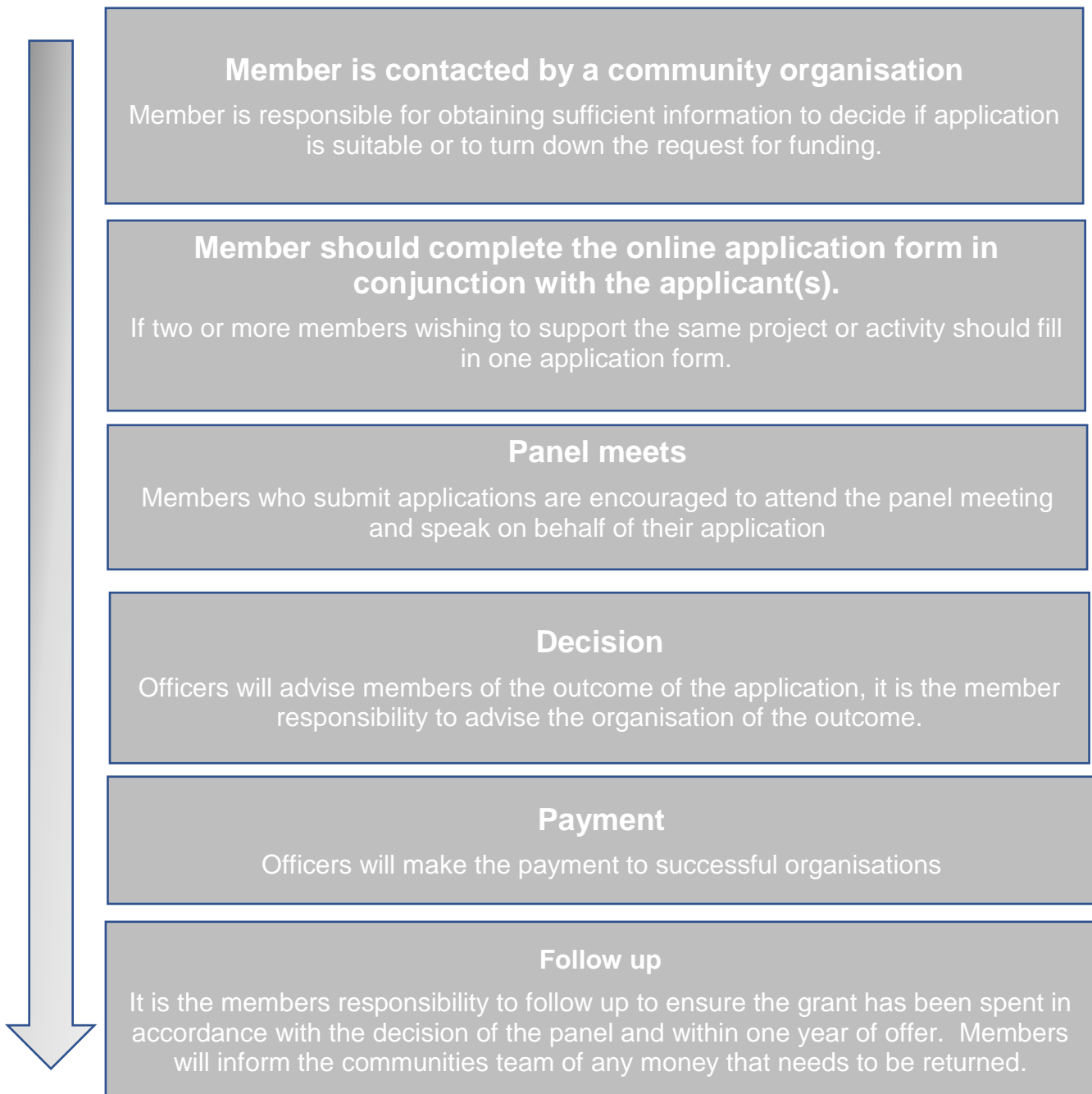
3. Governance

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

3.2 Following the CAF 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.

3.3 The fund will be renewed each financial year, and all applications will be considered at the Community Action Fund Panel which meets up to twice a year (May/June and September/ October).

Appendix A: The Application Process



Rules of the Panel.

- a) All applications will be considered at the Community Action Fund Panel which meets up to twice a year (May/June and September/ October).
- b) The Panel will consider all 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.
- c) The Community Action Panel consists of:
 - Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities **or** substituted by another Cabinet member.
 - Chairman of the People and Communities Policy Committee, **or** Deputy Chairman, if not available, another member from the Committee can be substitute.
 - Shadow Portfolio Holder, **or** substitute from their political party.

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

- Director responsible for People and Communities (or substitute Director if necessary)
- Either the Communities Manager or the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families

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 Director for People and Communities (or substitute) who will consider the views of voting members of the Panel.

- d) Members who submit applications can attend the panel meeting and speak on behalf of their application.
- e) 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.
- f) There is no limit to the amount awarded at any one Panel; but the total budget must be spent within the financial year and will not be carried over.
- g) 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.
- h) 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.