Performance Reward Grant Scheme
APPLICATION FORM

To be returned to:

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Area Board	All Area Boards
Form submitted by (contact for all queries)	Cllr Chris Williams Portfolio Holder for communities Chairman Tidworth Area Board (Contact: Mary Cullen, Area Boards Team)
Name of initiative	**Wiltshire Voices**
Brief Description of Initiative	**This project and LPSA bid to resource it was a specific recommendation from Wiltshire Council's Cabinet on 23rd March 2010 which considered the recommendations arising from the Review of Area Boards. It has the full support of Cllr Chris Williams, Portfolio holder for Communities.** **Background** Community engagement and empowerment have been high on the political agenda over recent years and are likely to continue to be significant requirements for local authorities. Key drivers for this include the need to - address the democratic deficit- rebuilding public confidence, making local government more transparent and accountable - increase active citizenship- to deliver more cohesive communities and increase 'social capital', - improve service quality and efficiency - deliver a fairer and more equal society. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires local authorities and other organisations to provide meaningful opportunities for involvement of a representative mix of local people using a variety of engagement activities.

Statutory guidance makes it clear that appropriate engagement and empowerment should be embedded as standard practice throughout authorities, central to service delivery, policy and decision-making.

Whilst Wiltshire Council is an exemplar authority, having developed our innovative Area Boards approach and having received Green Flag status for our community engagement activities, there is much more that we can do with our partners to ensure that meaningful opportunities for involvement continue to be provided and developed.

The recent review of Area Boards concluded that the Council and partners needs to do more to ensure that a representative cross section of the community is engaged at local level. This presents significant challenges in terms of reaching out to hear the voices of the traditionally excluded and harder to reach groups and also attracting new people to our area board meetings.

The Wiltshire Voices is a two year initiative which will challenge our Area Boards to develop new and innovative approaches to community engagement and empowerment, particularly focused on engaging with hard to reach and traditionally excluded groups.

The project will bring benefits to some of the most disadvantaged people in Wiltshire. It will also both benefit and challenge the Council, its partner organisations such as the Police, the NHS, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue and the MoD as well as the voluntary sector organisations, our Town and Parish councils and community partnerships.

This project has the following objectives:

1. To ensure that Wiltshire Council and its partners continue to meet obligations under the Duty to Involve and further develop our understanding of the communities we serve, their needs and aspirations
2. To build on and further develop existing community engagement good practice as developed by the Council and its partners
3. To test out a range of approaches and techniques for widening participation and involvement of those groups who are hard to engage and traditionally excluded
4. To develop a toolkit of tested approaches to engaging with different groups.
5. To produce a resource documenting the learning from this activity for use by the Council and dissemination to other partners and local authorities

6. To direct Council and partners resources more effectively in the future, feeding into budget setting processes and targeting areas and communities of greatest need, thereby delivering services which are more responsive and better tailored to the needs of our local communities
7. To ensure that a wider cross section of the population have access to our community grants awards, to bring forward and support projects from a wide range of groups and individuals. This will contribute to narrowing opportunity gaps and further develop social capital.
8. To help deliver on our Equalities and Diversity targets e.g. gathering further data and knowledge of Wiltshire's diverse communities, supporting elected members' understanding of equalities and inclusion
9. To Developing the role of area boards in promoting equalities and inclusion, contributing to community cohesion.
10. To ensure that a wide range of perspectives are fed into community planning processes, including the work of the Wiltshire Assembly and its thematic partnerships
11. To broaden and deepen the membership and further develop the capacity of our community partnerships.

Project details

Each Area Board will be allocated £3,000 and will be challenged to develop a community engagement initiative that reaches out to the most disadvantaged groups and those with whom contact to date has been limited. Community Area Managers, equalities team, partners and Local Elected members will undoubtedly already have ideas for how this money should be targeted, reflecting gaps in attendance at Area Board meetings and local knowledge of particular groups and communities.

Our Community Area profiles, information from People's Voice, Mosaic and other information provided by our partners e.g. JSNA will help facilitate the process, providing a good understanding of the demographics of our community areas, key issues and target groups.

