

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

To: The Metro Mayor and Members of the
Combined Authority

Meeting: 26 November 2021

Authority/Authorities Affected: All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: No

Key Decision: Yes

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR POLICY, STRATEGY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND METRO MAYOR

ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT OF UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND GRANT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to agree that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority should accept and act as Lead Authority for the UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) for the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and agree that the Combined Authority should make onward grant awards to delivery partners.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority:
- (a) Formally accept the UK Community Renewal Fund grant offer of £2,809,884 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and agree to act as the Accountable Body and Lead Authority for the Liverpool City Region;
 - (b) Agree the onward grant award of this money to the delivery partners listed in section 3.3; and
 - (c) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Policy and Strategic Commissioning in consultation with the Combined Authority Treasurer and Monitoring Officer to complete the relevant Funding Agreement with DLUHC, agree any necessary amendments to the project during the period of delivery and ensure appropriate grant agreements are entered into with the delivery partners.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Community Renewal Fund was announced by the Chancellor in his

Budget in March 2021. This provides £220m funding for United Kingdom as a bridging fund between European funds and the expected Shared Prosperity Fund. 100 priority places were identified nationally as a focus for this funding, with St Helens the only Local Authority to be identified by Government as a priority place in the City Region: as a comparison, 4 Greater Manchester Local Authorities were identified as priority places. However, Government also decided to allow applications for funding from non priority places too, although these were expected to have a lower chance of success.

- 3.2 Government published a prospectus setting out what can be funded as part of the Community Renewal Fund. The focus for the funding is investment in employment; skills; place and business ecosystem. It is 90% revenue funding and capital only projects will not be funded.
- 3.3 Collated lists of projects were required to be submitted to Government by 18 June 2021 by appointed Lead Authorities for appraisal. The Combined Authority worked with Local Authorities and local partners on this process and saw 43 applications taken forward for £20m for full assessment, with strategic fit input from Local Authorities. Following this, 12 projects worth £5.3m were submitted to Government for their review and consideration with decision making on which projects were to be funded residing with Government.
- 3.4 Government announced on 3 November 2021 that the Combined Authority would be awarded £2.755m to support five projects as set out below, with the confirmation that 7 projects were unsuccessful:

Project	Lead Applicant	Value	Local Authority
'Bounce Back' - Skills for Jobs	North West Skills Academy Limited	£306,000	Halton, Liverpool
Clean, Green and Advanced Manufacturing Skills for the Future	St Helens Chamber	£629,747	St Helens
Licence to Work Pathways	Genesis Training	£622,482	St Helens
St Helens Pathways into Employment	St Helens Council	£744,695	St Helens
The Innovation in Communities Project	Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services (LCVS)	£506,960	Liverpool

An outline summary of the successful projects can be found at Appendix One along with a summary of the unsuccessful ones: it is disappointing that Government chose not to fund these deliverable projects which would have made significant impact in local communities. The Combined Authority is seeking clarity from Government on the unsuccessful projects were not taken forward for funding.

- 3.5 The terms of funding will require the Combined Authority to make an onward grant allocations to the delivery partners as outlined above This is funding with a very short delivery window, with all project activity requiring to be completed by 30 June 2022. Successful projects are aware of this and are submitting revised delivery plans to ensure that the activity can be delivered within this timescale. This will include a strong risk register and mitigating actions to ensure that all aspects of the designed projects can be successfully

delivered. The balance of the funding (£55,096) will be available to the Combined Authority to cover additional management costs.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

This report seeks permission to accept and onward award £2,754,788 of UK Community Renewal Fund monies. The budget will be amended to reflect this decision. Under the terms of the funding, the Combined Authority will retain £55,096 to cover project management and related costs of administering the grants to Delivery Partners.

4.2 Human Resources

The Combined Authority's Programme Management Team will oversee the delivery and compliance of the project with support from the Combined Authority's legal, finance and policy teams.

4.3 Physical Assets

There are no impacts on physical assets arising from the recommendations in this report.

4.4 Information Technology

The proposal will not give rise to any specific Information Technology issues.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Legal Services will advise on the terms of the Funding Agreement with DLUHC and related guidance documents. Grant funding agreements with Delivery Partners drafted by Legal Services will ensure that responsibilities for delivery and risk are allocated appropriately. As part of the Grant Application process the potential implications and risks of individual projects from a subsidy control perspective were reviewed, and control measures identified as required to mitigate these risks will be included in grant funding agreements with Delivery Partners.

