

#### 1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Councillors' Divisional Fund (CDF) is a specific budget to enable each Member to put forward proposals for expenditure in their electoral division.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, Members may be allowed to carry forward a larger amount.
- 1.4 Applications will be processed through Members and Civic Support in 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.

#### 2. **The Scheme**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Proposals should be for one-off items of expenditure and not for anything which would create an on-going financial commitment.
- 2.3 Funding under the CDF is not available for:
  - a) direct employment of staff
  - b) general charity donations where there is no specific and identifiable benefit to particular divisions
- 2.4 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, Members and Civic Support can advise. Where there may be some concern about the appropriateness of the expenditure, Members and Civic Support will consult with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Property. In view of this, no firm commitment for expenditure should be made until a proposal has been approved.

- 2.5 Proposals for road repairs, highway schemes, and similiar environmental schemes should be discussed with the Corporate Director, Environment and Resources, to determine the feasibility and cost.
- 2.6 Two or more Members may agree on a joint proposal for the whole or part of their CDF budgets.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 The Council's Code of Conduct and usual rules on personal and prejudicial 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.
- 3.2 If a Member has a personal interest in a proposal (as defined in the Code of Practice) they must declare it on the application form. Members should not put forward a proposal in which they could be considered to have a prejudicial interest.

### **4. Administrative Procedures**

- 4.1 Proposals for expenditure must be made on the pro-forma provided and returned to Members and Civic Support in Democratic Services.
- 4.2 Payments will be made by cheque or BACS transfer. Orders for works will be placed using the Council's normal procurement arrangements.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.

### **5. Publicity**

- 5.1 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 Council is recognised appropriately.
- 5.2 Recognition may come through
  - a) Grants being reported on Members' individual web pages
  - b) Reports in County News

c) Press Releases on particular schemes

5.3 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:

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.

5.4 Members are expected to discuss publicity with the recipients of the payment. Advice is available from the Service Director, Communications.

## **6. Review**

6.1 The scheme will be kept under review and the Assistant Chief Executive may issue further guidance as necessary.

## **7. Pre-election periods.**

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