



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Neighbourhood Forum 2016-17 Community Engagement Fund Guidelines for expenditure

1. Before agreeing a project the following factors need to be considered:
 - Is there sufficient budget available? (figures should be checked with Democratic Services)
 - Is the project likely to incur any ongoing revenue costs?
 - Has the relevant Head of Service been consulted if appropriate?
 - Is the cost of the project proportionate to the number of people who will benefit from it?
 - How long will it take for the project to be completed?
2. Once at least two ward councillors have agreed on a project (and the third has been informed) quotes for work must be obtained. To comply with the Council's purchasing requirements, where the value is **£2,000 or under**, one oral quotation must be obtained (confirmed in writing where the total exceeds £500). Where the value **exceeds £2,000**, three written and meaningful quotations must be obtained.
3. Consideration should be given to aggregating orders with other wards, where appropriate, to obtain best value. Councillors will also be required to explain how their project demonstrates value for money.
4. An application must be submitted to Democratic Services using the relevant 2016-17 application form. **No work must be commissioned or funds committed until approval has been obtained.**
5. Application forms submitted retrospectively will not be processed and any councillor expenditure incurred on the procurement of goods and services without prior approval will not be reimbursed.
6. To comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, all orders need to be accompanied by an official order number which means that all orders for goods and services must be placed by officers using the electronic procurement system
7. Councillors must not make any direct verbal or telephone orders for goods, materials or work.
8. Councillors should be aware of the Code of Conduct when commissioning work and should advise Carol Chen, Head of Democracy and Governance, if

they think they may have a conflict of interests. If a councillor does have an interest they should not be a party to the application. Any application signed off by a councillor declaring they have an interest will not be approved and will be returned.

9. In order to ensure that expenditure comes from the current financial year, councillors are encouraged to submit all applications for projects by the end of February 2017. Whilst actual spend up to the end of March will still be considered, funds cannot be carried over and there is therefore the risk that expenditure may have to be taken from the following year's budget.
10. Financial statements will be completed and forwarded to councillors in April in time for the Neighbourhood Forum Annual Report to be presented to Council.
11. The amount spent needs to be proportionate to the number of residents benefiting from the project, i.e. it would not be appropriate to spend a large proportion of the funds on a small group.
12. Funds should not to be spent on:
 - Catering (other than refreshments at meetings)
 - Outings
 - Projects which will involve ongoing revenue costs/maintenance, except where approved by the appropriate Head of Service and the councillors are satisfied that there are other budgets in place that will meet those costs
 - Party political purposes
 - As a reward.
13. A separate form is available for meetings. This must be completed and forwarded to Democratic Services before arranging Neighbourhood Forum meetings. The form must include the date, time and location of the meeting and an approximate cost. This form should be submitted before the meeting and before any costs have been incurred.
14. Subject to agreement by the ward councillors affected, funds can be combined and used across ward boundaries where the project will benefit more than a single ward.
15. Whilst it is acceptable to publicise projects in ward leaflets or newsletters it must be made clear that the funding has come from the Neighbourhood Forum budget. It must not be attributed to any political party.
16. Councillors are required to adhere to the Protocol for Neighbourhood Forums and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules during each stage of the procurement of goods or services.