Once a target group or topic area has been identified, the Community Area Manager will set up a Project team which includes and elected member, a voluntary sector organisation representative, a member of a user group where possible, an appropriate partner representative and relevant professional officers. We will also have advice and support from our Equalities Team.

Phase one will involve desktop research to explore the demographics of where people are, to find out what engagement

has happened previously, the approaches to engagement which have worked best, what needs have been identified and how these could be addressed and ongoing engagement made possible through partnership working at Area Boards.

Phase two will involve direct engagement with the identified groups using a range of forms and formats, based on knowledge of what works but also allowing for the development of new an innovative approaches which we can test out together. The engagement is likely to take a variety of forms form from web and technology based schemes, to video or radio work, to more traditional face to face interviews, group work and survey type activities.

All approaches will be documented in the third phase of the project in 2011-2012 and the aim is to bring these together into 'Wiltshire Voices' a life story resource which will bring the perspectives of a wide range of people into view and facilitate better understanding of needs and issues faced by people living in Wiltshire and the ways in which partners have come together to respond to these through our Area Boards.

The resources developed will include an Issue Book, tracking an issue through the perspective of one person and looking at how it was resolved. We will also produce a DVD showing a range of life stories. We will also develop presentation materials to disseminate the approach we have adopted and the learning acquired through the process.

The fourth Phase is Influence, where our work on Wiltshire Voices will be publicised to other authorities and partners. It will be promoted for use in our schools to further learning, promote good relations and understanding between different people thereby contributing to our community cohesion objectives. It will also be promoted through our libraries and through community partnerships and other organisations.

The work will have the support of the Equality and Human Rights commission and the IDEA both of whom have offered time with Wiltshire Council to develop these types of initiatives. The involvement of these partners will also ensure that the work is promoted to other authorities, thus further raising the profile of Wiltshire Council.

Please put a cross against the ambition(s) that this initiative will support	Building resilient communities	X
	Improving affordable housing	
	Lives not services	X
	Supporting economic growth	

	Safer communities	X
	Protecting the environment	
	Action for Wiltshire – combating the recession	

Amount of funding sought	**£54,000.00**	

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)	*Total Project Cost £60,000*

Item	Capital	Revenue
18 area boards X £3,000 community engagement initiatives		*£54,000*
Total		*£54,000.00*

| **Please describe how your initiative will support the ambition(s) indicated above, and summarise the action that will be taken** | The initiative will support the LAW ambition of Building Resilient Communities by creating neighbourhoods where residents feel that they belong to the local community. Through reaching out to traditionally excluded and hard to reach groups we will show that their views and needs are important to the Council and its partners.

This project will support our ambitions around Lives not Services as residents will share their views about what needs to be done to improve their local area and quality of life. This will feed into our services and ensure that they are delivered in a more responsive way. Residents involved in the project will also gain in confidence and develop new skills, contacts and networks which will have long term benefits both for themselves and for the council and its partners.

This project will also support the development of our community partnerships into the future as the community profile information is enhanced and their membership base is broadened and deepened through contact with new people. This will in turn ensure the development of community plans with more local buy in and local relevance.

This project will further develop the local leadership role of our elected members and community representatives, many of whom will have had limited experience or knowledge of engaging with disadvantaged groups. |
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| | It will also improve the way in which organisations in Wiltshire work together. It will require and enable close working relationships between voluntary sector groups, Community Area Managers, Community Partnerships, equalities groups and town and parish councils.

It will also contribute to creating stronger and more inclusive communities by bringing people together, providing opportunities for learning about each other and helping develop local solutions to identified local need.

The project will contribute to the Council's performance on a range of National Indicators including

NI 1- % of people who feel people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
NI 2- % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
NI 3 – Civic participation in decision-making in the local area (more people will get involved in our area boards through broader range of agenda items emerging and broader range of groups applying for grant awards).
NI 4- % of people who agree they can influence decisions in their locality (as above)
NI 5- overall/general satisfaction with local area
NI- 140 Fair treatment by local services

The initiative will also contribute to perceptions of safer communities as people learn more about each other and some of the barriers and misconceptions people have about each other are broken down.

