

Contextual information

6. The 2021 Budget Statement 2021 announced a range of measures to support recovery following Covid-19, including a £220million Community Renewal Fund to increase funding for projects that support people and places across the UK, growing local economic and supporting communities. The purpose of the fund is to support communities to pilot programmes and new approaches ahead of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will replace European Union structure funding following the UK's departure from the EU.
7. To ensure the UK Community Renewal Fund reached the most in need, the Government identified 100 local authorities as priority places. Prioritisation was based on an index of economic resilience.
8. For the purposes of the UK Community Renewal Fund, 'place' is defined at the district, unitary or borough. None of the districts or boroughs in Hampshire are included on the priority places list.
9. Although the fund will prioritise applications from the top 100 places, applications from non-priority places that demonstrate a strong strategic fit to the Community Renewal Prospectus and are deliverable and effective may also receive funding.
10. The fund is primarily revenue and project applications need to focus on the following priorities:
 - investment in skills;
 - investment for local business;
 - investment in communities and place; and
 - supporting people into employment.

Lead Authorities

11. Hampshire County Council has been designated by Government as a Lead Authority.
12. The role of a Lead Authority is to invite project proposals from a range of local organisations and appraise the projects based on the criteria set out in the UK Community Fund Prospectus. Lead Authorities are required to submit a report to Government demonstrating an open invitation process and that objective and transparent assessment and prioritisation of proposals was conducted, along with any shortlisted projects prioritised, for Government to assess.
13. Lead Authorities are also required to enter into a funding agreement with Government to deliver any successful bids, issue agreements to successful bidders, and undertake monitoring and assurance activity.

14. Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council and Isle of Wight Council have also been designated as Lead Authorities. Councils do not have to accept the designation and can opt out of the fund. Southampton City Council and Isle of Wight Council opted out of the fund.

Progress

15. Although Hampshire districts and boroughs do not feature in the top 100 priority places the Community Renewal Fund provides an opportunity to help shape the future Shared Prosperity Fund prospectus. The fund creates an opportunity for organisations to come together, to work collaboratively and develop proposals and projects based on local need.
16. An officer led 'virtual' Project Team was established in April 2021, led by Economic Development, tasked with delivering the required roles and responsibilities of a Lead Authority.
17. As part of the engagement activity, district and borough councils, universities, and key community and voluntary organisations were invited to a seminar. One to one meetings were also offered to district and boroughs.
18. An invitation to bid was sent out to key stakeholders including business support organisations, community and voluntary sector organisations, colleges, private sector organisations and partners. Information was shared across the partners communication networks, in newsletters, and online. The Business Hampshire social media channels and website were also used to disseminate the invitation to submit bids.
19. Three themed webinars were held, approximately 120 people attended the webinars and had the opportunity to ask questions and receive guidance on the process.
20. To ensure transparency, the County Council website included content about the Community Renewal Fund, all the presentations, and all the questions and answers from the webinars.
21. The deadline for applications to the County Council was 21 May 2021. This was to allow time to evaluate and assess the bids in order to meet the Government deadline of 18 June 2021.

Assessment of bids

22. A virtual assessment team has been established to evaluate the bids. All bids will be assessed against the gateway criteria set out in the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus as published by the Government. This is based on a pass or fail assessment as to whether:
 - the project will be delivered by 31 March 2022;
 - the project responds to a need identified in the Prospectus; and

- the project does not duplicate other national or local provision.

23. Projects that pass the gateway criteria will then be fully assessed against the evaluation criteria set out in the UK Community Renewal Fund assessment documentation, which includes:

Strategic fit

- how the project contributes to the overall strategic objectives of the UK Community Renewal Fund;
- to what extent can the project inform the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through transferable learning or opportunity to scale up for local partners and UK Government?;
- what is the extent to which the project demonstrates innovation in service delivery?; and
- how the project responds to local needs.

Deliverability, effectiveness and efficiency

- does the applicant have relevant experience in delivering projects of this type?;
- does the applicant have in place the resources necessary to deliver the project, including any match funding?;
- are the milestones realistic and is the project deliverable within the stated timescale?; and
- what are the risks that the project cannot be delivered in time, within budget or outputs and results and their mitigation?

Evaluation

- how well the project meets the UK Community Renewal Fund requirement to provide a well-developed and credible plan that identifies how the project will be monitored so that lessons learnt can disseminated.

