

**Connected Communities Research Programme:
Invitation to apply for Initial Scoping Studies and Research Reviews**

Closing date for proposals: 5pm, Friday 26 November 2010

Introduction

The AHRC is leading the development of a new cross-Research Council research programme on Connected Communities in partnership with the EPSRC, ESRC, MRC and NERC. As a part of this development process, the AHRC wishes to commission a number of small scoping studies and research reviews (hereinafter referred to as 'the reviews') addressing a number of underpinning issues. It is hoped these will: stimulate debate and provide some early outputs for from the programme; inform future discussions about its shape, focus and priorities; and be of value to researchers undertaking research under the Programme in the future.

AHRC now wishes to invite applications to conduct reviews on the following initial topics that have been selected:

- I) Conceptualisations and meanings of 'community'
- II) Changing nature of 'connectivity' within and between communities, including connectivity between communities and their broader environment and the impact of new communication technologies;
- III) Evolution of ideas about community self-reliance, resilience, social & community 'capital', empowerment and participation
- IV) Conflict within and between communities
- V) Community perspectives and approaches to engaging communities in and with research

Applications are invited from researchers from any discipline or subject area across the arts and humanities and/or within the relevant remits of the other participating Research Councils. We anticipate funding a number of reviews /studies from different disciplinary or conceptual perspectives or studying different dimensions of issues under each of the headings. We will expect successful applicants to collaborate to ensure that the foci of their studies complement each other, to reduce unnecessary duplication and share expertise across disciplines.

The outcomes of the reviews will be expected to be published as the first papers in an on-line Connected Communities Discussion Papers series. We may also consider publishing outcomes in other formats such as shorter policy briefings where appropriate. At the outset a short summary of the planned review activities will be required, and a short summary of the review outcomes will be required on completion, both written in accessible language for the Programme website. The further development by applicants of the work conducted under the review into academic or other publications suitable for publication is strongly encouraged.

We expect to invite the successful applicants to attend at least one networking meeting with other reviewers and holders of other development projects under the Programme, such as follow-on projects following the recent Connected Communities Summit. Successful applicants will be expected as a condition of funding to be willing to collaborate with other award holders under the Programme, and to attend relevant Programme events wherever possible. Some award holders may also be invited to present summaries of the outcomes of their research at policy seminars or briefings.

The Connected Communities Programme

Connected Communities is a new cross-Research Council research programme, led by the AHRC, being developed in close partnership with the [ESRC](#), [EPSRC](#), [MRC](#) and [NERC](#) and a range of other partners.

The proposed vision for the Programme is “to mobilise the potential for increasingly inter-connected communities to enhance self-reliance, regeneration, sustainability, health & well-being by better connecting research, stakeholders and communities.”

At the core of the Programme will be research to understand the changing nature of communities, in their historical and cultural contexts, and the value of communities in sustaining and enhancing our quality of life. This understanding will inform the development of more effective community-based interventions to address key economic and societal challenges. Engagement with communities at all stages of the research will be a key feature. The programme will seek to connect research expertise and data relevant to communities from across the research base to develop a more holistic understanding of community life.

Following initial consultations three cross-cutting themes have emerged along with five key areas for research.

The three underpinning cross-cutting themes are:

- Understanding Changing Community Cultures and Patterns of Connectivity within and between Communities.
- Connecting Research on Communities
- Connecting Research with Communities and other Stakeholders, Stimulating Research Partnerships & Enhanced Harvesting of Research for the Benefit of Communities

The five areas which have emerged as key foci for the Programme are:

- Community participation, self-reliance and resilience
- Community health and well-being
- Community regeneration and prosperity
- Sustainable community environments, places, spaces and institutions
- Community cultures, diversity and cohesion

Nature of the Reviews

The main element of the reviews is expected to be desk-based reviews of research and research-related literature. Reviews drawing on relevant literature across a number of disciplines are strongly encouraged. Reviews are expected to synthesise research from a range of fields on their selected topic, highlighting common themes and areas of both emerging consensus and disagreement within the research literature. Reviewers will also be expecting to identify emerging areas of research innovation and also potential lacunae in research and to outline their own views on recommendations on potential future opportunities, directions and priorities for research in the field.

