

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
THE UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on work undertaken to date to develop a submission to Government under the UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF), report on the outcome of the Council's CRF evaluation process and to seek approval of the recommended projects to be included in the Council's submission for the funding.

Information

2. This report summarises the proposed bids to be submitted by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) to the Government's UKCRF. As a key pillar for levelling up and recovering from the impact Covid19 has had on businesses and communities, the submission will provide valuable investment. The projects to be include in the submission and referenced within this report will enable Nottinghamshire's priority places to unleash their potential, instil pride, have a positive impact on the County and support the Government's Levelling Up agenda.
3. Some information relating to this report is not for publication by virtue of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 because the information relates to the financial and business affairs of the bidders seeking to participate in the Council's submission for the UK Community Renewal Fund. Having regard to all the circumstances, on balance the public interest in disclosing the information does not outweigh the reason for exemption because divulging the information would add a limited amount to public understanding or the issues but would significantly damage the commercial position of the bidders. The exempt information is set out in Table 1 of the exempt appendix.
4. On the 21st April 2021, Policy Committee considered a report which set out the themes and expectations of the UKCRF and agreed that:
 - The Council undertake the UKCRF "Lead Authority" role as set out by Government; and
 - Council officers work with appropriate partners to prepare and accept potential projects for UKCRF for inclusion within a bid to Government, for consideration at the next Policy Committee meeting.
5. The UKCRF is governed by detailed guidance that requires the Council to put in place an open call for projects, with a focus on the 3 priority places of Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood. Maximum amounts of £3M of revenue funding per area were indicated as being available, giving a total potential submission to Government of £9M. The call for projects was launched on the 12th April with a deadline for applications of the 14th May 2021. In order to maximise the limited time available to applicants to prepare and develop their applications, a substantive package of support from the County Council was put in place, including:
 - A co-ordinated communications package, with press releases, promotion over social media and alerts to subscribers to business and community newsletters;
 - Engaging with partners and agencies likely to be interested in the UKCRF to maximise impact and to encourage partners to collaborate;
 - The establishment of a dedicated webpage confirming the full details of how to apply;

- A responsive Frequently Asked Questions tab offering additional insight into the local priorities and the Government’s expectations, as well as responding to all the questions asked by potential applicants;
- A live webinar offering a briefing on the UKCRF, recorded and made available on the webpage, offering additional insight into the Council’s approach and timetable. 74 organisations registered for the session.

The Assessment Evaluation Process

6. A total of 37 applications were received by the deadline, seeking a total of over £29.2M in UKCRF support. The UKCRF guidance sets out the following clear expectations for receiving applications, for undertaking their assessment and determining which projects should be included within the submission to Government. The guidance was followed closely with the process being summarised as follows :
 - a) Gateway Check – assessed as a “pass or fail” process, with 5 applications having failed at this stage;
 - b) Formal Assessment – being a two-stage scoring process, designed firstly to look at the strategic fit of projects with the local and national themes and priorities and secondly, to review the deliverability and risks associated with applications. This resulted ultimately in the development of a final list of “appointable” projects out of the 32;
 - c) Project Ranking and Selection – where the “appointable” projects were graded, based on the combined scores across the two stages of assessment and their impact on the priority areas.
7. The above process was led by the County Council, facilitated with the support of the three district councils having been identified as priority places and by appointed consultants. The three councils supported the County Council with the strategic fit aspects and the consultants with the deliverability aspects. This process ensured that the key expectations of the process were met, being transparently and independently assessed. The Government guidance places great stress on how the UKCRF approach should be managed, seeking assurances and evidence within the submission as to how the open call and the assessment process were each facilitated. The Government guidance was followed closely throughout.

