

# Report regarding the Denham and Gerrards Cross Local Area Budget

Title: Local Area devolved budgets 2017-18

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Electoral divisions affected: Gerrards Cross  
Denham

## Summary

1. This paper describes the arrangements for the Buckinghamshire County Council budgets devolved to Local Areas in 2017-18.
2. This budget provides the opportunity for Parish, Town, District and County Councillors, along with residents' organisations and other appropriate local groups, to help prioritise County Council expenditure and activity in their area as well as working together to resolve local issues.
3. Each Local area has been allocated a devolved budget (called the Local Priorities budget) to help address local priorities in its area. The Denham & Gerrards Cross Local Priorities budget for 2017-18 is £22,790. It was also allocated £3,400 in September 2016 to help deliver Year 2 of the County Council's Active Bucks programme in the area in 2017.



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## Recommendation

4. Denham & Gerrards Cross Area is recommended to note the arrangements in 2017-18 for:
  - its Local Priorities budget of £22,790 as described in the report
  - its allocation of £3,400 to support the Active Bucks project (January – September 2017)

## Background

5. An aim of the County Council's Strategic Plan is that all Buckinghamshire residents should be able to effect changes that will improve their lives and their local areas. We want to encourage communities to be actively involved in improving their local areas and all those who want more say in their local communities and services to have the opportunity to do so.
6. The Local Priorities budget plays a central role in achieving this (although this is not the only mechanism for working at a local level). The Local Priorities budget provided to each Local Area by Buckinghamshire County Council is to be used to assist the Local Area in addressing local priorities within the overarching framework of the County Council's [Strategic Plan](#).

## Local Priorities budget

7. The Local Priorities budget for 2017-18 is £500k. The County Council has a Strategic Plan commitment to "devolve Council assets and services to town and parish councils where it makes sense to do so". In support of this, the County Council is supporting a capacity building programme from town and parish councils, funded in part by £50k from 2017-18 the Local Priorities budget.
8. This makes the total Local Priorities budget £450k to be allocated via the Local area's according to population base, social need and other issues in the local area.
9. The Denham & Gerrards Cross Local Area allocation is £22,790. The allocation of Local Priorities budget across all Local Area's is contained in Appendix A.
10. Area Managers can provide guidance to assist Local Areas in identifying activity that will be eligible for support from the Local Priorities Budget.
11. In addition to the Local Priorities budget, the Local Area has received £3,400 for a second year from Active Bucks (Public Health) to promote physical activity in their area. (See paragraphs 34 – 40)

## Management and Decision-Making of the Local Priorities Delegated Budget

12. The Local Priorities budget is to be used to commission and support activities which will help deliver the County Council's Strategic Plan and meet the local priorities identified by its Local Area.

## Criteria for the use of Local Priorities budget

13. Proposals must:

- demonstrate that it will be an effective way of addressing the identified need and present value for money.
- provide a minimum of 50% non-BCC funding - for road safety, traffic calming and parking schemes.
- Meet one or more of the County Council's Strategic Priorities, as describe in the [Strategic Plan](#).

14. All proposals will be assessed against these three points, and recommendations will be based on this assessment.

15. The Local Area's investment must be spent in line with Buckinghamshire County Council's financial orders and procurement framework;

16. Local Priorities funding cannot be used to fund:

- activity which has already taken place.
- activity or facilities which are the primary funding responsibility of another body (e.g. it should not be used for activities normally funded by parish precepts or by district council budgets) unless it can be evidenced that the applying organisation is unable to provide the funding itself and has been unable to secure additional funding for the project.
- routine ongoing, updating or maintenance costs of organisations
- individuals
- political organisations
- activity aimed at the promotion of political or religious beliefs.

17. Proposals must also demonstrate that other sources of funding have been sought and are not available, or that the Local Area's contribution is an essential part of a multiple funding package. Proposals with match-funding will be prioritised *unless* a proposal can demonstrate that alternative funding is not available.

18. The existing guidance for the use of the Local Priorities Budget where assets/services are being transferred from BCC to a parish council or community organisation will remain in place for 3 years *following* the transfer date of each asset or service:

- 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.
- The Local Priorities Budget:
  - a. cannot be accessed at a later date for subsidising or supplementing the service if it was part of the original transfer package.
  - b. can be used for developing new or extended services with in-built sustainability if they meet the requirements for Local Priorities support.

