

7 December 2021

Agenda Item: 4

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE

UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to confirm the outcome of the submission made to Government under the UK Community Renewal Fund and to outline the next stages in delivery.

Information

2. As a Lead Authority, Nottinghamshire County Council was offered the opportunity to make a submission under the UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF), noting that the three district areas of Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood were announced as Priority Areas for support. The process, timescales and details of a proposed submission to Government were set out in a report to the Council's Policy Committee on the 17th June 2021, where the submission was approved to be made to Government by the deadline of 18th June 2021.
3. The decisions on the UKCRF nationally were announced on the 3rd November 2021, with the County Council securing approval for four of the projects submitted, summarised as follows:

Project	Lead Partner	UKCRF Secured
East Midlands Accelerator	East Midlands Chamber of Commerce	£1,736,839
Good Work	South Yorkshire Housing Association	£542,691
Newstart	Groundworks	£1,207,190
Volunteer it Yourself	VIY CiC	£459,000
TOTAL		£3,945,720

4. Outline details of the successful individual projects are included within the Appendix A, but together, the four supported projects will see:
 - Over 750 businesses supported
 - Around 900 training skills and job beneficiaries
 - 540 young people benefiting from direct practical skills and job experience
 - Around 25 community and public sector projects benefiting from support
5. Further details regarding the agreement and monitoring arrangements were offered alongside the announcement which are the subject of review at the time of writing, but the following are of particular note:

- Given the delays with the announcement, the project completion date has been extended from 31st March 2022 to 30th June 2022.
 - The announcement included an agreement to be signed within 10 days of receipt and this has been secured in the light of the recommendations agreed at Policy Committee in June 2021. This agreement reflects the Council's responsibilities as Lead Authority. Early discussions with the successful projects have confirmed that its terms and conditions will be mirrored in the agreement with each project. There are a number of expectations and requirements within the agreement which were unknown at the time of submission as this and guidance on monitoring requirements was still to be issued. The agreement is non-negotiable but aspects are subject to interpretation and clarification.
 - Each project lead has confirmed at this stage that it can deliver the project as assessed and approved, with a re-review of the risks and respective delivery models being undertaken.
 - To date, no feedback has been received on the unsuccessful projects included within the submission. The Government's revised "Frequently Asked Questions" suggest that broad feedback will be offered at a future stage.
6. Immediately on receipt, all projects included within the County Council's submission were alerted as to the outcome, with early meetings having taken place collectively and individually with all successful projects. Those that were unfortunately unsuccessful have been informed, with an undertaking offered to share any reasons offered at a later stage and to explore any alternative routes for projects should further funding become available.
 7. All the projects will be delivering support across the three district priority areas, with broadly equally proportional funding (and hence proportional impact) being available to each area. The exception being the Good Work project which, while impacting again on all three areas, has proportionally greater spend with the Bassetlaw area.
 8. Three of the successful projects have also secured support for delivery from and within other neighbouring or nearby Lead Authorities. Early discussions have taken place to explore a commonality of reporting arrangements within the bounds of the national agreement and the reporting expectations of Government, designed to secure a consistency in the required reporting arrangements but with an absolute focus on clear and additional delivery impacting on the County's 3 priority areas.
 9. As Lead Authority, the County Council will be working closely with the projects throughout their delivery, both individually and collectively, to ensure they impact as best as possible upon the local communities. The Council will ensure that synergies between the lead partners and their respective delivery models are explored and will work to maximise the links with complementary and related activity across the area. The three district councils remain engaged and will support delivery locally. Introductions have been made and the project leads will be attending existing networks to review links and secure support from other key organisations active in the three areas.
 10. From an operational perspective, the Council is establishing the financial and grant-making processes and will develop an agreement to be secured with each lead partner. The appropriate monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be put in place via the Growth, Infrastructure and Development Team who will also manage the relationship with each project, the wider partners and with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Progress will be reported to this Committee as the package of measures is delivered over

forthcoming months. Members may wish to offer an invitation to the project leads to attend a future meeting of this Committee to hear more and to review progress.

