



## Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

### ESF Community Grants

### Programme Prospectus



## Community Grants Prospectus

Oxford City Council has been awarded the contract to deliver the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (OxLEP) ESF Community Grants Programme from 2016-18. This prospectus outlines the background to the commissioning of the programme, the detail of the programme's themes, expected outcomes, and the schedule of funding calls.

### Background to OxLEP ESF Community Grants Programme

Oxfordshire is in practice a full employment labour market, with 0.4% JSA claimants – fewer than 2,000 residents, but also with a substantial number of people on long term sickness or disability benefits, some 15,000 claiming ESA. Long term unemployed residents are to be found across the county, although with concentrations in Oxford City itself and around the county's other towns.

The challenge of virtual full employment is the ability of employers to find and recruit suitably qualified staff, especially in professional (level 4 and above) and technical and associate professional level business sectors (level 3 and above) where over 7,500 vacancies exist with fewer than 600 people seeking those roles. Similar labour shortages exist in skilled trade occupations – with c1, 150 vacancies registered against 500 people seeking them. Only 86,400 Oxfordshire residents – 20.4% of working age people – were economically inactive between July 2014 2012 and June 2015, a far lower proportion than the national average (22.5%). A relatively high share of economic inactivity is accounted for by students and retired people, meaning there is little 'hidden' unemployment compared to other parts of the country. Unsurprisingly, economic inactivity is highest in Oxford City.

In this situation, those out of work, particularly for any length of time, must be significantly disadvantaged or have major barriers to finding employment. OxLEP's ESIF programme therefore targets precisely those furthest from the labour market for particular attention. With skills shortages in many sectors, the programme will seek to channel unemployed residents towards those sectors with the most appropriate opportunities for them.

Oxfordshire's labour market is forecast to grow significantly over the coming decades. Research to inform the county's strategic housing market assessment concluded a likely increase of some 88,000 jobs up to 2031, 4,400 per year (1% pa), an increase in annual growth of 25% over the previous decade. This projection is based on taking into account all likely sources of growth, including those planned from developments such as the Science Vale Oxford Enterprise Zone, Oxfordshire City Deal, NW Bicester Eco Town, the redevelopment of the Westgate shopping centre in Oxford city centre and other planned infrastructure investment. The county's goal of growth through innovation is based on economic growth, but clearly is expected to bring with it employment growth too, and from a LEP and local authority point of view employment growth is equally important as a goal for Oxfordshire. This will bring with it a number of implications relevant for the use of EU funds, including:

- Greater need to match labour market supply and demand, and opportunities to bring the more disadvantaged into work
- More pressure on the skills base and greater needs to ensure the right mix of types and skills is available
- In-migration including from overseas with associated need for ESOL provision

## **Community Grants Programme**

OxLEP's ESIF Strategy includes a number of programmes to address the above themes. However the scale of these projects makes them inaccessible to smaller community based organisations. The Community Grants Programme has been commissioned to ensure that any gaps in ESIF provision are addressed, whether by geography or demography, and to enable smaller organisations to access ESIF funding in a manageable way.

All community, voluntary and faith organisations in Oxfordshire, including those in Oxford city, the rural areas and in market towns where there is demonstrable evidence of local social and economic deprivation will be able to apply for a Grant of between £5,000 and £50,000.

The Community Grants Programme aims to ensure that a diverse range of community organisations are able to access ESIF funding. As such, no single organisation will be awarded more than one grant across the entire programme when applying as a single organisation. No organisation will receive more than one grant in each funding round when applying as part of a partnership.

Projects funded by Grants must address one of three core priorities:

### **1. Increase social inclusion by supporting residents towards and into sustainable employment, and promoting employment opportunities.**

Projects under this priority will include those that help the long-term unemployed and involuntarily workless move closer to the labour market, employment and training programmes, which equip residents with skills needed to achieve employment, and those that support first generation migrant women to access skills training and job opportunities. This may include access to volunteering, work placements, intermediate labour markets and other activities offering opportunities to participate and demonstrate commitment.

### **2. Help residents become better qualified and raise educational aspirations.**

Activities could include educational programmes for young people who are NEET, and adults, youth engagement and youth leadership projects, mentoring, community education projects aimed at raising aspirations and projects that support family learning. Recipients are not required to offer accredited qualifications but should demonstrate willingness to help move participants towards the acquisition of skills and qualifications needed in the labour market.

### **3. To actively promote and engage in partnership working with other local key stakeholders within communities.**

Recipients will need to demonstrate that they will work with other organisations, especially those operating in their communities, to get the maximum impact for the beneficiaries. Organisations might include local children's centres, youth hubs, health centres and other appropriate settings. The overall aim of the Oxfordshire ESIF Strategy and Implementation Plan, is to make sure existing a new provision aiming to increase social inclusion within community, communicate and join up with each other as far as possible so that services (and their promotion) are perceived as 'seamless' by those who use them. Recipients should also demonstrate an ability to engage positively with Oxfordshire's labour market including

public, private and third sector employers so as to ensure activities are founded on a realistic and aspirational understanding of where opportunities lie.

### **Target groups and outcomes**

Recipients should identify and demonstrate the needs of the target groups they wish to support based on local circumstances. Projects should support different groups, particularly where social exclusion is concentrated in particular localities and may impact on people with different characteristics. The target groups for Grant funded projects would therefore be drawn from:

- Individuals who are homeless or vulnerable to homelessness
- Offenders on release from custody and individuals with a recent offending history
- ESA claimants (for whom employment is appropriate, such as in the WRAG 1 cohort)
- Individuals affected by chronic ill-health and anxiety and depression
- Over 50s
- Ex-service personnel and family members
- Individuals recovering from drugs and alcohol addiction
- Individuals with ESOL needs
- Refugees who qualify to work in the UK
- Single parents, particularly those entitled to free childcare
- Young people NEET – age at start of activity
- Troubled Families adult clients
- Work Programme returners
- Individuals who are long-term unemployed or in a cycle of temporary contract, low skilled employment and need intensive support to increase self-esteem, self-confidence and core employability skills such as ICT, literacy, CV development.

### **Programme Outcomes**

The required outcomes for the programme, are for 325 Individualised Learner Records(ILRs) to be completed. With a total of £387,000 available in grant funding, this equates to £1,190 per outcome. There are also targets for supporting particular groups of individuals outlined below. Applicants must show how their project will contribute to meeting one or more of these targets:

- |                            |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| • Over 50s                 | min 14% |
| • Ethnic groups            | min 25% |
| • Disability/health issues | min 22% |
| • Female                   | min 36% |
| • Offenders/ex-offenders   | min 29% |

### **Funding Call Schedule**

There will be three funding calls intended to allocate the total funding amount of £387,000. The calls will open in October 2016, January 2017 and March 2017. If these funding calls do not allocate all the grant funding, a final funding call will be arranged in Spring 2017. The first three funding calls will have a number of themes attached to them as outlined below. The programme has been structured in this way to maximise the diversity of funded projects. However organisations may have a good reason for targeting groups outside of the allocated

funding call. In such an event, there is a space on the application to explain the reason for doing so.

Funding Call 1:

- Individuals who are homeless or vulnerable to homelessness
- Offenders on release from custody and individuals with a recent offending history
- Individuals recovering from drugs and alcohol addiction
- Individuals with ESOL needs
- Refugees who qualify to work in the UK

Funding Call 2:

- ESA claimants (for whom employment is appropriate, such as in the WRAG 1 cohort)
- Individuals affected by chronic ill-health and anxiety and depression
- Single parents, particularly those entitled to free childcare
- Troubled Families adult clients

Funding Call 3:

- Over 50s
- Ex-service personnel and family members
- Young people NEET – age at start of activity
- Work Programme returners
- Individuals who are long-term unemployed or in a cycle of temporary contract, low skilled employment and need intensive support to increase self-esteem, self-confidence and core employability skills such as ICT, literacy, CV development

