

# UK Community Renewal Fund

Invitation to Submit Project Bids

## Introduction

Warwickshire County Council is seeking bids from organisations wishing to deliver activity as part of the UK Community Renewal Fund.

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 [here](#).

The Prospectus provides detailed information on the national 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. Further information pertinent to Warwickshire is provided within this document, and on the following website: [add link to WCC pages]

Successful UK Community Renewal Fund bids will be for 2021/22 only and activity must end in March 2022.

## Background

To help local areas prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, 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 project proposals that align with long-term strategic plans for local growth, target people most in need and support community renewal. In addition, projects should show how they complement other national and local provision. A focus for this Fund is to support innovation and new ideas in these areas, 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.

Warwickshire County Council has been designated as a lead authority by the UK Government. As a lead authority, Warwickshire County Council 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.

The County Council is working closely with the five District & Borough Councils, and the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP). The CWLEP are available to advise applicants and provide information and guidance to potential applicants. The CWLEP can be contacted at: [projects@cwlep.com](mailto:projects@cwlep.com)

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

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

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

We are interested in bids across all four of these priorities, but have identified some further key sub-priorities that we are particularly interested in. These are detailed in the following section.

There are no financial allocations to these priorities.

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.

As 90% of funding available through the UK Community Renewal Fund is revenue funding and only available in 2021/22, projects should be predominantly, or exclusively revenue based. Projects that focus predominantly on the construction or major refurbishment of buildings, the purchase of land or the purchase of large pieces of equipment will not be supported.

## **Local Priorities**

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

Applicants should consider the key local strategies identified below and ensure that proposals are effectively aligned with the key issues and priorities identified within at least one of them:

- Warwickshire County Council's Economic Growth Strategy

- Warwickshire County Council's Recovery Plan
- CWLEP Reset Strategic Framework

Alignment with these local strategies will be considered when projects are being assessed and shortlisted. Copies of these strategies are available on the Warwickshire County Council website promoting this funding opportunity ([www.warwickshire.gov.uk/crf](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/crf))

In consideration against these key strategies, the current issues and opportunities that exist within Warwickshire, and the focus of this new funding programme, we have identified the following key sub-priorities under the four Investment Priorities set by Government for this fund. These are set out in the table below. We are particularly interested in seeing proposals come forward against these sub-priorities, and alignment with these will be considered as part of the assessment and shortlisting process, although this does not rule out high quality proposals that focus on other issues within the four Investment Priorities set by Government for the fund.

## LOCAL SUB-PRIORITIES

### Investment in Skills

- Skills programmes to support future growth sectors/technologies in the county, particularly:
  - Electric vehicles
  - Battery technology
  - Automation, robotics and AI
  - Transport technology (incl. rail, aviation and automotive)
  - Programming and digital technologies
  - Creative industries
- Upskilling/reskilling to help people who have been affected by recent structural change in the economy to change occupations
- Digital skills at all levels, and for all ages.

### Investment in local business

- Supporting rural businesses, and exploring an integrated approach to rural economic growth across diversification, business growth, employment & skills
- Boosting & supporting entrepreneurship in under-represented groups, and youth enterprise
- Helping businesses decarbonise their activities/exploit low carbon growth opportunities
- Encouraging and supporting innovation and productivity growth in SMEs
- Supporting those businesses that have been particularly adversely affected by the pandemic (particularly, but not exclusively, retail, hospitality & leisure sectors), including the self-employed

### Investment in communities and place

- Supporting local communities to develop and maintain vibrant community assets
- Innovative new approaches to supporting our town centres to recover and adapt
- Projects to support the development of low carbon neighbourhoods or energy schemes

### Supporting people into employment

- Addressing youth unemployment and supporting transition from education to employment
- Supporting inclusive growth, particularly through projects to support employment of care leavers and those with physical and learning disabilities; and addressing issues of low pay / insecure work
- Helping unemployed older workers back into work

In line with the Prospectus for this fund, we want to see innovative projects that are seeking to test new approaches and addressing some of the constraints and limitations that were experienced through the utilisation of the European Structural & Investment Funds. Projects that clearly demonstrate how they are addressing this requirement will be prioritised.

The delivery timescales are very tight, and projects must complete by end of March 2022. It is therefore essential that projects are able to get up and running quickly, and so readiness to deliver will also be a key issue that will be looked at when projects are appraised.

The Community Renewal Fund is available for all parts of Warwickshire, and projects should be undertaken in the following local authority areas (“places”):

- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton & Bedworth
- Rugby
- Warwick District
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Across the whole of Warwickshire

We are looking for a smaller number of larger projects that can make a demonstrable impact on the local economy. If potential applicants would like to discuss their ideas and how they align with these local priorities, or how they could be aligned with other ideas being developed to enable a project of sufficient size and scale, they are encouraged to contact the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP), who are supporting Warwickshire County Council in this call for applications.

Please contact the CWLEP at: [projects@cwlep.com](mailto:projects@cwlep.com)

## **How Bids Will be Assessed**

As the lead authority Warwickshire County Council will work with the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the District & Borough Councils in assessing all bids submitted. 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 support and will be rejected
- the extent to which they meet the objectives of UK Community Renewal Fund
- the extent to which bids would support the delivery of local growth and employment support priorities as set out in the key strategies and sub-priorities set out above.

Following assessment Warwickshire County Council will shortlist and submit those eligible bids which most strongly meet the UK Community Renewal Fund and local

priorities to the UK Government for consideration, up to a maximum of £3m per place.

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.

As lead authority, Warwickshire County Council 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 [here](#). Bids submitted in any other format will not be accepted.

Bids must be submitted to Warwickshire County Council using this email address: [crf@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:crf@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Bids must be submitted by **17:00 on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021**.

The UK Community Renewal Fund is a competitive process and Warwickshire County Council and the UK Government will not enter into discussions with bidders once a decision on applications is made.