

REPORT OF TEAM MANAGER (DEMOCRATIC SERVICES)**COUNCILLORS DIVISIONAL FUND – PUBLICITY PROTOCOL****Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider adopting a protocol around publicity for grants made from the Councillors Divisional Fund (CDF).

Information and Advice

2. The CDF is a successful initiative. It enables members to propose small grants to benefit their electoral divisions. Grants are made to a wide range of organisations and individuals to support work in the fields of children and young people, adult care, culture, community safety, and the physical environment. The administration of the scheme is light touch. Consequently a relatively small budget has significant community benefit.
3. The guidance on the scheme includes an expectation that the Council will receive appropriate recognition for its contribution. The Council publicises CDF grants through County News while individual members use their web pages. It is expected that the organisation will acknowledge the Council's funding in a proportionate manner.
4. Because of the close involvement of local members in CDF there is a risk of confusion between funding from the County Council at the member's recommendation and personal support for a project. Accordingly the draft attached protocol has been produced and is attached at appendix A to the report. For Members' Information a copy of the Policy and Guidance for CDF is attached which has recently been revised to take account of the changes to the members' declarations of interest and the change to a committee system attached at appendix B to the report.

Other Options Considered

5. None

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

6. To ensure that the Council receives recognition for CDF funding.

Statutory and Policy Implications

7. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the CDF publicity protocol as set in appendix A to the report be noted.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SB 24/09/12)

8. This report is for noting only.

Financial Comments (MB 18/09/12)

9. There are no specific financial implications arising from the report.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

Councillors Divisional Fund – Publicity Protocol

1. CDF funding is intended to have a direct benefit to the community. It is important that this is transparent and that the contribution made by the County Council is recognised appropriately.
2. Much of the funding provided through the CDF goes to temporary or short-lived schemes. However, some of it funds or contributes to permanent works. In either case, it is not intended to give permanent recognition to individual members through CDF
3. Recognition may come through
 - a) Grants being reported on Members' individual web pages
 - b) Reports in County News
 - c) Press Releases on particular schemes at the time funding is approved

In any press releases and publicity members generate they are expected to make it clear that the funding is provided by the County Council and to avoid any implication that it is personal funding from them.

4. In addition to this, the recipients of grants are expected to acknowledge the County Council's financial support. This acknowledgement should be appropriate and proportionate, for instance:
 - a) For capital schemes a suitable notice should be displayed
 - b) For other schemes acknowledgment could include a note in relevant publications, annual reports, letters or a mention at a particular event.

Members are expected to discuss appropriate publicity with the recipients of the payment.

5. Any notice on a capital scheme should along with the Council's logo simply read either
 - a) "Funded by Nottinghamshire County Council", or
 - b) "Supported by Nottinghamshire County Council"

Individual councillors should not be identified on the notice.

Where a number of partners are involved in a scheme and single plaque is planned advice on the wording should be sought from the Service Director, Communications.

6. In the year of a County Council election, no commitments, payments or related publicity may be undertaken from the date of publication of the Notice of Election until after polling day

Policy and Guidance

September 2012

7. Background

- a) The Councillors' Divisional Fund (CDF) is a specific budget to enable each Member to put forward proposals for expenditure in their electoral division.
- b) There will be an annual allowance of £10,000 for each Member to spend within their division. The scheme allows Members to carry forward to the following financial year an amount up to 10% of the annual allowance.
- c) In exceptional circumstances and with the consultation of the Finance and Property Chairman, Members may be allowed to carry forward a larger amount.
- d) Applications will be processed through Democratic Services. The Members and Civic Support team will be available to give advice on the operation of the scheme and specific proposals. A record will be kept of expenditure in each electoral division.

8. The Scheme

- a) The scheme is intended to provide a direct benefit to organisations, groups, or individuals active in your division. Experience shows that most of the payments are by way of small grants for specific purposes although there is scope for donations in kind.
- b) Proposals should be for one-off items of expenditure and not for anything which would create an on-going financial commitment, such as administrative support.
- c) Funding under the CDF is not available for:
 - i) direct employment of staff; either by a Parish Council, Town Council or voluntary group
 - ii) general charity donations where there is no specific and identifiable benefit to particular divisions
- d) The County Council must have legal powers to incur the type of expenditure proposed and the request should not be contrary to County Council policy. Where there is doubt, Democratic Services can advise. Where there may be some concern about the appropriateness of the expenditure, the Finance & Property Chairman will be consulted. In view of this, no firm commitment for expenditure should be made until a proposal has been approved.
- e) Proposals for environmental schemes should be discussed with the Corporate Director, Environment and Resources, to determine the feasibility and cost.
- f) Two or more Members may agree on a joint proposal for the whole or part of their CDF budgets.

9. Declarations of Interest

- a) The Council's Code of Conduct and usual rules on declarations of interest apply to the CDF as to other aspects of the Council's operation. Specifically, this means that members should not place themselves in a position where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, and should exercise their responsibility for the stewardship of the Council's resources properly.
- b) If a Member has a private interest in a proposal (as defined in the Code) they must declare it on the application form. Members should not put forward a proposal in which they could be considered to have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

10. Administrative Procedures

- a) Proposals for expenditure must be made on the pro-forma provided and returned to Democratic Services.
- b) Payments will be made by cheque or BACS transfer. Orders for works will be placed using the Council's normal procurement arrangements.
- c) If the grant is for £5,000 or more for a voluntary group the latest accounts should be requested and included with the application, if these are available.
- d) Where a proposal is for a project that requires funding from more than one source, the grant will not be paid until all the funding is in place but an indication of support can be made.
- e) If the project for which the grant has been given does not go ahead the organisation must either arrange for a refund of the payment or agree with the member an alternative proposal.

11. Publicity

- a) CDF funding is intended to have a direct benefit to the community. It is important that this is transparent and that the contribution made by the Council is recognised appropriately.
- b) Recognition may come through
 - i) Grants being reported on Members' individual web pages
 - ii) Reports in County News
 - iii) Press Releases on particular schemes
- c) In addition to this the recipient of the grant will be expected to acknowledge the County Council's funding. This acknowledgement should be appropriate and proportionate, for instance:
 - i) For capital schemes a suitable notice should be displayed

- ii) For other schemes acknowledgment could include a note in relevant publications, annual reports, letters or a mention at a particular event.
- d) Members are expected to discuss publicity with the recipients of the payment. Advice is available from the Service Director, Communications.

12. Review

- a) The scheme will be kept under review and the Corporate Director, Policy, Planning & Corporate Services may issue further guidance as necessary.

13. Pre-election periods.

- a) In the year of a County Council election, no commitments, payments or related publicity may be undertaken from the date of publication of the Notice of Election until after polling day.