

**CABINET MEMBER FOR POLICE & POLICY CO-ORDINATION
18 October 2011**

**BIG SOCIETY ACTIVE COMMUNITIES GRANT – ALLOCATION OF
WAVE 1 FUNDING**

Report by Head of Strategy and Communications

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Portfolio Holder for Police and Policy Co-ordination to make decisions on which proposals to fund in the first 'wave' of the Big Society Active Communities Grants.
2. In July 2011 Oxfordshire County Council launched the Big Society Active Communities Grants. These relate to county council priorities for Healthy and Thriving Communities as outlined in its corporate plan, including Big Society and Closer to Communities.
3. One-off grants are available in 2011/12 to Oxfordshire not-for profit community or neighbourhood groups to support them in:
 - Engaging all sections of their community to identify local needs and develop inclusive action plans to address those needs
 - Bringing together towns which act as local service centres and their hinterland to agree shared priorities and action plans
 - Undertaking wider community consultation and involvement to help prepare for potential local Big Society projects, such as a multi-purpose community facility.
4. Groups are eligible for a grant if their application demonstrates that their proposal will fulfil the following key criteria:
 - Bring together local resources and build greater capacity within the community itself – e.g. bringing in local activists, voluntary groups and businesses
 - Work in partnership with relevant service providers including the county council – e.g. inviting elected members to be involved in the work and liaising with professionals
 - Help strengthen relationships within and between communities – e.g. encouraging different sections of a community to work together, or neighbouring communities to work out shared priorities.

5. For-profit organisations, individuals or anyone outside Oxfordshire are not eligible to apply. Grants are not available for delivering projects rather than supporting a process. Preference will be given to applications that:

- Target areas identified as priorities in the council's [Closer to Communities](#) strategy (Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Didcot, Oxford especially regeneration areas)
- Will generate local engagement, consultation and action in relation to a wide range of services or issues, rather than focus on a single issue or small area within a larger community.

Wave 1 Applications to the Big Society Active Communities Grants

6. We have received three applications for this round and expect increased uptake for the remaining two rounds with deadlines of 30 November 2011 and 29 February 2012:

Organisation Name	Proposal Name	Amount bid for
Ock Valley Flood Group	Enhancing our Local Community	£5,000.00
South Abingdon Residents' Plan (SARP)	SARP Planning for Real® Community Consultation (PfR®)	£4,264.00
Carterton Fast Forward Partnership - CFF (Carterton Town Council acting as the accountable body)	Carterton and its Hinterland	£4,131.00

7. An Assessment Form has been completed for each application. Forms include project details, assessment against the main grant criteria, views from officers and organisations involved in advising on the application (where applicable), and comments from the Locality Review Groups of local county councillors. Assessment forms for all three applications are set out in Annex 1.

8. The assessment forms have been used to categorise bids as follows:

- Proposals that meet the grant criteria (see also sections 3, 4 above)
- Proposals that do not meet the grant criteria

Financial, Legal and Staff Implications

9. The total value of applications received is £13,395 against the fund of £40,000 for this year. Proposals that meet the grant criteria total £8,395; bids that do not meet the grant criteria total £5,000.

10. A grant funding agreement will be in place for all successful projects which will set out all financial and legal requirements and monitoring arrangements.

11. There are no staff implications in these proposals.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

12. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the Big Society Active Communities Grants. Potential impacts on equality groups have been considered (a copy of the assessment is available [on the council's website](#)).

Risk Implications

13. There is a risk to the county council that proposals will not be able to be delivered in the way envisaged in the application. This would have an impact on the quality of the work in the communities concerned and may lead to intended outcomes only being partially achieved or not at all. In a worst case scenario, the work could worsen relations within or across communities.

14. To mitigate this, the application form for the grants requires a sound proposal based on advice from expert organisations and groups delivering the proposal to remain in contact with the council and expert organisations as appropriate. It is proposed that funding will only be paid to successful applicants with a robust proposal in place and for larger grants payments will be staged, with agreed milestones having been met.

RECOMMENDATION

15. The Cabinet Member for Police & Policy Coordination is RECOMMENDED to

(a) approve those applications which meet the grant criteria:

- **South Abingdon Residents' Plan (SARP) – full amount £4,264**
- **Carterton Fast Forward Partnership – full amount £4,131**

(b) ensure a grant funding agreement that meets legal requirements is in place for all successful proposals

GUY SWINDLE

Head of Strategy and Communications

Background papers: Grant application documents

Contact Officer: Kathrin Luddecke Tel: (01865) 323965

October 2011

Annex 1 - Table of Contents

1. Bids that meet the assessment criteria*

South Abingdon Residents' Plan (SARP)	p.2
<i>Carterton Fast Forward Partnership</i>	<i>p.5</i>

2. Bids that do not meet the assessment criteria*

Ock Valley Flood Group	p.8
-------------------------------	------------

* Based on the 'Eligibility Checklist' included as part of the 'Application Form' on the website.

