

Getting People Involved (round 2) planned activities and early learning - summary report

Introduction

Getting People Involved (GPI) round 2 funding was made available in 2012 to support areas in the early stages of Big Local. Areas could request up to £30,000 through Getting People Involved. (£10,000 round 1, £20,000 round 2). Examples of what the funding could be used for include:

- materials for use in their Big Local activities
- publicity materials for Big Local
- salaries of people doing Big Local work
- transport or travel costs
- venue hire
- child care bursaries for those attending events
- volunteer expenses
- VAT that cannot be recovered
- proportionate and reasonable overheads incurred by the locally trusted organisation in delivering and coordinating the work.

This summary has been prepared following a full report written by Community Development Foundation (CDF). The full report is based on an analysis of proposals which were submitted by 47 of the first 50 Big Local areas and locally trusted organisations. As such it reflects what Big Local areas planned to do with their funding. The proposals may have been written by the rep, the locally trusted organisation or the interim steering group and reflects a range of experiences in the first 50 Big Local areas.

Purpose of GPI round 2

The design and delivery of the Big Local programme aims to provide support to the areas from the Big Local rep, Local Trust and delivery partners so that residents feel guided and supported through processes that strengthen relationships and enable resident-led decision-making. The purpose of this funding was to provide resources and support to areas to assist them in getting started and getting people involved in Big Local in their area.

These processes aim to build resident's understanding of how ideas can be developed into projects and activities whilst also having conversations with a range of people from their area. As a result of this we expect the following outputs and outcomes from getting people involved activities:

Connections: new connections will be established between and across Big Local areas through people coming together in new ways via a range of activities and conversations.

Knowledge: new knowledge will develop in Big Local areas across a wide variety of themes and subject matter, whether it's an increased understanding of resident-led



processes, how to engage residents and other people in Big Local areas, and/or generating new awareness about a particular issue or need.

Options: people in Big Local areas develop options for themselves and set local priorities as a result of knowledge, awareness and new connections.

Skills: through peer-to-peer learning or other learning experiences residents and others gain skills and increased social capital.

Key findings

1. How do areas plan to spend their GPI round 2 funds?

- **69%** of budgets are intended to support workers, events and marketing as part of the process of 'getting people involved'. Training and small grants were the next biggest areas of planned spending.
- **28%** of the first 50 Big Local areas had received, or were seeking to receive, matched or leveraged funding from external sources with an expected total of £105,615.
- **young people, older people, families and children** were key target groups for Big Local getting people involved engagement activities.
- Big Local areas typically planned to engage with harder to reach group(s) through specialist organisations that were already in contact with these people and who could arrange specific activities that would help appeal to them.
- Big Local getting people involved activities can be characterised as:
 - **outreach** such as door knocking, using residents as ambassadors or messengers for their community, events and activities '*where people are*' and mobile outreach using a bus or transport.
 - **interactive engagement activities** – such as Big Local-specific events and meeting with local groups and organisations
 - **interactive awareness raising activities** – such as information sharing at existing events and gathering feedback through postcards and surveys
 - **promotional awareness raising activities** – such as branding and logos, newsletters, websites, social media and the local media.

Almost 30% of the first 50 Big Local areas planned to use some of the funds for small grants to maintain momentum and provide some quick win outcomes for the community to see.

Big Local areas also planned to hold events and activities to develop their Big Local vision.

2. Lessons learned from early involvement activities

There was a wide variety of views about what Big Local areas felt had worked well from GPI round 1. Some of the following emerged as having worked well in delivering activities:

- **events** – both using existing events and holding special Big Local events.
- **using another activity or incentive as a hook** – for example using film to bring generations of residents together to discuss how to make it even better in the future.
- **going to where people are** rather than 'expecting them to come to you'.
- **marketing and branding** worked well in creating a clear message for Big Local areas, and providing an opportunity for residents to work together.



- **developing a website** had worked well as a means of communicating and enabling residents to record their views of how the area could become even better.
- **working with existing organisations** such as schools to access particular types of residents had helped in early development.
- **raising awareness with councillors** was felt to have been worthwhile.
- **having paid workers** to manage the process and maintain momentum was beneficial.
- **using diverse approaches** to gathering the views of residents was felt necessary.

Some of the key challenges identified in GPI 1 included the following:

- **difficulties gaining resident involvement** from across the whole Big Local area.
- **lack of clarity in processes** such as not having meeting minutes, no-one leading or chairing and a need for clearer terms of reference
- **social media and websites** being too reliant on a small number of people to manage them, or a general lack of interest in Facebook and website pages.
- **events** badly timed or coinciding with other community events leading to poor attendance.
- **relationships within the Big Local area** where joining up different parts of the area had proved difficult, or there had been negative attitudes towards Big Local

3. Who are the locally trusted organisations and what is their role?

The most common type of locally trusted organisation were individual local charities (22 areas) followed by councils for voluntary services (14 areas). Others included housing associations, local authorities, local non-charitable organisations and other public sector organisations.

