

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 18 June 2009

**Subject:** Brighter Borough Guidelines

**Report of:** Executive Director of Environmental Services

**Contact officer:** David Bilney 404223

---

**Purpose / summary:** To provide revised guidance to both members and officers on the appropriate use of Brighter Borough funds.

**Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:** The alternative would be to retain the existing guidelines whereas the proposed revisions are intended to clarify and improve advice given to members.

**Recommendation / decision:** To request Cabinet to consider and approve the revised guidelines contained in Appendix A to this report.

**Key Decision:** This report does not involve a key decision. The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 29 June 2009

**Risks / Implications:** None

Financial:	None
Staffing:	Within existing resources
Policy:	
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	No
Wards affected:	All

**Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?**

No

**If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?**

**Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?**

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

**Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?**

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution?

**Yes \***

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget?

**Yes \***

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

**No \***

\* delete which applicable

**For Cabinet reports only :**

Categorisation of the report:	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
Discussion leading to a decision	<b>X</b>	Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

**Tracking/Process:**

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
		18 June 2009	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
Brighter Borough Guidelines (April 06)	Cabinet	29 April 2006	David Bilney

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 3 June 2009

## **1.0 Background:**

- 1.1 The Brighter Borough initiative has been in existence since 1997 and is a fund provided by the Council to enable elected members to support and influence environmental improvements and community development schemes within their ward. The initiative has always had Guidelines to provide consistency and fairness in decision making. These guidelines have been revised a number of times since inception in order to adapt to an evolving perception of the appropriate use of the funds. The last revision of guidelines was approved by Cabinet on 29 April 2006 and in the three years since then a number of issues have arisen which warrant a further revision of the guidelines.
- 1.2 Members have previously proposed the use of Brighter Borough funds for the distribution of Christmas presents to children in need. Under the revised Guidelines this would be acceptable if organised by a recognised and properly constituted organisation. However, charitable donations which benefit an individual and not the local community would not be acceptable.

## **2.0 Proposals:**

- 2.1 The guidelines have been reconsidered and revised and the proposed version is attached to this report at Appendix A.
- 2.2 In summary the changes to the Guidelines are:
- to make the purposes of the Brighter Borough initiative clearer for all involved
  - to clarify the arrangements for allocation of funding
  - to emphasise under 'Funding allocation' members responsibility when there is a personal interest or a personal and prejudicial interest in a project
  - to include additional clauses of Suitable projects to cover additional circumstances i.e. charitable causes and individual benefit
  - to include under Restrictions the issue of funding for maintenance of projects and to further emphasise the need for approval to be obtained for any project before any expenditure is incurred
  - the introduction of an additional section regarding Publicity and Scheme acknowledgement. Whilst grants approved under the Brighter Borough initiative have included a requirement to give the Council appropriate credit for the funding, this has never been made clear in the guidelines. This omission has now been rectified. A suggested form of words for acknowledging grant aid is also included.
- 2.3 In addition, general revisions to reflect the current title of the Executive Director have been included.

## **3.0 Alternative options considered and reason for the recommended option:**

- 3.1 The alternative would be to retain the existing guidelines which are ambiguous and lack clarity in some areas now given the evolution of the grant. The proposed revisions are intended to clarify and improve advice given to members.

## **4.0 Conclusions:**

- 4.1 Cabinet are recommended to approve the revised Guidelines.

Appendix A  
**BRIGHTER BOROUGH GUIDELINES -**  
(Revised June 2009)

Members are asked to read these guidelines carefully before completing the proposal form.

### **What is the Brighter Borough initiative?**

The Brighter Borough initiative is based on a budget made available to elected members by Wigan Council to enable them to support and influence schemes which benefit the local community in their ward and, in some cases, extending into neighbouring wards and the wider Borough. The fund can be used to support schemes designed to improve the environment and/or engender a sense of civic pride and community spirit within the ward. This contributes to achieving one of Wigan Council's key aims of improving the quality of life for its citizens.

The fund can be used to undertake and support projects undertaken by departments of the council and also to create and improve partnership working with local organisations including schools and voluntary and community groups. Brighter Borough funds can be match funded with other resources.

### **Funding Allocation**

An annual allocation is made available to each ward which must be used to directly benefit the ward providing the funding. If members request it the budget can be split so that each member has their own allocation.

Where schemes are identified which have a wider benefit, contributions can be made by more than one ward to jointly fund schemes.

Funds are committed from the budget as required or carried over into the following year. In this way, it may be possible to save to undertake larger projects.