The initiative will reflect our commitment under the existing equality schemes to promote involvement , participation and engagement of diverse communities in Wiltshire, thereby increasing civic participation and local community cohesion |
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| **What makes this initiative a local priority (e.g. evidence from research and local support)** | As noted previously, the Review of Area Boards carried out after the first six months of operation, concluded that in order for the Council and its partners to fully meet our aspirations to involve local people more fully in decision making, more needed to be done to engage with a wider cross section of the community in the process.

Evidence from discussion at Chair's meetings and the recent Review of Area Boards, suggests that only a narrow cross section of people in our communities are currently represented at our Area Boards. The risks inherent in this include;

- Area Board agendas are not always reflective of the real issues and concerns of local people |

	- Our community planning process is only informed by a limited number of voices and perspectives, the needs and aspirations of a significant number of people are not identified or reflected within it. This can lead to disillusionment, lack of buy in to community partnerships and residents feeling that they do not have a say or a stake in community plans and the decisions that affect them. - Public funding is targeted at the wrong local priorities - Access to our community grants pot will be limited to those groups and organisations used to participating and developing funding applications e.g. parish and town councils and large charitable organisations. This does not enable the council to effectively target its resources to narrow existing gaps in opportunity and to address inequality - Significant issues affecting specific groups in the community may not be identified or addressed, affecting residents' quality of life and impacting negatively on community cohesion. - The Council fails to meet its duties and targets around equality and inclusion under the equality schemes, and will not be able to enhance our commitment to promote the right to civic participation under the human rights regulations - Our services are designed around the needs of a few - We may not be making best use of the information and expertise provided by our partner agencies, organisations and voluntary sector groups.
How will you know you have been successful?	We will know we have been successful when we have - Brought together a range of partners onto our Project teams - Identified target groups in each community area, in consultation with elected members, community partnerships and our partners in both the statutory and voluntary sectors and user groups and through the use of MOSAIC and other demographic datasets at our disposal - Researched past and current initiatives and incorporated the learning and best practice from these into new collaborative ways of working - Designed engagement initiatives across our Area Boards in consultation with our partners as above - Secured the participation of representatives of target groups in the initiative - Developed mechanisms and approaches which work and document these - Continued involvement of groups in our area board processes - Altered over time, the overall profile of those participating in

	our Area Boards process (this is wider than attendance at Area Board meetings, it also includes participation in using our issues system, participation in community events, participating in agenda setting, participating in community planning and in the work of our community partnerships and the online community networking resource proposed by WFCAP)
	• Altered over time the overall profile of those applying for community grants and the target groups funded.
	• Have developed a learning resource drawing upon the engagement experiments, documenting real people's experiences and what works in terms of securing their ongoing engagement
	• Seen realignment of our services and those of our partners to better address local needs
	• seen improvements in the percentage of people feeling overall satisfaction with their area, that they have a say in their local community, that people from different backgrounds get on well together and that they belong to their neighbourhoods and can influence decisions in their local area (National Indicators as above)
	• Shared our learning with other partners and local authorities
	• Improved trust and confidence of diverse communities in the Wiltshire council and public services overall
How will you measure the impact? (may have more than one measure)	• 18 inclusion/engagement projects will be trialled
	• There will be a greater diversity of voices and perspectives heard at our Area Board meetings. For example in Warminster, community radio brings the voices of local people into the Area Board meetings, on a range of items.
	• There will be more locally generated agenda items at Area Boards
	• There will be an increase in the number of issues reported through our issues system by the target groups identified
	• There will be an increase in the number of grant applications received from the target groups
	• There will be an increase in the representation of target groups at our Area Board meetings, either directly or through advocates
	• We will measuring requests for our learning resource DVD
	• We will monitor the changing Profile of community Area Networks
	• We will monitor the membership of our Community Partnerships
	• Our community plans will be more reflective of local communities.