24. All bids from community, voluntary and community organisations that pass the gateway criteria will be subject to a due diligence assessment to establish the credentials, resources, and capacity of the organisation to deliver their proposals, which will be conducted by the Finance Team.

25. Lead Authorities are expected to collaborate where there are cross boundary applications. The County Council has agreed with Portsmouth City Council to assess bids that cross the border between the two authorities collaboratively and as part of this process will determine which Authority will lead the bid in the event that it is shortlisted in accordance with the prospectus criteria. Southampton City Council and Isle of Wight Council have opted out of the fund.

26. Following the assessment, Hampshire County Council is required to submit a Lead Authority Bid Submission Summary report for each place, which includes the value of the bids submitted, up to maximum of £3million per place (district, borough, or unitary authority area) and the project application forms.

27. The table below provides details of bids received:

APPLICANT	GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT THEME	VALUE £000
The Branch Fordingbridge	Skills	£0-100
we are radikl	Business	£0-100
Off the Record	Employment	£0-100
Fiftyminusone	Business	£100-500
Winchester City Council	Communities and Place	£100-500
Hampshire County Council	Communities and Place	£100-500
Neill Ghosh (The Sloth)	Business, Employment, and Communities and Place	£100-500
Age UK Portsmouth	Communities and Place	£100-500
Winchester City Council (2 nd App)	Communities and Place	£100-500
WSX Enterprise	All	£100-500
Hampshire Cultural Trust	Skills and Communities and Place	£100-500
Havant and South Downs College	All	£500-1000
Tourism South East	All	£500-1000
Incuhive	Skills, Business, and Employment	£500-1000
The Lincolnshire and Rutland Education Business (The EBP)	All	£500-1000
Farnborough College of Technology	Employment, and Skills	£500-1000
Solent University	Business	£500-1000
Itchen College	Employment	>£1000
TieTa UK Ltd	Skills, and Business	>£1000

28. The Government requires a two-stage evaluation of bids, and at the time of publishing this report the first stage of evaluation is near completion and is expected to reduce the number of bids prior to the second, more detailed stage of evaluation. Results of the first evaluation will be reported at the decision day, and delegated authority is sought to complete the second evaluation and submit the results to Government.

Next steps

29. Subject to approval, the Director of Economy, Transport, and Environment will review the submission to Government, by noon 18 June 2021, which includes any shortlisted bids and a series of functional statements on how the process was managed, for assessment by Government.
30. Although not a requirement of the Community Renewal Fund, feedback will be provided to all applicants on their application status.
31. Following the Government's announcement in July 2021, a further update on the outcome on the bids submitted will be provided.
32. Grant agreements will be issued to successful bidders once funding has been agreed by Government, and monitoring and assurance activity will follow.

Finance

33. The UK Community Renewal Fund will provide Lead Authorities with funding to be used towards the costs incurred in managing Fund awards. A flat rate of 2% of the value of the UK Community Renewal Fund spent by each project may be used by Lead Authorities for the costs incurred in managing Fund awards. Hampshire County Council proposes to assess and manage the funds using existing staff, and therefore this would be used as a contribution in covering those costs. In circumstances where there is expected to be a large volume of transactions, or complex project delivery, for example, some employment support projects, a flat rate of 3% may be permitted. Lead Authorities should provide further details in their submission if 3% may be required. It is not anticipated that Hampshire County Council will need to provide such details in its submission.

Consultation and Equalities

34. All applications need to describe how they have considered the equalities impacts of their proposal, the relevant affected groups based on protected characteristics, and the measures proposed to respond to any impacts.
35. All shortlisted applicants will be assessed against the Public Sector Equality Duty as required by the Government's Prospectus.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

36. All applications to the Community Renewal Fund need to be able to demonstrate the extent to which the project contributes to the Government's net zero objectives or wider environmental considerations. As a minimum, the Government will only invest in projects that meet the clean growth principle and do not conflict with the UK's legal commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

37. The contribution to the net zero objective forms part of the overall score of each application.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

All applications need to describe how they have considered the equalities impacts of their proposal, the relevant affected groups based on protected characteristics, and the measures proposed to respond to any impacts.

All shortlisted applicants will be assessed against the Public Sector Equality Duty as required by the Government's Prospectus.