 

UK Community Renewal Fund

Invitation to Submit Project Bids

**Introduction**

North East Lincolnshire Council is seeking bids from organisations wishing to deliver activity as part of the £220m UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF). Please read the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus and the UK Community Fund Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers before starting work on a bid. They are available to download from this site <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus>

The Prospectus provides detailed information on the objectives of the Fund, the types of projects it intends to support and how it operates, including the process and selection criteria that will be used to assess bids. **Please read the prospectus and supporting documentation before applying.**

Successful UK Community Renewal Fund bids will be for 2021/22 only (with approvals expected from late July 2021) and activity must be completed by 31 March 2022.

**Background**

To help local areas prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (the successor to the European Structural Funds), the UK Government is providing funding in 2021/22 through the UK Community Renewal Fund. We are interested in bids that build on local insight and knowledge, and proposals that align with long-term strategic plans for local growth, target people most in need and support community renewal. In addition, proposals should show how they complement other national and local initiatives. A focus for the CRF is to support innovation and new ideas, investing in pilots that draw on local insights and which will help places to prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022.

The Council has been designated as a lead authority by the UK Government. As a lead authority, it is responsible for:

* issuing this invitation
* receiving bids
* selecting the bids that will be sent to UK Government for consideration
* paying grants to successful projects and managing their performance

Full details of the role of lead authorities can be found in the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus.

**What type of bids are we looking for?**

Projects must deliver activity that is in line with the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus and aligns with at least one of these investment priorities:

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

There are no specific financial allocations to these priorities beyond the £220m national allocation and NEL is not guaranteed to receive any funding. Further details of the anticipated nature of activity to be supported under each priority can be found in the prospectus.

The UK Government anticipates supporting a range of projects by theme and size, but applicants are encouraged to maximise impact and deliverability through larger projects (£500,000+) where this is possible. Every effort should be made to draw complementary projects together with potential partners to provide for a programme based approach but where this is not possible, or does not create a programme of at least £500,000, it is acceptable to put programmes or individual projects forward that are no less than £100,000. In order to comply with national guidance and to maximise the likelihood of success, we will not consider proposals below this amount.

As 90% of funding available through the UK Community Renewal Fund is revenue funding and only available in 2021/22, proposals should be predominantly, or exclusively revenue based. Proposals that focus predominantly on the construction or major refurbishment of buildings, the purchase of land or the purchase of large pieces of equipment are unlikely to fulfil the requirements of the fund.

**Who can apply for funding?**

Any legally constituted organisation can receive funding from the UK Community Renewal Fund to deliver an approved project. This includes local authorities, public sector organisations, higher and further education institutions, private sector companies and registered charities. Further details are provided in the UK Community Renewal Fund Technical note for project applicants and deliverers available in the above link.

Given the intention to support projects of scale, consortium bids are welcomed. In this scenario, a lead organisation should be identified.

**What are the target outcomes?**

The UK Community Renewal Fund seeks to support people and communities most in need across the UK. Government has identified North East Lincolnshire as a Priority 1 area for the UK Community Renewal Fund, using an index of economic resilience which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density.

Government has identified a series of outcomes that they expect supported activity to contribute towards. Details are provided within the UK Community Fund Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers, Annex A available in the above link.

Please bear these in mind when developing your proposal. The ability to deliver against these indicators will inform the value for money assessment as well as demonstrating its contribution to the fund objectives.

**Local Priorities**

In selecting the bids that will be forwarded to the UK Government for consideration, we will prioritise the bids that have the greatest potential to deliver against key local inclusive growth priorities.

Bidders should consider how their proposals align with the Council’s strategic ambitions/priorities namely: -.

* Priority one – Stronger economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across the borough
* Priority two – Stronger Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience and resourcefulness

Consideration should also be given to how projects respond to key challenges facing the economy and communities, such as:

* Recognising the severe impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the economy and local community with impacts likely to continue over the coming year, including the potential need for reskilling to support people to access alternative employment.
* High levels of deprivation including benefit dependency within the population, including long-term unemployment affecting some groups.
* High proportions of households falling within low-income socio-demographic groups and the barriers this creates to participation in economic and local growth.
* The number of adults with basic skills (literacy, numeracy, digital) and low proportion of adults with higher level qualifications.
* Promoting the advancement of digital skills and inclusion – for example supporting the development of digital skills for digitally excluded individuals, especially where digital exclusion presents a barrier to employment, building confidence in application of basic and advanced digital skills and promoting safety and awareness online.
* High levels of 16-24 year olds who are NEET (Not in Education,

Employment or Training).

* Expand and diversify the economy, to increase the areas resilience and to make the most of new and emerging industries and to build on existing core sectors
* Supporting our objective to be net zero carbon and the wider green agenda.
* Increasing participation in skills and employment programmes by those individuals who have additional barriers to employment but have not previously been engaged.

**How Bids Will Be Assessed**

NELC officers will complete a Stage 1 appraisal of all submitted proposals. Stage 1 will be a sift of all applications against the eligibility criteria outlined in the prospectus. Any application that does not meet the gateway criteria (outlined in the assessment template below) will be deemed ineligible. A full list of ineligible projects will be included in the information presented to the Stage 2 panel for information and to be able to ask why a project has been deemed ineligible. The complete template will show where a project is deemed to have not met the gateway criteria. A Stage 2 review will then be completed by a panel comprising representatives from the Place Partnership and Town Deal Board. Bids will be assessed against:

* the gateway criteria set out in the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus – bids that fail to meet these criteria are ineligible and will be rejected
* the extent to which they meet the objectives of the CRF
* the extent to which bids would support the delivery of local growth and employment support priorities

The assessment process is further outlined in Annex 1 at the end of this document.

