

From: Lizzy Adam, Head of Information Governance, Consultations & Member Support

To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 2 July 2026

Subject: KCC Combined Member Grants – Guideline Review

Status: Unrestricted

1. Background

- 1.1 The Combined Member Grant scheme provides individual Members with the opportunity to support projects that deliver benefit to their local communities.
- 1.2 The Committee has a role in monitoring expenditure on the Member Grant scheme and in receiving updates on the operation of the scheme, including the application process and considering any guideline reviews.
- 1.3 The guidelines were last reviewed ahead of the 2024–25 financial year to provide greater clarity to applicants and Members, and to strengthen the administration of the scheme.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Since the introduction of the updated scheme arrangements, Officers have continued to support Members and applicants through the application and approval process, with an emphasis on clarity, consistency and timely processing.
- 2.2 Officers in Operational Delivery have implemented a new automated application process. This has enabled applicants to submit requests for grant funds in a more streamlined manner.
- 2.3 Members have requested some changes be made to the guidelines. To address and respond to these requests, a review of the guidelines has been undertaken. The proposed changes are set out in Section 3 which details whether the proposed change has been requested by a Member or proposed by Officers to bring the guidelines in line with common practice.
- 2.4 A tracked changes document is included as an appendix to further indicate the proposed changes.

3. Proposed Changes

- 3.1 A number of Members have requested that the restriction on running costs be reviewed.
- 3.2 Grants have only been available as one-off funding under the Combined Member Grant scheme. Running costs (except for pilot projects) have not been funded because the grants are not designed to provide or imply ongoing support of any organisation or liability for any ongoing costs. Where the Council provides funding, via grants or contracts, any ongoing arrangement could give rise to legitimate expectations from the public which exposes the Council to risks at the point funding may be withdrawn.

- 3.3 Where running costs have been provided as part of pilot projects, there have also been a range of challenges with the monitoring of the grants, how they have been delivered and securing relevant evidence to confirm compliance with the guidelines. Therefore, it is proposed that the ineligibility of grant funding for running costs remains in the grant guidelines.
- 3.4 A Member has requested the removal of “used vehicles” and “maintenance of used vehicles” from the ineligible list.
- 3.5 It is recognised that local groups having access to a vehicle can bring real benefit to their communities particularly in areas where public transport is not accessible or group transportation is required. However, vehicles, particularly second-hand ones, often come with unpredictable and ongoing repair costs along with potential liability issues in the event of vehicle failure or collisions.
- 3.6 The funding of the maintenance of used vehicles is considered a running cost which is not eligible for grant funding except for a pilot project.
- 3.7 Recognising the principle of the suggestion from Members to find ways to support community groups with transportation assistance, particularly given Kent’s rural geography, it is proposed that “used vehicles” be removed from ‘What cannot be funded’ section of the CMG guidelines and in future these would be a permitted grant funded option. If implemented, KCC would accept no responsibility or liability for the used vehicle including but not limited to the insurance, maintenance and health & safety responsibilities.
- 3.8 However, as “the maintenance of used vehicles” is considered a running cost and increases the risk of the Council appearing to accept ongoing liability or responsibility for any such vehicles, it would continue the outside of the policy.
- 3.9 Officers have suggested clarifying the wording relating to the repeat funding of projects within two years included in ‘What can I apply for’ section of the guidelines. Some community groups run similar projects on an annual basis, such as a village fete. These are separate projects run each year, and as such can be considered for grant funding on an annual basis. This clarification has been proposed to bring the guidelines in line with common practice.
- 3.10 Officers have proposed the addition of “at the point of application” to the line “Retrospective funding for any project that has already been completed or any expenditure that has already been incurred” in the ‘What cannot be funded’ section, to provide further clarification and scope in the event of internal delays resulting in payments being processed after the completion of a project.
- 3.11 Officers have proposed the addition of “Costs relating to the temporary closure of Public Rights of Way where this fee can be waived by the Council” to the list of ‘What cannot be funded’. This addition to the policy is proposed to recognise that other more appropriate processes already exist to support community groups in relation to Traffic Regulation Orders and ensure there is a consistent approach to the handling of temporary closures of Public Rights of Way.

4. Recommendation

The Committee is requested to COMMENT on and RECOMMEND the revised guidelines to the Deputy Leader for adoption and implementation.

Appendix

Tracked Changes Combined Member Grant Scheme Guidelines for Applicants
2026-2027

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