

Report to Buckingham Local Area Forum

Title:	LOCAL AREA FORUM BUDGETS
Date:	12 th June 2012
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Electoral divisions affected:	Buckingham North Buckingham South Winslow Grendon Underwood

Summary

1. This paper describes the arrangements for the funding delegated to Local Area Forums (LAFs) in 2012/13.
2. In previous years, this funding has been made up of the Local Priorities revenue budget to be allocated in line with the priorities agreed by the LAF in its local area planning process, plus its share of the Transportation budget. From April 2012, these two budgets have been merged to form a single Local Priorities budget. This provides full flexibility to each LAF to spend its budget as it determines according to its agreed local priorities and can include transportation schemes as previously, where such a priority has been identified in the local area plan.

Recommendation

3. The Buckingham Local Area Forum is recommended to note the arrangements in 2012/13 for its delegated budget as described in the report
4. The Buckingham Local Area Forum is also recommended to agree an allocation of **£26,603.27** for previously submitted transportation schemes with the balance reserved for non- transportation schemes. A decision on how to manage the proposed transportation schemes in following years should be made as soon as practicable.



Background

5. A key element of the locality strategy is “genuine and increased influence by residents over local decisions and budgets”. LAFs play a central role in achieving this (although this is not the only mechanism for working at a more local level).

Delegated budget allocation 2012/13

6. The total amount delegated by Buckinghamshire County Council to LAFs in 2012/13 is £880,000. This year, LAFs will receive the same allocation as previously. For the Buckingham LAF, this is **£46,603.27**, plus **£16,000** unspent budget from 2011/12 providing a total of **£62,603.27**. **£17,338** has already been allocated to projects within this financial year (please see previous reports), providing **£45,265.27** available for allocation
7. Due to the specific issues experienced by the Buckingham LAF in the year 2011/12 in allocating the available budget; a carry over of the unspent funds (£16,000) was requested and approved. This process will not be available in following years and full allocation of funds, with a requirement that they are spent and invoiced, within this financial year is necessary.
8. The Cabinet Member is considering revising this apportionment in subsequent years in the light of the local population, vulnerable individuals, the aging population, carers and other considerations as well as transportation issues.

Management and Decision-Making of the Local Priorities Delegated Budget

9. The Local Priorities budget is to be used to commission activities to meet the local priorities identified in The Buckingham LAF’s Local Area Plan to support community needs and the well-being of the area in line with the criteria below:
 - Proposals meeting more than one of the LAF’s priorities or addressing a well-evidenced community need will be prioritised for funding.
 - Proposals enabling capacity-building or those with match-funding – financial or in kind e.g. with community volunteer input – will be given priority over proposals with no additional funding or those with little community support.
 - Priority will also be given to proposals which cannot be undertaken by an individual Parish Council, either because an activity is not within its remit or funding capability.
10. The Local Priorities budget is not the catch-all to fill service budget cuts or short-falls. Similarly, it should not be used for activities normally funded by Parish precepts.
11. Allocations can be made on schemes which span 2 financial years (or more), but funding can only be assured for the current year. This should be borne in mind if making such an allocation i.e. what value can be achieved in the 1st year should funding not be available for the remainder of the scheme in subsequent years.
12. The Locality Manager will evaluate potential proposals, whether commissioned or unsolicited, and make recommendations in due course to the LAF.
13. Proposals for Local Priorities budget support can be submitted by any organisation. Such proposals should be sent to the Locality Manager who will evaluate the proposal and also assess potential proposals to see whether there are other funding opportunities or if ‘quick wins’ can be identified to enable specific proposals/issues to be resolved quickly through other means.

14. To ensure that sufficient information is provided for the evaluation, a proposal form is available online and also directly from the Locality Manager. LAF members who have particular ideas should raise these directly with the Lead Area Officer or Locality Manager.
11. Standard conditions apply to schemes receiving LAF financial support. In addition, the Locality Manager may recommend additional conditions for any specific scheme. The standard terms and conditions are:
- The LAF's financial contribution may only be used for the purposes agreed by the LAF and detailed in the submissions held by Buckinghamshire County Council. Any variations must be agreed by the Head of Service and any significant changes will require reconsideration by the LAF.
 - Payment will be made upon invoice with proof of expenditure e.g. relevant paid invoices/receipts at completion of the scheme. (Advance or staged payments can be made by separate agreement with the County Council should this be necessary).
 - The LAF's support for the project must be acknowledged in relevant publicity.
 - The funding should be utilised during the financial year that it relates to.
 - The recipient must provide monitoring information requested by Buckinghamshire County Council and may also be required to attend a subsequent LAF meeting to speak on the outcomes of the project.
12. The funding must be spent within the financial year for which it is allocated and for this reason, LAFs are urged to allocate their budgets as early as possible in the financial year:
13. In November, in consultation with the LAF Chairman, the Service Director will take a view on the likelihood of unallocated and unspent monies being used that year. If there is budget that is unlikely to be spent that year, the Service Director will allocate it to activities that will benefit the area during the remainder of 2012/13.
14. As in 2011/12 and previous years, in terms of formal decision-making, the LAFs will be advising the relevant Service Director on how to spend the devolved budget who will then implement that advice.

Transportation schemes

- **2012-13**

15. Most LAFs will already have submitted transportation proposals to be funded from the 2012-13 transportation delegated budget. Transportation has already begun costing these schemes.

16. Subject to the availability of the costings from Transportation, it will be up to each LAF to decide when to consider these proposals:

- Delay making allocations until a range of proposals (both Transportation and non-transportation) is assembled and consider them together. However this could impact upon the delivery of schemes in this financial year
Or
- Make allocations as and when proposals come through.
Or
- For this transitional year only (2012-13), as transportation scheme proposals have already been submitted in anticipation of a ring-fenced transportation budget, a similar amount could be set aside for this purpose. The LAF will then be able to decide later this year how to manage the single budget in subsequent years. This is the recommended option.

- **Subsequent years**

17. Each LAF will need to work with its Transportation officers to agree how ideas for transportation projects should be submitted and the timetable. The implication of many late allocations is that such schemes may not be deliverable until the following financial year.

- **Other considerations**

18. If parishes and town councils wish, they can appoint an external contractor for delivery of transportation schemes. However, they should be aware that only contractors with the required accreditation approvals needed to work on the public highway will be permitted to undertake the works.

Report Ends