

Assembly Fund Guidance 2016 -17

**Lewisham Local Assembly
Programme**



1. The Assembly Fund: Introduction

- 1.1 The Assembly Fund is a budget allocated to each ward to meet the local assembly priorities. The programme has been running for seven years.
- 1.2 The Mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock, created the Mayor's Fund in 2008 to help each local assembly deliver substantial improvements to their neighbourhoods. In addition, a Locality Fund of £10,000 per ward was available for ward councillors to spend on local projects, in consultation with the assemblies. In 2010-12 the two funds were merged to provide one Assembly Fund.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Assembly Fund is to:
 - support chosen assembly priorities for each ward
 - help each assembly make decisions and bring about change
 - provide 'seed' funding to potentially attract further sources of funding
- 1.5 The Assembly Fund is not a small grants fund; it is designed to assist assemblies deliver actions identified through the action plan.
- 1.6 This guidance provides information on how much funding is available for 2015-16 and outlines the process for allocating the funds.

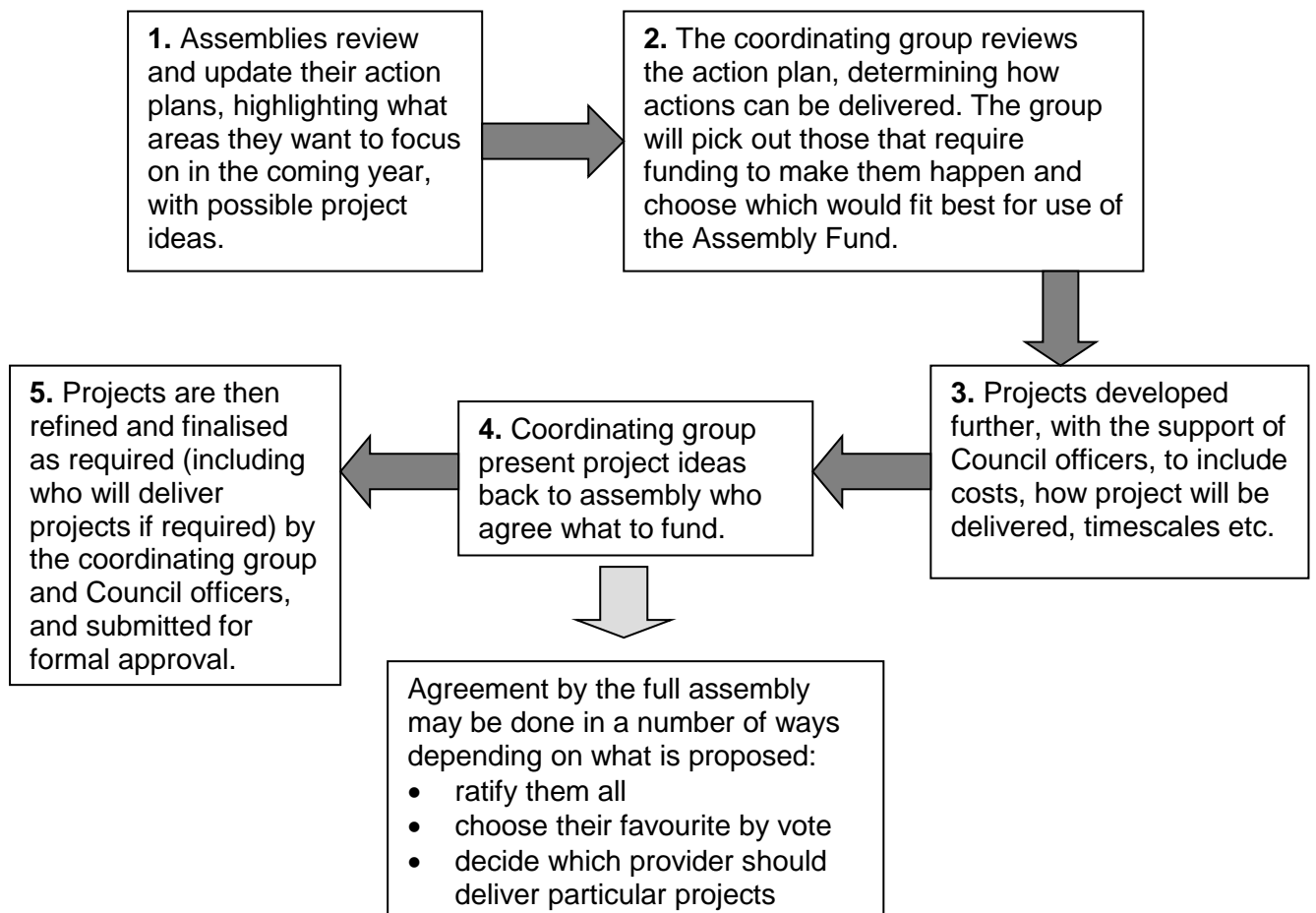
2. The Commissioned approach for allocation of Assembly Funds.