11. Overall, given the total resources available under the UKCRF nationally and the scale of submissions made across the UK, this represents a very successful outcome for the County Council's submission, seeing approval for a package of measures which will have a positive impact on Nottinghamshire's three priority areas. Compared to others in the immediate sub-region, the Council has secured more resources for project delivery, noting that some areas have fewer priority areas. Delivery across all 3 priority areas together brings strong efficiency gains, maximising local impact and will allow for a strong integration of the projects' activities, aligned with the existing skills, business and employment landscape.
12. In addition, the UKCRF process is being seen by the Government as a precursor to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a further commitment to which was made within the Chancellor's Autumn Budget and Spending Review on the 27th October 2021. The County Council's role in managing the UKCRF submission has been recognised through this process, and sets a positive and important tone for future funding opportunities.

Other Options Considered

13. The Council chose to engage with the UKCRF to bring additional resources to the County in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and to address long-standing levelling-up opportunities in the County's priority areas. The "do nothing" option was previously considered as inappropriate and the outcome of the submission is to be welcomed.

Reasons for Recommendations

14. The outcome of the UKCRF submission offers the opportunity to support investment in the Nottinghamshire economy, its businesses and its people. The positive response from project partners is welcome and the outcome offers recognition from Government that the Council is well-positioned to deliver the package of measures, working collaboratively with its district councils and key partners. The Council will be taking forward the management responsibilities as referenced throughout this report and in the recommendations.
15. Additional staffing capacity will be required in order to undertake the Lead Authority function and ensure contractual monitoring and reporting is completed.

Statutory and Policy Implications

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

17. Within the CRF budget there is £60,000 capacity payment plus ongoing management fee available for the role of Lead Authority. The Lead Authority management costs are recouped

as a percentage of project claims and will be claimed retrospectively, but the capacity payment has already been received. The costs of the Lead Authority will include staffing, travel and marketing and any other support required to ensure the best outcomes for Nottinghamshire.

18. In order to undertake the role of Lead Authority, one full-time administrator (on a fixed-term basis for the duration of the project) will be required. This post is additional to the current staffing level. A detailed job description will need to be devised and reviewed for job grading purposes

19. The total grant award will be paid to the Council proportionately, part up-front and part during delivery. Discussions will take place with each project to ensure payments are made promptly, subject to the agreement and to support any cash flow issues over project delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that this Committee:

- 1) Welcomes the outcome of the submission made to Government under the UK Community Renewal Fund;
- 2) Notes the on-going discussions with the project leads and wider partners to support the delivery of the projects;
- 3) Receives regular reports on progress with the funded projects and considers inviting the lead applicants to a future meeting.
- 4) Approves the establishment of one new full-time equivalent administrative post (on a fixed-term basis for the duration of the project) to enable the County Council to undertake the role of Lead Authority function. The costs will be met from within the CRF management fee.

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 12/11/2021)

20. The information within the report falls within the remit of the Economic Development and Asset Management Committee. The report provides an update, and Committee should consider if they require any further information or actions.

Financial Comments (RWK 15/11/2021)

21. The report informs the Committee of the award of £3,945,720 of funding under the UKCRF. The award of funding relates to 4 projects to be delivered by partners and the grant funding will be passed from the County Council to the lead partners. The County Council and the lead partners will also enter into agreements to ensure appropriate financial, grant-making, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms are put in place. Therefore there should be no additional financial implications for the County Council.

22. As well as initially receiving the grant funding referred to above the County Council will also receive a sum of £60,000 capacity funding to reflect the work undertaken by the County Council. This represents additional funding to the County Council.

23. In addition, a small element of each project award may also be used for management costs as may be required. Such sums will need to be agreed between the County Council and project leads and may represent further additional funding to the County Council.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here are available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- The Government's Announcement on the UKCRF: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-successful-bids>
- The UKCRF Grant Funding Agreement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-grant-funding-agreement>
- Updated Government FAQs: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-community-renewal-fund-frequently-asked-questions>

Electoral Divisions and Members affected

- Members across the district areas of Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood