

Metropolitan Borough of Wirral

National Lottery Strategy

**Contact: Special Initiatives Team - Corporate Services Department
(March 2007)**

Contents

	page
Foreword	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Wirral MBC's Bidding Process	6
3. Issues to be addressed	9
4. Wirral MBC's Strategies and the National Lottery	13
5. Looking to the future	16
Appendices:	
1 Wirral MBC's National Lottery application successes	
2 Wirral's Local Area Agreements and the National Lottery	
3 Internal Funders Group – Terms of Reference	

Foreward

We are pleased to present the National Lottery Strategy which has been produced to bring together the priorities and objectives of Wirral MBC in relation to National Lottery funding. In doing so it is hoped to maximise the benefits to the Borough, which are afforded by the National Lottery.

Since its launch in November 1994 the National Lottery has presented significant funding opportunities to organisations throughout the UK. The Metropolitan Borough of Wirral alone has, through its various departments; succeeded in securing just over £19.4 million to date. Throughout the life of the National Lottery the whole of the Borough, via individuals, groups and organisations has bid for and secured over £52 million in total funding some 850 projects. This total is just for National Lottery grants alone and does not include the millions drawn down as match funding from a multitude of sources.

National Lottery funding provides scope for all types of organisations to secure additional benefits and facilities which could not be funded from existing resources. For Wirral this has resulted in funding for numerous 'Out of School Hours' activities for many schools, the restoration of Birkenhead Park, Woodchurch High School's new Sports Hall, 10 Multi Use Games Area's (MUGA's) and many more capital and revenue projects.

It is inconceivable that this Council and its partners could fund these types of projects without the support of the National Lottery, especially given the tight financial constraints within which the Council has to operate.

It is also important to recognise that, over and above the National Lottery funding secured by the Council and its partners, many independent organisations within the public, private and voluntary sectors play an important role in attracting significant Lottery investment into the Wirral. This was particularly the case in relation to the old Community Fund, as local authorities were ineligible to apply to this funder. The Community Fund has now merged with the New Opportunities Fund and is now known as The Big Lottery Fund.

National Lottery funding, by its very nature, provides opportunities comparable with those presented by the Single Regeneration Budget, European Funding and other external funding sources. All of these sources of funds assist the Council in pursuing its long-term vision of providing an enhanced quality of life for all its citizens.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Strategy

1.1.1 This National Lottery Strategy has been produced in order to provide a focus for developing National Lottery projects and bids within the Council and the wider Borough to ensure that all relevant National Lottery funding opportunities are maximised. More specifically, the purpose of the strategy is to establish principles against which this Council will develop and support projects, dependent on their fit with priorities for the Borough's development.

1.2 Format of the Strategy

1.2.1 This National Lottery Strategy has been drawn up as a corporate document providing general guidance on how opportunities presented by National Lottery funding should be addressed in Wirral. For more specific guidance and an indication of priorities within a particular area or field funded by the National Lottery, e.g. the arts, sports etc, more detailed strategies have been produced.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The National Lottery Strategy has been drawn up in the context of:

- The Strategic Planning Process of this Council, e.g. through the LAA/Community Strategy and Service Plans, and the policies and priorities contained therein;
- The corporate approach maintained by the Council with emphasis on co-ordination and synergy, i.e. through Wirral MBC's Internal Funders Team;
- Other important funding opportunities such as European funding, Neighbourhood Renewal, Housing Market Renewal etc.;
- Detailed analysis and interpretation of all information available on the National Lottery;
- Links with the regional staff of the various National Lottery Distribution Boards, in particular North West Arts Council, North West Sport England and its Regional Sports Board, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the regional Big Lottery Fund.

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Lottery Strategy

1.4.1 The principal aim of the strategy is to ensure that the significant funding opportunities presented by the National Lottery are maximised for the benefit of the people of Wirral.

1.4.2 Further objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Ensure that Council-led National Lottery applications are driven by and made with due regard to the needs of the people of Wirral, and are therefore in accordance with Council priorities and Strategies;
- Provide a clear framework for appraising external bids which are presented to the Council for support by other organisations in the Borough, including schools and voluntary sector organisations;
- Establish a focus and set of priorities for the allocation of limited resources in terms of match funding, revenue support, bid preparation costs and staff time/expertise;
- Enable sufficient flexibility within the Council to take advantage of specific opportunities as they arise and as deemed appropriate;
- Maximise the chances of Wirral's bids being successful, by addressing the requirement of the National Lottery Distributors for projects to fit with local, regional and national strategies.

