

Ref number:
053



Performance Reward Grant Scheme

APPLICATION FORM

To be returned to:

wiltshirelaa@wiltshire.gov.uk

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| Area Board | All Area Boards |
| Form submitted by (contact for all queries) | Stephanie Little, Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships (WFCAP), Pentagon House, 52 Castle Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA13 4AN E; steph.little@wfcap.org T: 07887 641469 |
| Name of initiative | Online Community Led Planning Resource and Community Led Planning support system for Community Area Partnerships |
| Brief Description of Initiative | <p>To support the 20 Community Area Partnerships with the community led planning process to enable a consistent approach to the production of robust, well evidenced community plans across Wiltshire. The community plans can then be used to inform and challenge local service and project delivery.</p> <p>There is currently no free resource to support Wiltshire Community Area Partnerships through the community planning process. This project aims to redress this by developing a free to access online resource and a support system for producing effective community led plans.</p> <p>The web-based resource will offer real and practical support by sharing best practice and giving guidance on areas such as how to consult widely and produce a sustainable community plan, equality and diversity, how to use volunteers effectively, how to evidence community project bids and securing funding. There will be a forum for exchanging best practice and a toolkit with downloadable templates, forms and timetables. Each Community Area Partnership will be able to store and share completed documents online.</p> <p>In conjunction with the launch of the online resource there will be a number of support sessions based on producing a plan, getting a strong evidence base, strong leadership and making</p> |

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| | <p>the links to wider strategic partners and plans. The events will be followed up by 1 to 1 mentoring sessions with individual CAPs focussed on using the online resource to produce/refresh the community plan.</p> <p>The bid was initiated and is supported by the Resilient Communities Partnership and by Wiltshire Council officers and cabinet at Wiltshire Council (Area Boards in Wiltshire: Leader's Review Cabinet Resolutions – 23 March 2010 refers).</p> | |
| <p>Please put a cross against the ambition(s) that this initiative will support</p> | <p>Building resilient communities</p> | <p>✓</p> |
| | <p>Improving affordable housing</p> | |
| | <p>Lives not services</p> | <p>✓</p> |
| | <p>Supporting economic growth</p> | |
| | <p>Safer communities</p> | |
| | <p>Protecting the environment</p> | |
| | <p>Action for Wiltshire – combating the recession</p> | |
| | <p>Please note: Robust, well evidenced community plans have the potential to impact on all the above ambitions by identifying priorities within communities and developing an action plan to deliver solutions.</p> | |
| <p>Amount of funding sought</p> | <p>£29,930</p> | |
| <p>What will this money be spent on? (please show split between capital and revenue. For capital expenditure guidance – see Appendix 1 in the Bid Pack)</p> | <p>Development of template and design for web-based online community planning resource</p> <p>2 x community led planning events plus 40 x 1 day mentoring sessions for individual CAPs. Please note: For this element of the bid we have secured an in principle agreement for match funding from Action for Market Towns.</p> <p>Management time to deliver project and write/co-ordinate content of online resource and facilitate support sessions</p> <p>Laptop computer with remote access and software to be used for development of support sessions and online resource</p> <p>Promotional materials to advertise online resource and support sessions</p> <p>Review, evaluation and update of online resource at end of year one.</p> | |

Please describe how your initiative will support the ambition(s) indicated above, and summarise the action that will be taken

Where Community Area Partnerships undertake good quality community planning, using a structured process, the results are robust community plans, which help in “building resilient communities”. The community plan encompasses a vision for the community and an action plan to achieve it. Robust community planning uses a mix of evidence and consultation within the local community.

Done well, the community led planning process has been shown to generate high levels of participation and interest in the future of the community*. * Policy into Practice, Community Led Planning an Introduction, Action for Market Towns, Autumn 2009.

Community plans are not about single issues but a mechanism for pulling the community, statutory bodies and government together to identify and address local priorities. This holistic approach enables communities to become stronger and more resilient.

This project aims to provide resources to all Wiltshire Community Area Partnerships to guide and support them in producing a quality, well evidenced community plan by developing a practical online resource, accessed through the WFCAP website.

For the online resource to be effective CAPs need additional support sessions and guidance in community led planning. Working with Action for Market Towns WFCAP has in principle secured match funding of 50% of the support cost. This will enable a bespoke support programme for Wiltshire CAPs that will remain a resource for use in the future. The support sessions will be tailored to the needs of Wiltshire CAPs and will work in conjunction with the web-based resource.

To develop the on-line resource and support programme a small working group of WFCAP, CAP representatives and Wiltshire Council officers will be established. Other bodies, such as the web design company and Action for Market Towns will be brought in as required.

Effective community planning can give Wiltshire Council, particularly the Area Boards, and other statutory bodies and stakeholders valuable information at grass-roots level that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. This information can then be used to inform the decision-making process and supports the “lives not services” ambition.

