

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REPORT ON: MODERNISING GOVERNMENT FUND

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO 343-2000

1 PURPOSE

To advise the Committee of the Modernising Government Fund available to the local authorities from the Scottish Executive.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to submit a bid to the Modernising Government Fund for a project that will provide online booking facilities for arts and leisure activities through the Internet, Pinpoint Terminals and Digital Interactive TV.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Modernising Government Fund will contribute 75% of the capital costs of the project. Project team will need to determine how the remaining 25% will be raised and what revenue implications there are.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

This project aims to achieve integration across sectors and will require working in partnership with other organisations and have an objective of achieving increased participation in cultural or leisure events in the city.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The key part of the evaluation of the project will be its equal opportunities implications especially in encouraging greater participation in arts and leisure by lower income groups.

6 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Scottish Executive wrote to the Council on 3 April 2000 outlining details of the Modernising Government Fund. A summary is attached as Appendix 1.

6.2 Departments of the Council were invited to submit ideas to the Chief Executive on potential projects that the Council could submit as a bid.

6.3 Only one bid by the Council can be submitted. The idea which was most developed and provided the Council with an opportunity to develop skills in the emerging e-commerce arena was to provide an online booking transactions facility for all the arts and leisure events in Dundee. This also best matched the criteria in the guidance notes issued by the Scottish Executive.

7 WHAT'S ON - ONLINE BOOKING, TICKETING

- 7.1 The concept behind the project is to provide an interactive what's on guide to cultural and leisure events in the city which also offers the facility to the customer to book and pay for their ticket online. As well as through personal computer access to the Internet, and public access through Pinpoint terminals and Libraries the project would also aim to place this service on the new digital interactive television service in the Dundee area.
- 7.2 The Council's annual consumer survey highlights that the greater demand for additional information from the Council is "what's on type information". This is also backed up by existing use of the Council's website and pinpoint terminals and users surveys of this carried out by the Community Information Team.
- 7.3 The project would enhance this information for all Council and the Council's partners (e.g. Rep, Theatres, Dundee Heritage Trust etc. On "clicking" the event of interests to the user she/he would be able to book and pay for a ticket instantly. By providing the facility on digital interactive TV the intention is to assess the impact this has on Social Inclusion and the ability of the technology to assist in promoting participation in arts and leisure activities. For example, individuals can subscribe online and fill in their likes and dislikes which will allow the system to give them specific information on events most likely to interest them.
- 7.4 A key feature of the project will be the evaluation of whether it brings in new audiences especially from a social inclusion perspective. The project will also evaluate the impact of the enhanced capability of online systems for marking information and user feedback on the planning of event programmes.
- 7.5 A project team has been established comprising Arts & Heritage, Leisure & Parks, IT, Economic Development and Corporate Planning to put together an initial bid by the deadline of 15 May 2000 and if approved to work up complete details of implementation of the project by September 2000.
- 7.6` If the initial bid is approved by the Scottish Executive a more detailed report will be brought forward outlining full financial and technical implications of the project. The deadline for the full bid is 29 September 2000.

8 CONSULTATIONS

All Directors were consulted on this report.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Modernising Government Fund - Scottish Executive 3/4/2000

Chief Executive

Date

MODERNISING GOVERNMENT FUND - SUMMARY

Modernising Government Fund (MGF) is designed to help take forward projects involving the innovative provision of improved public services and contribute to the development of 21st Century Government for Scotland. The aim is to provide public services that meet the needs of citizens, be of high quality and efficient, be innovative and deliverable. Technology must be harnessed to improve public service delivery and encouragement given to joined-up working.

Examples of the type of projects which the MGF is available to support include:

- combining services into packages which better match the particular circumstances of individuals or groups of people, or businesses, and make access to government easier;
- joint projects involving an increase in the proportion of business done with public by electronic means (including the telephone, when supported by IT systems); and
- the co-location of agencies at local level enabling, for example, the sharing of accommodation costs, common IT etc.

The key issue will be the degree to which the project contributes to the objectives of the Modernising Government Strategy and the bidders' wider objectives. Projects implementing new forms of service delivery are particularly encouraged, as are projects involving the innovative use of ICT. The primary objective of the Fund is to assist with the modernisation of government but bidders may also wish to recognise that the Scottish Executive has particular priorities in relation to education, health, disadvantaged communities and rural areas. However, this is not intended to discourage or preclude bids outwith these priorities.

Bids are invited from a wide range of public sector bodies, including Scottish Executive Departments and Agencies, health authorities and local government authorities.

A total of £25m is available from MGF for projects to be drawn down in 2000-01 and 2000-02. The deadline for outline bids is 15 May 2000, and the deadline for those projects asked to put in a full bid is 29 September 2000. The aim is to announce successful bids in November.

Funding will be restricted to capital expenditure with awards representing up to 75% of the capital cost of each project, up to a maximum contribution of £2m. Bidders will be required to provide all associated current expenditure from within their own resources.

The detailed bidding guidance explains how funds can be sought from the MGF and sets out the requirements that bidders have to satisfy, the form in which bids should be made and the criteria which will be used to select winning projects.

The MGF is managed by the Scottish Executive Private Finance Unit, in consultation with the Modernising Government Unit and the Modernising Government Project Group.

Copies of the bidding guidance can be obtained from Mrs Fiona McLellan, Scottish Executive Private Finance Unit, 3-C23 Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ; Tel:- 0131 244 7500; E-mail:- Fiona.McLellan@Scotland.gov.uk The guidance is also available on the Scottish Executive Website.