The UKCRF Opportunity for Nottinghamshire

8. Noting the notional amount of resources likely to be available for the Top Priority areas combined, of the 32 projects passing the Gateway Checks, a total of nine projects have been prioritised for inclusion within the submission to Government, comprising just over £12,559,985 of UKCRF investment. The details of the nine projects are referenced in the Exempt Appendix. The breakdown of geographical and thematic impact of the nine projects is summarised at Appendix A.
9. It is proposed that the projects submitted to Government exceeds the £9M of funding that has been notionally identified for the three priority places of Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood combined. This “over-bidding” approach demonstrates the extent of the healthy demand for support and also offers the Government a wider pool of projects from which it will select its final choices. Collectively, if approved, the proposed nine projects should deliver the following outputs:

Indicator	Total
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Jobs Created or Safeguarded	2,228
No.s Engaged in Job Searching After Support	1,819
New Businesses Created	233
No. of Organisation's de-carbonisation plans	115
New Product Development within Businesses	607
Direct Business Support Sessions	660
No.s Receiving Life Skills Support	1,283
No.s Into Education and Training	2,271
No.s Gaining a Qualification After Support	1,690
No. of Increased Visitor Numbers	52,660
Amount of Sq M Buildings Renovated	5,000

Note: The above table is based on the cumulative contribution of the nine highest ranked projects to be included in the submission, spread across the respective themes, with reference to the Government's Core Outcome Indicators. A number of projects address multiple outcomes.

10. In preparing the bid, evaluations were undertaken in accordance with the the published guidance which will itself be used by the Government (with appropriate Ministerial discretion) to select the project(s) it wishes to support.
11. Subject to the approval of the recommendations made in this report, it is understood that a decision will be made by Government in late July 2021. Preparations will continue to ensure that the Council has the legal agreements prepared and the financial management and grant processes in place to manage those projects securing Government approval. Details of the grant agreements, the precise monitoring, reporting and evaluation arrangements and the capacity funding available to support this process are awaited. This report asks that £30,000 be set aside from the existing Major Programmes Delivery Budget for this purpose in the interim.
12. All UKCRF supported projects are expected to be fully completed by the end of March 2022.

Other Options Considered

13. Following the approval of the report to this Committee on the 21st April, the "Do Nothing" option was considered inappropriate and the Council has engaged fully with the UKCRF process to support the development of applications and to bring forward a submission to Government.

Reasons for Recommendations

14. The UKCRF offers opportunities to support further investment in the Nottinghamshire economy, its people and its communities. The Council and applicants have responded to the challenge to develop a submission and the projects proposed for inclusion will bring significant activity and positive outcomes to the County. In addition, with the County Council leading on the submission, working positively with its partners and being requested to manage the administration of the agreed funding programme, the submission presents an opportunity for the Council to demonstrate its credentials in managing future programmes, notably with the UKCRF being trailed as a forerunner to anticipated UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. 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

16. The previous report to this Committee noted that, if approved, the Council could be in receipt of up to £9 Million of UKCRF funding, approving its receipt and management as Lead Authority. The final submission as drafted proposes projects seeking over £12,559,985 in UKCRF grant; the final award being determined by Government.

17. Assuming the submission to Government attracts support, the timetable for project delivery will be tight over the remainder of this current financial year. The precise details regarding the liabilities facing the projects and in particular the Council as Lead Authority have yet to be shared by Government and in that light, it is proposed that the Committee approves the anticipated additional expenditure to approved projects and delegates consideration of any wider financial implications to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Policy Committee:

- a) Approves the submission of a bid to Government for UKCRF support for Nottinghamshire, comprising the nine projects as referenced in the Exempt Appendix;
- b) Agrees to “overbid” to the UKCRF against the notional £9m that has been made available for the three Priority Places;
- c) Agrees to set aside a funding requirement of up to £30,000 from the Major Programmes delivery work budget to enable the submission of the bid;
- d) Approves the additional expenditure referred to in paragraph 16 and delegates authority to the Corporate Director, Place to approve the process and terms, including consideration of any wider financial implications of managing a successful bid, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

COUNCILLOR BEN BRADLEY MP

Leader of the Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Matthew Neal, Service Director, Investment & Growth ext. 73822

Constitutional Comments (SSR 08.06.2021)

18. The recommendations set out in the report are matter that may be determined by Policy Committee.

Financial Comments (KP 28.05.2021)

19. The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

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

- *The UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus* alongside wider technical and methodology notes and the *Assessment Criteria* are available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus>
- The County Council's own webpage confirming the details of how to make applications and associated supportive information is available at:
<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/business-community/community-and-voluntary-sector/uk-community-renewal-fund>
- *Delivering Major Programmes of Work and Bids for Funding – Place Department*, Report to Policy Committee, 17th March 2021, Agenda Item 6
- *The UK Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Funds*, Report to Policy Committee, 21st April 2021, Agenda Item 5

Electoral Divisions and Members affected

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