

Revised Policy and Guidance on Councillor's Divisional Fund **Policy Committee 7th May 2014**

1. Background

- a) The Councillor's Divisional Fund (CDF) is a specific budget to enable each Member to, subject to compliance with the requirements of the scheme put forward proposals for expenditure in their electoral divisions which accord with the strategic objectives of the Council.
- b) Each Member will receive an annual allowance of £5,000 to spend within each financial year. Any funds remaining and unspent within this budget at the end of the financial year will be returned to County Fund balances.
- c) Applications will be processed through Democratic Services, who will also give advice on the operation of the fund and whether proposals meet the requirements of the scheme. A record of all expenditure under the scheme will be maintained and will be publicly available on the Council's website.

2. The Scheme

- a) The fund is designed to allow members to offer financial support to those individuals, organisations and groups within their division who actively support the community.
- b) Proposals should be for one-off items of expenditure and not for anything which could create an on-going financial commitment, e.g. administrative support.
- c) Funding is not available for the direct employment of staff, or for rent or general running costs of the organisation.
- d) Funding is not available for general charitable donations where there are no specific and identifiable benefits to the particular division.
- e) Funding cannot be given to any request which supports any matter which is contrary to County Council Policy - additionally funding cannot be provided to oppose or support any proposal including planning proposals which the County Council has a legal obligation to determine. A decision to refuse any requests will be made by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Property Committee.
- f) Two or more members may agree a joint proposal for the whole or part of their divisional budgets provided the proposals meet the requirements of the scheme.

- g) Any awards made should be in excess of £35.00 in order to ensure that the administration costs of awarding the payment do not exceed the payment itself.

3. Declarations of Interest

- a) The Council's Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles and usual rules on declarations of interest apply to the CDF. Members must 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 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.

4. Administrative Procedures

- a) Proposals for expenditure must be made on the agreed proforma application form and submitted to Democratic Services.
- b) Payments will be made by cheque, BACS transfer or internal transfer.
- c) If other County Council funding for the same project has been applied for, agreed or previously provided, such details should be included on the application form.
- d) Where a proposal is for a project that requires funding from more than one source, the grant will be not paid until all the funding is in place but an indication of support can be given.
- e) The Council's Grant Aid strategy directs applicants for grant aid requests below £500 to make applications for the Divisional Fund. Applications under the grant aid scheme must demonstrate how the project for which funding is requested meets the strategic objectives of the Council. Funding proposals/requests under the Divisional Fund Scheme must also demonstrate how the project meets the Council's Strategic Objectives.
- f) Between 5 -10 applications annually will be the subject of an audit which will including ensuring that the monies provided have been spent in accordance with the application made. The applications to be audited will be agreed with the Chairman of Finance and Property Committee and the results of the audit reported to Finance and Property Committee.
- g) Reports on the use of the Divisional Fund will be brought to Finance and Property committee on a quarterly basis.

5. Publicity

- a) CDF funding is intended to have a direct benefit for the community. It is important that this is transparent and that the contribution made by the Council is recognised appropriately.
- b) In order to ensure funding is recognised –
 - i) awards made will be reported on the individual web pages of Members
 - ii) a list of awards made will be maintained on the Council's website
 - iii) press releases will be issued on particular schemes.
 - iv) reports on the use of the Divisional Fund will be bought on a quarterly basis to Finance and Property Committee.
- c) In addition to this, the organisations in receipt of the award will be expected to acknowledge the County Council's funding. This may include a notice stating the project was funded via the Divisional Fund, or acknowledged in the organisations publications, annual reports or meeting minutes. Individual Councillors should not be named in any permanent notices or plaques. Advice on suitable publicity is available to Members from the Service Director for Communications.

6. Review

The Scheme will be kept under review in accordance with all council policies.

7. Pre-Election Periods

In the year of a County Council election, no requests for funding, payments or publicity relating to this scheme will be proposed or permitted from the date of publication of the Notice of election until after polling day.