Following assessment, NELC will submit those eligible bids that most strongly meet the UK Community Renewal Fund and local priorities to the UK Government for consideration, up to a maximum total of £3m The UK Government will assess all bids submitted by lead authorities against the criteria set out in the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus.

The UK Government has stated it expects to announce the outcome of the assessment process from late July 2021 onwards. Following confirmation of a funding award, NELC will enter into a funding agreement with successful bidders.

**Submitting a Bid**

Bids must be submitted using the UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form, which is available in the link above. Bids submitted in any other format will not be accepted.

Bids must be submitted using this email address: crfapplications@nelincs.gov.uk. Bids must be submitted by 21st May 2021. Any queries should also be sent to the same email address which we will endeavour to respond to within 2 working days.

The UK Community Renewal Fund is a competitive process and NELC and the UK Government are unable to enter into discussions with bidders.

# **Annex 1 – Assessment Template**

The template below sets out how NELC aims to appraise bids. This is in line with a Government developed template. Although the overall scope of the

assessment will remain unchanged, NELC reserves the right to make minor

adjustments, as questions raised with Government are responded to.

|  |
| --- |
| Programme / Project |
| Place: |  |
| Project Name: |  |
| Gateway Criteria |
| 1. Is the application from an organisation eligible to receive UK Community Renewal Fund support? | Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| 2. Will the project be complete by 31st March 2022? | Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| 3. Does the project address a need identified in the Prospectus? | Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial ☐ |
| 4. Does the project address a need identified in the local invite to submit bids? | Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial ☐ |
| 5. Is the proposed activity permissible within subsidy rules or Subsidy Control where relevant? | Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial ☐ |
| 6. Would the project duplicate other national or local provision? | Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial ☐ |
| 7. Would the project conflict with national policy? | Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial ☐ |
| 8. Will the project be delivered in accordance with branding requirements? | Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| If the answer to 3-7 is partial, if ineligible activity is removed, is there still a viable project? | Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| * If no, project does not meet the eligibility criteria. go straight to Part 4.
* If yes, proceed with the assessment and clarify the elements that should be removed from the project.
 |
| Does the project meet the gateway criteria? | Yes ☐ No ☐ |

**Selection Criteria**

The assessment will provide a narrative assessment against the criteria outlined below. The appraisal will also assign scores to the responses to support the prioritisation process.

Minimum score thresholds will be applied across the criteria to ensure that only the strongest projects (in terms of strategic fit, deliverability and value for money) are included in the application to Government.

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| **Section 1 - Strategic fit****1. Please consider the proposal’s overall contribution to the strategic objectives of the UK Community Renewal Fund** |
| * What is the level of contribution to an articulated investment priority identified in the Prospectus?
* To what extent can the project inform UKSPF 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?
 |
| Comment: |
| 2. How well does the proposal contribute to local needs set out in relevant local plans. |
| Comment: |

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| --- |
| **Section 2 - Deliverability, effectiveness and efficiency** |
| **Deliverability****Please consider the overall deliverability of the proposal including project risks, and financial due diligence where required.** |
| * Does the applicant (and delivery partner(s) where relevant) 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?
 |
| a) What is the risk that the project will not proceed in line with the stated timescales? |
|  |
| b) What is the risk that the project will not proceed in line with the stated budget? |
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| c) What is the risk that the project will not achieve the stated outputs and results? |
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| Has Due Diligence been undertaken? Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| If Yes, is the applicant able to manage the project as described? |
| Yes ☐ Yes, subject to conditions ☐ No ☐ |
| Comment: |
| **Effectiveness****Please consider the overall effectiveness of the proposal including monitoring and evaluation plans, the project budget and proposed outputs.** |
| * Has an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy been identified?
* Does the project budget reflect the stated activities? Is the budget reasonable in the light of the activities?
* Do the stated outputs reflect the project activities and are they achievable?
 |
| Comment: |
| EfficiencyPlease consider the overall efficiency of the proposal, including Value for Money. |
| * Does the project represent an efficient mode of delivery, taking account of the level of innovation proposed?
* Will it operate at an appropriate scale, providing good value for money taking account of project costs, match funding (excluding employment interventions), proposed outputs delivered and potential impact?
* Is it clear that the project would not proceed, or could only be delivered on a smaller scale without UK Community Renewal Fund support?
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| Comment: |

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| Section 3 Equalities Impacts(For UKG information – does not form part of assessment criteria) |
| What equalities impacts have been considered? Who are the relevant affected groups based on protected characteristics, and what if any are the measures identified in response to these impacts? |
|  |

Section 4 - Panel Recommendation:

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| Comment: |
| Progress ☐Progress with conditions ☐Reject ☐ |  |
| Completed by: |  | Date: |  |
| Reviewed by: |  | Date: |  |

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| --- |
| Proposed Conditions |
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |

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| --- |
| Section 5 - Lead Authority assessment decision |
| Submit to UK Government ☐ Submit with conditions ☐ Reject ☐ |  |
| Comment: |
| Conditions, if different to section 3. |
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| Name |  | Date: |  |