

Annex 1: Revised TAAP

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES: TARGET AREA ACTION PLAN (TAAP)

Government Office Region	
Local Authority District	
Wave (1, 2 or later)	
Target Area	

Key issues to be addressed

Community Ambassadors is an existing programme working successfully with BoME communities in Cheltenham. We wish to apply for Connecting Communities funding to develop the programme to work with communities in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. We have developed costings for a package that can be rolled out to as many as six areas depending on available resources.

Enhancing leadership

Primarily this project is about giving ordinary people skills, knowledge and confidence to enable them to participate in neighbourhood management and/or any other participatory programme that relies on engagement with communities.

Community Ambassadors are in effect champions for their communities who, once trained, will provide a two way link between their communities and service providers. Recognised and respected by both without the encumbrance of formal or bureaucratic constraints.

We plan to engage individuals within our target neighbourhoods, of Hesters Way, Springbank, St Pauls, Oakley, The Moors and St Marks, that demonstrate a commitment to their community and willingness to provide a link between their perceived community and service providers. This will enable us to engage these individuals in becoming a part of a network of similar minded individuals. By perceived community we mean the community or communities that they feel part of.

The Community Ambassador programme is about developing community leaders by giving them the skills and knowledge to link their communities with those who make decisions about their lives. Not everyone who is a natural leader has the skills to facilitate them or be able to voice the issues that concern their communities. Neither do they, initially, understand the authorities that they have to deal with.

Strengthening voice

By taking part in the Community Ambassador programme participants will be able to identify their perceived 'community' and then discover methods by which to regularly engage with members of their community to identify issues, feed these issues to the service providers and, by taking part in neighbourhood management, help to find solutions. As a two-way communication conduit between their communities and service providers Community Ambassadors will also be able to assist in consultation needs of the service providers.

Community Ambassadors become the eyes and ears within their community and the voice for their community externally.

Improving perceptions of service delivery

Cheltenham plans to roll out neighbourhood management over the coming months and aims for this to be fair and equal across all areas of the borough. To enable this there is need in some areas for the development of skills, knowledge and confidence in order to 'level the playing field' amongst potential resident participants. This is particularly the case in the most deprived areas where unemployment is high, educational attainment is low and community confidence is poor.

Particularly in these areas service providers can be seen as a bureaucratic and remote and engagement is through formal processes; collecting rent as landlord, collecting council tax, processing and awarding benefit claims; rather than real people with a willingness to help find solutions to problems. There is often

confusion as to which authority is responsible for what and how to report problems and find reasons behind priorities being set.

Many people in these communities feel disempowered and often feel that democratic processes are not relevant to their lives. In other words they do not understand the system and consequently do not believe that they can have any influence over it. Conversely, this can be interpreted by the authorities as disinterest and part of the problem itself.

By training between ten and twelve people in each of our six most deprived communities we believe that we can start a process to develop better understanding between communities and the authorities. In each community there will then be twelve people providing a voice on behalf of other residents and feeding back positively on the performance of the authorities. If these twelve are a representative sample of residents in their area information gained and passed on becomes more meaningful than the current situation where those with the most confidence and the loudest voice can claim to speak for their community, without any training or knowledge of consultation procedures.

Part of the Community Ambassador training programme informs participants about the different authorities and the services they provide. Representatives of the authorities are invited to attend sessions to have discussions with Community Ambassadors. This enables:

- Myth busting about inequalities in service delivery.
- An understanding of who delivers which service.
- Recognition that the authorities are approachable and interested in issues raised in communities.

Delivery solutions

In Cheltenham we have recently completed a pilot Community Ambassador training programme aimed at BoME communities. This has proved successful, with fifteen people from six different BoME communities participating. Although this programme was developed to be delivered to a multi-cultural group it became evident early on in the development of the programme that this would be a suitable training programme, with minor adaptations, for residents to prepare them for participation in neighbourhood management. There are currently a number of organisations working within the defined most deprived communities in Cheltenham. These are best placed to identify people to take part in this programme. These include neighbourhood projects, regeneration partnerships and social housing providers.

This is a programme suitable for people of various education levels from different backgrounds. The programme is designed in such a way that it can be adapted to suit the needs of each distinct group whilst also including important core aspects. These core aspects are:

- Confidence raising.
- Communication skills.
- Defining what a community can be (we do not assume that a community can only be based on geographic area or on a particular background – within geographic communities there are an infinite number of possible communities. This programme encourages participants to think about all of the communities that they are part of.)
- Understanding service delivery.
- Understanding decision making processes.

Currently we have the one person who has developed and delivered the programme. As part of this project we would plan to train further trainers to deliver the programme in order to enable further roll out of the programme at a later date if further funding becomes available. As we have already had interest in this programme from adjoining districts it could be possible to extend the training the trainers outside of Cheltenham.

Additionally we plan to set up an informal network of Community Ambassadors in order that they can support each other, provide the authorities with a collective with which to consult and assist their further development.

Funding requirements

OVERALL COSTS		£
Management of programme	3 hrs/week X 52 wks @ £20	3120
identifying and training other trainers	15 hrs in total @ £25	375
developing network of Ambassadors	10 hours @ £20	200
providing trainer packs	6 X £50	300
room hire for training trainers	10 sessions @ £40	400
		4395
PER AREA		
Identification of suitable candidates	3 hrs each X 12 @ £15	540
Group marketing	2 sessions total 3 hrs @ £15	45
trainer costs	20 hrs @ £25	500
childcare costs including group marketing	12 sessions @100	1200
participant expenses	average £3/seesion X 12	432
participant packs & marketing	12 X £7.50	90
Room hire course & group marketing	12 sessions @ £40	480
Room hire crèche including group marketing	12 sessions X £40	480
		3767
Total if all six areas	£3767 X 6 areas	22602
	overall costs	4395
		26997
One area		8162
Two areas		11929
Three areas		15696
Four areas		19463
Five areas		23230
Six areas		26997

Timescale

We plan for this project to run over twelve months, in three parts:

1. Three months in which to identify and recruit suitable residents. During this initial three months further trainers to be identified and trained.
2. Six months delivering the six programmes.
3. Three months developing and supporting a town wide Community Ambassador network.

Success measures

1. Sixty plus participants recruited.
2. % completing the programme.
3. % still engaged after twelve months
4. additional trainers able to roll out the programme

Agreed by

Government Office		Date	
Local Area		Date	