



Spending the funding delegated to Mole Valley Local Committee

At its meeting on 5 February 2002, Surrey County Council decided to delegate £17,500 per local committee member, to enable local committees to improve well-being in their locality. This money is revenue funding for one year only, i.e. there is no ongoing commitment.

Mole Valley Local Committee has been allocated £105,000 for 2002/3. The process for approving the spending of this money needs to be open, transparent, accountable and auditable. Given that the funding is not guaranteed next year, any contracts can only be for one year.

The money can be spent at any time during the year. Members can hold back funds to address issues that emerge later, but may wish to identify priorities as soon as possible since carry forwards cannot be guaranteed. Any overspend will be carried forward.

Principles

The principles for spending the money are to:

- meet demonstrable need
- deliver value for money
- be consistent with County policies
- can be pooled with funds from partner organisations
- spent on activities for which SCC has legal powers
- can be spent externally or internally.

Examples of how the funding might be spent include:

- grants
- equipment
- enhancing current services
- promoting new initiatives.

Criteria

Members may choose to set one or more priority themes. Surrey County Council has six priority themes in its corporate plan for 2002/3 (Making Surrey a better place):

- to learn and develop
- to live and do business
- to travel
- where vulnerable people are more independent
- where everybody matters
- where people feel safe.

The Mole Valley Community Strategy has thirteen key themes (overleaf).

The Mole Valley Community Strategy themes, of which the first six have been prioritised by the public and members via a consultation exercise, are:

- The need for more affordable housing
- Traffic congestion, road safety and maintenance
- Services and facilities for young people
- Access to services in rural areas and public transport
- Neighbourhoods with problems
- The local economy and viability of town centres
- The need to promote voluntary work
- Safeguarding the countryside
- Drainage infrastructure problems
- Health and welfare
- Community safety
- Lifelong learning
- Waste reduction, re-use and recycling.

Process

Members have already publicised the existence of this money through the media. They may also wish to ensure that local organisations in their divisions are aware of it.

Members need to complete a brief form for each proposal identifying its aims, the needs it will address, desired outcomes and financial details. The committee will need to agree all proposals.

A key decision for members is whether to spend the funding as a whole committee, as individuals, across neighbouring divisions, or a mixture of all three. Some of the possible benefits and constraints of these options are presented in the following table:

	Possible benefits	Possible constraints
Spend as whole committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a consistent approach across the whole district • a simple system that providers can understand and comply with • provides economies of scale • can deliver strategic services • low administrative costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not necessarily allow for local discretion • could be inflexible • if the service / project did not cover the whole district equally then it might be difficult to secure committee approval
Spend as individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives discretion to spend in division • allows maximum flexibility for individual members • members able to respond more directly to their constituents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposed service may cross more than one division • could create inequality of service delivery • if all funding is spent as individuals, there is no funding for services / projects that cover a wide area • more administration required
Spend across adjoining divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides some economies of scale • allows pooling of resources to provide more service • may make it more attractive for a provider to submit a bid (work involved in commissioning contracts, etc.) • could eliminate competition between providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjoining divisions may have different needs • may provide improved services in only one part of the district