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 will be considered when 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. Alternatively, the Local Area can make use of the Local Priorities Reserve. (See paragraph 31b)

## Submission and evaluation of proposals

20. Proposals for Local Priorities funding can be submitted by any organisation. Area Managers may also commission a proposal from organisations which they consider having the capabilities to deliver Local Area priorities. All proposals must be submitted on a proposal form which is available via your Area Manager or from [communities@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:communities@buckscc.gov.uk). Members who have particular ideas should raise these directly with their local County Councillor, Lead Area Officer or Area Manager. Completion of proposal forms will ensure a consistent approach and that sufficient information has been provided to support an effective assessment.
21. The Area Manager will evaluate all eligible proposals, consult with the local County Councillors and make recommendations to the Local Area. When evaluating proposals, the Area Manager will also assess whether there are other plans in place to address the priority, other funding opportunities, or if 'quick wins' can be identified, to enable specific proposals/issues to be resolved quickly through other means. In some cases an Area Manager will refer the proposal back to the organisation if further information is required, particularly around research into sources of alternative funding.
22. The submission deadline for proposals to be delivered by Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) in 2017-18 was August 2016. This deadline ensures complete assessments and budget estimates are prepared for all proposals to be considered by the Local Area's and scheduled into the 2017-18 TfB work programme. Therefore no further proposals will be taken for TfB-delivered schemes in 2017-18. Any proposals for TfB schemes for 2018-19 must be submitted by the end of August 2017.

## Compliance with the Council's financial orders and procurement framework

23. All Local Area funding must be allocated in line with Buckinghamshire County Council's financial orders and procurement framework<sup>1</sup>. It must be spent on activity within the financial year for which it is allocated. For this reason:
- Local Areas 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.
  - Organisations are encouraged to begin planning their proposals and delivery as early as possible in order to participate in this financial allocation process and ensure that expenditure on proposals can take place within the relevant financial year.
24. The Area Managers are responsible for ensuring that funding priorities and possible schemes are compliant with the Council's procurement framework. It is important that proposals can be considered at the earliest possible stage, particularly for highways schemes or schemes for which additional funding needs to be raised to ensure that work can be completed during the financial year to which the budget relates.

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<sup>1</sup> Compliance with BCC's procurement framework has never yet prohibited a Local Area decision. However, there have been occasions where either the size of a single allocation or the accumulated value of allocations to one provider from a number of Local Areas 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 Local Area's advice.

## **Standard conditions to approved Local Priorities budget proposals**

25. Standard conditions apply to all schemes receiving Local Priorities budget support and the Area Manager may recommend additional conditions for specific schemes. The standard terms and conditions are:
- a) The Local Area's financial contribution may only be used for the purposes agreed by the Local Area and detailed in the submissions held by Buckinghamshire County Council. Any variations must be agreed by the Service Director and any significant changes will require reconsideration by the Local Area.
  - 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, for example, where a small organisation may not have adequate cash flow).
  - c) Buckinghamshire County Council's support and funding for the project through the Local Area must be acknowledged in all relevant publicity, including articles on the scheme.
  - d) The funding can only be used during the financial year to which it relates. The recipient must alert the Area 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 by the date requested by Buckinghamshire County Council.

## **Governance**

26. As in previous years, in terms of formal decision-making, the Local Area is advising the relevant Service Director on how to spend the Local Priorities 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 Local Area including, where possible, options to allow a modified scheme to proceed.
27. The Communities Service Director has delegated the responsibility for the management of the Local Priorities budget to the Community Engagement & Development Manager and the day-to-day management to Area Managers. Issues relating to the devolved budget or individual schemes should be raised with the relevant Area Manager who may refer upwards if appropriate.
28. The allocation of funding, expenditure and notifications of timetable slippage (requirement 26d) is monitored by each Area Manager. This enables the Local Area's to consider reallocation to other proposals before the end of September.

## **Local Priorities budget allocation timetable**

29. All Local Area's must have completed budget allocation by the end of September 2017 for the 2017-18 Local Priorities budget. At this time, the Community Engagement & Development Manager will form a view on the unallocated and unspent monies and will allocate the budget to other purposes.

