



OFFICER REPORT TO COUNCIL

MEMBERS' COMMUNITY ALLOCATION – FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

KEY ISSUE/DECISION:

In October 2019, a refreshed Organisation Strategy was approved by Surrey's Cabinet. The Strategy details the council's contribution to the achievement of the Community Vision for Surrey in 2030. The Community Vision is a collective ambition to make Surrey a uniquely special place for people to live and learn, and where no one is left behind.

This report seeks approval for the new Financial Framework for Members' Community Allocation (MCA) attached at Annex 1. The Framework aims to more closely align MCA with the Organisation Strategy in supporting the realisation of the Community Vision for Surrey in 2030.

BACKGROUND:

1. Context

Members' Community Allocation (MCA) is an established funding stream that is well-utilised by councillors in supporting voluntary, charitable, faith sector and other local organisations working in Surrey's communities. Each Surrey county councillor is allocated an equal share of this funding to direct towards wide-ranging community activities that benefit residents in their local division.

In 2019-20, the countywide MCA budget totalled £405,000, with each councillor receiving £5,000 to spend per division. On average, 96% MCA grant is spent each year, the greatest share of which has been awarded to local community groups, as detailed at Annex 2.

The MCA funding criteria were last updated in May 2018. This was prior to both the launch of the Community Vision for Surrey in 2030 and the Organisation Strategy refresh. It is therefore opportune to review the MCA criteria to ensure synergy with the council's focus on creating better lives, a better place, and a county where no-one is left behind. The revised funding criteria seek to maintain MCA as a flexible funding stream for members' use in their local communities, while also assisting with the county's broader objectives of improving the quality of residents' lives and reducing the inequality in life expectancy that exist across Surrey. The proposed Financial Framework for MCA aims to strike this balance.

2. Proposed Changes to MCA Funding Criteria

With a long tradition of funding local grass-roots and community organisations, MCA is ideally placed to proactively support the Organisation Strategy's approach of:

- Working with partners and residents to strengthen and improve what we do and be more resilient to future challenges;
- Improving how we engage with residents, working in a more agile way and embedding the council in the heart of our communities;
- Tackling inequality of life expectancy and improving quality of life for everyone to ensure no one is left behind.

Subject to the limitations detailed in section 3, below, the revised MCA funding criteria will respond to members' expressed desire to fund:

- wide-ranging projects impacting residents in one or more divisions
- a broad range of internal and external partners; and
- county council services and initiatives (e.g. Adult Social Care, the Children's Celebration Fund and highway tree-planting).

New MCA Funding Criteria April 2020

To enable MCA to play its part in implementing the Organisation Strategy, we are proposing that the Organisation Strategy's eight areas of focus, below, supplant the existing MCA grant criteria to become the main standards against which all MCA applications are assessed for eligibility. From 1 April 2020, MCA applicants would be required to demonstrate how their project proposal would contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Organisation Strategy's focus areas in order to receive the grant.

- **Tackling inequality** – Work with Surrey's residents to identify and address causes of inequality, especially in life expectancy.
- **Supporting independence** – Help residents help themselves and each other within their communities.
- **More joined up health and social care** – Help integrate health and council services so they're more effective, efficient and seamless for residents.
- **Creating a greener future** – Tackle the causes of climate change to help Surrey become a carbon neutral county as soon as possible.
- **Embracing Surrey's diversity** – Recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce and population to ensure Surrey is a place full of opportunity for everyone.
- **Partnership** – Work with residents, businesses, partners and communities to collectively meet challenges and grasp opportunities.
- **Supporting the local economy** – Invest in the infrastructure Surrey needs to build a strong and resilient economy.
- **Digital revolution** – Make the most of new technology to innovate and improve local services, and how we work together, to help Surrey and residents thrive.

3. Limitations and exclusions

While seeking to allow the maximum degree of flexibility for local councillors, there are legal and organisational considerations that curtail how MCA funding can be used. Therefore, MCA will not be able to fund the following organisations, projects, initiatives, purchases or activities:

- **Political organisations:** Parties or organisations registered with the Electoral Commission www.electoralcommission.org.uk or any politically-related activities e.g. campaigns or meetings.
- **National curriculum:** Funding for subjects or learning activities that are contained in the National Curriculum, or that fall within the annual School and Early Years Finance Regulations issued under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- **Planning disputes:** Taking sides in a planning dispute, or support for contentious planning-related activities.
- **Reputational damage:** Activities that may adversely affect the reputation of SCC, or that could lead to disrepute.
- **Conflicts of interest:** Supporting organisations directly campaigning against SCC or its local statutory partners; or other activities that present conflicts of interest for the council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Approve the new MCA grant criteria detailed at section 2 of tackling inequality; supporting independence; joined up health and social care; creating a greener future; embracing surrey's diversity; partnership; supporting the local economy; and digital revolution.
2. Approve the revised MCA exclusions disallowing the funding of political organisations and activities; national curriculum teaching or learning activities; planning disputes; reputation-damaging activities; and conflicts of interest, as detailed in Section 3 of this report.
3. Approve the new Financial Framework for Members' Community Allocation, detailed at Annex 1, with effect from 1 April 2020.

Lead/Contact Officers:

Michael Coughlin, Executive Director, Transformation, Partnerships and Prosperity

Sources/background papers:

SCC Constitution – Financial Framework for Members' Community Allocation
SCC Organisation Strategy

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