

Matters arising from the Minutes – actions for Zoe Dixon

Members said that they did not agree with the current financial convention of not carrying forward delegated budgets from one year to the next. Zoe Dixon said that she would take this back – Action: ZD.

Response

The following has been proposed:

For the permanent reserve provision - for Local Priorities approved schemes where:

- a. A scheme remains viable but, despite best planning, has stalled and is unable to complete within the financial year. Examples are delays in assembling the complete funding package, difficulties in finding a contractor to complete within planned time scales or where bad weather extended outdoor building works.
- b. A Local Area Forum (LAF) wishes to assemble funding for a scheme over a number of years, either because the scheme value is beyond its funding capability in any one year or to deploy its entire annual funding on one scheme would significantly restrict other activity.
- c. A LAF wishes to provide revenue funding for a scheme that will span several years out of its current annual budget.

Additional criteria for the management of the reserve will be:

- Funding will only be transferred to the reserve when a clear plan and commitment to incur the expenditure can be evidenced through clearly agreed minutes from the LAF meeting or Service Director (or Locality Services Manager as delegated by the Service Director) decision.
- Where funding is then not fully required as planned, it will be returned to the corporate pot.
- For stalled projects, the activity associated within the “slipped expenditure” must complete within the subsequent financial year i.e. it will not be used as a mechanism to allow stalled projects to stall indefinitely, and will only be released for the purpose agreed in the LAF minutes or Service Director (or Locality Services Manager as delegated by the Service Director) decision.
- For the categories 1 b and c above:
 - o a minimum threshold of 50% of the LAF’s annual revenue budget will apply
 - o applications for the reserve should be made by August 1st of the fiscal year that the budget relates to, excepting the case of unexpected slippage due to weather at the end of the year.

The reserve will not be used to carry forward budget accruing from miscellaneous under spends or failure to allocate budget in good time.

The Chairman also referred to the scheme by Virgin Media to provide superfast fibre-optic broadband. There had been a delay caused by Transport for Buckinghamshire, but Ann-Marie Davies said that this was no longer the case... The scheme was supported by the Leader of the County Council and by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation. Zoe Dixon said that she would take this forward – Action: ZD

Response

I understand that Virgin Media (VM) have been taken over by a large US media company so am waiting for an update from Nigel Sims.

Previously, Nigel reported that VM were interested in pursuing 3 very different projects, all of benefit to residents, of immediate interest and to support economic growth:

1) The Virgin Media Pioneer project.

Aimed at 16 - 25 yr olds. Initially a NEETS (young People **N**ot in **E**mployment, **E**ducation or **T**raining) project but will be wider. Aimed at encouraging high tech / internet based entrepreneurship; basically helping young people to get going in new Start Up businesses. When I informed VM that there are 120 NEETS in Chesham they said they may go for a target such as getting 10% to start a business with VM support.

2) Telehealth. A major area of interest for VM for 2013. This fits with our view that this sector could be a growth sector for Bucks economy. Nigel was to put VM in touch with NHS.

3) Helping existing Chesham businesses.

3 a) VM already have high speed infrastructure running through Chesham high street. Idea number 1 is to "give" high street businesses "free" modem/hardware to enable them to offer free wifi to customers, an early idea of VM is to see how much of the high street they could then turn into a free wifi area.

3b) Offer free assistance to Chesham businesses to create decent 21st century web sites, especially those businesses with no current web presence. (VM may be interested in tying in schools or further education students into this strand). Nigel will act as the point of contact with VM taking this forward (with Bucks Business First).

- Nigel had discussed the previous 2012 project regarding wifi and the necessary access to street furniture (a Chiltern District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council issue). VM pointed out that had this gone ahead it would have only have been a trial period - maximum 12 months. The trials in Bristol and Newcastle lasted 4 weeks.
- VM advised that in the near future late 2013 and 2014 there are likely to be many issues regarding 4G and requests for access to street furniture, from many companies. (Nigel will brief Sean Rooney). VM now have the correct names for point of contact for any future issues to come to Buckinghamshire County Council and Chiltern District Council.

A member said that the LAF would need to decide whether they wanted to fund one or two large projects or many smaller projects. Zoe Dixon said that the advantage of bigger projects was that they gave the opportunity for match funding. Zoe Dixon said that she would provide a list of match funding available – Action: ZD

Response

I spoke with Jim Sims from Ngage about possible EU and other funding opportunities and he suggested that we access the following databases to search for specific areas:

[http://www.grantnet.org.uk/index.html?portal=Buckinghamshire County Council](http://www.grantnet.org.uk/index.html?portal=Buckinghamshire%20County%20Council)

['http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/Default.aspx'](http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/Default.aspx)