

Community Grants Panel procedure rules – South only

Purpose of the Community Grants Panel

1. The role of the panel is to make recommendations on grant applications, in line with the council's relevant grants policies, to the Cabinet member for grants.
2. The panel will also make recommendations on improvements to the scheme to the Cabinet member for grants.

Decisions of the community grants panel

3. Additional guidance to the panel will be provided by relevant officers and the Cabinet member for grants.

Membership

4. The Council will appoint up to nine councillors to a community grants panel at the annual Council meeting each year and the panel will be politically balanced, where possible.
5. Any non-Cabinet councillor may be a member of the Community Grants Panel. The chair or the vice-chair of Council shall not act as chair or vice-chair of the panel.

Time and place of meetings

6. The time and place of meetings will be notified in the agenda for each meeting. Community grants panels will take place in accordance with an agreed programme. In addition, extra meetings may be scheduled as required.

Notice of, and agenda for, meetings

7. The head of legal and democratic will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting. At least five clear working days before a meeting, the head of legal and democratic will publish the agenda on the council's website and make it available for public inspection at the council's offices, except where the matter under consideration contains confidential or exempt information. The agenda will set out the date, time and location of the meeting, and will specify the business to be transacted. The agenda may contain reports about matters for the panel's consideration. Where not all reports are available with the agenda they will be published as soon as they become available. Community Grants Panel agendas will also be available for six years after a meeting.

Chairing meetings

8. The chair (or vice-chair in their absence) will preside over meetings and lead and guide the work of the panel. They will be appointed each year by annual Council, or

by the panel if a vacancy arises. The chair may choose to indicate how they wish to be addressed, according to personal preference.

Substitutes

9. The Council will appoint the same number of preferred substitutes in respect of each political group as that group holds ordinary seats on the grants panel. Each political group will be entitled to up to a maximum of three named substitutes where it has fewer than three members on the panel. A political group need not appoint to all available substitute places.
10. Substitute members will have all the powers and duties of any ordinary member of panel but will not be able to exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the person they are substituting. These powers and duties will only be attained by the substitute members from the start until the close of the meeting at which they are substituting.
11. Substitute members may attend meetings:
 - to take the place of the ordinary member for whom they are the substitute;
 - where the ordinary member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
 - after notifying the head of legal and democratic before the start of the meeting.
12. Where possible, absent members must be substituted by a preferred substitute who has been named, but where that is not possible, any member of the same political group may act as a substitute. A councillor may only substitute if they have received up to date training relevant for the panel.

Quorum

13. A quarter of the members of the panel must be present for a legally valid panel meeting to be held. During any meeting, if the chair counts the number of councillors present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the chair. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next meeting.
14. If there is no quorum at the published start time for the meeting, a period of 15 minutes will be allowed. If there remains no quorum at the expiry of this period, the meeting shall be declared null and void. The business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the chair. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next meeting.

Duration of meetings

15. No meeting shall exceed two periods of two and a half hours in duration unless the panel, prior to the expiry of each period, votes for the meeting to continue each period for a further period not exceeding 30 minutes. Remaining business will be considered at the next meeting. The two periods of the meeting will be separated by a break of at least 30 minutes.

Public participation

16. An application to speak must be made in writing or by email to democratic services democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk by 5.00 pm on the last working day before the day of the meeting. Persons who have registered to speak may appoint someone to speak on their behalf provided that written authority from the person who has registered to speak is given to democratic before the meeting commences.
17. The public may address a Community Grants Panel meeting by asking a question, making a statement or presenting a petition. Every question, statement or petition must relate to an agenda item for that meeting.
18. The public may address the panel for up to five minutes per application. Where more than one speaker is registered per application the time will be shared.
19. The panel may ask questions of clarification of the speaker.
20. The chair of the meeting may suspend the operation of speaking rules at any time if he/she considers it necessary for the purpose of maintaining order.

Cabinet member for grants

21. The Cabinet member for grants will:
 - (a) consider the recommendations of the panel and decide what grants to award; and
 - (b) approve any amendments to the policy and scoring criteria, to make sure it continues to meet the needs of the community (via an individual Cabinet member decision).
22. If the Cabinet member does not agree with any of the panel's recommendations, those applications will go to the next full Cabinet meeting for decision.

Voting

23. As the Panel is advisory to the Cabinet member for grants, it will produce a recommendation based on consensus, rather than voting.

Minutes

24. The chair will sign the minutes of the proceedings at the next suitable meeting. The chair will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. Only the accuracy of the minutes may be discussed.

Record of attendance

25. All councillors present must sign the attendance list provided at the meeting.

Exclusion of the public

26. The public and press may only be excluded from attending a Community Grants Panel meeting for the consideration of confidential or exempt business or under rules 32 and 33 (disturbance by the public).

Councillors' conduct

27. If more than one councillor speaks, the chair will ask one to speak. Other councillors must remain silent whilst a councillor is speaking unless they wish to make a point of order or a point of personal explanation.

CHAIR SPEAKING

28. When the chair speaks during a debate, any councillor speaking at the time must stop.

COUNCILLOR NOT TO BE HEARD FURTHER

29. If a councillor persistently disregards the ruling of the chair by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business, the chair may move that the councillor be not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

COUNCILLOR TO LEAVE THE MEETING

30. If the councillor continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, the chair may move that either the councillor leaves the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

GENERAL DISTURBANCE

31. If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the chair may adjourn the meeting for as long as he/she thinks necessary.

Disturbance by the public

REMOVAL OF A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

32. If a member of the public interrupts the meeting, the chair will invite the person to stop. If they continue to interrupt, the chair will order their removal from the meeting room.

CLEARANCE OF PART OF THE MEETING ROOM

33. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the chair may call for that part to be cleared and if necessary, adjourn the meeting for as long as he/she thinks necessary.

Attendance by other district councillors at meetings

34. A councillor who is not otherwise entitled to attend and speak at a committee shall be entitled to do so (but not to vote) at a meeting of a committee in any of the following circumstances:

- (a) during the consideration of any matter which specifically affects his/her ward, provided that prior notice is given to the head of legal and democratic before the start of the meeting; or
- (b) with the agreement of the chair, or the person presiding at the meeting of the committee, provided that prior notice is given to the head of legal and democratic before the start of the meeting.