Funding of up to £25,000 is available to support this desk-based research on a full economic costs basis with the AHRC meeting 80% of the FEC. This could be undertaken by a single individual, an individual with research assistance, or by a team of reviewers, provided that for team proposals the roles of team members, including overall editorial responsibility, are clearly specified. Desk-based reviews will be expected to start in February / March 2011 and be completed (and submitted a final report) by end of October 2011

However, where appropriate we are also keen to support wider consultation activities as a part of the review process. Such might include, for example:

- Establishment of an expert advisory group
- Commissioning of reviews from other leading experts to contribute to the overall review (this could include experts from outside the UK)
- Commissioning in-depth peer reviews of / commentaries on draft outcomes from other experts
- Holding a workshop to feed into the review process or to discuss the draft outcomes of the review
- Convening an on-line discussion / conference / review process

Additional funding of up to £15,000 may be funded to cover such wider consultation / collaborative activities as a part of reviews.

AHRC may decide to commission more than one review under this heading. If this is the case AHRC may advise on changes to the focus of the proposed review and require the selected reviewers to liaise with each other to ensure that the activities complement each other and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

Review Topics

It will be up to the applicants to propose the precise focus of their review, within one or more of the broad headings below. In undertaking reviews applicants are encouraged to move beyond the literature in any one single domain or discipline.

Reviews with a strong historical perspective, applications which involve an international dimension, looking at research or experience in other countries, and looking at experience in different cultural contexts will be welcomed.

Applicants should explain how their review would add a significant new dimension to any previous similar reviews. All successful applicants will be expected to explore the implications of the review / project for research on contemporary and future communities.

I. Conceptualisations and meanings of 'communities'

The focus of reviews under this heading will be to look at different conceptualisations of 'communities', how these have changed over time and how this can inform our current understandings of communities.

To date the Programme has taken a very broad and general view as to what is considered to be a 'community' namely, as:

"cooperative or interactive groups sharing a virtual or physical environment and aspects of identity (such as location, race, ethnicity, age, history, occupation), culture, belief or other common bonds and/or a shared interest in particular issues or outcomes".

In addition, the Programme has acknowledged that such communities are nested and overlap and emphasised that it is interested both in the relationships within these communities and the interactions between communities and their outcomes for broader society and economy.

However, we recognise the need to develop the way the Programme conceptualises 'communities' and to refine this definition building on research in the field. It is also hoped that reviews under this heading will be a valuable resource for researchers in the field seeking to develop their own conceptualisations of communities.

Reviews under this heading could examine a range of issues relating to the conceptualisation, evolution, and nature of communities as complex cultural phenomena. They could, for example, look at:

- a) ideas about communities in philosophy, politics, religion or different systems of belief;
- b) comparisons of different notions of community in differing cultures around the globe;
- c) differing definitions and forms of communities (such as virtual communities, local or neighbourhood communities, communities of interest, faith communities etc.);
- d) changing (or continuing) beliefs about communities or roles of communities through history;
- e) representations and understanding of communities in creative & performing arts, literature and/ or popular culture;
- f) questions such: what constitutes a community? what are communities for in modern societies? How do they contribute to quality of life? What do flourishing communities look like? How are community values and identities changing?
- g) factors shaping change in communities and the interfaces between these technological, environmental, social, cultural & economic factors (e.g. globalisation, increasing mobility, digital technologies etc.);
- h) the conceptualisation, definition and/or treatment of communities in research / research literature across different disciplines.

II. Changing nature of 'connectivity' within and between communities, including connectivity between communities and their broader environment

Understanding connectivity is a vital to understanding communities; this includes the changing connections which link members within communities, the connections between different communities and the connections between individuals in communities and employment and services (e.g. education, health, housing, transport etc). Communities also provide a key context for exploring the connectivity between major policy issues, which have sometimes tended to be explored in isolation rather than in terms of their inter-linkages. Understanding this network of connectedness - between individuals, communities, services and policy issues – and when and how to enhance connectedness to help communities to move towards more healthy, prosperous and sustainable states, is a key rationale for a *connected* communities research programme. Reviews under this heading may focus on exploring a wide range of concepts and dimensions of this connectivity in community contexts.

Activities under this heading could review research looking at, for example:

- a) the different research perspectives on the forms of connectedness, communication, relationships, networks, clusters, links, ties or bonds, which underpin communities and/or the changing nature of these forms of connectedness over time (e.g. as a result of cultural change, globalisation, increased mobility, new technologies etc);
- b) communities as complex systems (cultural, social, economic, infrastructural etc) or networks of connectivity;
- c) the connections between communities and their environment and community spaces and places, and their role in creating a sense of community belonging, identities and boundaries;
- d) the impact of technological change, including information and communication technologies, on connectivity within and between communities;

- e) the role of connectedness in communities in supporting creativity, innovation, cultural interaction and/or social learning;
- f) the potential negative consequences of connectedness within communities, (such as exclusion of 'others' from communities, gangs and criminal networks).