- 2.1 During 2013 -14, a more commissioned approach to spending the Assembly Fund was encouraged. This decision was made following observations and analysis on how the fund has performed in achieving its principle aims in previous years; and to take into account the changing financial climate.
- 2.2 Drivers for this process for allocating the Assembly Fund include the following:
 - **The economic climate** – the need to ensure maximum value for money where budgets are being squeezed elsewhere across the Council. Assemblies will need to think carefully about how to achieve the best value and greatest impact to the largest number of people. Consideration by assemblies should be given to how the fund can lever added value from match funding and volunteering.
 - **Meeting local priorities** – as public sector budgets are squeezed and service areas are less able to respond to requests from local areas, the Assembly Fund will become an increasingly important tool in helping assemblies to meet local priorities.
 - **Action plan led approach** – taking an action development led approach will ensure the Assembly Fund is spent on the most suitable actions to best meet priorities for the ward; is more planned and strategic in its approach; and has the potential to achieve better value for money.

- **Impact** – assemblies are encouraged to deliver a smaller number of high value projects that will have a greater impact on the ward. Assemblies are encouraged to be ambitious in their development of ideas in order to maximise the benefit of the fund.

3. The 2016-17 Assembly Fund process

- 3.1 The Assembly Fund is designed to assist assemblies to deliver actions in their action plan. The process outlined in this guidance seeks to strengthen the relationship between the Assembly Fund and the delivery of local priorities. As such, assemblies are asked to take a developmental or commissioning approach to spending their fund. This will be done through identifying need, developing ideas to address this need and commissioning partners to deliver projects to address these actions.
- 3.2 Assemblies will undertake a staged process to allocating their Assembly Fund as follows:



- 3.3 Two examples of how this process may work in practice are outlined in appendix A.

- 3.4 In reviewing their action plans, assemblies are encouraged to consider the following:
- use of the recently released ward level census data, to understand the communities that live in a particular ward
 - other research and statistics to build a picture of the ward; e.g. crime statistics
 - ensuring that input into the priorities is reflective of the ward; this may involve testing ideas and priority areas wider than the assembly meeting, with communities that are under-represented at formal meetings, e.g. young people.
- 3.5 The coordinating group have an advisory, developmental role in the allocation of the Assembly Fund. They do not make decisions on behalf of the assembly.
- 3.6 Due to the coordinating group's close involvement in this process, it will be necessary for coordinating group members and Councillors to declare an interest they have in any organisations that may benefit from the funding. It will also be necessary to declare if there is a personal benefit by an individual proposing a project.
- 3.7 Assemblies are encouraged to lever added value from volunteering and match funding to achieve best value and greatest impact to the largest number of people. Assemblies are encouraged to bid for funding from other sources to increase the size or impact of projects they wish to deliver.
- 3.8 Where a number of delivery partners might deliver a project idea, and depending on the value of the project, a procurement process adhering to the council's rules on procurement, may be necessary.
- 3.9 When deciding the suitability of potential delivery partners Council officers and coordinating groups will take on board whether they have received funding from other Council grant schemes or been funded previously by the assembly (or other assemblies).
- 3.10 Project delivery partners can be statutory services (such as the Council and police), voluntary and community organisations, or private bodies.
- 3.11 The assembly should also consider the following advice in allocating their funding:
- A smaller number of larger value projects will have more impact
 - More than one ward may combine funds to deliver a single project
 - For projects that are providing a service or an activity that can be paid for by the participants, the project should consider the use of earned income when setting out their budget. For example, by charging some users a fee or discounted fee the assembly fund can go further with more people benefitting.
 - Projects must give consideration to employment responsibilities, where relevant. Responsibility cannot be passed back to the council at the end of the project, and any costs such as redundancy or recruitment will need to be factored into the funding provided.
 - The Assembly Fund is to be spent on projects which benefit people within the relevant ward.

4. Assembly Fund value

- 4.1 There is £15,000 available for each ward in 2016-17.
- 4.2 Of this £15,000:
- £12,500 is available to the assembly; and
 - £2,500 is a discretionary element for Cllrs to spend
- 4.3 The discretionary element is to be decided by all three Cllrs (or two where consensus is not possible) by end of December 2015, and can be spent on any small project that benefits the ward. Cllrs may add their part to the main assembly pot of £12,500 for the assembly to allocate if they wish.