Authorities engaging effectively with their communities can more easily understand the needs and aspirations; this can lead to higher satisfaction and trust ratings which can have a positive

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| | <p>impact on Council performance measures. Working with Community Area Partnerships who have undertaken community led planning can also help fulfil the Council's "Duty to Involve" that came into force in April 2009.</p> <p>Ultimately, through good community led planning, the aim is for better value and greater efficiencies from public spending as communities respond by targeting priorities and contributing their own efforts to delivering local solutions and services.</p> |
| <p>What makes this initiative a local priority (e.g. evidence from research and local support)</p> | <p>Community Area Partnerships and the community planning process are well supported by Wiltshire Council as a way of engaging local communities in the decision making process and encouraging community action.</p> <p>However, there is currently no consistency of approach in terms of practice, to help Community Area Partnerships with the community planning process and this has led to criticisms over the robustness of some of the community plans produced. Even where good plans have been produced, volunteers move on and there is little retention of community planning skills within the Community Area Partnership when it comes to refreshing the plan.</p> <p>Although the Community Area Partnerships are at differing stages of maturity they recognise the need for guidance and support with the community planning process to enable them to produce plans that will challenge and help shape service delivery and be the catalyst for local community action.</p> <p>Some Community Area Partnerships are about to embark on the production of their first plan and need help with the basics to ensure what they produce is credible. More mature Partnerships are in the process of refreshing their community plans but find themselves with new volunteers and a lack of training, guidance or information to enable a consistent approach to continuing the community planning process in their area. The online resource will enable Community Area Partnerships to be more sustainable by shortening the learning curve of new volunteers so they more quickly become effective in the community led planning process.</p> <p>For the community planning process to work more effectively in Wiltshire it is a priority for Community Area Partnerships to be given the tools needed to produce credible plans. No single body within Wiltshire currently has the resources to work with individual Community Area Partnerships to the extent needed</p> |

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| | <p>and through the use of support sessions and an online resource this project aims to provide the tools they need to enable a consistent approach to quality community planning.</p> <p>Using online technology will enable the resource to be updated easily and regularly and is a more cost effective approach than a paper based resource. Relatively low on-costs make this a sustainable resource for the future. It will also have the advantage of allowing public sector organisations, such as the Police, Council and NHS, to access information on a thematic basis which will help inform service planning and resource allocation.</p> <p>As part of the South West Market and Coastal Towns Network, which brings together the 6 counties in the South West, WFCAP is very aware that this form of resource is considered appropriate for community led planning. This project could become an exemplar template for others to use locally and nationally. Wiltshire Council leads the South West in the support it gives to Community Area Partnerships and community led planning and this project is a way of strengthening and adding value to the investment already made. This is reflected in the Area Boards in Wiltshire: Leader’s Review Cabinet Resolutions – 23 March 2010, which backs the submission of this bid.</p> <p>This bid also supports the ambitions within the Resilient Communities Partnership Strategic plan 2010 – 2013 to build strong and resilient communities by promoting inclusivity and involving people in local decision-making and delivery of solutions.</p> <p>The 2006 Communities and Local Government (CLG) white paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, aims to give communities more influence and power in their lives by “creating strong, prosperous communities and delivering better public services through a rebalancing of the relationship between central and local government and local people”. Robust community plans can be a conduit for achieving this.</p> |
| <p>How will you know you have been successful?</p> | <p>The resource will be live, up to date and regularly used by Community Area Partnerships across the whole county. Use of this important resource by Community Area Partnerships, public sector partner, local groups and the public and associated groups outside of Wiltshire will provide evidence of the projects’ success.</p> <p>Community planning support sessions will have been completed with all Community Area Partnerships who wish to participate.</p> <p>Feedback gathered from Community Area Partnerships who</p> |

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| | <p>have received one-to-one mentoring will show how valuable they have found it.</p> <p>Community plans that are robust, well evidenced and of a consistent quality will be produced as a consequence of the support sessions and use of the online resource.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you measure the impact? (may have more than one measure) | <p>Web statistics on use. Yr 1 will act as a benchmark with target to increase usage beyond the initial interest and in subsequent years.</p> <p>WFCAP and Wiltshire Council will develop benchmarking system to evaluate and monitor quality of community plans and report to Resilient Communities Partnership and other interested partners at regular intervals.</p> <p>Minutes of WFCAP Forum meetings will record the active role taken by Community Area Partnerships in development of the online resource and support sessions.</p> <p>Evaluation of the support sessions and feedback will show a positive response and delegates will be contacted at regular intervals for update on progress and feedback.</p> <p>WFCAP will seek signed commitments from the major public, private and voluntary sector organisations to have regard to the community plans when reviewing services and allocating resources.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your improvement target (s), and when do you expect to achieve this/these? | <p>By the end of Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the online resource will be live • the support sessions will have been completed • the majority of Community Area Partnerships will have commenced the individual mentoring linked to the support sessions • Feedback received from the Community Area Partnership Forum meetings will show the online resource is being actively used • The benchmarking system for evaluating community plans will be in place and being used. • There will be an overall improvement in the quality of community plans and plan refreshes. • The Public Services Board organisations will have signed up to support and utilise the system |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you ensure that the improvement continues after the end of the initiative? | <p>The online resource will be part of the WFCAP website and will continue to be refreshed and developed as part of the 3 year WFCAP Partnership Agreement with Wiltshire Council.</p> <p>WFCAP will have an ongoing responsibility for involving CAPs</p> |

