

Radio Ninesprings Grant Application (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To consider funding towards the cost of setting up the new community radio station Radio Ninesprings.

Public Interest

Community grants are available in each area to voluntary and charitable organisations, not-for-profit groups, Parish or Town councils and other organisations that benefit the wider community. Applications are encouraged that meet a clearly identified local need.

Recommendation

That members support this application for up to £11,675 from the Area South Capital Grant allocation.

Background

Radio Ninesprings is a Community Radio station, established as a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered charity. Its charitable purpose is to advance the education and training of the inhabitants of Yeovil and district of South Somerset in radio production, broadcasting and media skills techniques.

Community radio stations typically cover a small geographical area with a coverage radius of up to 5km, and are run on a not-for-profit basis. They can cater for whole communities or for different areas of interest such as a particular ethnic group, age group or interest group. For example, there are stations which cater for urban or experimental music, while others are aimed at younger people, religious communities or the Armed Forces and their families. They can also bring community benefits such as training and community news and discussion. They are a third tier of radio broadcasting in addition to commercial and BBC broadcasting. They raise income through advertising/programme sponsorship, training, events, and funds given by public bodies. They are 'not for profit' and their output is influenced by the communities they serve.

Evidence of Need

Consultation regarding the need and support for a Community Radio station for Yeovil has been extensive. In total presentations were made to 18 town and parish councils, including Yeovil Town Council. All 18 supported the principle of a community radio station and 12 backed their support with funding.

Further consultation included an open-to-all public meeting on the 7th May 2014 at the Courtyard Café, Market St, Yeovil. This was attended by:

South Somerset Voluntary Community Association (now Spark)
The Hub
Yeovil Chamber of Commerce
Yarlington Housing Group
South Somerset MIND
Yeovil Foundation Learning Partnership
Fairmead School
Somerset Sight
Yeovil College
Battens Solicitors
Yeovil Live magazine
Pathways

Radio Camelot
Yeovil Town FC
Westland (now Leonardo)
Yeovil Arts Association
South Somerset District Council (Pauline Burr)
RNAS Yeovilton
Yeovil Youth Council
Yeovil U3A
Yeovil Operatic Society
The Well Being of Yeovil
Shopmobility

Further presentations were made to the following groups and schools in order to establish levels of support.

Yeovil Chamber of Commerce
Lynx2business
Dorvile Business Group
South Somerset MIND
Yeovil Rotarians
Schools - Bucklers Mead, The Park, Stanchester and Preston
All media students at Yeovil College

A 28 day internet radio station experience was run from a studio set-up in the Quedam in March 2016. In addition to providing valuable work experience for 26 media students from Yeovil College (without which there would have been nowhere else in Yeovil for them to gain that level of experience) the students expressed a strong desire for Radio Ninesprings to become a permanent facility. It also provided an opportunity for the public to provide feedback.

Letters of support to Ofcom were also provided by David Laws MP in April 2014, and Marcus Fysh MP on the 14th October 2015 and SSDC leader Cllr Ric Pallister.

Finally 24 individuals and organisation submitted comments in support of the Ofcom licence application.

It is also worth noting that a number of Somerset's major towns have their own licenced community radio stations. Taunton has two community radio stations, plus BBC Somerset, and there are licenced community stations in Bridgwater, Frome, Glastonbury, and Dulverton. A new licensed community station for Minehead launches later this year. Yeovil is the notable exception to this.

The very fact that Ofcom has awarded Yeovil a licence for a community radio station is itself a demonstration that the need for the town the size and importance of Yeovil to have a community radio station has been properly established.

Project

In November 2017 Radio Ninesprings was awarded a 5-year FM community radio licence by Ofcom with the aim to begin broadcasting by the early autumn of 2018. Also, whilst the longer term aspiration is to broadcast across a wider South Somerset area the licence initially permits broadcasting within a 5km radius of the transmitter. The

transmitter will be located at Huish Park football ground. Radio Ninesprings has its main studio and offices at Waterloo House in Westminster Street Yeovil and with a further studio facility located at Yeovil College. It is for these reasons that the project is deemed to be a predominantly Area South project.

During its development phase Radio Ninesprings has been active in the local community making recordings of local events. These have included the Mayor of Yeovil's Civic Service, meetings of South Somerset District Council, public meetings in Yeovil held by Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner, school Christmas Carol Concerts, local musicians who performed on the 'Introducing Stage' at the Yeovil Show and the provision of public address system at Westfield's Community Gala Day.