6. RISKS AND MITIGATION

- 6.1 There is a risk of clawback of funding by DLUHC in the event of failure to comply with the terms of the Funding Agreement or failure of any part of the project. This will be mitigated by putting into place back to back grant funding agreements with Delivery Partners and by effective monitoring and oversight arrangements.

- 6.2 There is a risk that the project will underperform against output targets, but this will be mitigated by clear management responsibilities, along with regular reporting to the Combined Authority on progress and performance.

7. PRIVACY IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy implications associated with this report.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Funding distributed under the arrangement outlined in the report will be the subject by the receiving authority of detailed equality impact assessments, as set out in the applications. This will be a condition in the funding agreement from the Combined Authority and be accompanied by a full Equality Impact Assessment.

9. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

All publicity will be done on the advice of the Combined Authority Communications team in line with the UK Community Renewal Fund publicity guidelines alongside Combined Authority branding.

10. CONCLUSION

Acceptance and commitment of the Liverpool City Region allocation from the UK Community Renewal Fund by the Combined Authority will support the key strategic priorities of investment in skills, local businesses and communities and supporting people into employment, with a specific focus on St Helens.

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Appendices:

Appendix One – Outline of projects

Background Documents:

None

APPENDIX ONE

OUTLINE OF PROJECTS

Bounce Back Skills

Bounce Back Skills will be delivered by North West Skills Academy providing a skills escalator approach supporting employed, self-employed, low skilled gain higher skills and qualifications and support unemployed residents into employment working collaboratively with employers, filling jobs in areas of demand in construction in Halton and Liverpool. This will enable local residents to take advantage of the opportunities available, and support the wider ecosystem, working with Halton People into Jobs, Liverpool in Work, Riverside College and City of Liverpool College, adding value to existing Adult Education Budget funded provision.

Clean Green Skills

Clean Green Skills is a project from St Helens Chamber and will deliver a coherent package of activity designed for both short-term outcomes and medium-term repositioning in perceptions of achieving Net Zero outcomes. It will work businesses to provide support to help them realise sustainable development goals, and additionally deliver knowledge transfer activity, providing financial support to training providers to enable them to prepare for the delivery of low carbon and green skills. The final component sees careers inspiration activity to communicate green jobs to young people. This will add value to already committed Adult Education Budget delivery.

Licence to Work Pathways

Licence to Work Pathways will be delivered by Genesis Training to support residents to be provided with the opportunity to acquire licences to work, within the Digital Infrastructure, Construction or Logistics sectors: these would be jobs and roles that are in demand e.g. fork lift truck driver, large goods vehicles driver, cable jointers. It will provide training and licences support to enable people to get to work and add value to the existing Adult Education Budget funded activity.

St Helens Pathways into Employment

St Helens Pathways into Employment is an employment programme from St Helens Council which will build upon local Ways of Work delivery, providing support for people to help them closer to work. It will work with local SMEs and organisations from community and voluntary sector to ensure that their employment needs can be met.

Innovation in Communities

Innovation in Communities is a project from LCVS who will be providing a community grants and capacity building approach for the third sector in Liverpool to deliver locally focused community activity Community Renewal Fund activity. This will build upon previous programmes and ensure that local community needs are met.

UNSUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

- Pathway to Net Zero: this would have delivered Net Zero advice and support to businesses in St Helens;
- Our heritage, our environment, our people: this would have seen a series of linked community capacity building and environmental improvement projects across the 12 mile stretch of canal in St Helens and adjoining green space network, creating volunteering opportunities and paid internships in the green economy including bio-diversity, flood risk, and heritage surveying, nature based construction, community development and youth work. It would also have stimulated new enterprises serving the needs of the visitors to the area – and demonstrable health benefits within deprived communities lacking in access to green space;
- Match Trading: this would have provided support for social enterprises across the City Region who were looking to develop and expand;
- Wirral Outreach Programme: this would have provided outreach and engagement support for the most vulnerable people in Birkenhead to secure training and jobs linked to the Birkenhead Town Deal;
- Aspire: this programme would have provided bespoke personal development, identifying and overcoming barriers to employment, education and training, training and jobsearch support to young people from Knowsley;
- Crosby Youth and Community Café; this would have provided ongoing support and development for the café, which operates as a social enterprise; and
- Irish Famine Trail: this project would have revitalised Liverpool's Irish Famine Trail with a series of artist and community engagements, operating in and for the City Region, providing a digital and international offer.