

Report to the Chesham and Chiltern Villages Local Area Forum

Title: LOCAL AREA FORUM BUDGETS 2013-14

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Electoral divisions affected: Chess Valley, Chesham East, Chesham North West, Chiltern Ridges

Summary

1. This paper describes the arrangements for the funding delegated to Local Area Forums (LAFs) in 2013-14.
2. This year, LAFs will receive the same allocation as previously. For the Chesham and Chiltern Villages LAF this is £54,584. However in subsequent years, the apportionment of the budget between LAFs may be reconsidered in the light of the local population, vulnerable individuals, the aging population, carers and other considerations as well as transportation issues.

Recommendation

3. The Chesham and Chiltern Villages LAF is recommended to note the arrangements in 2013-14 for its devolved budget as described in the report [and also note the expenditure of the allocated funding in 2012-13].

Background

4. 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). The devolved budget provided to each LAF by Buckinghamshire County Council is to be used to assist the LAF in addressing local priorities.



5. Delegated budget allocation 2013/14

6. The total amount delegated by Buckinghamshire County Council to LAFs in 2013-14 is £880,000. Each LAF will receive the same apportionment of the budget as in 2012-13.
7. For the Chesham and Chiltern Villages Local Area Forum, its devolved budget for 2013-14 is £54,584.
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 Chesham and Chiltern Villages Local Area Plan to support community needs and the well-being of the area in line with the criteria below:

- **Criteria for the use of LAF budget**

10. Proposals must meet one or more of the LAF's agreed priorities or in another way address a well-evidenced community need.
11. Buckinghamshire County Council has to make the best use of its resources and so,
 - the LAF's investment must be in line with the County Council's vision http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/assets/content/bcc/docs/corporate_plan/Strategic-Plan-2013.pdf and various strategies.
 - LAF funding must not be used to fund activity or facilities which are the primary responsibility of another body (e.g. , it should not be used for activities normally funded by Parish precepts) unless it can be demonstrated that the purpose is not within that organisation's funding capability and that the LAF's contribution is an essential part of the funding package to achieve the benefit for the local community
 - the funding must be spent in line with Buckinghamshire County Council's financial orders and procurement framework.
12. Proposals must demonstrate that other sources of funding are not available or that the LAF's contribution is an essential part of a multiple funding package. Accordingly, proposals with match-funding will be prioritised unless a proposal can demonstrate that alternative funding is not available.
13. As a general rule, the budget should not be used for retrospective funding i.e. on activity which has already taken place.
14. Funding relating to the maintenance, development or operation of an asset and/or service transferring from Buckinghamshire County Council to a community group will be decided as part of the Council's transfer decision. LAF devolved budget can contribute to this transfer funding package but will not be available separately for the same or similar purposes. This arrangement will remain in place for 3 years following the transfer date.

- **Submission of proposals**

15. Proposals for Local Priorities funding can be submitted by any organisation. 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.
16. The Locality Manager will evaluate potential proposals, whether commissioned or unsolicited, and make recommendations in due course to the LAF. In evaluating proposals, the Locality manager will also assess 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.

- **Other considerations**

17. As previously stated, the funding must be in line with Buckinghamshire County Council's financial orders and procurement framework¹. Specifically, funding must be spent on activity within the financial year for which it is allocated. For this reason; LAFs are urged to allocate their budgets as far in advance as possible as this will enable schemes to commence early in the relevant financial year once the budget is confirmed by Buckinghamshire County Council.
18. Early consideration of funding priorities and possible schemes will also enable the Locality manager to ensure compliance with the Council's procurement framework. Early allocation is especially important for engineering schemes or schemes for which additional funding needs to be raised to ensure that such schemes can be completed during the financial year that the budget relates to.
19. 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.
20. Standard conditions apply to schemes receiving LAF financial support. In addition, the Locality Manager may recommend additional conditions for specific scheme. The standard terms and conditions are:
 - a) 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.
 - b) 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).
 - c) The LAF's support for the project must be acknowledged in relevant publicity.

