

## **Devolved Ward Budget – Scheme Rules**

### **Objective:**

The devolved budget scheme is designed to provide members with a dedicated ward budget to undertake improvement works within their wards as identified by, and with, their local communities.

### **Criteria for Spend:**

- The primary use of this funding should be for one-off spends on material work that has identified as creating a positive impact within the ward.
- The funding can be used for projects that either enhance community facilities in the ward, work that will improve the accessibility of facilities in the ward, and/or work that will enhance the environment in the ward.

### **Funding and scheduling:**

- Each of the nine wards has a total budget of £3,000 for the year.
- All projects must be considered, approved, implemented and paid for within the financial year 1 April to 31 March.
- Where projects require scheduling and delivery by Council departments, reasonable time should be allowed to enable projects to be completed within the financial year. To this end, all such schemes need to be submitted to relevant officers by 31 December to enable a reasonable chance of this being achieved.
- All schemes involving payment to third party groups must be finalised and submitted by the end of February to enable sufficient time for the scheme to be processed and payments issued by financial year end.
- The timing of some types of schemes (e.g. Tree planting) will be affected by seasonal constraints, and this can be discussed with the officers at the initial planning stage.

## **Eligibility:**

- Eligible projects are where the work is to be sourced either:

### **Internal**

- (a) From within the Council's service departments or procured via relevant service officers with contractors or other authorities. In these cases, preliminary research needs to establish the full cost of the work, including administrative costs, and the viability of the project to be delivered, by ward councillors with the relevant officers in advance of making and submitting decisions for work to commence and funding to be released.
- (b) When completing the request form, councillors should consider and agree a reasonable timescale for delivery of the scheme in conjunction with the relevant officer.

### **External**

For projects that reimburse local community groups/clubs subject to:

- (a) The fund being used for the purchase of essential equipment or necessary repairs and refurbishment to premises or costs towards new/improved facilities or services.
- (b) Onus being on the community group to obtain owners consent where the proposal involved work to premises or on land owned by another party.
- (c) Onus being on the community group to demonstrate to ward members the community need and worth of the proposal, which could include gathering supporting evidence such as letters, emails, testimonials and photographs etc.
- (d) Agreement by ward members, in advance of purchase in respect of consents, amount, equipment purchase and/or works to be done, with reimbursement only after proof of purchase and/or works done and/or where members are satisfied that the project will and can only go ahead if funds are given in advance.
- (e) The responsibility for obtaining the equipment or procuring the work being with the community group.

- (f) All such projects to be one-off initiatives with no subsequent funding implications for the Council.
- (g) All projects relating to funds being given directly to community groups for them to deliver are normally limited to a maximum funding of £4,000 per project but a greater amount can be awarded with the specific consent of the monitoring officer.
- (h) Again, when completing the request form, councillors should consider and agree a reasonable timescale for delivery of the scheme in conjunction with the community group.

### **The Council's Safeguarding Policy:**

Eastbourne Borough Council's Safeguarding is committed to ensuring we do all we can to protect the welfare of children, young people and adults and minimising the risks of abuse within any services we provide or fund. The Council's Safeguarding Policy states that

"Support for programmes which involve children, young people or vulnerable adults (funding, premises, etc.) will be subject to those organisations providing evidence of effective policy and procedures on child and vulnerable adult protection. This includes all those managing any of our buildings or with a licence to run services from any of our buildings."

To help us comply with the policy, we will ask that you ensure that anyone applying for funding has been asked the following:

- Will any children or young people under the age of 18 be involved in delivering this project?
- Will delivery of this project involve working in settings where there will be significant contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults?
- If so,
  - (a) Please ask us for a copy of the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures - please contact: [Committees@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:Committees@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)
  - (b) Do you have a Safeguarding Policy / Procedure?

(c) Have you done a risk assessment covering safeguarding issues relating to this project?

(d) If you are using contractors to carry out any work, you need to provide them with a copy of the Council's Safeguarding Policy and ask them to provide a copy of their own Policy and Safeguarding Risk Assessment.

You can access the Pan Sussex Procedures on Child Protection and Safeguarding Adults at:

<http://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk> and  
<http://sussexsafeguardingadults.procedures.org.uk>

### **General rules:**

- Where intended work involves any form of construction on land not owned by the Council, the consent of the landowner must be obtained as part of the preliminary research before a decision is made.
- Proposals that could adversely affect the environment or community inclusiveness within the ward cannot be supported.
- Proposals that involve work to be provided by the Council that is already programmed to occur within the current financial year cannot be supported.
- It is accepted that certain projects may need ad hoc follow-up work in future years and this is permissible where such funds could be drawn from future devolved budget allocations. However where a project will require a significant increased obligation for year-in year-out commitments from the Council's general revenue fund for maintenance, the work cannot be supported.
- It is admissible to part fund a project across two financial years, other than in Borough election years.
- Proposals that require work that cannot be lawfully undertaken by the Council cannot be supported.

### **Process Sequence:**

- Ward councillors to promote the availability of devolved ward budgets using party literature, ward surgeries, leaflets, posters, etc and encourage

individuals and groups to submit suggestions for proposed projects and needed work.

- Ward councillors to consider projects proposals and suggestions and make preliminary investigations with relevant service delivery officers or community groups to establish cost and viability of projects.
- Ward councillors to consult with any residents likely to be affected by the proposal.
- Based on the scheme criteria and the outcome of preliminary investigations, ward councillors decide on which projects to support.
- Ward councillors submit a completed decision notice to Committee Services ([committee@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:committee@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)). Payment arrangements from the ward budgets will be as follows.
  - (a) In the case of works to be delivered from within the Council, funds will be coded and released to the relevant service department for the work to be undertaken or procured.
  - (b) In the case of grants to community groups, reimbursement of the amount agreed with ward councillors will be paid to the relevant contact person via cheque or bank transfer as appropriate.
- Ward councillors should maintain contact with service officers and/or community group on the delivery of the work and are encouraged to communicate the outcomes of these works within their wards using the same mechanism as those used for promoting the scheme.
- Members will be asked to update the Scrutiny Committee on schemes, both ongoing and completed, within the financial year and dates for reporting will be scheduled into the annual programme.

### **Decision Notices:**

- Decision notices are the responsibility of ward members to complete and submit electronically to Committee Services ([committees@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:committees@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)).
- Decision notices must not be sent to Committee Services until the cost and details of the proposed project have been fully agreed with the relevant Council Officer or Community Group Contact as appropriate.

- In respect of grants to community groups, submission of the decision notice is the ward councillors' guarantee of accountability that the funds will be spent on the project as agreed with them.
- Funding for projects will not be released unless the decision notice contains details of evidence that the project has resulted from community engagement or contact.
- Decision notices will be placed on the Committee Services shared server and a summary of schemes will be placed on the Council's website quarterly for public inspection.

### **Decision Making Rules:**

- All decisions need the agreement of at least 2 of the 3 ward members.
- Where a ward is cross party, the minimum of 2 in favour must come from different political parties unless declarable interests make this impossible.
- Any ongoing disputes in respect of perceived difficulty in obtaining decisions will initially be referred to Cabinet for their consideration.
- Where a member has a personal, prejudicial interest in any proposal, the decision must be made by the other 2 ward members who must both agree. This overrides the need for the decision to be cross-party.