1. Bids that meet the assessment criteria

South Abingdon Residents' Plan (SARP)

Section 1 – Proposal Overview

Name of Proposal	SARP Planning for Real® Community Consultation (PfR®)
Name of Group	South Abingdon Residents' Plan (SARP)
Grant Applied For	£ 4,264
Proposal Locality	Abingdon
Outline of Proposal and Intended Outcomes	<p>We will use PfR to gain views from a wide cross section and a large number of residents of south Abingdon (Ock Meadow & Caldecott parishes). The information we are seeking is what residents like about south Abingdon, what they don't like, what they would like to see improved & what big ideas they have for the area. We have already held an open day when in excess of 250 suggestions were received; sub groups around major themes have been formed.</p> <p>Our expectation through deploying PfR is to engage with a much larger & more representative profile of residents than we have hitherto managed. The PfR model will be produced in the 2 local primary schools & possibly with support from Larkmead which takes the largest proportion of the area's secondary population. This together with local advertising, media reporting & a leaflet drop should ensure we achieve widespread knowledge of our first & subsequent events to engage with the public & obtain their views.</p> <p>These views, together with those already received & to be received from sub-groups will be collated & used to inform the questionnaire we will be delivering to & resources permitting, collecting from every household in the area. In brief, PfR is the principal tool in our efforts to gain sufficient information from south Abingdon's residents to ensure our action plan is truly representative of the wishes, needs & desires of our community.</p> <p>Our overall process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will make us more aware of the needs of different elements of our community, • will identify local needs & workable solutions to them, • will encourage more people in south Abingdon to work together and • the community's scope and range of involvement in improving the community will be significantly greater than at present.
Supporting Councillor(s)	Cllr Mike & Marilyn Badcock support tbc in writing

Section 2 – Grant Criteria Assessment

Proposal eligibility:

This is **eligible** for a grant as:

- The proposal is to undertake community consultation as the basis for developing a local action plan for Ock Meadow & Caldecott wards in Abingdon.
- There is no duplication with work of other agencies such as Abingdon Town Council or Choose Abingdon.

Proposal readiness:

Advice has been sought from Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC), the district and county councils.

Proposal preference:

To **receive preference** as:

- Abingdon is a county council priority area (with South Abingdon more deprived than other parts of the area)
- The proposal covers community engagement/consultation on a wide range of issues and recruitment and training/capacity building for volunteers.

Group eligibility:

SARP is **eligible** as:

- It is unincorporated community group, with 30 local members and non voting members include Abingdon Town Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, a range of other local stakeholders; Oxfordshire County Council has been represented by Councillors Mike and Marilyn Badcock.
- The group have a constitution, bank account and are looking to purchase relevant insurance.

Group readiness:

The group was set up earlier this year. Work on PfR is scheduled to start in November; no estimated dates for completion of other milestones are given. The group has agreed to all conditions set for receiving the grant.

Section 3 – Expert Officer and Organisations View

Outcomes sought and match to grant aims:

Proposal matches grant aims to develop local action plan through engagement and consultation, involving local members, building relations within and between communities and agencies. Local residents are to benefit from capacity-building, including up to 18 existing volunteers and agencies representatives.

Liz Morgan (Extended Schools Co-ordinator, Abingdon Partnership): South Abingdon has been targeted by agencies including the council for a number of years as a known area of greater need. This group has developed from the work of the Saxton Road/South Abingdon group of professionals and voluntary agencies. A group of families in and around the area have come forward to work together as SARP through the work of Vale Local Strategic Partnership project worker and these professionals. SARP are committed to working to improve their

CMDPPC4

own environment in partnership with agencies and councillors.

Reach of proposal, local links and understanding of area:

Two targeted wards have 10,000 residents. Choice of PfR explained as desire to reach more widely into the community. Lifestyle differences and communications preferences in the two wards researched through Oxfordshire Data Observatory with help of ORCC.

Representatives of local agencies proposed to be fully involved in the work, such as the schools, children's centre and South Abingdon officer group, with residents.

Delivery plan, monitoring and milestones:

Milestones are set in two main stages, starting with a November capacity building session and followed by four or more PfR events with prioritisation and action planning. Schools are asked to help with developing the 3D models and local advertising, media reporting and a leaflet drop planned. The second stage, without estimate dates, includes undertaking a questionnaire before a final action plan is produced.

