



## **Councillors' Community Support Scheme Guidance Notes**

### **Introduction**

The Councillors' Community Support Scheme exists to enhance the capacity of Councillors to undertake their community leadership role through the granting of funds within their ward to support community projects. The grant is paid out of public funds.

All grants should have a positive impact on residents of the ward the Councillor represents and enhance the lives of the ward residents.

These notes have been produced to help Councillors with the administration and spending of their designated budgets within their ward. They aim to provide guidance so that Councillors have the freedom to spend their budgets within an approved reporting framework to benefit local communities and mitigate against risk.

### **Budget**

The grant available to each Councillor to spend in their ward for the benefit of their community is decided each year by Council. The amount agreed is subject to change as part of the annual budget setting process.

This guidance and the process generally supports applications to be made in accordance with the Council's financial regulations and standing orders.

Use of designated budgets will be suspended during the pre-election period for Borough Council elections and, for those relevant Councillors, for the County Council Elections. Use of designated budgets may also be suspended at the discretion of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services during the pre-election period for a By-election for a Parish / Town Council if the member is also a Borough Councillor.

Any funds remaining unspent at the end of the financial year will be returned to corporate reserves or spent on community projects which benefit the whole Borough.

The grant allocation is primarily for use within the Councillor's own ward. It can be spent in conjunction with other Councillors for the same ward (where they exist) or in an adjacent ward with the approval of the relevant Ward Councillor and where there is a demonstrable benefit to both communities.

Payment of grants will be made by BACS, due to administration costs and efficiency, with a covering email unless Councillors specifically request a cheque for personal presentation to the group. An annual audit of the Scheme is undertaken each summer and a selection of beneficiaries will be contacted and asked to provide evidence of expenditure and community value (usually in the form of a photograph or personal statement).

## **Criteria for this scheme**

Key Criteria: applications need to meet the following criteria:

- Within the Rushcliffe boundary and for the benefit of the residents in your ward
- To benefit the local community within your ward and enhance residents quality of life
- Proposals should be for one-off items of expenditure and not for anything which could create an on-going financial commitment
- Funding is not available for the direct employment of staff or for rent or general running costs
- Awards should, where possible, meet a guideline minimum payment of £50, which approximates to the estimated average cost of the administration of grants. For grants below this limit, the application should include justification.
- Awards to parish councils to fund projects that should be funded out of the parish precept, should be kept to a minimum, and will be made at the discretion of the ward Councillor.
- Awards should be for items or work within the current financial year and supporting evidence should be provided to reflect this.
- Awards should be avoided where there is an alternative, more suitable funding source i.e PTA of a school.

## Transparency

Councillors need to be mindful of how they spend their budgets and be clear of the community benefit. A Councillor arranging a grant should clarify that this is arranged from the Council's Community Support Scheme. Information will be published on the Council's website in line with the transparency code, giving the general public the opportunity to scrutinise expenditure.

## **What this grant CAN be spent on**

- ✓ Improvements to community facilities within the ward
- ✓ Community events or activities within the ward that benefit all/a wide range of residents of the ward
- ✓ Investment in community infrastructure within the ward
- ✓ Support to a religious organisation where the project/event to be delivered benefits the wider ward (e.g. repair of church clock)
- ✓ Support to a local school or academy where the project/event to be delivered benefits the wider ward
- ✓ Section of the community within the ward with a specific need.

## **What this grant CANNOT be spent on**

- ✗ Anything illegal
- ✗ Projects of a party political nature, including supporting political organisations
- ✗ Supporting religious groups, activities or events, where the benefit is for that group only
- ✗ Requests which directly benefit a sole individual
- ✗ Requests spent on consumables
- ✗ Support to lobbying or campaign groups
- ✗ The direct employment costs of staff or hospitality payments (including food and drink)
- ✗ Anything that will bring the Council into disrepute or damage the Council's reputation.

The Monitoring Officer keeps a record of all applications to the Councillors' Community Support Scheme and may, on occasion, turn down applications from the same applicant made through multiple Councillors. Councillors are asked to check additional funding sources when approached by applicants to ensure the Community Support Grant is available to all residents that need it.

### **How do I make an application?**

- Proposals for expenditure must be submitted using the electronic application form available on the Councillors' Portal. A separate electronic form must be completed for each application. Applications must contain up-to-date bank details for the applicant and evidence which supports the application being made (for example, requests on email, project proposals, quotes for work etc).
- Two or more Councillors may agree on a joint proposal for their own or adjacent wards for the whole or part of their Councillors' Community Support Scheme allocation. These must be submitted on separate electronic forms but can use the same supporting evidence. It is imperative that, in completing the form, the Councillor includes justification of how this would affect the wider community.
- **No firm commitment for expenditure should be made until a proposal has been approved.** Supporting evidence from the grant recipient should be included with the application, e.g. email asking for funding with an estimate of the cost, invoice or receipt etc.
- Part of the application form will need to be completed by a representative of the group in receipt of the funding as well as the ward Councillor. This is to ensure that correct contact and payment details are received.

Please note: Councillors need to declare on the application form any personal interest that they may have with the organisation or activity that the grant supports.

### **How we will make the decision**

All applications will be considered by the Monitoring Officer or their designated representative. If an application does not initially meet the criteria for the scheme, they will discuss this with the relevant Councillor.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Decisions will be made by the Council's Monitoring Officer or their designated representative. Application forms will be reviewed against the criteria specified above.

Councillors must be mindful of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles.

Councillors must disclose on the application form any private interests in a proposal.

A record of grants awarded and refused in each ward will be kept on the Council's website. Reasons for turning down a grant will be provided by the Monitoring Officer or their designated representative.

To ensure that monies provided have been spent in accordance with the applications made – spot checks will take place throughout the year totalling 10% of the applications made.

The Council's communications team will be happy to work with ward Councillors to support promotion of activities funded by this scheme.

**Review**

The overall scheme will be reviewed every four years in line with the Borough Council's election cycle to be agreed at a full Council prior to the election.

**Undertaking**

All Councillors will be asked at the start of their term of office to read the above guidance and sign below before being able to access the Councillors' Community Support Scheme.

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

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ward \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Updated: July 2025  
Sara Pregon