

Councillor Ward Funding - Guidelines

Background

1. The Ward Funding Scheme was first introduced in 2016/17 aimed at providing local Councillors with the ability to support the award of flexible, small and timely funds for local initiatives within their Ward. The scheme provides increased opportunities to improve levels of engagement and influence at a very local street-based level addressing the 'here and now' issues. Ideally, projects/activities should enable communities to help themselves and lead on delivering local solutions. Overall the fund should enhance the social, economic or environmental well being of the Ward community and residents quality of life.

Ward Funding Review

2. A review of the first year of operating the scheme was undertaken and circulated by email to Councillors on 20th April 2017 and a number of recommendations were made to clarify the process and make it easier to manage. As recommended then the following information sets out a step by step guide to the process.

2019/20 Information and process to be followed by Ward Councillor

3. The budget for 2019/20 has been agreed and Ward Funding remains at £2,000 allocation per Councillor. The Neighbourhood Committees may agree to pool or divide the fund, to be determined at the March 2019 Committees, the options available to the Neighbourhood Committees are:
 - retaining the existing Councillor Ward Funding scheme.
 - pooling the Neighbourhood's entire Councillor Ward Funding budget so that it can be allocated as additional funding for Neighbourhood Community Grants.
 - pooling the Neighbourhood's entire Councillor Ward Funding budget so that it can be allocated to larger versions of the type of projects that are currently supported by Councillor Ward Funding. If this option is pursued then the Committee should note, given the larger value, that these allocations will be subject to these projects being reported to the Committee for approval.

Key Points

4. A new budget of £2,000 per Councillor will available for allocation from 1 April 2019.
5. Ideally in the first financial quarter (April - June) Ward Members will engage directly with the community and consider their approach and options for the allocation of funds based on the arrangements agreed at the Neighbourhood Committees in March.
6. The Ward funding scheme will be promoted in Ward by Councillors and Officers. Promoting and publicising the Councillor Ward Funding will be at the individual Councillor's discretion but, to help to get a wider reach in the local community, the following communication methods will also be used:
 - posters/leaflets in Neighbourhood Noticeboards
 - social Media
 - promotion at local community events on stalls
 - local media press releases
 - Council Community Grant Funding pages

Governance and administration

Neighbourhoods retaining the existing scheme where each Member allocates £2,000 individually:

7. Supported schemes/activities to be identified and approved with funding allocated by Ward Councillor ideally between April and October and by no later than January. (Any funds unallocated by 1st January may be declared available for redistribution by the Neighbourhood Committee.)
8. Once allocation is decided, Ward Councillor to complete, sign and submit funding template (example attached) to Neighbourhood Manager to be processed.
9. Ward Councillors to encourage local communities to raise funds, seek external grants and pursue new social media forms such as crowdfunding to boost the value of supported activities within their Ward. The Council's External Funding Team will be available to provide advice on external funding streams.

External Community Projects

10. If the scheme/activity/project is **externally funded** with payment directly to the community then Ward Councillor(s) are to liaise with residents to confirm by letter or email their support, the level of funding to be given and to request an electronic invoice from the community be sent to the Council's Communities Support Officer by email to nick.spicer@kingston.gov.uk
11. Communities Support Officer to process payment and take any enquiries relating to invoicing or payment.

Internal RBK Projects

12. If the scheme/activity is to be **internal funding**, Neighbourhood Manager will identify and advise Councillor(s) of the Lead Officer from the appropriate service area.
13. Ward Councillor(s) liaise directly with Lead Officer and once activity details and timetable is agreed and any other issues resolved, the Ward Funding template is finalised and signed by Councillor(s).
14. If required, Councillor informs residents of their Ward improvement.
15. Once the funding allocation is confirmed the Communities Support Officer will complete an internal journal transfer to reallocate funds to the service area so that funds are held and expended by the appropriate responsible Officer.
16. Throughout the process the Communities Support Officer will maintain an audit trail of expenditure. The respective Neighbourhood Manager will monitor the overall budget and individual Councillors expenditure and provide regular reports to Neighbourhood Committee.

Neighbourhoods with pooled Councillor Ward Funding

17. The process will be same as the individual scheme as outlined above but the allocation will be subject to the allocations also being reported to the appropriate Neighbourhood Committee for consideration and approval.

If you would like any further information or advice, please get in touch with your Neighbourhood Manager by using the following mailbox
neighbourhood_management@kingston.gov.uk