

## PART 12 – WARD IMPROVEMENT FUND RULES

- 1.1 The Ward Improvement Fund (WIF) scheme supports Medway's elected Members to fund activities designed to improve the social, economic, or environmental wellbeing for residents in their ward(s).
- 1.2 The WIF budget is held and managed by the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with ward members, with the Revenue Accounts team in Finance administering the scheme. Individual ward Members are allocated a sum which they may distribute in accordance with the essential criteria set out in these WIF rules.
- 1.3 Support is available to elected Members via the Members Portal and/or email [wif@medway.gov.uk](mailto:wif@medway.gov.uk)
- 1.4 The essential criteria proposals must meet are as follows:
  - 1.4.1 Ward Members are responsible for ensuring (and must confirm for each proposal) that the proposed activity will improve the social, economic or environmental wellbeing for residents within the ward(s) and that the activity is supported by the community.
  - 1.4.2 Ward Members must ensure the proposed activity does not incur council officers any significant additional work, which would distract them from their core responsibilities, without the express approval of the relevant Assistant Director/Director.
  - 1.4.3 Ward Members must ensure proposals do not incur any ongoing revenue cost to the Council, such as on-going maintenance costs.
  - 1.4.4 Ward Members must ensure they obtain and provide accurate payment information including bank details at the time of submission of the WIF form.
  - 1.4.5 Ward Members must ensure they obtain any approvals from Council services and quotes required from external bodies before the WIF proposal is submitted to Finance. Examples might be where permission is required from another agency or landowner to take forward a project, where planning permission is required or where Medway Norse are to be asked to carry out grounds maintenance activities.
  - 1.4.6 Ward Members must submit their proposals to Finance in sufficient time to ensure that their proposals can be paid before the end of the financial year but by no later than the end of February each year. There will be no automatic carry-forward of unspent amounts, and any carry-forward of sums relating to requests received late in the financial year will be at the sole discretion of the Chief Operating Officer.
  - 1.4.7 The proposal for WIF funding must constitute lawful expenditure for the Council. For example, the Local Government Act 1986 prohibits local authorities publishing any material which, in whole or part, appears to be designed to affect

public support for a political party. The Council must also comply with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity issued by the Secretary of State under the 1986 Act.

- 1.4.8 Members must ensure any works or services required from other bodies are procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 1.4.9 Ward Members may, at their discretion, agree to pool their WIF with another Member to fund a proposal that delivers a benefit across ward boundaries, however each Member must submit an individual request form; this is to ensure no commitments are made against an individual ward Member's allocation of funding without their documented approval.
- 1.4.10 As they are closely engaged with their local communities, it is possible that Ward Members, or their spouses, relatives, friends or associates may be in a position of control over local organisations that Ward Members might wish to support with their WIF. Ward Members must therefore declare any interests (whether a disclosable pecuniary interest or other significant interest as set out below) when submitting their WIF request. The Members' Code of Conduct defines interests as follows:
- a) A disclosable pecuniary interest applies to a Member and their spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom they are living as if they were a married couple or civil partners and provided they are aware that the other person has the interest.
  - b) An other significant interest applies to a Member and:
    - i. a member of their family or friends or any person with whom you have a close association;
    - ii. any person or body from whom they have accepted or received any gifts or hospitality as specified in Schedule Two of the Members' Code of Conduct;
    - iii. any outside body or group specified in Schedule Two of the Members' Code of Conduct of which you they a member or in a position of general control or management (as relevant)
- 1.5 The following process must be followed by ward Members to release the funds:
- 1.5.1 Ward Members must submit a request for each proposal to use their WIF allocation, and proposals must be approved by the Chief Operating Officer or deputy, before any commitment is made to the proposed recipient of any WIF funding.
- 1.5.2 Ward Members must complete the WIF request form in the secure area of the Members' Portal, accessible only via the Medway Council issued device and login. Requests will not be accepted and processed if received in any other format.
- 1.5.3 The Finance team will confirm that there are adequate funds available for the WIF proposal and seek the approval of the Chief Operating Officer or deputy. As elected Members are responsible for confirming that each proposal is in line with the WIF rules, the Chief Operating Officer or deputy will review each WIF proposal on the assumption they will be approved however they may seek

clarification if it is not clear how a proposal would meet any of the criteria. The Chief Operating Officer or deputy will then either accept or reject the WIF proposal.

1.5.4 The Finance team will then notify the Member(s) and instruct payment to the recipient(s) as directed.

1.5.5 Details of all WIF requests approved will be published on the Council's website.