Monitoring to be undertaken through monthly steering group, involving local county councillors. Recommended to work with SARP to check how the process will reach most deprived residents within the wards, e.g. families in Abingdon Caldecott living in low rise estates and high density social housing with significant levels of benefit need.

Costs and resources:

Good value for money as estimate about 20-30 local volunteers and members of agencies could benefit from the initial capacity building proposed in November.

Local donations have been secured for other elements of SARP's work.

The majority of funding is sought to buy in specialist support from PfR, and to help with publicity for events and insurance. **Recommended** to award grant, to be made in two staged payments based on SARP meeting proposed milestones and agreed outcomes.

Section 4 – Locality Review Group Assessment

Members expressed some concerns about the SARP work. However, they agreed it was a Big Society project and funding would have to be carefully managed with staged payments.

Carterton Fast Forward Partnership

Section 1 – Proposal Overview

Name of Proposal	Carterton and its Hinterland
Name of Group	Carterton Fast Forward Partnership - CFF (Carterton Town Council acting as the accountable body)
Grant Applied For	£ 4,131
Proposal Locality	Carterton area
Outline of Proposal and Intended Outcomes	<p>With a number of important changes taking place in and around Carterton, and with new opportunities for local action made available in the Localism Bill, we believe we should review and update the Carterton Fast Forward Delivery Plan (last updated in 2009). As part of this process we wish to engage with and improve collaboration with our four closest hinterland communities and support the town’s aim to make it the first destination of choice for local shopping. Ultimately Carterton would like to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan for the area; this project would help build the foundations for that work.</p> <p>There are two main strands to this project: although they are linked, we are only seeking funding for the element relating to the work with neighbouring parishes (Part 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: The CFF Project Manager will undertake a review of the current CFF Delivery Plan, and following community consultation and involvement, publish an updated Plan, endorsed by the local communities. • Part 2: Working with an independent facilitator (Rowena Harris) and ORCC Field Worker, the CFF Project Manager will develop in detail a plan to engage with the four neighbouring parishes [Brize Norton, Black Bourton, Alvescot, Shilton]. <p>The two main outcomes the project aims to achieve are: An up to date Delivery Plan, endorsed by the local communities, which takes account of the aspirations of the communities in both Carterton and the close hinterland - the process of reviewing the CFF Delivery Plan will increase community engagement and provide a renewed impetus for new projects and to attract additional volunteers. Improved relationships with the close hinterland communities, and the foundations laid for the future development of a Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
Supporting Councillor(s)	Cllrs J Couchman and Don Seale

Section 2 – Grant Criteria Assessment

Proposal eligibility:

CMDPPC4

The proposal is **eligible** for a grant as:

- It aims to bring together town and immediate hinterland to review and update the Carterton Fast Forward Delivery Plan.
- It plans to use a range of engagement techniques and bring in expert advice to support and train up local people.

Proposal readiness:

Two of the three county councillors have confirmed support; early discussions have taken place both with county council officers and Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) who will be working with the project. The proposal includes advice on how best to approach the four parishes if a grant is awarded.

Proposal preference:

To **receive preference** as:

- Carterton with RAF Brize Norton is a county council priority area
- The proposal covers community engagement/consultation on a wide range of issues and recruitment and training/capacity building for volunteers.

Group eligibility:

CFF Partnership is **eligible** as:

- It is constituted
- It has a range of members including Carterton Town Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Carterton Chamber of Trade and many community representatives.

Group readiness:

If funding is confirmed for October 2011, the project will start in November 2011 and run until March 2012. CFF has previous experience of community-led planning, having been awarded Beacon Market Town Status. Carterton Town Council supports the bid and will continue to act as accountable body. The group has agreed to all conditions set for receiving the grant.

Section 3 – Expert Officer and Organisations View

Outcomes sought and match to grant aims:

Match to grant aims to encourage more active communities and build capacity:

- Reviewing the CFF Delivery Plan will increase community engagement and provide a renewed impetus for new projects and to attract additional volunteers.
- Work with the neighbouring parishes will lead to a greater understanding of the needs of those in the area, building the foundations for developing an innovative neighbourhood plan.

There is less emphasis on mobilising resources, including local partners, except using local shops and businesses to help reach residents.

Reach of proposal, local links and understanding of area:

The proposal covers a population of approximately 14,817 (2001 Census). The group propose to research key statistics before reaching out to local residents. Recommend to signpost to Local Information System.

Linda Currie (Team Leader, Strategic Planning Consultations): Significant housing growth is proposed for Carterton under the draft West Oxfordshire Core

Strategy (c. 1000 dwellings). Carterton itself is keen to grow to attract new investment in the town and to help maintain existing services and facilities. Where it should go is an issue. Sites to the west, north and east are being considered. A review of Carterton Fast Forward could bring together the villages and the town and could help the various communities shape Carterton/ identify common aspirations.

