

Devolved Ward Budgets 2023/24 - Application guidance

Background

Rotherham Council's Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy identifies how we are 'Putting communities at the heart of everything we do' by:

- Councillors working with their communities on what matters to them
- Listening and working together to make a difference and
- Supporting people from different backgrounds to get on well together

Councillors within each of the Borough's 25 wards have developed a Ward Plan, which includes their priorities for the year ahead.

Councillors receive devolved ward budgets to support the delivery of their Plan's priorities, as well as increasing engagement opportunities with local residents.

Amount available (2023/24)

The 2023/24 budget approved by Council, includes revenue and capital budgets that are devolved to individual Elected Members (Community Leadership Fund) or the ward as a whole (Capital Budget):

- Each Elected Member will receive £1,584 Community Leadership Fund. This is Revenue funding
- Two member wards will receive £7,120 Capital Budget
- Three member wards will receive £10,680 Capital Budget

Capital - expenditure relating to the acquisition or improvement of physical assets or equipment which will be of use or benefit in providing services for more than one financial year or will increase the assets useful economic life. e.g. buildings, surveyor's fees, street furniture, fixtures & fittings, computer equipment, etc.

Revenue - expenditure relating to the provision of services, short life and low-cost assets, e.g. general running costs, utility bills, room hire, activity sessions, trips, events, one off payments, etc.

What can be funded?

Ward budget allocations **must be aligned to the Ward Plan priorities** and fund activity or services that support activity to tackle these. The Ward Plans and priorities for 2023/24 can be found here - www.rotherham.gov.uk/homepage/120/ward-plans

Minimum and maximum

There is no specific minimum and maximum that can be applied for, other than the total budget currently available.

How will funding be allocated?

Councillors can decide locally how to allocate their ward budgets.

They can choose to do this in different ways:

- Commissioning services that provide Value for Money. This could include -
 - In-house council provision e.g. Streetpride, Highways, Green Spaces etc. **or**
 - Vol-com sector or partner provision e.g. from a local group / organisation, charity, Parish Council, etc
- Community Chest / open bidding process
- A form of participatory budgeting e.g. Dragons Den, Soup Kitchen etc. where people pitch their proposals
- Purchasing equipment / goods from the private sector for the benefit of the local community
- **Or** by a combination of any of these

Ward budgets **cannot** be used for any proposal which:

- Involves funding an individual
- Involves funding retrospective activity
- Involves funding activity that is political / religious in nature or involves campaigning against the Council / its priorities or activity that could be construed as lobbying
- Would then have an expectation of, or a legal / contractual commitment to, ongoing (Revenue / Capital) funding
- Would be unlawful for the Council to support

Completing the form

All sections of the application form must be completed or your application form will automatically be rejected.

About the project

Please include:

- The ward or neighbourhood that will be covered by the proposal / project
- How the proposal/project will contribute to the delivery of ward plan priorities and benefit the local community
- Who you involved or consulted with about this project (e.g. local councillors, council / police staff, voluntary groups, residents, etc.). **If you are applying to an individual councillor's Community Leadership Fund (CLF) please state the name of that Councillor**
- Whether any other organisation will be involved in delivering the project
- An estimate of how many people you expect to benefit
- Whether people with protected characteristics will specifically benefit and an estimate of how many (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, Pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). *Please note - If your project is aimed at particular groups only you will need to tell us why so that we can ensure that there will be no breach of the Equality Act 2010*

- The period over which the activity will run.
- The date, time and venue if it is for a one-off event
- Details of any equipment to be purchased, including who will own / maintain and be responsible for its possible future disposal

About your budget

Please provide a breakdown of what you intend the grant to cover. If you want to purchase a single item or service over £5,000, you are required to obtain two quotes and choose the quote that offers the most value for money. Please provide details of both quotes.

If you are applying for funding as a contribution to a project, please tell us how you intend to raise the additional funds (including any contribution from your organisation's reserves). If only part of the funding is granted explain how you will meet the rest of the costs.

Please note the following:

- We do not require you to send us a copy of the group's accounts or a financial statement showing your group's income and expenditure for the most recent 12-month period, but we expect that these documents are in place and can be made available to us if needed
- You must keep receipts for **all items** of expenditure as they will be requested for monitoring purposes. Any monies not spent for the purpose it was granted will need to be returned along with the monitoring form.

Insurance, equalities and safeguarding

Please provide confirmation that -

- Adequate insurance is in place to cover any activities being delivered or items purchased
- You have permission from the landowner to use the site (if required) for the purpose stated on your application
- You have acceptable safeguarding policies and procedures in place which meet your legal responsibilities if you are applying for funding for a service or activity that involves working with children, young people or vulnerable adults (this includes Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and ensuring that individuals are not permitted to undertake particular activities where a disclosure casts doubt on their suitability to do so)
- You comply to the Equality Act 2010 and you try to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations in delivering your project and you do not intentionally discriminate against anyone with a 'protected characteristic' (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, Pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)

About you

If possible, please provide a contact email for your application. If you provide an

email, we will use this to contact you about your application, so please be sure to check it regularly. If you do not have an email address, we will contact you by telephone / post at your contact address.

Making decisions

The frequency of spending decisions is down to ward Councillors' discretion.

The allocation of the Community Leadership Fund is down to the individual Councillor concerned.

The Capital budget will be decided on a **majority** vote if a unanimous vote cannot be achieved. If unanimous or majority vote cannot be achieved, then the Cabinet Member or Leader will be asked to arbitrate. If agreement still cannot be reached, then the award of funding will not take place.

If an Elected Member has a conflict of interest in a proposal, then they must declare this to their ward colleagues and will be unable to vote on that particular proposal. In the event that all Elected Members within a ward have a conflict of interest then the application form will be taken to the Cabinet Member or Leader for a decision.

Elected Members will have to illustrate that they have allocated / committed their devolved budgets by **31st January 2024**, in advance of the May 2024 elections and the end of their term of office. No applications or proposals will be accepted after this date. All devolved ward budgets must have been received by the recipient organisation / service by **31st March 2024**.

Monitoring

If your application is successful a Monitoring Form will be sent to you for completion at the same time as you receive your funding.

Transparency, scrutiny and accountability

An Annual Devolved Budget Report for each ward will be published annually and will include:

- A breakdown of projects / activities supported
- Amounts allocated
- The sector funded (i.e. VCF, public sector, etc.)
- The ward priorities the projects have contributed to
- Which communities of identity have been supported

Ward Budget funds are public money and so the same rules apply as do to any other Council spending. All spending is subject to the Council's Constitution, CSOs and Financial regulations, as well as appropriate, scrutiny and accountability. **Failure to complete and return the monitoring form by the due date will result in the Council initiating a process to request the grant being returned.**

If you have any queries, please contact us at neighbourhoods@rotherham.gov.uk