## **Local Priorities Devolved Budget funding reserve**

30. There may 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.

31. In summary these criteria are:

- a. A scheme remains viable but, despite best planning, has stalled and is unable to complete within the financial year. Examples include 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 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 because to deploy its entire annual funding on one scheme would significantly restrict other activity.
- c. A Local Area wishes to provide revenue funding for a scheme that will span several years out of its current annual budget.

32. 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.
- Where funding is then not fully required as planned, it will be returned to County Council reserves.
- 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.
- For the categories 31b and 31c above:
  - a minimum threshold of 50% of the Local Area’s annual revenue budget will apply
  - applications for this reserve should be made by August 1st of the fiscal year that the budget relates to.

33. Under no circumstances can the reserve be used to allow Local Areas to carry forward budget accruing from miscellaneous under spends, or a simple failure to allocate its budget in good time and in line with the devolved budget management framework.

### **Active Bucks allocation to the Local Areas**

34. Physical activity has been highlighted in all Public Health local area profiles as a key preventative priority. Active Bucks has allocated part of its funding, £107,600 per year over 2 years (Sept 15 – Sept 17), for distribution via the local areas to support initiatives which increase physical activity, particularly amongst inactive groups. The Denham & Gerrards Cross Local area was allocated £3,100 in September 2016 to help deliver Year 2 of the County Councils Active Bucks programme in the area in 2017, reflecting the population in the area (based on data from Census 2011). The allocations for each Local Area are illustrated in appendix A.

35. The overall Active Bucks funding will be delivered in two ways:

- Projects directly commissioned by the Local Area for locally-determined provision which can deliver the Buckinghamshire Physical Activity Strategy.
- Projects centrally commissioned, including project co-ordination, physical activity asset based community development, asset mapping, some county-wide physical

activity interventions, and evaluation.

36. The Active Bucks funding package for each Local Area went live from September 2015 and each Local Area was provided with a full set of guidelines setting out the priorities to be funded, criteria, restrictions, the decision-making process and deadlines for spend on local physical activity provision. The procurement process for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Active Bucks Local area funding is now complete and contracts have been awarded to successful providers, who will start their delivery between January – March 2017.
37. The funding package, its guidelines and delivery was informed by a community engagement process and an asset mapping exercise which was carried out between May and September 2015. The engagement and mapping was crucial in better understanding physical activity in local communities and identifying what physical activity communities wanted to participate in. As the project concludes, further reports will be provided to the Local Area with the final summary in early 2018.
38. Compliance with the Council's financial orders and procurement framework applies (see paragraphs 23 and 24). Likewise, the same conditions apply to Active Bucks funding as for Local Priorities funding (see paragraph 25).
39. The same governance principles apply (see paragraph 26). The relevant Service Director is the Director of Public Health who has delegated the day-to-day management to Sarah Preston, Public Health Principal. Issues relating to the devolved budget or individual schemes should be raised with the relevant Area Manager who will refer upwards where appropriate.
40. A full report on the Active Bucks project and the role of Local Areas has previously been provided by the Public Health service.

### **Transportation schemes**

41. Transportation schemes are usually delivered by Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB). If parishes and town councils wish, they may undertake the work themselves or 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.

## Appendix A.

Local Area	Local Priorities Allocation	Physical Activities Strategy Allocation Year 2 <i>(Already Allocated)</i>	Total
Amersham	£23,140	£5,600	£28,740
Beaconsfield	£22,100	£3,000	£25,100
Beeches	£23,310	£5,100	£28,410
Buckingham	£23,020	£5,600	£28,620
The Chalfonts	£22,330	£4,600	£26,930
Chepping Wye Valley	£23,770	£7,600	£31,370
Chesham & Chiltern Villages	£25,500	£5,600	£31,100
Denham & Gerrards Cross	£22,790	£3,400	£26,190
Gt Brickhill, Wing & Ivinghoe	£22,790	£4,100	£26,890
Greater Aylesbury	£29,830	£15,800	£45,630
Haddenham & Long Crendon	£22,620	£3,300	£25,920
High Wycombe	£30,000	£15,900	£45,900
The Missendens	£22,100	£3,500	£25,600
Northwest Chilterns	£22,850	£5,300	£22,850
Southwest Chilterns & Marlow	£23,950	£6,900	£30,850
Waddesdon	£21,870	£3,000	£24,870
Wendover	£22,390	£3,300	£25,690
Wexham & Ivers	£23,710	£3,000	£26,710
Winslow & District	£21,930	£3,000	£24,930