



Community Services

Agenda Item No. 6

Briefing Paper

Report of: Sarah Sprung (Scrutiny / Committee Officer)

Date: Wednesday, 4th February 2009

Open

Recommendations from the External Funding Review Panel

1. Summary

1.1 This briefing paper details the recommendations of the External Funding Review Panel, following its scrutiny of the processes in place for external funding within the Council.

2. Background

2.1 The External Funding Review Panel was established by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 5th November 2008.

2.2 The review panel consisted of the following members:

- i) Councillor M A Salter (Chairman)
- ii) Councillor Mrs H E Dyke
- iii) Councillor Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis
- iv) Councillor Mrs S Hayward

2.3 The terms of reference for the review panel were:

- i) To investigate the process for selecting and applying for external funding by Council divisions.
- ii) To review the process for collecting, monitoring and the reporting of funding data across divisions of the Council.
- iii) To define the role and responsibilities of the External Funding Strategy and the External Funding Working Group (EFWG).

3. Key Issues

3.1 A cross divisional External Funding Working Group was established in September 2004 to map external funding streams and procedures. The group meets biannually.

- 3.2 The reporting mechanism in place for external funding is an External Funding Position Statement which is presented to the Audit Committee.
- 3.3 The last position statement presented to the Audit Committee was for the period July to September 2007.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of the Regeneration & Economic Prosperity Section with the Planning, Health and Environment Division to collate data on bids for funding submitted across the Council.
- 3.5 In order to collate this information any officer that applies for external funding is required to complete an 'external funding intent form' to enable the Regeneration & Economic Prosperity Section to compile data on the Council's external funding activities.
- 3.6 Members noted that the reason the Audit Committee had not received any recent position statements was that not all officers had not been consistently submitting these forms to the Regeneration & Economic Prosperity Section. This was thought to be due, in part, to a lack of awareness and understanding throughout the Council for the need to report bidding activity.
- 3.7 A revised version (appendix 1) of the funding intent forms was circulated to the Review Panel. It was hoped that in simplifying the forms, it would take officers less time to complete.
- 3.8 A survey was circulated to Heads of Service to seek information on the external funding activities within their divisions. See appendix 2 for responses.
- 3.9 The Panel felt that, as Council Officers were successful in obtaining external funding, both for the Council and its partners, there should be more publicity advising members and the public in order that positive Council news is communicated effectively.
- 3.10 It was noted that there was no system in place for dealing with Member enquiries regarding external funding.
- 3.11 Discussion took place on developing a central 'bank' of funding applications, in order that officers could access examples of successful bids to aid their own bid writing process.
- 3.12 In order to share best practice in bid writing, Members felt that it would be beneficial for the External Funding Working Group to hold an event aimed at highlighting the procedures in place for the writing and monitoring of bids.

4. Recommendations to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 To consider putting the following recommendations forward to Cabinet for approval:
- i) The revised Funding Intent Forms be adopted.
 - ii) All Officers, who complete bids for external funding, complete revised funding intent forms and supply them, together with a full copy of the bid, to the Regeneration & Economic Prosperity Section.
 - iii) Financial data regarding the Council's external funding activities be included quarterly in the Members Information Bulletin, together with contact details for the External Funding Working Group.
 - iv) External Funding be a topic for the next Member Briefing Session on 1st April 2009, in order that all Members can be apprised of the Council's external funding activities.
 - v) The External Funding Working Group hold an event to share the process in place for external funding within the Council and to highlight best practice.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Heads of Service
- 5.2 Other Local Authorities

6. Relevant Council Policies/Strategies

- 6.1 External Funding Strategy

7. Wards affected

- 7.1 District Wide

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Revised Funding Intent Forms
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Responses received from Heads of Service

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 Minutes of the External Funding Review Panel held on
 - 25th November 2008
 - 15th January 2009

Officer Contact Details:

Sarah Sprung
Scrutiny / Committee Officer
01562 732736
Sarah.sprung@wyreforestdc.gov.uk