5. Timescales

- 5.1 Assemblies must agree how they wish to spend their Assembly Fund by the end of December 2016. This allows enough time for formal approval to be given, paperwork issued and returned and payment made to the projects before the end of the financial year.
- 5.2 A suggested timescale for the allocation of funds is outlined below:

Activity	Who	When
1. Review and update action plan; identify possible project ideas	Assembly	End May-July 2016
2. Identification of projects in action plan suitable for Assembly Fund	Coordinating Group	July-September 2016
3. Development of chosen projects	Coordinating Group Council officers	July-September 2016
4. Developed projects presented to assembly and decision made on what to fund	Assembly	September- November 2016
5. Projects refined and finalised; including decision on delivery partner	Coordinating Group Council officers	By end of December 2016
5. Formal approval given; grant administrative processes; payment	Council officers	November 2016- February 2017
Project delivered	Project delivery partner	By 30 November 2017

- 5.3 Projects must be fully delivered by 30 November 2017. If this is not possible then projects must contact the local assemblies team as early as possible.

6. The decision-making process

- 6.1 The assembly makes recommendations on how to spend the Assembly Fund. These recommendations are then subject to formal approval by the Council.
- 6.2 In most cases formal approval is decided under delegated authority by the Executive Director for Community Services. Where a project is for more than

£10,000 and will be paid to a third sector organisation the decision will be taken by Mayor & Cabinet Contracts.

7. Funding restrictions

- 7.1 The Assembly Fund cannot be spent on activities that require ongoing revenue support (unless funding for this has been identified elsewhere). Projects need to be self-contained or be able to demonstrate how they will become self-financing - the Assembly Fund is one-off funding.
- 7.2 The Assembly Fund cannot fund worship or activities that promote the views of a religious organisation.
- 7.3 The Assembly Fund cannot fund activities that promote the views of a political party.
- 7.4 The Assembly cannot fund activities and projects that have already taken place; i.e. no retrospective funding.
- 7.5 Organisations who have received funding previously and not fulfilled their monitoring requirements will not be eligible for further funding from the Assembly Fund.

8. Monitoring

- 8.1 All projects that receive Assembly funding will be monitored to ensure that the funds have been used in the agreed manner and that the project has been delivered. Failure to comply with monitoring requirements may make that organisation ineligible for future assembly funding.
- 8.2 Projects will be required, if requested by the assembly, to return to a future assembly meeting to feedback on progress.

9. More information

- 9.1 Advice and support on developing the action plan, use of the Assembly Fund, agreeing spend with the assembly, developing project briefs and all other aspects of the process are available from the Local Assemblies Team.
- 9.2 Further guidance is also available for funding feasibility studies and procurement guidelines.

APPENDIX A:

In order to help illustrate how the new process for allocating the Assembly Fund might work in practice, the following two examples have been created. They are illustrative and not to be viewed as the only way of distributing funds.

Example 1: Estate based intergenerational project

At their June 2013 assembly meeting, Assembly A discussed their action plan. They had round table discussion on each of their five priorities, with participants discussing the actions already on the action plan and what still needed to be delivered and what new issues needed to be added. They then discussed how these issues could be tackled and each table were asked to create three project ideas for their priority.

Assembly A coordinating group then took all of the ideas away and discussed each in turn, deciding what needed funding and which ones could be delivered in other ways. One idea was to provide more intergenerational activities within an estate in the ward, to help bring people together following recent spates of anti-social behaviour and fear of some residents to leave their homes.

A Council officer met with the TRA to discuss further what they felt might work, and then, with the coordinating group, developed an outline project proposal and allocated £3,000 of the £12,500 fund to it. The coordinating group then identified three local organisations that could deliver the project and asked them to submit applications. The coordinating group then scrutinised these to ensure they met the outline project proposal and came in on budget.

The three organisations then presented at the October 2013 assembly meeting and attendees voted for their favourite by paper vote. The project proposal was then finalised, and submitted to the Council for formal approval.

Example 2: Greening ward project

Assembly B met in July 2013 to discuss their action plan. They had recently done some work on reviewing and updating their priorities and action plans. As such they did not repeat this work; instead they focused on deciding which actions were most required and popular. The main project ideas were put on pieces of paper around the walls, and attendees were given sticker dots to vote for their favourite.

The coordinating group then used the results to determine which projects should be developed further. One project idea was to green the ward more, and this received the most votes. The coordinating group, along with council officers in the environment section, developed an approach which included re-stocking existing planters and new hanging baskets. A sum of £2500 was allocated to the project.

When the assembly met again in November 2013 this project (and others) were presented and agreed by show of hands. The assembly made some suggestions about where the new hanging baskets should be located and this was incorporated into the project proposal. The Council was chosen as the delivery partner by the coordinating group. The project was then submitted to the Council for formal approval.