

2009/10 Area Based Grant Proposal Form (LSPs)

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Title: Narrowing the Gap	
Local Strategic Partnership: Stratford on Avon District	
Chair of the LSP: Charles Goody	
Responsible Officer, Contact Details & Accountable Body: Julia Phillips Chief Officer Voluntary Action Stratford on Avon District Suite 3 Arden Court Arden Street Stratford upon Avon CV37 6NT	
Summary of Expenditure (including details of match funding where available) proposed:	
Project Manager/Admin staff	£21,000
Coun & Guidance	£500
Trainer	£19,000
Training Allowance	£1,500
Participant Expenses	£1,800
Volunteer Expenses	£1,000
Travel and subsistence, conference fees	£2,500
Telephone, office support, other expenses	£3,250
Advertising and promotion	£300
Educational/Development trips	£600
Equipment	£500
Exam fees	£250
Utilities	£800
Total:	£53,000
Description and scope of proposal:	
<p>This proposal has been jointly developed by Voluntary Action Stratford on Avon District and Stratford upon Avon College. The partners will deliver a strong coordination role to identify and "join up" existing provision of services.</p> <p>Stratford on Avon District accounts for 55% of the total rural population of Warwickshire. 41,100 people live in villages, hamlets or isolated dwellings (<i>Quality of Life in Warwickshire, 2008, Warwickshire Observatory</i>). Young people aged 16-18 who are not in employment, education or training are vulnerable, particularly so when they live in relatively isolated locations where access to support and advice is more difficult and low skills and levels of income are likely to cause particular disadvantage.</p> <p>Focusing on the needs of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the needs of rural communities to access services and affordable housing, this programme of activity will demonstrate effective partnership working to meet key objectives contained within the Stratford District Sustainable Community Strategy, as adopted by the LSP Core Group and Stratford on Avon District Council in April 2009.</p> <p>Delivery will focus on those Super Output Areas ranked within the top 10% most deprived areas nationally for access to housing and services (source: Department for Communities and Local</p>	

Government, 2007), as approved by the LSP Core Group at its meeting in February 2009.

Our programme will involve engaging young people with complex needs that prove a barrier to learning and with those who are vocationally focused. It will provide social and personal support through the medium of training targeted towards qualifications supported by practical experience. Drawing upon the resources of the partners, we will address a significant barrier to young people undertaking education, that of lack of affordable transport from rural communities.

The partnership will also develop innovative solutions to rural issues, particularly those concerning access to housing and local services, identified through extensive surveying of rural parishes. This will enable the sharing of local knowledge and economies of scale in delivering solutions, as well as developing the capacity of those with local responsibilities for their communities.

Voluntary Action Stratford on Avon District (VASA) will invite local community or voluntary groups to participate in the project and enhance the delivery of these services throughout the District. The invitation to groups will be issued on 1st July 2009, which will provide three months notice before service delivery begins in October 2009.

2. NARROWING THE GAPS

What are the key community outcomes for this proposal?

1. A reduction in the number of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) (NI 117). The programme will benefit 10 young people, with 60% achieving an accredited qualification and 50% progressing into a positive destination.
2. An increase in the number of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI 141). The programme will respond to personal and social barriers experienced by vulnerable young people, signposting them to specialist services (e.g. housing, transport) and enabling them to gain confidence, self-esteem, and motivation. It will give them improved communication skills to help them make their way forward into the workplace.
3. An improvement in access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling (NI 175). The programme will focus on the 14 super output areas (SOAs) within Stratford on Avon District that are ranked in the top 10% of most deprived districts nationally for access to key services. Work may also be targeted on the further 15 SOAs ranked within the top 10% - 20% and the 10 SOAs ranked within the top 20%-30% nationally. The programme will help rural communities to identify and implement solutions that maintain and improve access to retail, leisure and community activities.
4. An increase the number of people volunteering in the District, contributing to the achievement of the target for NI 6. The programme will target of an additional 20 volunteers per year, including the recruitment of up to six highly specialised experts to provide support and advice on critical issues facing rural communities.
5. An increase in the capacity within rural communities to effectively influence decisions affecting their locality (NI 4).
6. An increase in the delivery of affordable housing (NI 155). The programme will examine innovative but practical methods of providing new funding alongside allowing more community management, achieving this via expert volunteer help recruited to validate the possibilities.

How does this proposal focus upon addressing the causes of the Gaps in Warwickshire?

This proposal addresses the causes of the Gaps through:

- a) Targeted interventions designed to equip young people with the skills needed to gain and retain sustainable employment or continuing further education; and
- b) Directly addressing the need to maintain and improve access to services and affordable housing, the principle issues that characterises Stratford-on-Avon District in an unfavourable light when compared to the other Warwickshire districts. The work will build on issues identified through parish planning activities and enable root causes to be identified and addressed.

Outline the extent to which the proposal will target priority communities/communities of interest and priority neighbourhoods to narrow the gaps.

The project is targeted towards specific communities:

- o SOAs that rank in the top 10% most deprived areas nationally for access to housing and services(14 within the District); and then those that rank in the top 10%-30% (25 within the District).
- o Young people in hard-to-reach areas (community of interest or neighbourhood area), who have a number of barriers to overcome to participate in education.

Please list the partner organisations directly involved in the delivery of this proposal and how the programme is part of an overall co-ordination of partnership activity at a local level.