III. Evolution of ideas about community self-reliance, self-help, resilience, social and community 'capital', empowerment and participation

Reviews under this heading would contribute to the programmes theme on *enhancing community participation, self-reliance and resilience*, through exploring the 'capacity' and 'resources' within communities and the potential to mobilise or exploit these community 'assets'.

Projects / reviews under this heading could, for example, examine:

- a) different political, philosophical, religious or cultural and other systems of belief of relevance to notions of community self-reliance, self-help, resilience, social and/or community 'capital', empowerment and participation and/or related issues such as community rights and responsibilities and/or associated concepts such as communitarianism, community solidarity or localism;
- b) learning from the past in respect to previous approaches to encourage communities to be more self-reliant or resilient, to co-operate or participate, to adapt or change behaviours, to volunteer or donate, or to take on greater responsibility for aspects of their lives and /or the circumstances in which such movements have emerged from communities themselves;
- c) the roles of different actors and organisations (e.g. the state, voluntary sector, community leaders) in generating or sustaining community self-reliance;
- d) approaches to researching such issues, including indicators and/or approaches to assessing or evaluating progress in respect to community self-reliance, self-help, resilience, social and/or community 'capital', empowerment and participation and the health and well-being of communities more generally.

Such reviews would be expected to explore the possible lessons that could be drawn for contemporary policy debates such as the role of community-led initiatives, the Coalition Government's localism and Big Society agendas and/or renewed interest in issues such as mutual, co-operative, co-operative and voluntary forms of organisation.

IV. Conflict within and between communities

Reviews under this heading could explore the potential for conflict within or between communities (either continuation of conflict, re-emergence of old conflicts or new conflicts). Projects could also examine the role of communities and community-based approaches in resolving conflict. Proposals could explore issues of conflict and communities from a wide variety of perspectives such as in the context of past periods of austerity and/or the current economic climate, including pressures on public services, tensions resulting from increasing community diversity and/or mobility and manifestations of global conflicts in communities.

V. Community perspectives and approaches to engaging communities in and with research

A key aim of the Programme is to involve communities and other stakeholders at all stages of the Programme and its research from its early stages in the co-creation and co-production of research, through to achieving real benefits for communities.

Given this focus on engagement with communities at all stages of the research process, the expectation is that reviews under this heading will form an important resource informing either the overall development of an overall community engagement strategy for the Programme and/or researchers conducting community-engaged projects under the Programme. A vast amount of research has been conducted which has involved some form of engagement with communities providing a rich source of potential learning for future research. Activities could add value to existing research by reviewing lessons to be learnt from this past and current research and seeking to identify leading edge theory and/or practice for engagement.

Projects / reviews under this heading could, for example, examine:

- a) insights from research about what communities value highly and consider to be the most important issues and explore how this might inform future research priorities under the Programme;
- b) approaches to community engagement and/or co-production at both: a strategic programme level in setting funding agendas and priorities - with a view to making recommendations for the Programme; and/or at a project level – with a view to producing outcomes of relevance to researchers undertaking future research projects under the Programme;
- c) questions of why to engage, when to engage, who to engage with and/or how to engage appropriately;
- d) the specific issues raised by engaging with communities compared to engagement with other publics;
- e) the potential role of different organisations, institutions or intermediaries in research engagement with communities or different ‘spaces’ or ‘places’ for engagement between research and communities;
- f) the many broader issues raised by community engagement such as: the ethics of engagement; issues of power and voice; the role of researchers in community engagement activities (e.g. researchers as activists, facilitators, observers etc.); consent; confidentiality; language & (mis)communication; ownership (e.g. of research outcomes), IPR, expectations about information sharing; management of expectations; and, representativeness and representation of communities.;
- g) new methods of approaches to engagement with communities for example exploiting digital technologies or different forms of creative practice or performance to stimulate engagement;
- h) ways to engage with diverse or ‘hard to reach’ communities.

We wish to encourage innovation in addressing the above themes and will welcome proposals which propose alternative approaches provided that they would make a central contribution broadly to the above issues. The potential for commissioning further reviews on other topics will be kept under review as the Programme develops.

Eligibility

Applications may fall within the remit of any Research Council.

Proposals which cross disciplinary and Research Council boundaries will be welcomed.

This competition is open to members of the academic and academic-related staff of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) directly funded by HEFCE, DEL, HEFCW and SFC, and AHRC-recognised Independent Research Organisations (IROs). A list of eligible IROs can be found on the AHRC website at:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/IndependentResearchOrganisations.aspx>.

