

13 May 2021

## Community Renewal Fund update

### Purpose of Report

This report updates the LEP Board on the Government's Community Renewal Fund programme and the work underway by the MCA Executive and local council partners to develop a response for submission to the Government.

### Thematic Priority

The contents of this report are cross-cutting across all the LEP's thematic priority areas.

### Freedom of Information

This paper will be available under the MCA Publication Scheme.

### Recommendations

The Board are asked to note the objectives of the Government's Community Renewal Fund, the timescales associated with the Fund and the approach taken by the MCA to deliver a successful set of bids.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The UK Government has announced £220 million investment in the UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF) in its budget on 3 March 2021. The UKCRF is the pre-cursor to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The UKCRF aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in skills, community and place, local business and supporting people into employment.

There is a maximum of £3 million of UKCRF available per place (local authority area) and eligible project applicants include business support organisations; voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations; and education providers, including Colleges and Universities.

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority has been designated as a lead authority by the UK Government and is expected to submit a programme of schemes to the Government on the **18<sup>th</sup> June**.

## 1.2 Timeline

The process for the development, prioritisation and appraisal, submission and then delivery of the projects is extremely compressed.

21st April	Open call for applications by MCA
26 <sup>th</sup> April	Webinar and comms underway
7th May	Notification of South Yorkshire or multi-area bids to local authority teams and MCA.
26th May	Deadline for project submissions to local authorities.
9th June	Deadline for local authority project shortlist submissions to MCA.
18th June	Deadline for lead authority to submit application to Government.
End July	Successful projects confirmed for delivery
<b>Projects must be delivered by March 2022</b>	

## 1.3 Eligibility

All places can apply for the investment from the UKCRF. The Government criteria indicates that Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham are priority places. Applications from other places, such as Sheffield that demonstrate a strong alignment with strategic fit and good delivery/effectiveness may also receive funding.

The UKCRF will prioritise bids that target the priority places, alongside a good contribution to strategic fit and delivery/effectiveness.

Projects that cover all South Yorkshire or more than one area are also eligible.

## 2. Proposal and justification

### 2.1 Our approach

The principle underpinning our approach to developing a strong set of projects is that working with the MCA our local places are best placed to develop and prioritise proposals, to convene local partners and to understand and navigate complex delivery environments. On that basis we have developed a process that puts local councils at the heart of the process whilst ensuring that the strategic focus established in the Strategic Economic Plan and Renewal Action Plan drive the development of schemes.

### 2.1 Strategic fit and co-design where possible

In the MCA 'call' document and associated guidance we have made clear that bidders will show in-depth knowledge of the opportunities and challenges of the local area covered in their bids as well as strategic fit against the national investment priorities:

- Investment in skills
- Investment for local business
- Investment in communities and place
- Supporting people into employment

As well as bringing forward projects that deliver against key economic growth priorities outlined in the Strategic Economic Plan and Renewal Action Plan.

We have also set out that we particularly welcome the development of projects which can demonstrate the ability to expand or scale up within South Yorkshire and that utilise innovative approaches and could also be used to inform future SPF rounds.

Where possible, partners are being encouraged to co-design and co-produce schemes with the council area.

### 3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1** A centrally managed process – the MCA could have adopted a highly prescriptive and centralised approach to the development of CRF projects. This approach has not been endorsed on the basis that the timescales do not allow for the development of new SY wide schemes, that many of the objectives related to CRF are inherently local in nature – and that the capacity and capability through a joint MCA and local council approach is most likely to yield a successful result.
- 3.2** Do nothing / less – the MCA has a responsibility as the accountable body responsible for CRF to ensure that the process we undertake is rigorous, robust and transparent. The approach being pursued secures those objectives whilst giving the greatest opportunity for local schemes to emerge. This approach also ensures that the MCA and local partners are well placed to develop proposals for the Shared Prosperity Fund from 2022/23 onwards.

### 4. Implications

#### 4.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications for the LEP arising from this paper. The MCA will submit a final prioritised list of schemes on the 18<sup>th</sup> June.

#### 4.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications for the LEP arising from this paper. The MCA as accountable body will be expected to enter into contractual arrangements with successful projects once the Government have reviewed submissions. This process will be undertaken through the MCA governance processes.

#### 4.3 Risk Management

None

#### 4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

The Strategic Economic Plan and Renewal Action Plan have a strong inclusion focus. We expect that projects brought forward by partners locally will set out how they will deliver for the particular needs of communities across South Yorkshire.

### 5. Communications

- 5.1** It is critical that potential bidders for CRF are informed on the process and aware of how to submit schemes. We have made all information available online and will continue to promote the opportunity publicly and through local networks.  
The first webinar run attracted over 90 attendees from groups including FE, training providers, the voluntary and community sector and higher education.

### 6. Appendices/Annexes

- 6.1** None

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: