



REPORT TO: SPECIAL MEETING OF MORAY COUNCIL ON 16 JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Council of the UK Government Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF) and to seek approval for submitting proposals.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Council in terms of Section III A (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to long-term financial plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Council:-

- (i) note the criteria and timescales for delivery of projects under UK Government Community Renewal Fund;**
- (ii) consider the recommendations by the assessment panels; and**
- (iii) approve the submission of the proposals to the UK Government**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The UK Government recently launched this fund with the aim of supporting people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches, in preparation for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022. An initial report to Group Leaders was considered in April 2021.
- 3.2 Moray is not one of the chosen priority areas in the UK, nevertheless Moray Council has been designated as a lead authority by the UK Government. As a lead authority, Moray Council is responsible for:
- issuing an invitation for proposals
 - receiving bids
 - selecting the bids that will be sent to UK Government for consideration
 - paying grants to successful projects and managing their performance

- 3.3 On 5 May 2021 invitations for bids were published on the Council website alongside all details of this fund. Proposals were invited which build on local insight and knowledge, align with long-term strategic plans for local growth, support innovation and new ideas under any of the four national investment priorities:
- Skills: including work-based training, retraining and digital skills/inclusion
 - Local business: including supporting entrepreneurs, innovation and decarbonisation
 - Communities and place: including feasibility studies for net zero projects, opportunities for culture-led regeneration, green spaces and rural connectivity.
 - Supporting people into employment: including addressing barriers to employment, raising aspirations, and basic skills.
- 3.4 This is a revenue funding programme and projects must be delivered and financially completed by 31 March 2022. Projects should ideally have a minimum planned expenditure of £200,000 where possible to maximise any impact.
- 3.5 The value of the bids identified by the Council must come to a minimum of £500,000 and no more than £3m. Projects are required to align with long-term strategic plans for local growth, target people most in need and support community renewal.
- 3.6 The closing deadline for proposals was 21 May 2021 and 8 bids were received with grant requests of over £2.3 million. For the assessment of the proposals, 3 panels of relevant partners and council staff were set up under Business, Community & Places and Employment & Skills (See **Appendix 2**). As several proposals applied under multiple priorities they were considered by the various panels.
- 3.7 The panel's recommendations are for 2 proposals to be submitted to the UK Government for consideration, as they most strongly meet the UK Community Renewal Fund criteria and local priorities. Details are featured in **Appendix 1 and Appendix 2**.
- 3.8 The deadline for submitting the bid to the UK Government is 18 June 2021. 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 will announce the outcome of the assessment process from late July 2021 onwards. If successful, Moray Council will enter into a funding agreement with successful bidders.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Economic development is a key priority in the corporate plan and an Economic Recovery Plan was agreed by the Council in October 2020 recognising that as a result of the pandemic the need for economic investment has grown considerably. The UK Community Renewal Fund provides an opportunity 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. All bidders had to demonstrate how their proposal will support the implementation of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plans, Economic Strategy and Climate Change Strategy.

(b) Policy and Legal

Any funding agreements with successful bidders will be undertaken in consultation with Legal.

(c) Financial implications

The Glenlivet Rural Regeneration Programme total project cost is £179,790 with a grant request from the UKCRF of £154,790 and £25,000 match funding (£10,000 in kind & £15,000 Dorenell Community Benefit Fund tbc)

The Just, Green, Thriving and Resilient Moray proposal total cost is £463,000 with a grant request from the UKCRF of £423,000 and match funding from HIE of £40,000.

The total projects grant requests from the UKCRF is £577,790. If the proposals are successful, Moray Council can claim 2% of the total grants as management and administration fee, which equates to £11,556 bringing the total ask from the UK Government to £589,346.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a risk that the proposals are unsuccessful. However if successful each proposal has a risk management plan in place with mid-point review and monitoring of projects by Council scheduled for November / December 2021.

(e) Staffing Implications

The work around the UK Community Renewal Fund has been assigned to the Economic Growth & Regeneration section. The services are currently under significant workload pressures associated with business support, COVID 19 grants, TCCF and Economic Recovery Plan. The UK Government management and administration fee could contribute to costs for further staff resources.

(f) Property

There are no property implications.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The fund will bring economic investment into Moray's areas of which some are characterised by low wages, low rates of full-time employment, wealth deprivation and child poverty. During the implementation, Moray Council will work closely with the successful bidders in carrying out an equality impact assessment to ensure that the projects will contribute to a fairer Moray.

(h) Consultations

Consultation has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Estates Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Chief Financial Officer and the Democratic Services Manager have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The UK Community Renewal Fund aim is to support people and communities most in need across the UK through piloting programmes and new approaches, in preparation for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022.

5.2 Whilst Moray is not one of the designated priority areas for this fund, nevertheless it has been encouraging to have received 8 proposals. Following the assessment process by the 3 panels, it is recommended to submit 2 projects to the UK Government for consideration, as they most strongly meet the UK Community Renewal Fund criteria and local priorities.

5.3 If successful, the completed works will provide a strong foundation for future investments in Moray.

Author of Report: Reni Milburn, Economic Growth & Regeneration Manager

Background Papers: Documents on file in Economic Growth & Regeneration section.

Ref: SPMAN-813460984-112
SPMAN-813460984-113
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