

Making Communities Mobile Project –

Proposal for BIG application under People and Communities programme

(1) Background

Down Armagh Rural Transport (DART) working in partnership with a range of community, voluntary and statutory stakeholders is developing a new 4 year transport and access project for community groups and organisations operating within the former legacy council areas of Craigavon & Banbridge.

(2) Project Aims

The aim of the Making Communities Mobile project will be to provide a range of free accessible transport services to facilitate access for group members to community services and scheduled group activities.

The free transport support provided through the project will derive from actual need identified by group members in each of the selected project areas.

(2.1) What will the project do:

Making Communities mobile will provide a range of accessible transport services to facilitate access to community services and scheduled group activities.

(2.2) Who will benefit from it

Members of community groups within the former Craigavon & Banbridge council areas - of all ages, gender, political opinion, etc.

Making Communities Mobile project will actively increase community group participation, reduce social exclusion and facilitate access to essential community based services within the relevant town/village and environs.

The Making Communities Mobile project will establish five community transport hubs which will service the needs of a number of affiliated community groups in that particular area.

(2.3) Why is it needed

The lack of transport provision in rural areas is a well documented and researched issue. Through existing work by Communities for Actively Ageing Well - lack of accessible transport, poor public transport facilities and issues surrounding accessing health and well being services have been highlighted as a key cross-cutting issue.

A number of recent studies from external bodies in 2015 also confirm the lack of accessible transport is inhibiting the growth and development of communities especially in rural areas. The issue has been exacerbated from August 2015 with the withdrawal of a number of Translink scheduled services in rural areas across N.Ireland.

Furthermore existing research has also confirmed that cost and affordability of transport hire is also becoming an increasing barrier to community participation for existing groups.

(2.4) People-led

Making Communities Mobile will establish a project steering group - comprised of community representatives and representatives from the voluntary, community and statutory sector.

This steering group will be responsible for assessing and reporting community need throughout the project life cycle ensuring the unmet transport needs of community group participants are being addressed through resource allocation.

(2.5) Strengths-based

A significant amount of research already available in the area which will be fed into the project planning process and supplemented by a needs analysis undertaken by community representatives in each of the hub areas.

DART will use an asset-based community development model for the Making Communities Mobile which will utilise and avail of community assets already in place, namely:

- Research
- Volunteers
- Capital Assets (buses & community facilities)
- Training & Development assets
- Community groups and community networks

Individual community groups will be responsible for identifying own needs through initial survey data which be disseminated to the hub contact – this data will be considered by the the steering group who will allocate the operational vehicle resources.

(2.6) Connected

Making Communities Mobile will compliment the work of rural community transport partnerships rural community networks, local council, health trusts, community groups and ongoing PHA initiatives.

(3) Progress to Date

DART has been invited by BIG to submit a full application after a successful telephone assessment of the Making Community Mobile project concept.

A successful pilot project involving project partners has already been established in the Dromore area utilising an asset based community development model which has effectively built on community assets already in place, namely;

- Research
- Volunteers
- Capital Assets (Buses & community facilities)
- Training & Development assets
- The expertise and skills of community groups and community networks
- Existing community services and programs

(4) Existing Research

A significant amount of desk research is already available for the Making Communities Mobile project, through MARA, CTANI, PHA/ABC, NIWN, CARDI. This data will be fed into the project planning process and supplemented by a needs analysis undertaken by community representatives in each of the hub areas through existing email networks. The designated areas will be (Dromore, Craigavon, Portadown, Banbridge, Lurgan).

(5) Track record and application scope

The Making Communities Mobile Project will also build on learning derived from DART's successful delivery of the BIG funded ICONNECT project. The estimated application budget for Making Communities Mobile is between £375,000-£400,000 over 4 years with an application submission - no later than 30th May 2016.

(6) Next Steps

NEXT STEPS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE
Confirm initial partner buy-in to project concept using ABCD model and Dromore good practice.	22/04/2016	ALL
Establish project steering group of orgs/partners in principle	22/04/2016	ALL
Agree MCM survey concept for dissemination to potential groups	22/04/2016	ALL
Conduct scoping exercise for interested groups in hub areas - Compile database of groups.	22/04/2016	DART – will use available group contact lists from agreed project partners.
Engage groups with agreed MCM survey to ascertain level of transport need	29/04/2016	DART – will use available group contact lists from agreed project partners.
Pitch agreed project concept to BIG for green light to advance and prepare application	09/05/2016	DART
Prepare and submit final application	30/05/2016	30/05/2016