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| | <p>and stakeholders in the refreshing and updating of the online resource to ensure it remains relevant and easy to use, and to monitor the impact the resource is having on the community planning process.</p> <p>By improving the quality of plans they will become more credible with stakeholders and this will encourage communities to engage in future refreshes of the plan and in project groups.</p> <p>Once established, the online forum will also enable statutory and other bodies to engage with the partnerships on issues affecting them and become a two-way information conduit.</p> |
| <p>Who will benefit from this initiative?</p> | <p>Initially the 20 CAPs in Wiltshire will benefit but it is hoped that this resource will be used by the wider community, such as parish and town councils interested in putting together their own local plans. The aim would be to make this an exemplar resource that is used nationally as well as locally.</p> <p>Statutory and other bodies, particularly Area Boards, will have more confidence that the community plans are robust and well evidenced, making it easier for them to use the plan priorities as a reference point for directing their work, evaluating funding requests, planning or service provision.</p> <p>Ultimately everyone in the community will benefit if community plans are improved. A quality community plan will have the credibility to challenge service provision and project delivery against the needs of the community, allowing scarce resources to be targeted more effectively.</p> <p>Hard to reach groups would benefit from a more focussed community planning process that encourages wider engagement and a more inclusive consultation process to get their voice heard.</p> <p>Other sectors of the community, for example businesses and those concerned with the environment, could use the themes within the community plan to develop their own strategic plans.</p> <p>A robust community planning process and quality community plans and will also help to involve a wider cross section of the community in civic life by providing more opportunities for consultation, participation and volunteering.</p> |
| <p>Confirm no unfunded commitments from this initiative</p> | <p>There are no unfunded commitments from this initiative.</p> <p>There will be a small on-going financial commitment for hosting the site annually and updating it. This will be funded by WFCAP as part of the 3 year WFCAP Partnership Agreement with Wiltshire Council, which includes resource for maintaining the website.</p> |

What are the key risks to success and how will these be managed?

That the online resource is difficult to navigate, irrelevant and Community Area Partnerships will not use it. To avoid this, the working group will include individuals with IT technical and community planning knowledge and actively seek feedback from Community Area Partnerships to ensure the site is relevant and easy to use.

The online resource becomes unwieldy and unfocussed. To ensure the project remains focussed a project plan and website floor plan will be written at the outset against which progress would be monitored and evaluated by the working group and Community Area Partnerships. The online resource will cover:

- General principles of community led planning
- Methods and examples of community led planning
- Case studies – local and national
- Toolkit – practical help with form templates, checklists, timetables, plan content, suggestions on consultation with timetables, costs and resources needed.
- Making sense of Government policies e.g. LAA, LAW, Spatial Plans, Local Development Frameworks
- Working with Area Boards
- Equality and diversity and engaging the wider community and hard to reach groups.
- Useful links e.g. the Wiltshire and Swindon Intelligence Network, SWMCTN, reports and papers
- Communication through blog/forum
- Events listings

The support sessions will run alongside the launch of the online resource and will be focussed around the following key elements:

- The Vision and Action Plan – with the community taking ownership of the plan with clear, SMART objectives.
- A strong evidence base – grounding the plan in evidence of real issues is more likely to influence partners.
- Strong leadership – strong, independent leadership will add credibility and ensure there is no dominance by a single group or issue and that the wider sections of community are engaged in the process.
- Making the links to the wider strategic partners and plans – an essential part of the process is the linking of the community plan to the strategies of other stakeholders e.g. local authority plans. Creating sustainable and effective working relationships is essential to build an effective network between the community and others. This event will be targeted at CAPs and appropriate local authority/stakeholder officers.

Throughout the project the working group will report to and gain

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| | feedback from the WFCAP Forum (which all CAPs in Wiltshire attend) and the Resilient Communities Partnership. |
| Who will manage the initiative | Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships Contact: Stephanie Little, Strategic Manager, WFCAP, c/o WACC, Pentagon House, 52 Castle Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8AU. T: 01225 355553 E: steph.little@wfcap.org |

Signed: Steve Milton, Head of Community Governance will take bid to Area Board Chairs

Dated: 21 May 2010
Chairman of Area Board