



UK Community Renewal Fund

Invitation to Submit Project Bids

Introduction

Staffordshire 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 suite of documents including the **UK Community Renewal Prospectus** and the **UK Community Fund Technical Note** for Project Applicants and Deliverers, before starting work on a bid. The documents are available [here](#).

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.

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.

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

What type of bids are we looking for?

Projects must deliver activity that is 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

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 Staffordshire County Council will prioritise the bids that have the greatest potential to deliver against its key local growth priorities, as detailed below.

Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022 - Connected Staffordshire

Our new Strategic Plan sets out our ambitions and priorities for the years ahead. It outlines what we want to achieve and how we intend to do it over the next four years (2018 to 2022).

The Strategic Plan outlines our vision:

A county where big ambitions, great connections and greener living give everyone the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy.

As a result of this vision the plan outlines the three priority outcomes which we will keep at the heart of what we do, and how we aim to achieve them. Our three priority outcomes are that the people of Staffordshire will:

- be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth
- be healthier and more independent
- feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

Staffordshire County Council 5-year economic recovery and renewal strategy

Covid-19 has been devastating for economies across the country. The economic support measures that we have put in place in Staffordshire as a partnership, alongside those made by government, have had a positive impact, but the next few months will be challenging.

Despite the challenges ahead, Staffordshire can still achieve its potential as a thriving powerhouse economy on the international stage by not just recovering but renewing. Our five-year [Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy](#) outlines how we will seek to make this happen.

Our Economic Recovery, Renewal & Transformation Strategy sets out our priorities for the next five years through four, non-linear phases:

- Respond – support our businesses and residents through the COVID-19 crisis.
- Recover – create the conditions to support our businesses and residents to return-to work as soon as possible.
- Renew – continue to progress those priorities that will play an important role in achieving our ambitions to develop the local economy beyond the current crisis.
- Transform – utilise the opportunities presented by the current economic conditions by supporting the transformation of the local economy to be digital, clean and higher-value.

Supplementary reference documents

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP Local Industrial Strategy - <https://www.stoke-staffslep.org.uk/our-lis/>

Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan - <https://www.stoke-staffslep.org.uk/app/uploads/2019/01/SSLEP-Strategic-Economic-Plan-April-2018-.pdf>

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP Skills Advisory Panel Skills Strategy - <https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/skilled-workforce/education-trust/skills-advisory-panel-board/>

Geographic Coverage

Bids are encouraged from all Staffordshire districts and boroughs although **Newcastle-under-Lyme** will be considered a priority place, as defined in the Prospectus 2020-21 “To ensure the UK Community Renewal Fund funding reaches the most in need, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density. This has been developed based on a consistent approach to identifying need across these nations.”

Bids that are not successful will be retained on a project pipeline for future reference and bidding opportunities.

The Staffordshire districts and Boroughs are:

- **Newcastle-under-Lyme – Priority Place**
- Cannock Chase
- East Staffordshire
- Lichfield
- Stafford
- Staffordshire Moorlands
- South Staffordshire
- Tamworth

How Bids Will be Assessed

As the lead authority Staffordshire County Council will assess 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

Financial checks will also be undertaken for **all** providers using Experian (www.experian.co.uk) and, from time-to-time, other financial appraisal system organisations. Providers will be initially assessed according to the level of risk stipulated by the financial assessors used. Additional information will be requested if required.

Following assessment Staffordshire County Council will 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.

Staffordshire 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. Bids submitted in any other format will not be accepted.

In addition, for **private sector, charitable and voluntary organisations applicants only**, the UKSPF Due Diligence Form, needs to be completed.

Bids must be submitted to Staffordshire County Council, the email address to follow.

Bids must be submitted by **noon on Friday 14th May 2021**.

The UK Community Renewal Fund is a competitive process and Staffordshire County Council and the UK Government will not enter into discussions with bidders.

Workshop surgeries to be held, between 26.4.21 to 7.5.21, to respond to any queries on the application process and the bidding documents, further details to follow.

Timeline

Task	Timeline
Event /publish bidding documents	16.4.21
Project Bid Applicant workshops/surgeries	26.4.21 – 7.5.21
Bids returned by	14.5.21
Review applications/identify recommendations	17.5.21 - 28.5.21
Secure approvals in accordance with county council governance arrangements	2.6.21 – 14.6.21
Submit Annex 1 to MHCLG	15.6.21
MHCLG announce successful projects	31.7.21
SCC issue funding agreements/project start	August 21
Projects completed	31.3.22