



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL WARD MEMBERS' FUND GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA 2017/18

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Ward Members' Fund (and through it the opportunity to support schemes, activities and projects) is intended to enhance ward councillors' community leadership role and to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Bedford Borough.
- 1.2 Ward members' funds are intended to provide ward councillors with a dedicated and flexible resource with which to address specific local priorities. These priorities will emerge from Councillors' consultation with residents, businesses, Parish and Town Councils, voluntary and community bodies and other partners.
- 1.3 The Council's Corporate Plan 2017-21 has identified 4 goals as follows:
 - Support people
 - Enhance places
 - Create wealth
 - Empower communities

2. Principles

2.1 The Ward Fund will operate in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) Projects should help fulfil the Council's priorities as shown in the Corporate Plan.
- (b) Projects should improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of an area or otherwise have a clear benefit to the local community.
- (c) Projects should not duplicate existing service provision of the Council, unless the provision has been deemed to be a 'low priority'.
- (d) Projects should not duplicate service provision of other public bodies.
- (e) Capital Projects for equipment and one off costs are encouraged. However, any ongoing revenue costs associated with, or arising from, a project must be able to be contained within existing budgets if it is a Borough Council project or be met by the relevant body (e.g. Parish or Town Council or community/voluntary group budgets). Written confirmation of this will be required before the scheme can be approved.
- (f) Bedford Borough Council must have the legal power to fund any proposed project.

- (g) All applications for funding must be made using the link to the electronic application form and be authorised by the Service Manager (Democratic and Member Services) or the Head of Democratic and Registration Services, following an assessment against the approved criteria before funding is made available. The criteria is set out at points 4 and 5 below. Members will be advised of the reasons for the rejection of any projects.
- (h) A deadline will be set for the receipt of applications, which must be observed. Earlier deadlines may be established for the submission of applications for certain types of project – those applications for funding received after such deadlines will not be progressed but will be held on file for the following year (subject to the continuation of the Fund). For Highways and Greenspace projects the deadline is 15th September 2017, to enable officers to confirm details of projects and programme works for the coming year. For litter bins, salt bins and ward fund salt bin refills, the deadline is 24th November 2017. Projects to support outside organisations can be submitted throughout the year, no later than 29th December 2017. Members will be issued a reminder 7-10 days beforehand of the approach of these deadlines.
- (i) Applications must demonstrate the consultation that has been undertaken with ward residents, businesses, Parish or Town Councils, voluntary/community bodies and/or other partners.
- (j) Projects which pool the funds of different Members either within a Ward or across Ward Boundaries are encouraged.
- (k) Contributions to projects which have Borough wide benefit are permissible, provided that applications to use the fund in this way are able to demonstrate the value of the project to the particular Ward area.
- (l) Any underspend(s) (i.e., uncommitted funds) allocated to the councillor within the Ward Fund scheme cannot be carried forward to the next financial year.

3. Allocation of funds

- 3.1 Each Ward Councillor will receive an allocation of £2.68 per registered elector divided equally, as appropriate, by the number of Councillors for the Ward. A breakdown of the allocation of funds for 2017-2018 is attached.

4. Criteria: - what will be covered by Ward Funding

- 4.1 Projects must be consistent with the principles set out in Section 2 above. Subject to this a Member may use their allocation to provide:
 - (a) One off project, equipment or other costs.
 - (b) Contributions to celebration events that will provide ongoing

benefits to the community or have a follow up plan of community engagement.

- (c) Start up costs for a new group or organisation.
- (d) Start up costs for Parish Council Liaison Meetings in their Ward.
- (e) Match funding for projects – evidence will be required that such funding has been secured.
- (f) VAT costs if the organisation is not VAT registered and therefore unable to claim back the VAT incurred.

4.2 Where a Community Group to which a Member wishes to make a donation does not have a constitution or bank account, the donation may be made via a partnership organisation, if they are willing to act as an agent for the Group concerned (examples of partnership organisations are Parish Councils, the Council for Voluntary Service, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity).

5 Criteria:- what will not be covered by Ward Funding

5.1 The following will not be covered by Ward Funding:

- (a) Ongoing revenue or maintenance costs.
- (b) Insurance, planning etc. application costs, solicitors or other fees.
- (c) Donations to individuals.
- (d) Donations to commercial bodies or events.
- (e) Direct staffing costs.
- (f) Premises rental (unless these form an element of the start up costs for a new group/organisation or for Parish Council Liaison meetings).
- (g) Match fees for sports fixtures.
- (h) VAT costs if the organisation is VAT registered and able to reclaim the VAT incurred.

6 Documentation required

6.1 The following documentation must be submitted before any application for funding can be approved:

- Full details of the project.
- For funding of capital costs for projects of a value up to £10,000 (in full or in part), two quotes submitted by email or post or by a link to a relevant website(s) displaying the costs of any proposed purchase.
- For funding of capital costs (in full or part) for projects of a value of £10,000 or more, three quotes submitted by e-mail or post or by a link(s) to a website(s) displaying the cost of any proposed purchase

- Where relevant, details of any other funding or grants received from the Borough Council for the projects.
- Where relevant, evidence that match funding has been obtained.
- Where relevant, evidence that planning permission and/or any other consents required have been obtained.
- Where applicable, a copy of the recipient Group's constitution/rules or, in their absence, a reference from a partnership organisation (e.g. the Council for Voluntary Service or Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity) able to verify the group(s) intentions and capacity to deliver the project.
- Bank account details in the name of the group or organisation applying or, where the grant is to be paid to a partnership organisation, in the name of that organisation.

7 Recording and Evaluation of Projects

- 7.1 All projects for which funding is made available will be recorded against the Council's corporate priorities.
- 7.2 Each Councillor will receive an update about their submitted projects, expenditure/commitment and balance on their fund. These updates will be in, September, November and December each year. Councillors may request an update on their submitted projects, spend and balance on their fund, as required.
- 7.3 A list of all projects supported by each Councillor's Ward Fund will be published on the Council's website each April, having given the relevant Councillor the opportunity to comment on the details of their projects which are proposed to be published.
- 7.4 That Councillors request that evidence (proof of purchase and photograph) for any of their external Ward Fund projects is forwarded to Democratic and Member Services by the end of the financial year.