¹ Compliance with BCC's procurement framework has never yet prohibited a LAF decision. However, there have occasions where either the size of a single allocation or the accumulated value of allocations to one provider from a number of LAFs has required specific action to be taken to ensure that the Council can demonstrate that it considered value for money and fair competition in implementing the LAF's advice.

- d) The funding can only be used during the financial year that it relates to. The recipient must alert the Locality Manager at the earliest possible opportunity if it is likely that the scheme expenditure is slipping from its original timetable.
- e) The recipient must provide monitoring information requested by Buckinghamshire County Council and may also be required to attend a LAF meeting to speak on the outcomes of the project.

21. The requirement in 20 d) above for schemes to alert the Locality Manager if the expenditure timetable is slipping is to enable Locality Manager to manage the devolved budget effectively. For example, if scheme slippage is notified early enough the funding can be reallocated for other purposes and, if the LAF wishes, an appropriate allocation made in the subsequent financial year for the original scheme.
22. Where appropriate, for example to allow for opportunities that require a swift decision, funding may be agreed in between LAF meetings in consultation with the Local Area Forum Chairman and the Service Director.
23. In October, 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. The Service Director will allocate such budget to activities that will benefit the area or elsewhere during the remainder of 2013-14.
24. As in previous years, in terms of formal decision-making, the LAFs will be advising the relevant Service Director on how to spend the devolved budget. The Service Director will implement that advice unless there is a good reason not to do so. In such an instance, a full explanation will be provided to the LAF including possible options which may allow a modified scheme to proceed.
25. The Service Director has delegated responsibility for the management of the devolved budget to the Locality Services Manager and, day to day management, to Locality Managers. Issues relating to the devolved budget or individual schemes should be raised with the relevant Locality Manager who may refer upwards if appropriate.

Transportation schemes

26. Transportation schemes are usually delivered by Transportation for Buckinghamshire (TfB). If parishes and town councils wish, they can appoint an external contractor for delivery of transportation schemes. However, TfB approval for any scheme on the public highway is required. Parish and town councils should also be aware that only contractors with the required accreditation approvals needed to work on the public highway will be permitted to undertake the works.

Local Priorities Devolved Budget funding reserve

27. There will be exceptional circumstances which cannot be accommodated within the devolved budget management framework described in this report. For this reason a funding reserve has been established for Local Priorities approved schemes which meet certain criteria. The reserve will under no circumstances be used to allow LAFs to carry forward budget accruing from miscellaneous under spends or a simple failure of the LAF to allocate its budget in good time and in line with the devolved budget management framework.

Local Priorities Budget Expenditure 2012-13

Project	Amount agreed	Date Agreed by LAF
Building Community Capacity projects in Chesham, Cholesbury and Ashley Green. Project came in under budget £5466.	8200	02/05/2012
Chesham Asian Welfare Group - Commonwealth Festival	2000	02/05/2012
Pond Park Health and Community Fair	425	02/05/2012
Rafe's Place at Chesham Youth Centre	1510	02/05/2012
Chesham Events Group - Chesham Jubilee Celebrations	2000	02/05/2012
Movers and Shakers Chesham Asian (and other BME) Men's Health and Wellbeing Project	1950	02/05/2012
Elmtree School sensory garden	2000	11/07/2012
Citizen's Advice Bureau Outreach work	3324	11/07/2012
Chesham Walkers are Welcome - Food trail	500	11/07/2012
Blue Light Course (Bucks Fire and Rescue)	1970	14/09/2012
Chesham TC - Black fencing Market Square/Culvert. Now repair of culvert.	4000	11/07/2012
Chesham TC - Fullers Close Grasscrete	15425	11/07/2012
Cholesbury PC - Oak Lane/Jenkins Lane kerbing of grass island.	2500	11/07/2012
Cholesbury PC - St Leanards Grit bin	450	11/07/2012
Chartridge PC - Cogdells Lane Grit Bin	450	11/07/2012
Cholesbury PC - Pound Lane/Stoney Lane kerbing of grass triangle	2500	11/07/2012
CDC marked crossing point across Star Yard car park	5000	10/10/2012
Grit Bin Pheasant Rise Chesham	380	10/10/2012
Total	54,584.00	