In years when elections are to take place members who are coming to the end of their term of office will be allocated a pro rata portion of the budget. The balance will be made available to the incoming member.

When submitting a proposal under the Brighter Borough initiative members should be conscious of the members code of conduct and should not support any proposal in which they have a personal and prejudicial interest. Particular care should be exercised when any interest is personal but not prejudicial.

### **Suitable Projects**

Any scheme which improves the environment, community facilities and/or helps to develop the civic pride and community spirit of the area could be eligible. Examples include:

- Landscape and other improvements to open spaces, local parks, school grounds, etc.
- Street scene improvements.
- Work to footpaths, monuments, artwork etc.
- Crime prevention measures and community safety issues.
- Support for voluntary and community groups and events.

- Contributions to school initiatives.
- Improvements to community facilities.
- Support for festive celebrations.
- Support for charitable causes promoted by registered charities, where there is a clear local community benefit
- Schemes which allocate individual or family benefit can be acceptable if the funding is
  1. To support the cost of representing the Borough or a particular section of the Borough at an event of regional or national importance or
  2. Where a particular need has been identified (e.g. for children or older people) and is administered by a recognised organisation with an appropriate constitution, public liability insurance etc.

### **Restrictions on the use of Brighter Borough funding**

- Expenditure must be 'one-off' and must be formally approved by the Executive Director of Environmental Services before any expenditure is incurred.
- Future maintenance of projects can only be funded when this is capitalised into a one off payment paid with the initial capital cost.
- The proposed projects must not involve the Council in future revenue commitments or any increased liabilities.
- Schemes must not be in conflict with existing Council policy or strategies.
- Where a scheme is to be undertaken on Council owned land, then the approval of the relevant Department/Committee will be required before any expenditure is incurred.
- Where a scheme is to be undertaken on private land this should only be where there is a clear community benefit and access to the land. There should also be a written agreement detailing access, liability, maintenance etc.
- The fund should not be used to support political or religious causes.
- Projects should normally benefit the wider community.
- Applications can be made for qualifying projects on behalf of voluntary groups.
- Expenditure should not replace other Council budgets.

### **Publicity and Scheme Acknowledgements**

In publicity for schemes all credit for funding support should be attributed to the Council and in particular the Brighter Borough initiative, together with other funders where match funding is used. Whilst the ward(s) can be mentioned there should be no element of political claim either indicated or inferred for any approved project. Wording on notices on site or in publicity material might be 'Funded by the Wigan Council Brighter Borough initiative'.

### **Implementation**

The law does not allow Members themselves directly to incur Council expenditure. It is necessary therefore for all Brighter Borough expenditure to be authorised for payment by Council Officers. As a result it is necessary for a Lead Department/Project Officer to be identified for each project. Normally this might be the Council Department which either designs or orders/procures the works.

It must be noted that approval for schemes must be obtained before any expenditure can be incurred and members should allow sufficient time for this when planning projects.

When the project is to be implemented by a community or voluntary group then a grant agreement will be prepared for signing. The grant will be paid directly to the group on receipt of the returned signed agreement.

### **The Application Process**

1. Members identify project, check compliance with guidelines and consult with other ward members if appropriate.
2. Members identify a Project Officer within council department or a contact person for organisation.
3. Members /Project Officer establish cost of work and/or amount of grant to be offered.
4. Members complete Brighter Borough application and submit to Environmental Services Department for consideration and an approval decision. No expenditure should be incurred before the application is approved.
5. Environmental Services consult with relevant departments, land owners, etc. or send corporate grant form and agreement to organisations as necessary.
6. Environmental Services consult Leader and Deputy Leader with copy to relevant members.
7. Application submitted to the Executive Director of Environmental Services for approval.
8. Environmental Services Department place an order with the department / supplier or arrange payment to the organisation on receipt of grant agreement.
9. Departments or organisation submit accounts, invoices etc. as soon as expenditure occurs and by the date indicated on the grant agreement to support expenditure on approved items.

### **Earmarking of funds**

Members can ' earmark ' funding for the future projects where details are not sufficiently advanced to allow a full proposal to be made. This is used to identify members' intentions for the funding but does not imply that approval is being sought for the project.

### **Further information**

For queries on the application process, progress on applications or further information on the Brighter Borough Initiative please contact:

David Bilney  
Environmental Services Department  
Civic Buildings  
New Market Street  
Wigan  
WN1 1RP  
Tel: (01942) 404223  
D.Bilney@wigan.gov.uk  
BrighterBorough@wigan.gov.uk