



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 03.08.21

To the Mayor of Doncaster

COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND: AWARENESS, APPROVAL & NEXT STEPS

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Mayor Ros Jones	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Community Renewal Fund (CRF) was launched by the Chancellor at the 2021 budget as a pilot in 21/22 for the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) from 2022 onwards. The SPF will be the successor to EU Funding. CRF is a national funding programme administered by the UK Government designed to fund projects that are supporting people and places across the UK, focusing on domestic priorities, growing local economies, and breathing new life into communities.
2. Government announced an extremely tight window for proposals to be developed and submitted. All spend and activity has to be completed by March 2022. The fund prospectus requested project proposals that would tackle local people and business based issues, including building skills, supporting communities and providing employment support, as well as projects based around Decarbonisation. The fund is revenue based, and named 100 Priority Areas in the UK where it was considered that extra investment was vital. Doncaster was identified as a priority area, and although this does not guarantee funding, it provided an additional incentive to apply.
3. The fund is managed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, but the accountable body is the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). All communication on the fund is done via the MCA, including an open call for proposals on their website, the independent appraisal, prioritisation and submission of bids and subsequent notice of awards. They will also receive the funding and will devolve it to the successful projects. In contracting with the MCA, government may stipulate grant conditions as part of their offer on CRF, the MCA will consider the

appropriateness of these and where relevant will passport these conditions onto the various contracting authorities. A government decision was scheduled for late July / early August, but has not yet been confirmed.

4. On 18/06/21 the MCA submitted a South Yorkshire programme that included four Doncaster focused applications. These were produced by convening a wide-ranging group of partners and stakeholders from across the borough, we quickly identifying our key issues (engaging people; progressing learners, and supporting businesses) and putting together projects that would specifically target these areas, providing a number of additional services and interventions that focus on providing additional support, guidance and progression to those who need it, particularly those struggling in the aftermath of Covid-19.
5. The projects we submitted were:
 - **DONCASTER ENGAGE**
 - **DONCASTER PROGRESS**
 - **DONCASTER THRIVE**, and
 - **DECARBONISING DONCASTER**

TOTAL PROGRAMME: £2,835,986.

6. The programme bids were designed to be mindful of the delivery constraints but also to deliver on Doncaster's key priorities, including the emerging Borough Strategy, Inclusive Growth, Education and Skills 2030, the Environment and Sustainability Strategy, and to support delivery of the Sheffield City Region Economic Plan. Our proposed programme is balanced and strategically aligned and helps to deliver our local plans and strategies using a community based approach. The programme is flexible and reflexive and delivery will be based on the latest local intelligence, particularly in understanding and targeted particular communities of interest and geographical areas where need is greatest.
7. The programme is designed specifically for the people of Doncaster: it will be used by ourselves and our partners to actively support interventions that will Engage individuals who are struggling and disconnected; to provide Progress for learners beyond what they might otherwise achieve; and to support businesses and entrepreneurs to Thrive in the aftermath of Covid-19. CRF will provide a number of opportunities that would not otherwise be possible, including moving more quickly on the Decarbonisation agenda which, ultimately, affects all our citizens and will help individuals learn new skills and secure new jobs and support businesses to grow and re-carbonise.
8. If successful, Doncaster Council would receive up to £2,207,986, which excludes the Progress project which is under the aegis of DN Colleges group (if they are successful, the funds will be awarded to them directly via the South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority).
9. Driven by the tight timescales and delivery constraints and, in advance of notification from the government about which of the bids have been successful, this report seeks to gain approval to accept any / all CRF monies offered and seeks delegated approval 'award' contracts for the delivery of the programme to partner organisations.

10. The three Council led projects each have procurement requirements ranging from mandatory £10k (for evaluation of each project) to £150k (for delivery). A full breakdown is provided in section 3. Total procurement across the programme totals £1,194,970.
11. The three Council led projects also contain grant pots that will be used as 'barrier busting' awards to individuals and businesses. A full breakdown is provided in Section 3. Total grants across the programme total £800,000.
12. If all our applications are successful, the maximum amount awarded would be £2,835,986 of which Doncaster Council would receive £2,207,986 (this figure does not include the Doncaster Progress project, as the funds will go directly to the DN Colleges Group who will contract directly with the SYMCA as lead authority)). Although our projects are strong propositions, at this stage it is not possible to predict what will be awarded and to which project, so an actual figure cannot be confirmed at this time.

