

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**  
**26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009**

**Wyre Forest District  
Revised External Funding Monitoring Policy**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:</b>	Cross Theme
<b>CORPORATE PLAN AIM:</b>	Cross Aims
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Stephen Clee
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<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1 – External Funding Monitoring Strategy <i>The appendix to this report has been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details).</i>

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To agree the revision of the External Funding Monitoring Policy.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:**

- 2.1 **That the revised External Funding Monitoring Policy be approved.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) promotes and improves the economic, social, and environmental well being of the district in the best interests and for the greatest benefit of its inhabitants, residents, businesses and visitors.
- 3.2. The District Council is increasingly dependant on attracting external funding sources, in addition to it's own budgets, to meet it's own priorities and as well of those of the community.
- 3.3. In April 2005 the District Council adopted its External Funding Strategy to establish protocol and aid development to all stakeholders and partner organisations that WFDC work with (on external funded projects) to be aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.4. The Strategy states that external funding data obtained is to be recorded on a quarterly basis to ensure that funding is reported and monitored regularly. It is also made available on the Intranet.

## **Agenda Item No. 10.3(a)**

- 3.5. An annual report is to be delivered to the Corporate Management Team detailing levels of funding attracted in that financial year.
- 3.6. As the Strategy is now over three years old and a number of internal and external changes have taken place since adoption, a review is required to ensure that it is meeting its aims and objectives effectively, and that the protocol is relevant and up to date.
- 3.7. The Review will also consider the mechanism for reporting and monitoring information regarding funding bids being submitted to the Regeneration Officer.
- 3.8. In November 2008 the Community Services Scrutiny Committee established an External Funding Review Panel to:
  - i) Investigate the process for selecting and applying for external funding by Council divisions.
  - ii) Review the process for collecting, monitoring and the reporting of funding data across divisions of the Council.
  - iii) Define the role and responsibilities of the External Funding Strategy and the External Funding Working Group (EFWG).
- 3.9. The recommendations of the Panel were reported at the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and to Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009. The work of the Panel has informed the development of the proposed revised Strategy.
- 3.10. The draft strategy was also reported to the Council's Audit Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

## **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1. As the Strategy was adopted in 2005 a lot of the information within it is now out of date. This is particularly true of references to made to other Council Policy and priorities such as the Corporate Plan. There have also been changes in the service that the Council provides with regard to external funding. A general revision is required to make sure that the document is relevant and up to date.
- 4.2. The most notable issue involved in the review of the strategy is the process of reporting funding bids. Bidding activity has not been consistently reported, therefore, the main aim of this review was to investigate this and find a way of making the process easier and more of a priority for Officers making bids.

## **5. MAIN AMENDMENTS TO STRATEGY**

### **STRATEGY NAME**

- 5.1. During consultation, the External Funding Working Group, commented that the Strategy should be better defined to recognise its principal role as a monitoring and reporting process. As the Strategy has never been an "action plan" for the Council's Externally funded activities, it is proposed to rename the Strategy the 'External

Funding Monitoring Policy' to emphasise its primary function.

- 5.2. This point is further reiterated throughout the document itself through the stated aims and objectives and through the more defined role of the Working Group.

#### PROTOCOL

- 5.3. The most significant change to the Strategy involves the protocol behind the reporting of funding bids. This was one of the key recommendations to come from the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.4. Currently, Officers making funding bids are required to complete Funding Intent Forms, which are then sent to the Regeneration & Economic Prosperity Section for recording.
- 5.5. However, the revised Strategy proposes that Officers send the completed funding bid to the Regeneration & Economic Prosperity Section. The Regeneration Officer will then complete the forms on their behalf and record the data.
- 5.6. All the Funding Intent Forms have been revised as part of this process, as the Community Services Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet.
- 5.7. A new Intent Form has also been created for situations where WFDC has been involved in a funding bid but is not the financially accountable body for any monies received. It is still deemed important to report this as WFDC Officers have committed their time and the District will benefit. This will require the Officer to fill out the form, but it is designed to be simpler and quicker to complete.

#### EXTERNAL FUNDING SERVICE

- 5.8. As WFDC no longer subscribes to a funding database, it can no longer formally offer the free external funding search service it once did. However, the Strategy points people towards sources where they can search for funding streams, in particular the Worcestershire Partnership website, which offers an excellent search facility for community and voluntary groups.
- 5.9. The Strategy also highlights the important role that WFDC has in assisting community and voluntary groups in finding and bidding for funding.

#### IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING & MONITORING

- 5.10. The Strategy sets out exactly why it is important that all funding bids are reported and monitored. This aims to clarify that the process is not simply for bureaucratic reasons, but is vital to ensure the Council's financial and legal probity.

#### EXTERNAL FUNDING WORKING GROUP

- 5.11. The Strategy more concisely defines the role of the working group and its function in the process. Officers on the Working Group, representing each Division, are responsible for ensuring that funding bids from their area of work are reported to the Regeneration & Economic Prosperity Section.

**AIMS, OBJECTIVES & ACTION PLAN**

- 5.12. The items set out in the aims, objectives and the action plan have been included to ensure that a monitoring framework will be in place for the recording of funding bids which will then be reported to CMT on a quarterly basis and to Members via the Audit Committee and Member Information Bulletin, as recommended by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.13. The recording of this information will also be used to set up a database of all funding bids. This database will be made available to all Officers and Members. It will be a useful tool in providing best practice examples of bids and for identifying funding streams in which the Council has been successful in attracting money.
- 5.14. A recommendation from Community Services Scrutiny Committee was the need for an event to share and highlight best practice. Therefore, the action plan also sets out that training will be provided to relevant officers dealing with external funding. This is aimed to result lead to a greater number of successful bids.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. External funding is an important revenue source for the Council to continue to deliver its services.

**7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report. The recommended policy responses are in accordance with the Council's established priorities.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1. If the reporting of external funding is not transparent and effective there is a risk that the Council will not maximise the benefits for continued service delivery.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1. The adoption of the Policy will enable the District Council to better record, monitor and report external funding activities.

**10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1. Head of Community & Partnerships Division

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1. Existing Strategy adopted in 2005.