- Almost **60%** of the first 50 Big Local areas specified some resident involvement in the decision to select their locally trusted organisation (29 areas).
- **64%** of the locally trusted organisations that had been selected for GPI round 2 were continuing their role from GPI round 1.¹
- **1/3 (32%)** were replaced. Details of why the locally trusted organisation had changed were not generally provided, but one was replaced due to financial issues and another had closed.

4. How Big Local areas select locally trusted organisations

The criteria the first 50 Big Local areas used for selecting locally trusted organisations included:

- a strong local knowledge and community involvement (36 per cent)
- they had been the lead organisations² on round 1 (26 per cent)
- a strong partnership network (20 per cent)
- being familiar to those selecting the locally trusted organisations (16 per cent)
- ability to reliably manage finances (16 per cent)
- they had contributed to round 1 (6 per cent).

¹ These were formally referred to as 'lead' organisations and were generally selected by Big Lottery Fund. Local Trust subsequently changed this as the residents are in the lead, not the organisation.

² Locally trusted organisations were referred to as lead organisations for GPI round1



5. Challenges presented by working with varied stakeholders

Big Local areas experienced various challenges working with stakeholders and resident. These included:

- managing expectations of people in the area about what can be achieved and when
- balancing the influence of individual agendas of people, ie- people who participate in Big Local due to a personal projects and passions versus the consensus approach that Big Local aims to support in areas.
- it can be difficult meeting the needs of all stakeholders in the area and generating wide interest in Big Local
- Some areas had experienced issues relating to their area name or the specific location of the area including boundaries.

Typically, these challenges were addressed by using methods such as electing a chair, agreeing a code of conduct and improving two-way communication between the different parties who may need to continue conversations such as residents and councillors.

6. Resident participation and leadership

This review of GPI round 2 proposals suggested that's areas planned to engaged with residents in three different ways. These forms of engagement may occur separately or at the same time.

- **resident-led** - residents leading key decisions including budget management and setting priorities and strategy.
- **resident-involved** – including residents in decision making through interactive methods such as outreach and events where they can have their say.
- **resident-informed** – those involved with Big Local (residents, interim steering group members and locally trusted organisations) sharing information with all those residents not yet involved in the Big Local area and communicating with them about Big Local activities.

GPI round 2 proposals provided some early indications about the extent of resident led processed in Big Local:

- nearly **60%** of the first 50 Big Local areas had involved residents in deciding who to select as the locally trusted organisation.
- one area planned to have a panel of residents making decisions about small grants.
- some areas planned to fund a worker who was a local resident.
- over 20% of the first 50 Big Local areas planned more involvement for residents during GPI round 2 and over 30% (18 areas) specified the need to work towards a more resident-led partnership.

In order to become more resident-led, the GPI round 2 proposals identified a need to:

- overcome barriers to community engagement
- fund workers to generate momentum
- train and develop residents to understand and participate more fully in the process
- provide access to relevant information to support decision making
- draw on the specialist expertise of local partners.



3. Conclusion

In drawing conclusions from Big Local areas' GPI round 2 proposals, it is worth considering what Big Local aims to achieve and how it is distinctive. The Theory of Change for Big Local shows that, to achieve the overall four Big Local outcomes, Local Trust and their delivery partners will work to ensure that people are supported, are connected and have choices so that they can achieve lasting change where they live.

The evidence from the GPI round 2 proposals provides an insight into Local Trust's and the delivery partners' progress towards those aims. Although Big Local is still in its early stages as a programme, the planned GPI activity of the first 50 Big Local areas indicates that:

- Whilst Big Local is resident-led, the proposals from Big Local areas show perceived need by areas to have someone driving Big Local. This is reflected by areas using some of the Getting People Involved funding to pay for a worker to support residents to maintain their momentum.
- There are also signs that people in Big Local areas are developing their skills and capacity by using funds for resident training to support them gain increased confidence and skills to manage Big Local. This suggests that building on assets, skills and capabilities with residents is being taken up seriously in Big Local areas. Over time, this will contribute to the Big Local outcome of residents having increased skills and confidence to make decisions and set priorities.
- The wide use of small grants in areas demonstrates that providing small but tangible and quick win outcomes can help promote resident buy-in and participation in Big Local and can support longer-term resident engagement.

What next?

Through this research and evidence from GPI, there are early indicators that the first 50 Big Local areas are identifying and building capacity among residents. As a consequence, this is supporting resident-led approaches in areas to select the locally trusted organisations and make decisions about how GPI round 2 funding is spent. This will help to develop a core of resident-led decision-makers in areas that can ultimately form a partnership.

The getting people involve process has shown it can support increased in resident led capacity in the lead up to areas developing their profile, vision and plan. The lessons learned from getting people involved processes will be significant in developing capacity, key skills and knowledge to support areas through the next stages of Big Local and to make decisions about their local priorities and needs.