

# **KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF THE WARD INITIATIVES FUND**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Ward Initiative Fund of £500 per member per annum exists to enhance the capacity of members to undertake their community representation role.
- 1.2 These guidelines set out the prohibitions on the use of the fund, but does not cover all the authorised uses to which the fund may be put. Members can be innovative in producing proposals for use of the fund and will share their experiences of the outcomes of any new uses.
- 1.3 Members cannot access the fund directly. All payments will be made by the clerk and are subject to the usual internal controls on expenditure and the prohibitions listed below.
- 1.4 Members should not raise unrealistic expectations to potential beneficiaries.
- 1.5 Members are advised not to incur expenditure themselves and then seek to recover their costs from the fund without first being assured that such costs are refundable.
- 1.6 Where possible, Members or the grant recipients should provide invoices, quotations or receipts to accompany any request.
- 1.7 Before payments from the fund may be authorised, members are required to sign an undertaking not to use it for improper purposes.

## **2. PROHIBITIONS ON THE USE OF THE FUND**

- 2.1 The fund may not be used for any purpose for which the Town Council could not itself incur expenditure.
- 2.2 This prohibition includes:
  - expenditure which would be in breach of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity
  - expenditure which would be in breach of any statutory provision relating to elections and referendums
  - expenditure which would be contrary to the Council's commitments to local people, as expressed in the Corporate Plan

### 2.3 Examples of prohibited expenditure include:

- anything which is, or is liable to misrepresentation as being, party political. Anything published with financial support from the fund may not include reference to political affiliations, use political slogans, expressly advocate policies as being of a particular political party or directly attack policies and opinions of other parties, groups or individuals
- no publications, projects or events shall be funded which are issued or held during the period preceding an ordinary Town Council election and the election itself, nor will support be given during such period in relation to a ward in which a by-election is to be held. For other local and national elections, the prohibition relates to any event, project or publication which gives, or could be misrepresented as giving, any publicity whatsoever to a candidate at the election.
- no publications, projects or events shall be funded which appear designed to influence local people in deciding whether or not to sign a petition or vote in a referendum.
- any request which would directly benefit a sole individual
- any request for monies to be spent on consumables or trips
- any request that could be considered as 'Treating' under election law.
- The Ward Initiative Fund will not substitute itself as a provider / funder of services when another public provider cuts such a service.

2.4 Determinations to withhold funding will be made by the Clerk and shall be in writing detailing the basis of the determination.

### 3. AUTHORISED USES OF THE FUND

3.1 Subject to the prohibitions noted in Section 2 the fund may be used for any purpose which in the opinion of the member concerned will enhance their community representation role. Such purposes will include:

- providing facilities or improving access to services for residents in their ward
- providing information to constituents, whether in the whole ward or a part thereof and whether about the Council or about any other matter affecting the economic, social or environmental well-being of the ward or that part of the ward

- seeking the views of constituents, whether in the whole ward or a part thereof and whether about the Council or about any other matter affecting the economic, social or environmental well-being of the ward or that part of the ward
  - any other purpose which in the opinion of the member will enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of their ward or part thereof.
- 3.2 Individual ward members may pool their fund allocations together if they feel that a scheme would benefit residents of more than one ward. One or more ward members can also join with one or more ward councillors from another ward or wards to fund a project, provided it can be shown that the project benefits residents from both or all wards concerned. Individual members are responsible for ensuring funds are distributed in an equitable manner.

#### 4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND

- 4.1 The clerk shall have responsibility for administering the fund.
- 4.2 All requests must be submitted to the clerk to be assessed and authorised.
- 4.3 The annual allowance will be set by Council each year.
- 4.4 Any money which has not been committed by the 31<sup>st</sup> December each year will be transferred to the small grant budget for pooling and spending in the last quarter of the year.
- 4.5 No monies can be rolled over into the following financial year, and all committed monies should be spent by the 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- 4.6 In the financial year immediately preceding a whole Council election, all the monies must spent by the 1<sup>st</sup> January and no new allocation in the next financial year can be used before the date of the election.
- 4.7 If there is a local or national bye-election, or a national election or referendum, called during a year, disbursements from the fund and decisions about the use of the fund will be suspended from the day of the notice of election to the day after the election in the wards affected by the said election.
- 4.8 Where a member resigns or is disqualified, any unspent monies will be inherited by their successor, subject to the restrictions above.

4.9 Reports will be compiled and published from time to time.

5. UNDERTAKING

I declare that I shall follow these guidelines in my use of the Fund and shall not use it for any purpose contrary to law or otherwise incompatible with my role as a member of Kettering Borough Council.

Signed by .....

Name .....

Dated .....