

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 5 March 2008

Subject: External Funding Unit Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with an update on the remit and performance of the External Funding Unit since its establishment in January 2007.

2. Background

- 2.1** In April 2006 the Council and the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board agreed to establish an External Funding Unit (EFU) that would combine the Council's existing external funding activities and resources with additional resources from the CPP and its partners. The idea was to develop a more strategic approach to securing external funding in relationship to the Community Planning agenda.
- 2.2** Originally there had been a suggestion that the EFU would be located and managed by the CPP, however it was decided that the Council, as the lead community planning partner and the biggest contributor of resources would be best placed to manage the EFU.
- 2.3** In January 2007 the EFU was established. At that time all the 4 existing funding posts within the Council had become vacant. In the period January - April 2007 all these vacancies were filled. The EFU is now staffed with a Lead Officer EFU, a European Officer, an URBAN Officer and a Clerical Assistant. All these posts were/are existing Council resources.
- 2.4** The EFU has the following main tasks, which have been discussed and agreed at the CPP Board meeting of 19 February 2007.
- (a) Securing and managing European funding for the Council and its partners.
 - (b) Securing funding for large, strategic projects that address the community planning agenda.
 - (c) Acting as a first port of call for any kind of funding request in West Dunbartonshire and signposting projects that do not fall under the EFU's core activities to other providers.

2.5 The role of the EFU with regards to European funding is:

- Disseminate information.
- Liaise with SEP, ESEP and other European funding bodies.
- Develop new projects, prepare application forms.
- Guidance and support to project managers on records, claims, eligibility etc.
- Check and submit claims.
- Support monitoring visits.

2.6 The role of the EFU with regards to other, non-European, funding is:

- Actively seek partnerships with other Council departments and key partners in the area to develop large projects that address the Community Planning agenda.
- Work with individuals, groups and organisations that contact the EFU in preparing funding applications that fall within the remit of the EFU.
- Actively seek partnerships with other local authorities to develop joint pilots and projects that address the Community Planning agenda.
- Respond to any funding request and signpost requests that do not fall within the remit of EFU to other agencies.
- Disseminate funding information to a wider audience.

2.7 The CPP Board meeting of 19 February 2007 acknowledged that the EFU should not overlap existing services and thus concentrate on the larger and more strategic projects linked to the Community Planning agenda. It was recognised that organisations such as CVS, Community Links and the Community Learning and Development Section of the Council had the remit to work with the community on local projects, build capacity, develop skills and fundraise with them. The EFU have met with all stakeholders, including the aforementioned and explained the role and remit of the EFU and this was agreed and welcomed by all.

2.8 The funding landscape has changed and still is changing. There is less Lottery and European funding available and local authorities have to cope with increasing pressure on their budgets. Also, most funders have changed from 'activity-based' funding to 'outcome-based' funding, which many community groups find difficult to cope with.

3. Main Issues

3.1 In general the EFU has achieved its objectives in point 2.4 A (European funding) and C (signposting/information) of its remit and has had only limited success so far in point B (large strategic funding).

3.2 A delay in recruiting new staff resulted in a significant backlog in processing European claims. This backlog has decreased, but not diminished altogether.

3.3 Major achievements of EFU in 2007 include:-

- EFU have established and maintain a good working relationship with all major partners and funders.
- Given advice and support to 38 projects. This includes checking applications, giving advice and assisting with filling in applications.
- Signposted 43 projects to other service providers. This includes providing Grantfinder reports and liaising with other service providers. In many cases this also involved a meeting with representatives of the group.
- In 2007 West Dunbartonshire secured £ 622,437 Lottery funding. The EFU have been directly involved in securing £ 80,411.
- Submitted 3 European funding applications in the ESF Shadow round, securing £ 98,640 external funding.
- Submitted 1 ESF and 1 ERDF application on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP-bid) for £ 2,395,969 additional funding over 2 years.
- Supported 11 European funded Council projects and 1 joint project with Inverclyde Council in claiming £ 647,572 of European grants for the Council in 2007.
- Supported 9 non-Council European funded projects (URBAN II).
- The EFU has contributed to West Dunbartonshire meeting its 2007 N+2 target, thus securing the funding allocated for the West of Scotland.
- Supported the Sports Development Department in winning the telephone voting contest in the People's Millions television broadcast, thus securing £ 79,311 for Posties Park.
- Sent a monthly newsletter to 278 people/organisations on our mailing list.
- Organised / contributed to 7 training/information events.

3.4 The EFU is working on some larger, strategic projects such as Posties Park athletics facilities, Social Work Activ8, Sports Development's After School Football project, Alternatives' intensive treatment programme and Levensgrove Park development. The EFU has further started a dialogue with the Lottery that will lead to targeted surgeries in West Dunbartonshire in 2008.

3.5 The EFU has also been requested to assist with local projects in liaison with partner organisations such as Whitecrook Regeneration Centre, St Augustines, Bankie Talk and The Morison Project.

3.6 The EFU plan to increase their focus on securing large, strategic grants for the Council and Community Planning partners linked to the Community Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement. This will require them to agree and clarify clearer boundaries with the other service providers in the area, such as CVS, Community Links and the Community Learning and Development Section within the Council.

- 3.7** The remit of the EFU with regards to securing large strategic grants will be:
- a) Advising and supporting Council departments with accessing funding. This can include attending project development meetings and writing funding applications.
 - b) Advising and supporting Community Planning partners with securing funding for larger strategic projects linked to the Community Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). This will be done on request of a Council department or Community Planning partner and in conjunction with CVS as necessary.
 - c) Advising other projects on funding and sustainability on the request of a Council department, a Community Planning partner, an Elected Member or another service provider (CVS, Community Links).
 - d) Acting as a first port of call for any kind of funding request in West Dunbartonshire, doing Grantfinder searches and signposting projects that do not fall under the EFU's core activities to other providers.
 - e) Liaising with funders and disseminating funding information to a wide audience.
- 3.8** The EFU will signpost projects that do not fulfil these criteria to other organisations, such as CVS, Community Links or internally to the Community Learning Development Section.
- 3.9** **The greatest risk of overlap with existing services is with CVS.** The EFU will be conscious to avoid overlap of services by increasing the communication and liaison with CVS in order to determine the right support for a project.
- 3.10** The actions set for the External Funding Unit to deliver through Corporate Plan for 2008/09 are:-
- Provide 50 social economy or third sector organisations with funding information
 - Provide 12 instances of support and external funding advice to Council departments and Community Planning partners
 - Deliver 3 training events

4. Personnel Issues

There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the detail of the report though the focus of the EFU's work programme is to secure additional funding for regeneration within West Dunbartonshire.

6. Risk Analysis

There is a risk that if the work of the EFU is not properly focused and organised that additional funding will not be secured.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The EFU will continue its present role in securing European funding and ensuring claims are submitted correctly and timeously.
- 7.2** For non-European funding the EFU will concentrate on securing funding for Council projects and strategic projects linked to the Community Plan and SOA as described in this report.
- 7.3** The EFU will endeavour to increase liaison and communication with other service providers to avoid overlap in services and continue to work towards targets set within the corporate plan as detailed within paragraph 3.10 of this report.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1** The Committee is asked to note the information contained within this report.

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Date: 20 February 2008

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Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Wards Affected:	All Wards