Parish and Town Councils	Stratford on Avon District Council
Warwickshire County Council	Warwickshire Rural Community Council
Rural Services Network	Chambers of Commerce
Extended Services	Job Centre
Warwickshire Police	Connexions
Mencap	Groundwork
Voluntary and Community Groups (Stratford on Avon District)	

The programme will co-ordinate partnership activity designed to address the six key community outcomes identified previously. All these outcomes have been identified as priorities both for the District and for Warwickshire via the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA processes.

3. LAA TARGETS AND CORPORATE PRIORITIES

What are the quantitative and qualitative links to the LAA priorities (include any measurable outputs and/or performance indicators)

This programme addresses the District's corporate priorities, in particular so that more young people can pursue vocational qualifications or further education (NI117) and access to services will be improved (NI 175). Rural communities will be supported to achieve the LAA targets for NI 4, NI 6, NI41 and NI155.

The programme will contribute to achievement of the 2026 Economic Vision for Stratford District, as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, namely that "*by 2026: children, young people and older workers will have access to the first-class education and training they need to qualify for better paying new jobs within our District*". It also contributes to the achievement of targets in the Warwickshire CYPP concerning 'Achieving Economic Well-being' by focusing on reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (Priority 19 – Ensuring a positive destination for all young people post 16 – outcome – young people post 16 are engaged in employment, education or training).

Recruiting more volunteers is also a key target in the Stratford District Sustainable Community Strategy. Using a range of methods specialised experts are attracted to volunteer to support parishes in the delivery of their parish plans. The project also assists with District-wide advertising for volunteer drivers and for Neighbourhood Watch. There are more than 300 volunteer drivers in the District, and many more are needed to meet the increasing demands of access to services.

The funding is only available on a one off basis. Therefore will any commitments beyond one year be created and if so, how will they be funded and managed in the future?

No commitments will be created beyond the timeframe of the funding.

What are the key risks associated with this project?

- Economic pressure on rural communities places unrealistic demands on local volunteers (risk: small)
- Failure to recruit a sufficient number of volunteers to deliver the services (risk: medium)
- Lack of additional human resources should the Project Manager be unavailable through (e.g.) absence for illness (risk: small)
- Project meets all its targets successfully, but fails to meet LAA targets owing to inadequate identification of demand and outputs (risk: small)
- Failure to find ongoing funding beyond the ABG period (risk: medium)
- Failure to recruit number of beneficiaries – NEETs (risk: small)
- Low programme retention – people dropping out (risk: medium)
- Low number of progressions into positive destinations (risk: medium)

What plans are in place at the end of the project to evaluate success and experiences?

A detailed project evaluation will be conducted periodically in accordance with an audit and evaluation plan. Financial reporting will be against budget on an accrual accounting basis. A full analysis will be undertaken at the completion of the project.

Upon completion please return to Bill Basra, LAA Manager via email billbasra@warwickshire.gov.uk (01926 412016)

CRITERIA/PROCESS FOR APPLICATION

Timelines

LSP's are encouraged to submit applications by the end of June to enable decision making and allocations by end of August. However in exceptional circumstances applications may be submitted by the end of August to enable decisions to be made in September.

Decision Making

There is a requirement for a Sub Group to be established consisting of the Chief Executive of Warwickshire County Council, the three County Council Group Leaders and three nominees from the Public Service Board. These nominees are:

Louise Bennett-Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
Kate Mulkern-Heart of England Foundation
Andy Parker-Warwickshire Police

The Sub-Group will approve applications and report for information to the Public Service Board together with recommendations for review of implementation and effectiveness.

Criteria for use of the Funding

In overall terms, applicant LSPs should ensure that their submissions:

- Take forward the Board's Narrowing the Gaps agenda
- Focus activities in priority communities in their area, taking fully into account the priority neighbourhoods agreed by the Board
- Take the form of a coordinated programme of partnership activity as opposed to a bidding process for unconnected local initiatives
- Address the causes of 'the gaps' as opposed to the symptoms

Within this overall context it is suggested that the LSPs are requested to submit a programme to the PSB Sub Group for approval specifying:

- The community outcomes that will be achieved.
- The localities / neighbourhoods in which delivery will take place
- How the programme impacts on the achievement of LAA indicators / targets

- The contribution of the Programme to the Narrowing the Gaps agenda
- Matched funding via the contribution to the Programme by partners of their mainstream funding / other resources
- The links with LAA Delivery Plans
- How the programme can be sustained into 2010 and beyond
- The accountable body/bodies for the use of the funds

Engagement of Voluntary and Community Sector

In order to respond to concerns raised by Voluntary and Community Sector representatives regarding the 2008/9 process it is suggested that the Board makes clear to the LSPs that they should ensure that local voluntary and community organisations have a full and equal opportunity to participate in the development of the programme. Attention is drawn to Compact Commissioning Guidance 2009 which makes clear that the LSPs should:

- Engage with a wide range of relevant third sector organisations. This includes organisations that act as advocates for service users and also as service providers. Commissioners should consider working with their local infrastructure organisations or relevant local networks for access to third sector organisations.
- Consider how to engage with third sector organisations as they vary in size. Smaller organisations often lack time, resources and dedicated staff for responding to consultations or engaging in development work.
- Allow an appropriate length of time for engagement and being clear on what is involved, will also improve the results of this stage. This will allow individual organisations, representative bodies, partnerships or networks time to prepare resource effectively and respond. It is vital to think about how dialogue is made accessible to, and inclusive of, wider third sector organisations, for example, faith groups.

Early involvement of representatives of the Sector in the development of programmes is encouraged as is the requirement that VCS representatives ensure that information received is shared widely within respective VCS organisations.