

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Change and Delivery) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	Thursday 14 November, 2024

External Funding Strategy

Is this report confidential?	No
------------------------------	----

Is this decision key?	No
-----------------------	----

Purpose of the Report

- To present the External Funding Strategy for approval.

Recommendations to Cabinet

- To approve the External Funding Strategy.

Reasons for recommendations

- The External Funding Strategy will ensure there is a consistent process for applying for external grants and funding. The strategy will help the Council to have better oversight of the application process, monitoring and delivery.

Other options considered and rejected

- The alternative option would be not to adopt an External Funding Strategy. This has been rejected as it is a management action from the Annual Governance Statement.

Corporate priorities

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

5. This report presents the External Funding Strategy which is a shared strategy between Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council. It will support officers in leveraging additional revenue into the council to help deliver priorities, by setting out a consistent approach to planning and approval of external funding applications.
5. The strategy is to support a two-pronged approach where the council identifies priorities and projects where we will then seek external funding if needed, alongside identifying external funding opportunities that are available that would support our priorities. The strategy aims to provide a framework for good governance and will support the priorities set by each Council.

External Funding Strategy

6. An agreed management action from the Annual Governance Statement proposed the adoption of an External Funding Strategy. The draft strategy is available in Appendix A, it is intended to ensure that:
 - There is an agreed procedure for seeking grant funding.
 - There is central co-ordination through the People, Policy and Partnerships service.
 - There is the ability to share experience and knowledge across the councils.
 - Grant funding is sought to meet corporate priorities and projects, ensuring a focused approach to external funding.
 - Where there is a request for 'opportunity' grant funding, this is agreed by the Senior Management Team to ensure that resourcing can be properly considered.
7. The strategy sets out the background, responsibilities and process for External Funding across the councils, making it clear and easy for officers to use. The process makes use of existing procedures including the project management framework and financial regulations to minimise the duplication of work and to complement existing processes wherever possible.
8. The strategy introduces an External Funding register to be managed by the People, Policy and Partnerships service to ensure that there is a central record of all external funding. This will allow for better monitoring and oversight of funding arrangements and will support information sharing and communication across the council including lessons learnt, best practice and positive news stories.

Implementation

9. Following the approval of the strategy, the following work will be carried out by the People, Policy and Partnerships service:
 - a) Training will take place with key services who are likely to apply for grant funding, with communications shared with the rest of the organisation to raise awareness of the new strategy.
 - b) Development of an intranet page to share resources in support of external funding applications such as the live external funding register, key data needed for bids and good practice examples. This will be accessible to all staff across the organisation.

- c) Horizon scanning will be undertaken on a regular basis to identify potential opportunities for grant funding which align with our existing priorities. The team will ensure that relevant officers are notified of any opportunities in a timely manner and encouraged and supported to apply in accordance with the process.
10. The strategy will be reviewed after 12 months to ensure that it is working effectively, and to consider if there is any other support which could be provided to maximise the council's effectiveness in securing and spending external funding.

Climate change and air quality

11. The strategy itself has no direct climate change and air quality implications, however there are external funding opportunities around the green agenda, which the council may wish to take advantage of. This new process will help to ensure that any funding bids are appropriately scoped and approved and will support green priorities and carbon reduction targets.

Equality and diversity

12. The strategy itself has no equality and diversity implications. The process will help to ensure that all External Funding proposals are agreed by the Senior Management Team and have a completed Integrated Impact Assessment.

Risk

13. External funding sources can come with certain risks, such as dependency, uncertainty, competition, compliance, or reputation. Therefore, it is essential to assess and mitigate these risks before applying for or accepting any external funding. The External Funding Strategy will act as a tool for mitigating such risks when utilising external funding to deliver council priorities.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

14. The External Funding Strategy should ensure a more assured approach to the costing of new schemes to the implementation and accuracy of returns. The approach will sit alongside any reporting or additional sign offs required by the relevant bodies.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

15. The requirement for an External Funding Strategy has been identified from the Annual Governance Statement and is key to ensure a consistent approach is being applied across the Council with input from support services at an early stage.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

Appendix A- External Funding Strategy

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Caroline Winstanley (Transformation and Change Manager)	caroline.winstanley@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	17.10.2024

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.