

## **Appendix 5b: COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND SUMMARY**

### **1) Fund Background**

The UK pays for EU structural funds through its EU Budget contributions, made of UK taxpayer's money. Local areas will continue to spend investment from EU structural funds until the end of 2023.

Further to Brexit, the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** will be a new flagship policy in delivering on this Government's commitment to level up the country. This new Fund, to be launched in 2022, will operate throughout the UK and play a part in uniting and levelling up the whole country. It will target people and places most in need across the UK. To help the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, this government is providing funding in 2021-22 through the **UK Community Renewal Fund**. This Fund aims to support **communities to pilot programmes** and new approaches, aligning national and local provision.

The UK Community Renewal Fund aims to **“support people and communities most in need across the UK, creating opportunities to trial new approaches (pilot programmes) and innovative ideas at the local level”**.

Through this Fund, UK government will work directly with local partners, so that the people that know their places best central to the decisions that impact their areas and lives. To ensure that local communities are best placed to do this, the UK Community Renewal Fund is being provided for 2021-22 – an additional £220 million of investment. This Fund, which this prospectus outlines, will help support local areas to pilot imaginative new approaches and programmes that unleash their potential, instil pride, and prepare them to take full advantage of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund when it launches in 2022

### **2). Objectives of the UK Community Renewal Fund**

- **Enabling innovation through pilots**

The UK Community Renewal Fund will support communities to pilot programmes and new approaches ahead of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This includes removing barriers that people face in accessing skills and local labour market opportunities, building the evidence base for future interventions and exploring the viability of new ideas.

- **Levelling up and creating opportunity**

The UK Community Renewal Fund is a competitive process with no pre-set eligibility. In Great Britain, to level up and create opportunity across the UK for people and 100 priority places have been identified based on an index of economic resilience.

### **Investment priorities**

To nurture innovative thinking and offer flexibility, projects may align with one, or deliver across several, of the following investment priorities:

1. **Investment in skills**
2. **Investment for local business**
3. **Investment in communities and place**
4. **Supporting people into employment**

90% of funding available through the UK Community Renewal Fund is revenue funding.

**A range of projects by theme and size can be submitted but it is encouraged that to maximise impact and deliverability, larger projects of £500,000 are submitted.**

All project activity must be able to be completed by March 2022.

### **1. Investment in skills**

The Fund will help equip people with the skills they need to seize new opportunities and ensure their local communities are prosperous and productive. This includes equipping people with the skills they need to capitalise on the opportunities and needs of their local area and meet the needs of an increasingly green and digital economy.

Innovative projects are sought that address current and emerging local skills needs and are complementary to broader place-based investment. Bids may include, but are not limited to interventions that address:

- Work-based training
- Retraining, upskilling or reskilling members of the workforce
- Promoting the advancement of digital skills and inclusion

### **2. Investment for local business**

Targeted support for local business can help local residents through increased employment, better training and in-work opportunities and creating new entrepreneurial ventures.

Projects that target support for under-represented groups and community-level interventions that can increase opportunity for all, including coastal are sought.

Investment in pilots can also help create an innovation culture across the UK. This could be through finding new ways to promote green and tech adoption, commercialisation or helping create a pathway for upskilling local businesses through collaborations between higher education and small businesses.

Innovative pilots and projects are sought that address local business and innovation needs. Bids may include, but are not limited to, interventions that address:

- Supporting entrepreneurs and helping businesses with potential to create more job opportunities for current employees or take on new employees

- Encouraging businesses to develop their innovation potential
- Supporting decarbonisation measures

### **3. Investment in communities and place**

Communities are at the core of cultural and economic heritage and identity. The fund aims to invest further to maximise opportunities to bring people together, build the social fabric and boost recovery and resilience. In turn, this will create places where people want to work, visit and live. Investing in improving, protecting and creating community and natural assets can boost pride and wellbeing, drive productivity, attract and retain talent, and nurture a unique sense of place.

