

Audit and Governance

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	8 June 2016
Officer	Policy and Performance Officer, VCSE and External Funding
Subject of Report	Bidding Procedure to Manage External Funding Activity
Executive Summary	<p>At the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 21 November 2015 members considered a report by the Chief Executive that provided details of the bidding procedure, cost benefit analysis, reasons why bids failed and an explanation of criteria used to manage bidding activity. The report had been provided at the request of the Committee on 21 July 2015.</p> <p>The Committee noted that although the level of bidding had reduced, the Council had been successful in 72% of its bids, resulting in funding of £99.3M being obtained over the last three years. Currently bids are signed off by Heads of Service, or above, following scrutiny of a business case that includes information about the resulting benefits. The committee felt that there was a need to ensure that this practice was being followed and it was highlighted that there was a question about the availability of resources to support future bids. Members thought that any future bids should support the council's priorities and be outcomes focused. They supported the development of a strategy for external bidding activity and that this should also take into account the possibility that bids may be undertaken by voluntary or other organisations in future.</p> <p>This report highlights improvements to the strategy by which bidding activity is managed to ensure that it supports corporate priorities.</p>
Impact Assessment:	Equalities Impact Assessment: Not applicable
	Use of Evidence: Not applicable

Bidding Procedure to Manage External Funding Activity

<i>Please refer to the protocol for writing reports.</i>	Budget: Not applicable
	Risk Assessment: Not applicable
	Other Implications: None
Recommendation	To approve the update to the External Funding Policy highlight in red text in Appendix A to this report.
Reason for Recommendation	It is necessary to ensure that the cost-benefit external funding bidding activity contributes to the delivery of corporate aims.
Appendices	Appendix A: External Funding Policy: Corporate External Funding Bidding Template
Background Papers	External Funding Policy available on Sharepoint here: https://sharepoint.dorsetcc.gov.uk/iwantto/Pages/External-Funding.aspx
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1 Background

1.1 The County Council's External Funding policy aims to establish a guiding framework under which external funding activity can take place across the authority. The policy highlights the key procedures to be followed for all bidding activity in order to:

- Maximise the impact of bidding activity
- Manage risks
- Manage activity
- Prioritise the use of resources
- Produce effective management information

1.2 The policy relates to the receipt of external funding where the activity funded is:

- Led by Dorset County Council and/or where the County Council is acting as the accountable body

or

- Where Dorset County Council is a formal partner to a bid and is bound by a partnership agreement, memorandum of understanding or other formal document

or

- Where the bid is by a third party organisation where the council is an informal partner in the project or service funded but shares some risk in the project or service

Bidding Procedure to Manage External Funding Activity

2 Strategy

- 2.1 There is currently no overarching external funding strategy in the authority other than the guidance provided in the External Funding Policy. This is because most bidding activity takes place in response to funding streams being announced with bidding activity taking place over a relatively short period of time. Hence it has not been practical to develop a detailed strategy, or plan. There is however an emerging plan being developed in response to EU funding programmes.
- 2.2 As well as the ad-hoc and unplanned nature of bidding activity it is becoming more common for the county council to act as a partner or facilitator in bidding. This is because of the nature of external funding criteria focussing on 'communities' and the increasing prevalence of partnership working with third sector bodies and/or public sector bodies. Recent examples of this activity include the Transformation Challenge Award funding and the Technical Assistance programme in support of EU Social Investment Funding.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 Given the varied and ad-hoc nature of external funding programmes, and the lack of a dedicated external funding resource within the council, it is practical to provide a light touch approach to strategy. The onus is therefore on the bidding officer to gain approval to bid through the scheme of delegation at either Head of Service level or Cabinet.
- 3.2 However, to ensure that more emphasis is placed on ensuring activity is focussed on recognised priorities and that bidding in partnership is appropriately managed, it is recommended to update the External Funding Policy as shown in red in Appendix A.

Debbie Ward
Chief Executive
May 2016

Bidding Procedure to Manage External Funding Activity

Appendix A: External Funding Policy - Corporate External Funding Bidding Template

The purpose of this form is to:

- capture key information in order to update the corporate register of bids
- provide a checklist for bidding officers to help them gain approval to bid
- ensure bidding activity is in support of corporate priorities

Section 1: Project Information							
Lead Service				Lead Officer			
Project Name				Project Description			
Estimated Project Dates	Initial Idea		Start Date		End Date		
Sources of Funding Include funding from grants, DCC and partners	Source				£ Confirmed	£ Unconfirmed	
Estimated Total Project Costs							
Accountable Body (e.g. DCC)		(see appendix B)					
Formal Project Partners							
How does the bid support the delivery of corporate aims		OUTCOME	OUTCOME STATEMENT	POPULATION INDICATOR	MEASURE		
		SAFE					
		HEALTHY					
		INDEPENDENT					
		PROSPEROUS					
Section 2: Advice Checklist							
Specialist advice DCC officers can provide advice to help inform your project and your bid. This list is a prompt for areas to consider.	Service	Advice / Support				Your Notes	
	Financial	You must consult your directorate accountant in all cases to discuss financial processes, budgets & VAT implications etc					
	Legal Services	You must consult legal services where the bid requires a partnership agreement. Legal services can also advise on contracts and corporate governance.					
	Chief Executive's Office	Case history of bids, funder information, assistance with match funding and bid development costs, good practice, sign posting, partnering, voluntary sector liaison, statutory sector liaison					
	Procurement	Compliance with EU Procurement Legislation and DCC Contract Procedure Rules					
	HR	Recruitment process and timescales					
	Communications	D4U Website, promotion, publicity, Your Dorset,					
	ICT	Hardware & software costs, compatibility					
Bear in mind that adhering to corporate governance procedures, procurement legislation and HR processes can significantly increase your project timescale – get advice early on.							
Section 3: Approval to bid							
Approval to Bid Before bidding, financial regulations stipulate that approval must be obtained at an appropriate level	Q: Is the County Council Contribution less than £500,000?						
	Q: Is the County Council Contribution from an approved budget?						
	Q: Can you confirm that the bidding does NOT require a change in Council Policy?						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you have answered NO to <u>any</u> of the 3 questions above then approval to bid is required through the KEY DECISION process. See http://staffnet/index.jsp?articleid=267689 ▪ If you have answered YES to <u>all</u> three questions then approval to bid can be sought through the SCHEME of DELEGATION. See section 7 of the External Funding Policy 							
Please indicate if approval to bid has been obtained.	Through 'Scheme of Delegation'				Officer giving approval:		
	Through the 'Key Decision'				Date at cabinet:		
What Next ?	Submit this form, via email or in hardcopy, to c.scally@dorsetcc.gov.uk You can submit this form once section 1 is completed.						
Help and queries?	☎ Chris Scally: 01305 22 8624 ☎ Laura Cornette: 01305 22 4306						