2. Wirral MBC's Bidding Process

2.1 Wirral MBC is keen to be recognised as a proactive and forward-looking organisation in relation to National Lottery funding opportunities and the considerable benefits they can provide. Since the National Lottery was launched in 1994, the Council has endeavoured to maintain a co-ordinated approach and to promote and raise awareness of National Lottery funding opportunities.

2.2 Role

2.2.1 The Council has 2 main roles in relation to National Lottery funding:

a) as an applicant organisation

The Council's role as an applicant is to bid for funds in order to aid the progress and development of the Borough of Wirral by pursuing its aims and objectives and ultimately the overall vision for the area. Strategic objectives are identified in the LAA/Community Strategy, under which a number of priorities for action are set down. National Lottery funding, along with other external funding sources, is considered to be an important factor in working towards achieving these priorities. Appendix 2 provides details of how Lottery funding can help meet the Council's strategic objectives for the borough.

b) as a partner or supporter of other applicants

The same premise applies to the Council in determining its role as either an active partner or supporter of other applicants, i.e. the potential contribution that a specific project could make to the boroughs development is taken into consideration.

After an initial assessment of the project proposal, the Council, as a partner or supporter of applicants, may:

- i) Advise the applicant on the appropriate departmental contacts to ensure the proposal fits within the appropriate 'In-house' strategies;
- ii) Provide general or specific advice and information on the suitability of the various National Lottery funding programmes for proposed schemes;
- iii) Where the application falls within the Council's strategies, the Council may provide additional support and information including assistance in collating, compiling and making bids for Lottery funds.

In all cases, the level of support the Council can offer applicants will be determined by reference to the Strategic Principles given later in Section 4.

2.3 Approach

2.3.1 Currently the Council takes a corporate approach to the National Lottery in an effort to ensure that all relevant funding opportunities are maximised. In doing so, the following structures and mechanisms have been put in place:

Internally:

- **National Lottery Officers**

Two National Lottery Officers (one full-time and one part-time) are based in the Council's Corporate Services Department within the Strategic Development Section's Special Initiatives Team. They are responsible for monitoring Lottery developments, highlighting potential funding opportunities and assisting with project applications when requested.

- **Wirral MBC's Internal Funders Group**

Chaired by the Director of Adult Social Services this group meets on a regular basis and has representatives from relevant Departments and partner Organisations. The purpose of the group is:

"To provide a forum for sharing information, developing principles, ideas, good practice and co-ordinating the provision of funding information and advice to the Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) within Wirral. To have one "funding door" for all Council Funding and develop a common application process for all funding and ensure there is no opportunity for duplication with the Community Initiatives Fund (managed via Area Forums)".

Refer to Appendix 3 for the full Terms of Reference of this group.

National Lottery information is disseminated, via the Internet, to Group members who are then responsible for further highlighting potential Lottery funding opportunities within their departments/teams and encouraging bids to be developed where relevant.

- **Cabinet and Cabinet Member with Management Portfolio**

The Cabinet Member with Management Portfolio, together with the Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Services, has overall responsibility for the Council's strategic approach to the National Lottery. The Cabinet Members with responsibility for each department, and Departmental Chief Officers also have an important role in supervising the preparation and submission of those National Lottery applications which would impact upon their duties and on which the financial implications, both capital and revenue, would fall.

Externally:

- **External Organisations and the Voluntary Sector**

As Wirral MBC is one of the many organisations within the borough eligible to bid for National Lottery funds, the recently launched web search facility (Wirral 4 Community & Wirral 4 Social Enterprise) is now available affording prospective bidders free advice on potential funding sources for their projects. This facility not only covers National Lottery grants but Charitable Trust's, Government and social enterprise funding.

Should voluntary and community organisations wish to take this further and apply for National Lottery funds, Wirral's CVS also offers help and advice in developing funding strategies and making applications. Schools and other agencies have the opportunity to contact the Council's Lottery Officers for advice and assistance in making the relevant contacts with the National Lottery Distributing Bodies.

- **Merseyside Funding Information Portal**

The Merseyside Funding Advisers Network is acting as the steering group for this project via the Merseyside Funding Information Portal and recognises the value of 'empowering' organisations to research funding sources for themselves. This portal and the j4b web-based search facilities will free up funding advisers in CVS's and Local Authorities to offer more focused advice and support to organisations in other ways.

The Portal will be a single online access point that will allow any interested party to research the diverse range of funding sources available and to access advice and support resources to improve awareness and good practice around fundraising and income generation activity.

3. Issues to be addressed

3.1 The National Lottery Distributing Bodies are continuously reviewing their programme priorities, in particular the move towards allocating National Lottery funding based on need and a significant move to 'Outcome' based projects particularly by the Big Lottery Fund. This Section considers these key issues and implications of these changes for Wirral.

3.2 National Lottery Distributing Bodies - National, Regional and Local Strategies

3.2.1 The National Lottery Distributing Bodies have put in place national strategies in order to achieve the effective distribution of Lottery funds on the basis of need. As a result, the regional boards, to whom greater responsibility for the distribution of funds has been delegated, have also become more strategic in their approach – producing regional strategies that identify areas of need, in conjunction with priorities for the focused allocation of grants.

3.2.2 This approach is to be welcomed as it clarifies priorities for the distribution of National Lottery funds and provides a framework within which proposed bids can be developed and assessed. It is also considered that the emphasis on 'need' can only be to the benefit of Wirral.

3.2.3 In order to maximise the chances of local schemes receiving National Lottery funding, local strategies need to be in place, which respond to and complement the priorities of the regional and National Lottery Boards. This document sets out to provide this local dimension.

3.2.4 The Council already has a number of documents and strategies that clearly set out its policies and priorities both at a strategic level (i.e. Community Strategy / Local Area Agreements) and service level (those relevant to the National Lottery include Arts Strategy, Sports Strategy, Heritage Strategy, etc). It is essential when developing National Lottery bids, that their relevance to these other strategy documents is taken fully into account as well as the Strategic Principles set out later in Section 4 of this document. By approaching bid development in this way, it can be ensured, and demonstrated to the National Lottery Distributing Bodies, that Wirral's overall priorities are taken into account and each National Lottery application has a clear purpose, fitting within a structured framework.

Individual Departments, when making a bid for Lottery funding, must make reference to their own strategies and how they compliment the priorities and outcomes of the various funding distributors. It is suggested that any bid by Wirral MBC must have a strong synergy with our own LAA/Community Strategy.

3.3 Match Funding and Partnership Working

- 3.3.1 With the exception of Awards for All and specific Big Lottery Fund Programmes, each of the good causes requires matching funding to be in place for National Lottery projects. However, with ever-increasing demands being placed on Council budgets, it is necessary to look to external sources in order to secure the appropriate level of partnership funding. Furthermore, the opportunity to maximise the potential of other sources of funding attracted by the Council, such as European funds (where possible) or Neighbourhood Renewal must be fully explored when developing National Lottery bids.
- 3.3.2 Where the Council has provided match funding to support a National Lottery project, and the project is completed at a lower cost than originally expected, an underspend will arise. The Lottery Distributor which funded the project will seek to recover a fair proportion of this underspend, and the Council will also seek to recover the appropriate proportion of the match funding that it made available.
- 3.3.3 The requirement to secure match funding is seen as a positive factor in relation to making National Lottery bids. It encourages the establishment of important partnerships between people and organisations from all sectors of the borough, building on the solid foundation of Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership and associated Organisations.
- 3.3.4 Commercial organisations are eligible to bid for some National Lottery funding provided the scheme is primarily for public benefit. As a stated objective of National Lottery fund Distributors is to lever in private sector finance, there is significant potential to strengthen National Lottery bids through increased partnership work with the private sector.
- 3.3.5 As well as being a potentially important source of partnership funding, the private sector has the potential to help the voluntary sector through assistance with bid preparation, business plans and computer and administrative facilities. Similarly, the voluntary sector can offer the private sector an important outlet for community involvement, with consequent opportunities for publicity and training.
- 3.3.6 It is essential that a clear picture of the needs, concerns and wishes of the people or organisations which are to benefit from a project is established, both when developing strategies and at the outset of the project development. Consultations undertaken should be clearly demonstrated and fully taken into account with issues arising being addressed in the final proposals for submission.
- 3.3.7 The end result is that National Lottery bids from Wirral are submitted, with the support and commitment of many people including the general public, who are the best judges of need within the Borough.

3.4 Revenue Funding

- 3.4.1 In addition to securing partnership funding for capital National Lottery projects, the longer term implications of revenue funding must also be considered to ensure that projects are, where relevant, sustainable. As the National Lottery Distributors can provide only limited revenue support, and as a general rule do not support endowments to secure the long term future of projects, the provision of ongoing revenue support is a key issue in deciding whether to proceed with submitting or supporting an application.
- 3.4.2 This is a particularly important point for those organisations that apply for time-limited revenue support. Such projects must ensure they achieve their aims and objectives whilst in receipt of National Lottery revenue support, or are able to become self sustaining by the end of that period, as it is extremely unlikely that the Council will be able to provide the revenue funding required. In general, the Council cannot pledge to provide future support for projects seeking National Lottery funds because:
- a) The Council does not have the necessary resources to provide additional revenue support ; and,
 - b) As a general rule, the National Lottery is a funder of last resort and will not support projects that could be funded elsewhere. If the Council were able to find resources to support a project beyond its Lottery funding, it would appear that funds were already available and the principle of 'additionality', would be breached, making the project ineligible for National Lottery support.

3.5 Competition/Bid Preparation

- 3.5.1 In general, National Lottery bids are developed and submitted on an increasingly 'at risk' basis given the growing level of competition for funds which demand high quality applications. Applications therefore require a significant investment of time and money.
- 3.5.2 The issue has been addressed to a degree by the requirement to complete a Pre-application Form or Outline Proposal Form. This application process is used so as to minimise some of the risk for applicants (i.e. short-form pre-application first, then if the proposal is acceptable to the Distributor and meets its stated outcomes, the applicant will be encouraged to complete a Stage One application).
- 3.5.3 Financial support for National Lottery projects from within the Council is currently left to the bidding Department to source, this could be through their own revenue budgets or via the Council's Capital Programme. The skill in developing National Lottery bids is to concentrate resources on those schemes which fit the priorities of the Borough, complement strategies, have the best chances of success, and are clearly sustainable in the medium and longer-term.

3.5.4 It must be accepted that whilst National Lottery bids are developed in a more focused way, some will still be rejected, as has been the case so far. However, by adopting a strategic approach and aiming to meet local, regional and national priorities for the distribution of National Lottery funds, it is hoped that the successes will far outweigh the disappointments.

3.5.5 It must also be recognised that the National Lottery is only one of a number of funding regimes that the Council can pursue in order to achieve its aims for the Borough. Therefore, when projects are being developed, a holistic approach should be taken, identifying and linking all appropriate sources of funding. This, in essence, is the purpose of producing a National Lottery Strategy for the Council.

3.6 Big Lottery Fund - Outcome's approach explained

3.6.1 Launched on 1 June 2004, the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) is the joint operating name of the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and the National Lottery Charities Board, which made grants under the name of the Community Fund (CF). BIG will distribute 50% of the money raised for the 'Good Causes'.

Big Lottery Fund's mission is to bring real improvements to communities and the lives of people in need. They have a clear focus to fund projects and programmes within three key themes:

- Theme 1 – Community learning and creating opportunity
- Theme 2 – Promoting community cohesion and safety
- Theme 3 – Promoting wellbeing

BIG's four outcomes are which underpin these themes are:

1. People having better chances in life, with better access to training and development to improve their life skills
2. Stronger communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problems
3. Improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy
4. Healthier and more active people and communities

N.B. Outcomes are the changes or differences that a project can make over time, they are a result of what is done, rather than the activities or services provided.

3.6.2 BIG expect all prospective bidders to review their project in terms of its outcomes and how it links with and will help BIG to deliver its own stated outcomes above.

4. Wirral MBC's Strategies and the National Lottery

4.1 The importance of 'strategic fit' not only with local funding priorities, but also with the regional and national priorities of the National Lottery Distributing Bodies, has already been established. In this context, bids for National Lottery funding must be undertaken with a clear focus so those funds are directed to areas of real need within the Borough.

4.2 In an effort to ensure that this takes place and that bids are prioritised in accordance with the Council's aims, objectives and vision for the Borough, the following strategic principles are suggested. This framework will be applied to all potential National Lottery bids in order to assess their fit with priorities, and ultimately whether an internal scheme should be submitted or an external one supported.

4.3 Strategic Principles

- **Maximise Funding**

The Council will seek to maximise funding to the Borough from the National Lottery as part of its overall policy to maximise the benefits afforded by all external-funding sources. Whilst much of the work of the National Lottery staff will remain reactionary a more pro-active role will be possible through monitoring of the newly established j4b funding portal project.

- **Council Priorities/Strategic Fit**

The Council will pay due regard to its overall strategic policies, and those of other organisations that affect the lives of the people of Wirral, in reaching any decision to either submit or support National Lottery bids. In doing so, the Council will seek to ensure that all National Lottery bids submitted are based on need and are in line with its own Corporate priorities, as opposed to being led by National Lottery priorities.

Particular regard will be paid to a projects potential fit with the priorities set out in the Council's Community Strategy/ Local Area Agreements.

- **Flexibility and Anticipation of Future Developments**

Council priorities will be taken into account, but it is essential to be flexible making allowances for other potentially beneficial projects. The Council will also seek to anticipate and take early advantage of any future changes to National Lottery funding programmes.

- **Consultation**

The Council will seek to ensure that public involvement is incorporated into National Lottery project development and bid preparation in order to secure maximum public benefit from National Lottery funded schemes. This area is now deemed essential by Lottery Distributors for a bid to be considered.

- **Partnership**

In the pursuit of its priorities for the benefit of the people of Wirral, the Council will seek to work in partnership with any appropriate organisation, group or individual in order to strengthen the case for each National Lottery bid and to maximise vital partnership funding contributions. In this connection, the Council will seek to develop the role of the private sector in relation to bids for National Lottery funding and will seek to encourage joint work between the private and voluntary sectors.

Whilst giving priority to its own bids, and subject to the availability of resources, the Council will endeavour to provide assistance to the Voluntary Sector, as long as bids conform to the relevant strategic framework and are in accordance with agreed priorities.

- **Best returns on investment**

With due regard to the potential revenue implications of submitting or supporting a particular scheme, the Council will seek to pursue National Lottery funding in the areas which offer the best chances of returns on the investment involved in bid preparation.

- **Resource allocation/management**

The Council will seek to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to pursue National Lottery funding for projects of strategic significance to the Council and the Borough as a whole. This will primarily be through bids to the Council's Capital Programme.

4.4 Local Area Agreements/Community Strategy and the National Lottery

(Also refer to Appendix 2 where these links are covered in more detail).

Wirral's four blocks:

1. Children and Young People
2. Healthier Communities and Older People
3. Safer and Stronger Communities
4. Economic Development and Enterprise

National Lottery through its distributors: Big Lottery Fund, Heritage lottery Fund, Sport England and the Arts Council and their respective funding programmes can support and potentially contribute to various project activity within a number of the priorities listed under the 4 blocks. In particular the Big Lottery Fund's stated themes and outcomes (see 3.6.1 above) has a strong fit with Wirral's four blocks and can and should be referenced in any bid documentation.

4.5 General advice for prospective bidders

As National Lottery funding is 'Public' money the distributors are subject to strict procedural and financial controls and are audited to ensure the money is spent in an appropriate way.

There are some general principles to be observed when considering an application to any of the National Lottery funding programmes and these are listed below. However the two critical questions to be answered for any applicant is the evidence of need for any given project and how it will be sustained once the funding has run out!

The following 'top tips' have been given by BIG Officers:

- Check that you are eligible. Are you a not-for-profit organisation? Do you have a bank account in your own organisation name and does it require a minimum of two signatories!
- Check that your project is suitable for the programme, does it fit with the stated outcomes and general aims of the funder.
- Check what the deadline is for the application, don't leave it until the last minute!
- READ the application pack and guidance notes carefully.
- Seek advice.
- Enclose all requested supporting information and that your accounts have been signed.
- Ask a helper organisation to read your application.
- Keep a copy of your application for reference purposes.
- Check the right people have signed the application form and the named contact is available during the daytime to discuss the project.

Many applications received by Lottery Grants Officers are either incomplete or the requested supporting information is not included or not signed, therefore this requires checking and double checking before an application form is submitted.

5. Looking to the future

- 5.1 The Council, through its National Lottery Officers, will establish and maintain appropriate information systems to analyse and quantify the success of activity in relation to National Lottery bidding within the Council and where possible across the Borough. This will include:
- A database of enquiries to the Lottery Officers concerning possible Lottery bids by organisation within Wirral.
 - A cumulative breakdown of all Lottery grants awarded to the Borough via the DCMS website or any substitute site. This search will be greatly assisted if **ALL** Wirral MBC bids had the same generic title – Metropolitan Borough of Wirral followed by a project title or school name.
 - An information dissemination process to ensure that current and new funding opportunities are highlighted with the relevant Council departments and action/bid preparation is undertaken where appropriate.
 - Marketing the Wirral 4 Community and Wirral 4 Social Enterprise (j4b) web based search facility, on the Councils own website, along with the Merseyside Funders Information Portal (www.mfip.org.uk) site.
- 5.2 National Lottery Officers will monitor the progress of both the National Lottery Strategy and individual National Lottery bids through:
- The Governments National Lottery Grants database
 - Reporting to the Council's Internal Funders Group regarding Local Authority bids for National Lottery funding along with noting individual Departments reports to Select and Cabinet.
 - Liaise with colleagues regarding match-funding opportunities in relation to Wirral MBC's internal grants system – e.g. CIF funding.
 - Liaising with the Council's Performance Management Team to see that projects are entered into the PIMS process through both Service and Forward Plans.
 - Through the Council/j4b web based funding search facility analyse the monthly statistics and where possible contact individual project owners to offer assistance with National Lottery projects.