In February 2018, Radio Ninesprings completed the Westland100 Oral History project with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This involved making a film about the Westland World Helicopter Speed Record and recording interviews/oral histories with former Westland employees. A website featuring all 32 oral histories was launched and CD copies of the oral histories placed in Yeovil Library.

Radio Ninesprings is being developed in three stages. Stage 1 is complete and with the current levels of funding available, is now completing stage 2 with enough equipment provided for the radio station to soft launch at the end of September. The end date for completion of the whole project is 31 March 2019 whereby the station will be fully equipped and able to deliver the promises in their application to Ofcom and able to meet their 'social gain' commitments, by which Ofcom will measure performance.

If this application is supported in full, the £49,000 funding target will be met and the stage 3 work will be able to commence and complete by the March 2019 deadline.

Having successfully raised just over 75% of the project costs (in both cash and 'in kind' donations) from a range of charitable, public and commercial bodies this application represents the final 25% of the total project costs and will ensure the project is able to complete and become fully functioning.

With regards to the ongoing annual running costs of c£7,000 (PRS/PPL/Ofcom Licences; software licence; rent for Waterloo House and utilities) these will be raised predominantly through 'on air' advertising revenues and programme sponsorship. Rent for the studio at Yeovil College will be an ongoing 'in kind' contribution as is the costs of locating the transmitter at Huish Park. The ongoing running costs have been kept to a low level by negotiating discounted rates for services in return for offering the businesses that provide those services with complimentary on-air advertising.

It has been agreed by the 4 Directors/Trustees that none would claim fees. However, under their articles of association, directors can be paid fees for delivering media training or for providing professional /expert services in situations where it would be prudent to use them rather than buy them in from outside.

Whilst the original request was for £12,500 (the maximum permitted by our community grants policies) additional funding has been secured since the application was first submitted so that the total outstanding amount required is now only £11,675.

It is recommended therefore to award a one-off capital grant of up to £11,675 or 25% of the total project costs.

Assessment Scoring

Below is the summary table from the grant assessment form. It is recommended that funding is only awarded to projects scoring 22 points or more.

Category	Score	Maximum score
A Eligibility	Y	
B Equalities Impact	3	7
C Evidence of Need	4	5
D Capacity of Organisation	13	15
E Financial need	6	7
F Innovation	2	3
<i>Grand Total</i>	28	37

Funding Breakdown

Project Costs are as follows

Adaption of premises to radio studio including signage	£5,000
FM Transmitter	£11,000
Telecoms, IT, associated broadcast equipment	£21,000
1-yr running costs PRS/PPL/Ofcom/Adobe/rent/utilities	£7,000
Website and hosting for 1-yr	£4,000
Total: £48,000	

Income (cash and 'in-kind') secured towards the project is as follows

Jones Building Group (Sound Proofing Premises)	£2,500
Walter Walls Carpets (Premises)	£600
Celador (Studio Equipment)	£12,000
Yeovil Football Club (Year 1 running costs)	£2,000
Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioners	£1,000
Yarlington Housing at £3,000	£3,000
Town and parish councils at £5,225 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeovil Town Council £1,000 • Parish Councils £4,225 	£5,225
Awards for All' Big Lottery at £10,000	£10,000
Total: £36,325	
Shortfall of income over expenditure (this application)	£11,675

Financial Implications

As part of the Area South Capital Programme, members agreed to ringfence £25,000 a year to support larger capital community projects. The uncommitted 2018/2019 capital grant allocation stands at £45,000. If members agree this award of £11,675 it will leave £33,325 available for other community projects.

Grant Conditions

In addition to the standard grant conditions, it is also proposed to attach the following special condition to the grant award in order to satisfactorily address the issue of accessibility and the participation of disabled people as per Radio Ninesprings Equality Policy.

1. That the final fitting out of the studio facility at Yeovil College will ensure accessibility for disabled (mobility and sight impaired) volunteers who are interested in becoming presenters or technicians. Advice on such things as lighting, desk heights etc. to be obtained from SSDC's partner Access for All.

The grant offer would be made based on the information provided in the application form and would represent up to 25% of the total project costs (the final payment may be reduced if the costs of the total project are less than originally anticipated, however payment will not exceed the grant amount approved at committee).

Corporate Priority Implications

Health and Communities

To build healthy, self reliant, active communities we will:

- Help people to live well by enabling quality cultural, leisure, play, sport and healthy lifestyles facilities and activities.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The current premises in Westminster Street are not accessible but this project will ensure that the studio facility at Yeovil College is accessible for disabled (mobility and sight impaired) volunteers who are interested in becoming presenters or technicians.

Background Papers

None