Delivery plan, monitoring and milestones:

The proposal has specific deliverables and outline key milestones, including a survey of parish residents, final review meeting and report. Generating support for the proposal from within parishes, including parish councils, is a critical part of the proposal for which CFF is proposing to bring in specialist advice to add to their expertise and help reach parish residents. A small Steering Group from the town and villages will oversee the work with working groups for specific projects. No mention is made of other local agencies including members of CFF.

Linda Currie (Team Leader, Strategic Planning Consultations): Timing may be an issue. WODC have yet to decide which housing option to pursue, submit their core strategy and then have it examined by an independent Inspector. It may be some time before this process is complete and there is some certainty how the town will grow. However, in principle I would support the proposal.

Aimee Evans (Oxfordshire Rural Community Council): The time frame seems very short (project to be completed March 2012) and for meaningful consultation I would suggest that more time is given to this. I have spoken to Catherine Chater to express this concern and she has agreed that perhaps more time should be given to consultation (particularly given that Christmas intervenes as well!) She would be happy to extend this time frame, if funder's approval is given. I would recommend this is approved to enable opportunity for involvement from the hinterland.

Costs and resources:

The budget is realistic, balanced and includes actual estimates. The majority of the grant requested is for the independent community facilitator. Carterton Town Council is offering substantial in-kind and potentially some financial support (approx. 22% of total cost); no other contributions have been sourced to date.

Recommended to award grant, to be made in two staged payments based on CFF meeting proposed milestones and agreed outcomes.

Section 4 – Locality Review Group Assessment

The locality group supports Carterton Fast Forward's proposal and noted the challenges in engaging with the local villages. Councillors were keen that CFF work with all the surrounding villages. They were also keen to see the use of facilities in Carterton promoted.

2. Bids that do not meet the assessment criteria

Ock Valley Flood Group

Section 1 – Proposal Overview

Name of Proposal	Enhancing our Local Community
Name of Group	Ock Valley Flood Group
Grant Applied For	£ 5,000
Proposal Locality	Abingdon area
Outline of Proposal and Intended Outcomes	We would like to provide a picnic area in the field west of Drayton Road Bridge, on Ladygrove, for all to use and to encourage local people to appreciate this area of the Ock Valley walk, which at present, has very little to offer the community. We would also like to provide some benches in the same area so that the elderly people who live on Ladygrove and Tithe Farm have somewhere to rest when walking the Ock Valley walk. At the moment there is no provision for this and as a group we want to encourage all ages to use the walk, which runs from St Helens Wharf to Tesco superstore.
Supporting Councillor(s)	Michael and Marilyn Badcock

Section 2 – Grant Criteria Assessment

<p><u>Proposal eligibility:</u> The proposal is not eligible as it is for project delivery (this fund is for process only) with a grant sought to purchase picnic units, benches, bins to be installed by volunteer members of the group.</p>
<p><u>Proposal readiness:</u> It is supported by the local county councillors (see below). No reference is made to early discussion or any advice being sought on the proposal, as recommended.</p>
<p><u>Proposal preference:</u> Although this is looking for an improvement in Abingdon, a priority area, it should not receive preference as addressing a single issue in a small area.</p>
<p><u>Group eligibility:</u> Group would be eligible as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a local residents’ group with up to 30 volunteers from wider South Abingdon area • It has its own bank account and public liability insurance up to the value of £5 million.

CMDPPC4

Group readiness:

Not applicable as proposal not eligible.

Section 3 – Expert Officer and Organisations View

Outcomes sought and match to grant aims:

Proposal is to use existing volunteers not mobilize new ones, to deliver a project not a process as specified for this grant.

Recommended to signpost to advice and funding sources that can fund project delivery, including Big Society Fund.

Reach of proposal, local links and understanding of area:

Group state there are approximately 500 residences on Tithe farm and Ladygrove and hope facilities also to be used by visitors to Abingdon who like to walk along the river. No further evidence of need or beneficiaries included.

Delivery plan, monitoring and milestones:

No milestones or detailed delivery plan given as not proposing a process.

No reference to specialist advice or plans to broaden out engagement.

Costs and resources:

Grant is sought for purchase of picnic units and benches from a local company.

In-kind contributions through volunteer work not specified and no support sought from other organisations. **Recommended** not to award grant from this fund.

Section 4 – Locality Review Group Assessment

Members agreed the Ock Valley Flood Group are doing great work in the spirit of Big Society. They need encouragement to articulate their project better and find appropriate funding sources.