EXEMPT REPORT

13. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14.
 - A. To delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Resources to accept up to £2,207,986 of Community Renewal Funding (the total amount subject to government approval and award) once the terms of the funding have been properly determined.
 - B. To approve the roll out of the schemes as outlined in this report, including the award of contracts and grants to outside bodies.
 - C. To provide delegated authority to the Director of Corporate Resources for initiation and the ongoing delivery of the programme as approved, including the specific amounts awarded to outside bodies in contracts and grants and to agree any changes necessary to ensure deliverability within the timescales, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

15. Community Renewal Fund is designed to fund projects that are supporting people and places across the UK, focusing on domestic priorities, growing local economies, and breathing new life into communities.

16. Essentially, this scheme serves as a pilot for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund when it launches in 2022, and gives us vital additional funds to target our most pernicious local challenges, including poverty, health, and jobs and skills. We have worked closely with Team Doncaster partners to design a programme that tackles those challenges head on, and we are confident that it provides the interventions necessary to make a difference.

17. Our programme is strategically aligned and helps to deliver our local plans and strategies using a community based approach. The programme is designed specifically for the people of Doncaster: it will be used by ourselves and our partners to actively support interventions that will **Engage** individuals who are struggling and disconnected; to provide **Progress** for learners beyond what they

might otherwise achieve; and to support businesses and entrepreneurs to **Thrive** in the aftermath of Covid-19. CRF will provide a number of opportunities that would not otherwise be possible, including moving more quickly on the **Decarbonisation** agenda which, ultimately, affects all our citizens and will help individuals learn new skills and secure new jobs and support businesses to grow and re-carbonise.

BACKGROUND

18. The Community Renewal Fund was launched in March 2021. As above, it requested project proposals that would tackle local people and business based issues, including building skills, supporting communities and providing employment support, as well as projects based around Decarbonisation. The fund is revenue based, and named 100 Priority Areas in the UK where it was considered that extra investment was vital. Doncaster was identified as a priority area, and although this does not guarantee funding, it provided an additional incentive (if any were needed) to apply.

19. The fund is managed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, but the accountable body is the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. All communication on the fund is done via the SYMCA, including the submission of bids and notice of awards. They will also receive the funding and will devolve it to the successful projects. In contracting with the MCA, government may stipulate grant conditions as part of their offer on CRF, the MCA will consider the appropriateness of these and where relevant will passport these conditions onto the various contracting authorities.

20. Convening a wide-ranging group of partners and stakeholders from across the borough, we quickly identified our key issues (engaging people; progressing learners, and supporting businesses) and put together three bids that would specifically target these areas, providing a number of additional services and interventions that focus on providing additional support, guidance and progression to those who need it, particularly those struggling in the aftermath of Covid-19.

21. Each bid provides a strong, solution based response to the problems faced by individuals of all ages and businesses, and are co-designed with key organisations and anchor institutions to provide maximum input. CRF is very much a 'warm up' for the Shared Prosperity Fund, and Government will be closely watching how these projects perform, and this will have a bearing on future funding. A short term solution, our interventions are agile and quick to put in place – a necessary distinction as all CRF monies must be spent by 31st March 2022.

22. Doncaster's project proposals are:

Doncaster Engage

23. Led by Doncaster Council Public Health Team, this project invests in communities and place by providing our residents with targeted and bespoke support to help them combat and overcome the challenges they face on a daily basis, with specific focus on Training, Financial & Digital Exclusion; All-Age Loneliness; Employability, and Health & Well-Being. There will be an £87,000 Integrated Grant Pot for individuals and community groups spread across all four priorities. **Value: £644,137.**

24. Procurement: There will be four separate contracts to delivery partners, each for up to £150k. There will be an additional requirement for an independent evaluation, budgeted at up to £10k.

Doncaster Progress

25. This project uses an integrated 'skills accelerator' approach to address skills challenges across the borough exacerbated by Covid-19 and provides short flexible training and development interventions. It further challenges businesses to innovate and invest in higher level skills. Value: **£628,000**. This is provided for information only, and does not form part of this decision as it is entirely led by the DN Colleges group.

Doncaster Thrive

26. Led by Doncaster Council Business Doncaster Team in partnership with Doncaster Chamber, this project will deliver a large scale community Innovation and Enterprise project, which will stimulate entrepreneurial activity, problem solving, and innovation across all sectors of the community, reaching the 'entrepreneurial hard to reach'. There will be an integrated grant pot of £163,000 to provide incentives and remove barriers for businesses and entrepreneurs. **Value: £570,369**.

27. Procurement: Business Doncaster will be looking to award two separate contracts to delivery partners, one for £12,000 and one for £59,490. £160k will be used to enhance facilities at Space2Create. There will be an additional requirement for an independent evaluation, budgeted at up to £10k.

Decarbonising Doncaster

28. Led by Doncaster Council Business Doncaster Team, this project is a landmark, place based initiative that supports delivery of Team Doncaster's Environment and Sustainability Strategy, and comprises of important feasibility studies as well as a grant scheme encouraging carbon reduction in organisations and business across Doncaster. **Value: £993,480**.

29. Procurement: There will be various contracts to commission feasibility studies, up to a total of £394,000. There will be an additional requirement for an independent evaluation, budgeted at up to £20k.

30. Independent evaluation is a grant requirement, so costs have been built into each project. However, we are looking to procure a single, cross programme evaluation as soon as possible, and have incorporated an indicative budget of £50k to do so.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

31. Option One: To accept UP TO £2,207,986 of Community Renewal Funding, the total amount subject to government approval and award and acceptance of the terms and condition of grant.

To approve the roll out of the approved schemes as outlined in this report, including the procurement requirements and grant pot allocations and awards and grants to outside bodies.

To provide delegated authority to the relevant directors for initiation and the ongoing delivery of the programme as approved, subject to deliverability within the timescales and terms and conditions of grant.

32. Option Two: To reject the project proposals in total or in part; to not accept CRF funding approved in total or in part once announced.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

33. We are confident that Option One would be the best result for Doncaster, as it reflects an acknowledgement of the hard work and co-ordination across partners and stakeholders that has gone into the bids and, if successful, will enable interventions and opportunities not possible without the additional funding CRF will bring.

34. Each project has been worked up in partnership to provide an effective challenge to some of our most difficult issues, and provides the best possible approach within the resources available and within the short timeline for delivery.

35. Not accepting funding for approved CRF projects would almost certainly have an impact on future funding, especially through the vital Shared Prosperity Fund which will be a major funding source from March 2022.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

36.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>Engage, Progress & Thrive each target working age people. This includes community engagement with individuals who may feel isolated and disconnected from the jobs market (Engage); higher skills and learning, including apprenticeships (Progress), and supporting businesses to recover from the economic shock of Covid and flourish. Each of these three projects stands alone but works in conjunction with the others, providing a continuous thread between citizen, learner, worker and business. Interventions will be in the areas deemed most in need.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p>	<p>CRF will provide more opportunity for our people of all ages, and the Decarbonisation project will provide us with steps towards a cleaner and healthier</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	environment.
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	Our CRF projects focus on individuals and businesses in a way that provides support and guidance, but also access to learning. This is perhaps best exemplified by the Progress project which is specifically about higher level skills and learning in the formal context of the College and the workplace, but the other elements (Engage & Thrive) have learning elements, and training and mentoring are important elements.
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	Doncaster Engage will ensure that vulnerable residents who have been adversely affected by Covid or are otherwise isolated from their community and the wider world will be given practical support and guidance to improve their circumstances and move towards a better life.
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and 	The CRF projects have been designed with partners, and will be delivered with and by partners. The process has been an exemplar of cross-working and the delivery / execution can only work in a similarly co-ordinated way. This includes ongoing shared leadership and governance across all four projects and the Doncaster CRF programme in its entirety.

	residents to provide effective leadership and governance	
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RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

37. There is an obvious risk that we may not be successful in our applications, either in part or in whole. It is assumed that we will accept the decision and take whatever funding is made available for those projects that are approved. This does not preclude us from applying again for unsuccessful projects, either via further rounds of CRF or (more likely) Shared Prosperity Fund.

38. There is a risk that there is not enough money in the pot to cover the whole of the UK and the myriad applications that the government will receive will outstrip resources (the total value is £220m, with each of the 100 priority areas able to bid for up to £3m, but it is an open competition and non-priority areas are not excluded). To this end, it is assumed that, regardless of quality and need, not all of our projects will be funded as there simply may not be enough money to pay for everything.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: ND Date 27.07.21]

39. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with a general power of competence, allowing the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council the power to purchase goods and services.

40. If successful in the bid application, the Council will be required to enter into funding agreements. Although the terms of those funding agreements have not yet been seen, it is likely they will include certain terms. Failure to comply with the terms may lead to claw back of the funding.

41. All procurements undertaken must comply with the terms of the funding agreements and the Councils contract procedure rules.

42. When administering the funding, the Council must comply with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Technical Guidance on the UK's International Subsidy Control Commitments and Summary Guide to awarding Subsidies.

43. Further specific legal advice will be provided as the projects progress.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: CA Date 26.07.21]

44. The UK Government is providing £220m of additional funding through the UK Community Renewal Fund to help move away from the EU structural fund programme. The intention is that the CRF will help prepare over 2021-22 for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund by piloting new approaches and through provision of capacity funding.

45. South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority are the Lead Authority for the Doncaster project proposals. Bids have been submitted via the Lead Authority based on the policy prospectus which sets out priority places and investment priorities but further detail is awaited regarding the terms and conditions of the

funding.

46. The prospectus states that 90% of funding available through the CRF is revenue funding and that interventions must be financially completed (i.e. all delivery activity concluded) by 31 March 2022. Being listed as a priority place does not guarantee funding.

47. The projects total a maximum of £2,207,986 to be awarded to Doncaster Council (funds for the Progress project will be awarded directly to DN Colleges group). At this stage it is unclear whether funds will be received directly from MHCLG or via the Lead Authority.

48. The Council's Financial Procedure Rules say at section E.9 "Directors are authorised to apply for external funding, in consultation with the CFO, which contribute to the delivery of Council services or achievement of Council goals. Grant acceptance and/or commitment is subject to key decision rules." The funding awarded is likely to be over key decision level, therefore the recommendation in this report is to delegate this decision to the Director of Corporate Resources due to the tight timescales for spending the funding and in preparation for a timely decision once the detailed terms and conditions for the grant have been set out.

49. Financial Procedure Rules E.16 – E.18 cover Grants to Outside Bodies and these procedure rules will need to be complied with, including record keeping, monitoring requirements and legally binding agreements being in place between the Council and the recipient(s).

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: GS Date 27/07/21]

50. The Council is required to comply with UK Procurement Regulations and its own Contract Procedure Rules.

51. Upon acceptance of and approval of Community Renewal funding the Procurement team will provide ongoing advice and assistance for the commissioning and procurement activity to support all projects identified in this report. This will include exploring compliant and suitable options to commission the projects, including:

- By utilising existing contracts suitable to deliver the required works
- Undertake a compliant procurement exercise(s) in line with UK procurement legislation. Or
- By commissioning the project via a compliant third party framework agreement.

52. The procurement activity undertaken to support the delivery of will be evaluated on the most economically advantageous tender and will take in to consideration cost, quality and social value as the key criteria.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: CB Date 22.07.21]

53. There are no immediate HR implications arising from this report. Further HR advice should be sought regarding any HR implications should they arise from the identified projects.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: AM Date 22.07.21]

54. There are no technology implications in relation to this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: VPH Date: 27.07.21]

55. People with multiple disadvantage are subject to significant health inequalities and this development will have positive health implications. Decision makers should monitor the impact of the development.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PB Date: 27.07.21]

56. Doncaster Council and its partners are fully aware of, and committed to celebrating equality, inclusion and diversity whilst promoting good relations between our diverse communities.

57. We will adhere to the general duty on public authorities contained in the Equality Act 2010. Due regard will be applied and legitimately considered when carrying out public functions to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with regards to the nine protected characteristics.

58. This applies to the Council and in relation to any ongoing partnership work and compliance to these standards will form part of our appraisal process for any procured or commissioned activity within this project.

CONSULTATION

59. The tight timescales of the bid did not allow for a public consultation. However, the project applications were submitted following a process of close partnership working amongst members of Team Doncaster and all build upon existing initiatives and areas of action, complementing and enhancing our local strategies and plans and targeting areas of most need.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

60. All four CRF applications are available upon request in full.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CRF: Community Renewal Fund

SYMCA: South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority /

MCA: Mayoral Combined Authority

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