Staff at Research Council Institutes may also be eligible to apply.

At the time of application, applicants must have either a contract of employment with their Research Organisation in place for the duration of the award or an assurance from the submitting institution that, *if the proposal is successful*, a contract of employment will be given that covers the period of the award. By submitting an application to this competition, the institution is confirming that the applicant will be granted the necessary contract and that they will provide accommodation and facilities for the Fellow such as would be provided for established members of staff. Applicants on either full-time or part-time contracts may apply.

Applications will be considered from early career post-doctoral researchers, mid-career and more senior researchers. However, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they are of at least postdoctoral standing. Applicants do not need to hold a doctorate, provided that their CV demonstrates that they have equivalent experience to undertake research at post-doctoral level, for example, by demonstrating significant past relevant research outputs and achievements.

Early career researchers should also have at least a year of post-doctoral experience in an academic/research environment or to have an equivalent level of professional/practice experience of direct relevance to the proposed research. In the case of very early career post-doctoral researchers, applicants are encouraged to consider the possibility of working with a more senior academic who could provide support as a co-investigator or as mentor and advisor and to include details of any such arrangement within their application.

How to apply

Applicants may apply for up to £25,000 to cover the costs of undertaking the review plus up to a further £15,000 to cover any networking or collaborative activity. All proposals must be costed on the basis of the full economic costs (fEC) of the project up to this maximum limit. For applicants based at HEIs, the time of reviewers should normally be costed as directly allocated or directly incurred staff costs. If the proposal is successful, the AHRC will contribute 80% of these costs with the remainder to be met by the Research Organisation. Therefore applicants should ensure that approval from the host institution has been secured at the point of application.

Proposals should be submitted by email to connectedcommunities@ahrc.ac.uk by **5pm on Friday November 26th 2010. Awards must be completed (and submitted a final report) by end of October 2011.** Please note that in order for the AHRC to coordinate any other work surrounding the activities, **all awards must have a start date between 1st February and 1st March 2011 inclusive.** Starting certificates must be returned to AHRC within 7 days of the start date.

Application forms can be downloaded from the AHRC website at <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/connectedcommunities.aspx>. The form should be completed and submitted along with a Case for Support. The Case for Support should be no more than 4 sides of A4 outlining the rationale for the proposed activity, how it will add value to current activities, a description of the proposed activities to be

undertaken, and an outline of the expected outputs and dissemination plans as appropriate. Please ensure you use a font no smaller than size 11.

Other attachments should include:

- An appendix of up to 2 sides of A4 providing a breakdown of, and justification for, the costs requested.
- A short CV of no more than one side of A4 detailing research experience and publications of the applicants that are relevant to the proposed review area.
- If collaborative activities are proposed, an additional attachment of up to 2 sides of A4 providing details of any planned collaborators and collaborative activities should also be included.

Further information on how to complete the application form and information required can be found in **Annex A**.

Funded applicants will be expected to produce a discussion paper outlining the outcomes of their activities upon the completion of the award (and by 31 October 2011 at the latest). The report should be in a format suitable for publication on the Connected Communities webpages. The AHRC may wish to discuss other forms of publication or dissemination with successful applicants as appropriate and successful applicants may also be invited to attend other related events to report on and discuss the outcomes of this funded activity. Award Holders will also need to complete an expenditure statement at the end of the award in order for the AHRC to reconcile the project costs. Further information will be provided by the AHRC towards the end of the award period.

Award announcements

Proposals will be subject to light touch peer review by a small panel involving AHRC senior management and other experts as appropriate.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their proposal by mid January 2011.

Contacts

Enquiries regarding the type of activities that can be supported through this call for proposal should be directed to either:

Gail Lambourne, Strategy and Development Manager (Cultures and Heritage)

g.lambourne@ahrc.ac.uk or 01793 416082

or

Karen Buchanan, Portfolio Manager (Cultures and Heritage)

k.buchanan@ahrc.ac.uk or 01793 416083

Enquiries regarding the application process, eligibility criteria etc should be directed to:

Wendy May, Programmes Coordinator (Cultures and Heritage)

w.may@ahrc.ac.uk or 01793 416040

Annex A

Application Form

Complete details of the applicant, Research Organisation, Project Title, Start date and duration of the project.

All costs must be itemised separately within the budget breakdown section of the application form. You should include costs of the salary for the Principle Investigator and any Co-Investigators or Research assistants, for the time spent overseeing and providing intellectual input to the activities.

Other costs that can be included are; the cost of setting up and coordinating the activities (for example, administrative support), casual or temporary research assistance, estates and indirect costs, costs involved in organising events and travel and subsistence costs.

All costs should fall under one of the following headings:

Directly Incurred

These are costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project, are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an audit record. They include:

- **Staff** – Payroll costs requested for staff, full or part-time, who will work on the project and whose time can be supported by a full audit trail during the life of the project.
- **Travel and Subsistence** – Funds for travel and subsistence for use by staff who work on the project where these are required by the nature of the work.
- **Equipment** – The cost of individual items of equipment dedicated to the project and costing more than £3,000 (including VAT).
- **Other costs** – Costs of other items dedicated to the project, including consumables, books, survey fees, purchase/hire of vehicles, publication costs or recruitment and advertising costs for staff directly employed on the project. Items of equipment costing less than £3,000 should also be included under this heading.

Directly Allocated

These are the costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities. They are charged to projects on the basis of estimates rather than actual costs and do not represent actual costs on a project by project basis. They include:

- **Investigators** – Proposals will need to show the salary costs if their time charged to the project is based on estimates rather than actual costs.
- **Estates** – These costs may include building and premises costs, basic services and utilities, and any clerical staff and equipment maintenance or operational costs not already included under other cost headings.
- **Other Directly Allocated** – These costs may include, for example, the costs of other casual or temporary research staff, technical, administrative and other support staff, or access to institutional research facilities such as equipment and IT systems.

Indirect Costs

These include non-specific costs charged across all projects based on estimates that are not otherwise included as Directly Allocated costs. They include the costs of the Research Organisation's administration, such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services.

Indexation

All costings should be at current prices, inclusive of VAT and other taxes where applicable, with no allowance for inflation. Any allowance for inflation that has been included in the

full economic costing of the proposal by the Research Organisation must be excluded. The AHRC will include an allowance for inflation if a grant is awarded.

All the following documents should be completed in a font no smaller than size 11. Please also note the permitted document lengths.

Case for Support

You should include a 'Case for Support' document, which should be no more than 4 sides of A4. This document should outline the rationale for the proposed activity, how it will add value to current activities, a description of the proposed activities to be undertaken, and an outline of the expected outputs and dissemination plans as appropriate. You should structure your case for support using the following headings:

Rationale and context

You should describe clearly the rationale, approach and context of the activities. How will it build on, and add value to, the existing research base? How will it advance knowledge, understanding and/or knowledge exchange in the area? How will it identify emerging areas of research innovation or potential gaps in current research? How will the review or scoping study explore the implications for research on contemporary and future communities?

Aims and objectives

You should describe the aims and objectives of the activities. What do you hope to have achieved from the Review or Scoping study?

Contribution to the Connected Communities programme

How will the activities contribute to the Connected Communities Programme? Which of the review topics will the project contribute to? How will the research relate to the core themes of the Connected Communities Programme?

Description of activities

Please describe the planned activities, outlining the proposed approach or methods and the rationale for selecting them.

Management and Co-ordination

How will the activities be managed, coordinated and delivered? If the application includes additional review assistance or administrative support, please outline the activities and responsibilities for each post.

Outcomes

Alongside the Review or Scoping study what are the other expected outcomes and outputs of the activities? To which audiences will the activities and their outcomes be of interest? How will any outputs be discussed with, and/or communicated and disseminated to, those audiences? Other than publishing the reviews in the on-line Connected Communities discussion papers, what other potential publications and outputs could there be?

Please state clearly the word count at the end of the document.

Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae should include basic information about education, employment history, and academic responsibilities. The CV should be no more than one side of A4 and should detail research experience and publications of the applicants that are relevant to the proposed review area.

Collaborating Activities

If collaborative activities are proposed, an additional attachment of no more than 2 sides of A4 should be included. Please outline potential partners or who could be involved in the activities, including research collaborators and any proposed knowledge exchange/ stakeholder partners, or engagement with communities or community groups. Please describe the role / input of collaborators in the activities.

Justification of Resources

All costs associated with the project must be justified in the Justification of Resources.

Applicants should:

- Explain why the indicated resources are needed, taking into account the nature and complexity of the activities proposed. Note that it is not sufficient merely to list what is required
- Refer to the breakdown of resources in the summary fund headings Directly Incurred and Directly Allocated
- Estates costs, Indirect costs, Fellowship salary costs, and some other Directly Allocated costs such as general technical services do not need to be justified

The Justification of resources should not exceed two sides of A4.