Proposals for innovative pilots and projects that address community needs and support local places. Bids may include, but are not limited to, interventions that address:

- Feasibility studies for delivering net-zero and local energy projects
- Exploring opportunity for promoting culture-led regeneration and community development – for example investing in culture focused feasibility studies and community facilities to attract people to places, including city centres and rural and coastal towns.
- Improving green spaces and preserving important local assets

### **4. Supporting people into employment**

There needs action to reduce the additional barriers some people face to employment in order to enable them to take advantage of the economic opportunities as the UK moves forward.

Investment here will help places provide local, tailored, wrap-around support to those furthest from the labour market – focusing on individuals who find it difficult to engage with mainstream provision or for whom mainstream provision is not an option. This will support people in overcoming a variety of additional barriers to employment or mainstream programmes, which they are unable to fully utilise without additional support.

Bids should also demonstrate how their proposal will complement mainstream activity, such as the Kickstart Scheme, Restart Programme and other Plan for Jobs initiatives, highlighting what wrap-around support is being proposed, and how the target audience will be identified and engaged.

Pilots should draw upon and enhance multi-agency delivery teams, including the community and voluntary sector along with public provision. They should bring together a range of service providers to embed and provide a coordinated service to support individuals along the journey to employment.

Proposals for innovative pilots and projects are sought that focus on delivering bespoke programmes, utilising a needs-based approach to support individuals to overcome their multiple or complex barriers which inhibit their ability to gain employment. These pilots should support those most disengaged from the labour market. Bids may include, but are not limited to, interventions that address:

- Supporting people to engage with local services which support them on their journey towards employment
- Identifying and addressing any potential barriers these individuals may face in gaining employment or moving closer to the labour market
- Raising aspirations, supporting individuals to access Plan for Jobs employment support, jobs and find sustainable employment
- Supporting people to gain the basic skills they need to develop their potential for sustainable work
- Testing what works in helping people move towards work

These pilot projects should enable an evidence base to understand what really works in supporting people into employment. They should test ways of working collaboratively at a local level, taking a multi-agency approach, working with Jobcentre Plus and including the community and voluntary sector to provide the complete suite of support that those with additional or complex barriers might face.

### **3). Application Process**

Lead authorities (Blackpool Council) should **invite project proposals** from a range of local applicants, including local district councils, voluntary and community sector organisations, umbrella business groups and local education providers including universities. Lead authorities should then **appraise** these projects and **prioritise** a shortlist of projects up to a maximum of **£3 million per place** for submission to UK government with a **bid deadline of 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021**. Late July successful projects are targeted to be informed.

#### **Timetable**

Included here is a summary of the UK Community Renewal Fund timelines and key dates.

#### **3 March 2021**

- UK government publishes the UK Community Renewal Fund prospectus.
- During March, lead authorities launch invite bids from for their places.

#### **1 April 2021**

- Bid assessment and coordination capacity funding can be incurred by lead authorities of the 100 priority places in Great Britain.

#### **18 June 2021**

- Lead authorities submit a shortlist of project bids to UK government for assessment.

**Late July 2021 onwards**

- UK government announces successful projects for the UK Community Renewal Fund.
- First tranche of funding flows to lead authorities

**November and December 2021**

- Mid-point monitoring reviews of projects with lead authorities

**31 March 2022**

- UK Community Renewal Fund finishes.

The lead authority of each of the 100 priority places will receive capacity funding (£20,000) to help them with this bid co-ordination and appraisal.

A detailed selection criteria is in place based around Strategic fit, Deliverability, effectiveness, and efficiency

**Leveraging other funds**

The UK government encourages applicants and lead authorities to **maximise the leverage** of other funding. It is recognised that not all projects or applicants will be able to secure match funding, and it is not expected for employment support projects. However, value for money is a selection consideration. This will take the overall funding package for each project, including any match funding, into account.

Following conclusion of the selection process, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will enter into agreements with Lead authorities – for an agreed package of projects