



Buckinghamshire County Council

Report

Deputy Leader

Decision to be taken on or after 9 July 2002.

Cab Member Report No. DL 02.02

Date 3 July 2002

Title External Funding Action Plan

Author Bill Richards

Contact Officer Bill Richards – 01296 383371

Electoral Divisions Affected All

Summary

The way both the statutory and non-statutory sector is financed has changed dramatically within the last twenty years. Traditionally facilities, projects and activities would be funded either through an automatic grant from central government or through a differently assessed Standard Spending Assessment level. The introduction of the National Lottery in 1995, together with what is perceived as a much more rigorous central government scrutiny of local government and voluntary sector spending, has resulted in an altogether different climate. Increasingly, both local authorities and the numerous charitable and community groups are invited to bid on a project-by-project basis for various funding streams. As these funding opportunities become progressively more competitive, so the need for a coherent, well-thought Action Plan becomes paramount. In order to achieve success, it is important to demonstrate to the grant assessors that the awarding of a grant will result in the best possible service for the public or special interest group it is targeted towards. Applicants will have to show that they have fully consulted with stakeholders, are offering value for money and have a plausible 'exit strategy' once the grant has been fully utilised. There should be a strategic vision that illustrates that with every bid, a piece-meal, ad hoc approach has not been taken.

The need for a strategy becomes more acute for a county like Buckinghamshire. Despite its pockets of urban deprivation and areas of comparative rural isolation, it is commonly viewed as an affluent county. In consequence, this has had a detrimental effect on its core funding from central government in recent years, which has been reduced in real terms. Moreover, this government, either through its own departmental grants or through the auspices of the lottery boards, has been targeting funds towards areas of multiple deprivation thereby making most, if not all, of Buckinghamshire ineligible for assistance through some funding streams.

1.3. The purpose of the External Funding Action Plan is therefore:

- a. **To implement a procedure by which the county of Buckinghamshire can best work in partnership to attract the maximum possible external funding.**

- b. To implement a coherent system of bidding within the County Council to ensure that each application accords with this Council's corporate and strategic objectives and ensures applications are not submitted in isolation resulting in an ad hoc approach to external funding thereby leading to duplication and consequential weakening of bids.**

Recommendation

| That the Deputy Leader approves the External Funding Action Plan.

A. The decision required, and why it is needed

The Action Plan requires the agreement of the Deputy Leader and members of the Council to allow for the implementation of the External Funding strategy (currently out to consultation). The increase in the amount of external funding attracted by this Council is a key policy steer.

B. Recommended action, and the reasons for this

That the Deputy Leader makes a key decision to agree the Action Plan to give it the authority it requires for the projects being undertaken. Supported as a key decision, the Action Plan should be supported by other officers especially in regard to informing the External Funding Officer of proposed bids within the County Council.

C. Other options available, and their pros and con

Non applicable

D. Resource implications

Any promotional monies required to support funding seminars/workshops or produce funding advice literature will be from the Performance and Initiatives budgets. Such expenditure is not expected to exceed £3,000.

E. Other implications

The development of the Buckinghamshire External Resourcing Partnership will play an important role in providing a coherent structure to external funding across Buckinghamshire. Moreover, its adoption by CADEX has laid the foundations for the Partnership to be an important adjunct to the New Bucks Partnership for Action and to be the conduit for funding bids through this Local Strategic Partnership.

F. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views

The Action Plan has been formulated along side the External Funding Strategy. This has been widely commented upon by both other bidding officers and members of the Bucks External Resourcing Partnership. The salient parts of the Action Plan are also to be presented to the Senior Management Forum.

G. Communication issues

If the Deputy Leader decides to approve the Action Plan, it will be posted on the Funding pages of the Intranet. It will also result in the sending out of the External Funding form to all Heads of Service that in turn should be distributed to all bidding officers in their sections. All forms will then be returned to the External Funding Officer when a bid is being considered.

H. Other issues

External funding advice and support will be particularly targeted to assist both urban and rural 'hard to reach' groups. It is also intended that external funding assist in supporting the PSA 11 'Targeting Local Communities'.

Background Papers

***Draft External Funding Strategy
Draft External Funding Action Plan 2002/03***

Copies may be obtained from the Contact Officer

Decision Taken:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Decision Not Taken:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Reason: _____

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper, which you would like the Deputy Leader to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Head of Policy Support by 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 8 July 2002. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382966), Fax (to 01296 383441), or e-mail to cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk