

External Funding Strategy 2023 - 2024

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Introduction and Purpose

One Manchester is more than just a landlord, we provide support and opportunities which enable our customers and communities to thrive. Our approach and ongoing commitment to External Funding is key to delivering our corporate priority of Prosperity and supporting our customers to prosper and live well as part of a thriving Manchester, whilst tackling inequalities and barriers our customers may experience. The purpose of this strategy is to outline the priorities and key principles of One Manchester's approach to external funding for the next two years.

One Manchester has a 10 year proven track record of identifying and securing external funding to deliver outcomes for customers and communities. We have experience in working across sectors and are committed to working in partnership to add value and meet gaps in provision to remove barriers and increase opportunities. In turn, this approach assists us to achieve our vision to create inclusive, connected and sustainable places where people live well.

Scope

This strategy focusses on external funding opportunities in the form of contracts, competitive tenders and grants. It covers opportunities that secure external funding directly to One Manchester to directly deliver for our customers and communities, as well as opportunities that we pursue in partnership and consortia.

Key Principles

The key principles of this External Funding Strategy are:-

1. Customer Voice – Ensuring the customer voice is considered and influences external funding approaches.
2. Priority Themes – Ensuring key themes are explored and prioritised.
3. Governance – Ensuring effective due diligence and compliance with delegatory framework, financial controls and authorisations.
4. Capacity to deliver – We have the expertise and experience to apply for, deliver, and comply with the external funding we are bidding for.
5. Stakeholder Engagement - Ensuring we build relationships and partnerships that deliver external funding opportunities and we understand the external operating environment.

Principle 1 – Customer Voice

A key underpinning principle of this strategy will be the voice of the customer. Customer's have influenced the priority themes outlined in Principle 2 following consultation in July 2023.

We will further ensure the voice of the customer is reflected in the implementation of this strategy through feedback and data gathered from Tenancy Experience visits, Tenant Satisfaction Measures sentiment analysis and survey results which will help shape and inform future funding priorities and focus.

In addition, we will ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is an underlying principle in all our external funding. We will utilise our data and that of partners and national statistics to inform our external funding applications and bids. Examples could include applying for targeted funding for under represented groups such as supporting older people into work, hyper local funding to address barriers and issues in certain customer cohorts or neighbourhoods. Another example could be using cooking classes to support people with literacy and numeracy and then passporting to other provision.

External funding provides another vehicle for One Manchester to facilitate access and opportunities to tackle inequalities experienced by our customer and communities.

Principle 2 – Priority Themes

The following themes were identified by customers of being the priorities that One Manchester should focus on when seeking external funding to deliver outcomes for customers and communities. They are ranked in the order of prioritisation by customers.

Customer Priority Themes
Health & Wellbeing
Cost of Living & Financial Inclusion
Employment & Skills

These themes will be prioritised for external funding opportunities. In addition, we will also explore opportunities for external funding in the following themes, as we know from our own data and that of partners, that these are important issues within our communities which we can utilise external funding for, alongside working with key stakeholders.

External Funding Themes
Digital Inclusion
Community connection
Green Space and Environment

Principle 3 – Governance

Securing external funding requires clear and effective governance and accountability. The external funding strategy will be underpinned by an External Funding Monitoring & Assurance Framework which has been devised to meet the objectives and delivery of this strategy and is a mandatory process for all external funding activity which involves contractual obligations, financial transactions or contribution of significant capacity by One Manchester.

External funding will not be authorised, applied for or secured without the oversight of the External Funding Lead and the relevant Director/Head of Service approval and Governance and Financial approval as outlined in the External Funding monitoring and assurance framework. The sign off for funding applications and approvals is in accordance with One Manchester's Delegatory Framework and Financial Regulations. Compliance against funding requirements will be the responsibility of the lead theme area and directorate. Regular review of the contract performance will be undertaken through the Monitoring framework.

All opportunities applied for will be done so with an understanding of the financial costs and/or returns to the business. Where match funding is required this will be identified and agreed by relevant budget holders and documented. Capacity and resource commitments should be proportionate to the value of opportunities considered. Financial compliance and due diligence will be undertaken and will be supported by the Finance business partner.

Principle 4 – Capacity and Skills to Deliver

We will ensure we have the skills, experience and expertise to be able to effectively apply for and bid for external funding, to minimise colleague time in pursuing unsuccessful external funding opportunities.

We will pursue opportunities where we have sufficient knowledge, skills and experience to deliver to a high standard. We will ensure there is sufficient organisational commitment, capacity and know-how from all relevant teams to enable effective delivery, outcomes and compliance.

Where feasible we will use existing resources to deliver external funding projects. In addition, we will aim for external funding opportunities to either; test or pilot an approach to provide proof of concept, or that are sustainable, and add to the activity already undertaken by One Manchester and enhances the offer, meets the needs of customers or is a targeted approach to redress under representation. We will not apply for short term posts unless there is a clear business rationale for doing so, and we are unable to create an internal secondment.

We will work in partnership and consortia with trusted other partners and stakeholders where their expertise, knowledge and background is greater than our own, where One Manchester is ineligible to apply or hold the funding due to turnover size, or where we wish to maximise the chances of securing funding by being in multiple bids.

We will also continue to lead consortia and partnerships if in line with our priority themes, area of expertise and in line with governance frameworks and delegations. We will continue to seek and apply for funding in our own right, on behalf of our customers and communities.

Principle 5 – Stakeholder Engagement

This strategy is dependent on building and maintaining relationships with key funders including, trusts and foundations, government, the combined authority and Manchester City Council. We also need to ensure we are utilising our partnerships and networks at a local level.

We are involved in a range of networks nationally, regionally and locally that support us with our external funding objectives and exploring upcoming opportunities. Examples include Communities that Work and ERSA, Employment Related Services Association. We are also members of Athena, a Greater Manchester Housing Provider bidding vehicle.

We will further develop and map key stakeholders in the relevant priority theme areas to ensure that we are maximising our reach and keeping up to date.

Key Objectives and Action Plan

The objectives of this strategy will meet these principles through creating a consistent structured approach for external funding. The main strategic objectives for external funding during 2023/24 are stated below:-

- Apply for UK Shared Prosperity Community grants funding
- Undertake Horizon scanning and mapping of external funding opportunities against priority themes
- Seek and bid for opportunities relating to Priority themes
- Ensure up to date registration with key frameworks and Dynamic Purchasing Systems to maximise opportunities
- Ensure all relevant compliance requirements and quality standards required for bids are up to date such as Matrix standard
- Work with partners and stakeholders and build relationships to create and maximise external funding opportunities
- Scope and lead green skills academy development project
- Review and update External Funding Pipeline tracker on a quarterly basis
- Monitor performance against agreed External Funding KPI's

The objectives stated within this strategy will be incorporated into an External Funding Action Plan which will be reviewed and updated on at least a quarterly basis and reported to the Leadership Team. All external funding activity is governed by the organisation's delegatory framework, financial regulations and the external funding monitoring and assurance framework.