• **What is your improvement target (s), and when do you expect to achieve this/these?**	The improvements targets are • Improvements will be measured through the above methods. Whilst this is still early in the operation of our Area Boards and our baseline figures have not as yet been produced, we will be working on this over the next year and will be able to measure improvements as we go forward. • We will also monitor the scores for NI's 1,2,3,4,5 and 140. If this project or some of the elements of it are successful, there will be an increase in all of these results. These NI's are monitored by the Place Survey. The next one takes place in 2010 which may be too soon to see improvements generated by this project. Following this, the survey will be repeated in 2010 which may be ideal timing in capturing the success of this project.
• **How will you ensure that the improvement continues after the end of the initiative?**	We will ensure that the improvement continues at the end of the initiative by • Working more effectively with our partners to share information and undertake joint consultation and engagement activity • Adding the names of those who have participated onto our Community Area Networks (our databases of local contacts) to which we send regular information and seek feedback on the operation of our area boards and request agenda items. • Monitoring the profile of those on our CAN with a view to developing a more representative sample • Ensure that those who have participated receive our regular Just a Minute newsletters giving information about our area boards, grants awarded and agendas and details of future meetings • Use the techniques and approaches which have been tested on an ongoing basis, allowing for their further development and refinement • Continue to monitor the participants at our area board meetings and thee types of agenda items coming to our Area Boards • Link those participating in the engagement initiative into our community partnerships • Monitor the distribution of our community grants and the types of projects and groups funded on an annual basis • Monitor the levels of community engagement in our community partnerships and community planning processes

	- Share learning across the council and with our partner agencies such as NHS Wiltshire and other organisations and authorities - Use Mosaic and other research tools tools to help identify target groups and communities and ensure representation of a wide cross section of people in the Area Boards process on an ongoing basis.
Who will benefit from this initiative?	We anticipate that a wide range of people will benefit from this initiative as we target groups such as - Young people - Older people - Black and Ethnic Minority residents - Disabled people including people with sight and hearing impairments - People with limiting long term health conditions - Gypsy and traveller communities - Social housing tenants - People with Learning Disabilities - Carers - LGBT people - Victims of Anti-Social Behaviour - Army families - Migrant workers - Homeless people - Stroke Victims - People with mental health difficulties - People receiving home care - Boating communities - Single parents - NEETS There will also be benefits for the Council and its partners in terms of increased knowledge about our local communities, delivery on our equality and diversity targets, increased understanding of local need and the opportunity to design our services and allocate resources more effectively in response to these. There will be benefits for a range of local voluntary groups and organisations as we involve them in scoping and running community engagement initiatives. This will include opportunities for closer working and collaboration, sharing of resources and knowledge and securing future funding for projects. The project will have benefits for our elected members in terms of broadening their experiences of working with different groups and

	communities. This will support and reinforce our equalities commitments to provide training for elected members in equality and diversity issues. The project will also promote our elected members in their community leadership roles.
	Our partners and other authorities will benefit from this initiative as we disseminate the good practice and share the learning from Wiltshire.
	Our authority is also likely to benefit in terms of enhanced reputation. We are well placed to spearhead this type of learning, as we are already recognised as a leading authority in community engagement and empowerment.
Confirm no unfunded commitments from this initiative	I confirm that there will be no unfunded financial commitments arising from this initiative.
What are the key risks to success and how will these be managed?	.The key risks are that Some engagement initiatives will fail to produce wider or sustained engagement of particular groups. This risk will be managed by • Involving key partners at an early stage to draw upon their knowledge experience and expertise e.g. carers organisations or gypsy and traveller liaison services. • Accepting that not all groups will want to be fully engaged on an ongoing basis but will have knowledge and information about how to get involved should they wish to. It is also important that we recognise that the process of engagement is as important as the outcome. • Allowing for advocacy and experts in particular fields to help input on behalf of these groups. There is a risk that our partner organisations will not engage in the process • This risk is unlikely to materialise as there are significant benefits for all partners in participating in the project. We have already demonstrated good partnership working in responding to the information provided in the JSNA and in our work with the Police and town and parish councils around Community Speedwatch and other local initiatives. We are keen to develop our partnership working with the Mod and to look at the need of army families in particular.

Who will manage the initiative	The initiative will be managed by The Area Boards Team Contact Mary Cullen Team Leader Area Boards Team (south) 01722 434260

Signed:

Cllr Chris Williams, Wiltshire Council Portfolio Holder for Communities (on behalf of All Area Boards)

Dated: