



# UK Community Renewal Fund Invitation to Submit Project Bids

## 1. Introduction

North Somerset 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.

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**.

## 2. 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.

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

1. Issuing this invitation
2. Receiving bids
3. Selecting the bids that will be sent to UK Government for consideration
4. 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](#)

### 3. 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:

1. Investment in skills
2. Investment for local businesses
3. Investment in communities and place
4. Supporting people into employment

There are no financial allocations to these priorities.

In its role as Lead Authority, North Somerset Council is inviting applications which will deliver outcomes in one or more of the investment priorities detailed above; whilst focusing on either or both **of the following local priority themes** for investment:

- **Inclusion and Equality** – We wish to invite projects that that will design and deliver innovative solutions that address the challenges of inequality affecting the prosperity, health and wellbeing of residents.
- **Thriving towns, villages and coastal communities** – We welcome projects that will deliver a placemaking approach to creating thriving environments for businesses, residents and visitors.

In addition to aligning to at least one of the four investment priorities above, the Government is requiring that any investment made under this Fund should be able to demonstrate the extent of contribution to net zero objectives or wider environmental considerations. Projects should be based on low or zero carbon best practice, adopt and support innovative clean tech where possible and support the growing skills and supply chains in support of Net Zero where possible. As a minimum, investment under this fund should meet the clean growth principle and must not conflict with the UK's legal commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

To support green growth, bids should also consider how projects can work with the natural environment to achieve project objectives, and as a minimum consider the project's impact on our natural assets and nature. For further information on how to take these considerations into account, please see the [Enabling a Natural Capital Approach \(ENCA\)](#) resources. **Please note:** this is **not applicable** to interventions focused on supporting people into employment.

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.

**Please note:** 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.

#### 4. Local Priorities

In selecting the bids that will be forwarded to the UK Government for consideration, North Somerset Council will prioritise the bids that have the greatest potential to deliver against key local growth priorities discussed in the following documents:

- [North Somerset Economic Plan](#)
- [North Somerset Employment & Skills Strategy](#)
- [Weston Placemaking Strategy](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched every part of our lives and has impacted on the economic fortunes of our residents, our businesses and our towns, villages and rural and coastal areas. It has had a profound and immediate impact and there will be a long-lasting recovery and renewal period.

The UK Community Renewal Fund represents an opportunity to secure up to **£3 million of revenue funding** that can be used to address many of the challenges faced by North Somerset, particularly those resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic.

We've listened to our businesses, residents and stakeholders and recognise the need to act quickly and responsibly. Hit particularly hard have been transport, retail, the visitor economy and creative industries. Unemployment has risen and our young people are especially at risk with fewer job opportunities and apprenticeships. Those without access to broadband or the right equipment and skills are at a big disadvantage. In addition, there has been a huge pressure on mental and physical health, highlighting the importance of wellbeing.

Our priority is to first identify projects which can help residents experiencing exacerbated deprivation due to the impact of the pandemic. Job losses, business closures, reduced access to digital learning or reskilling courses must be addressed to lessen the impact felt by our vulnerable communities.

Our second priority comes from the creation of a different set of values; community, connectivity and wellbeing, as well as a healthy and sustainable environment, are now much more prominent drivers for decision-makers.

We are therefore seeking innovative responses to our local challenges that test the delivery of integrated interventions. Our two key priorities are:

- **Inclusion and Equality** – We wish to invite projects that that will design and deliver innovative solutions that address the challenges of inequality affecting the prosperity, health and wellbeing of residents. In particular we welcome projects that address the pockets of significant deprivation in Weston-super-Mare, Worle and Pill; the predominance of jobs in low paid sectors; and the high job losses in leisure and hospitality. We also wish to invite projects that will

develop workforce skills in emerging sectors and fill gaps, as well as create conditions for businesses to retain the talent they need.

- **Thriving towns, villages and coastal communities** – We welcome projects that will deliver a placemaking approach to creating thriving environments for businesses, residents and visitors. In particular we welcome projects that will develop civic, cultural and community spaces that result in improved wellbeing and lifestyles whilst reducing out commuting and reduction of carbon emissions and that maximise digital inclusion.

Geographic Coverage – where required and led by local evidence, projects can name specific towns or villages, or they can benefit North Somerset as a whole.

## 5. Geographic Coverage

North Somerset i.e. the area administered by North Somerset Council

## 6. How Bids Will be Assessed

As the lead authority, North Somerset Council will assess all bids submitted. Bids will be assessed against:

1. The gateway criteria set out in the [UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus](#) – bids that fail to meet these criteria are ineligible for support and will be rejected
2. The extent to which they meet the objectives of the UK Community Renewal Fund
3. The extent to which bids would support the delivery of local growth and employment support priorities (see Section 4).

Following assessment, North Somerset 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. (i.e. place as in North Somerset – the area administered by North Somerset Council).

Bids will be assessed using the [UK Government supplied assessment process](#) Applicants should familiarise themselves with the assessment process and ensure that they provide sufficient information to enable the assessor to make an accurate assessment against all the assessment criteria.

The UK Government will assess all bids submitted by lead authorities against the criteria set out in the [UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus](#) They will announce the outcome of the assessment process from late July 2021 onwards.

North Somerset Council will enter into a funding agreement with successful bidders.

## 7. Submitting a Bid

Bids must be submitted using the [UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form](#) This can also be found on the [UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus](#) page.

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

Bids must be submitted to North Somerset Council using this email address: [business@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:business@n-somerset.gov.uk) Please use the subject heading **'Community Renewal Fund – completed application'**

Bids must be submitted by **12 noon** on Friday 28 May 2021.

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

If you would like any of the documents in a different format, please email [business@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:business@n-somerset.gov.uk) Please use the subject heading **'Request for documents'**

If you have any other questions about the Community Renewal Fund or the bid process, please email [business@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:business@n-somerset.gov.uk) Please use the subject heading **'Request for information'**

## 8. Bid writing support

North Somerset Council will be hosting a free webinar on preparing your application at 14.00 on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May. If you would like to attend, please email [business@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:business@n-somerset.gov.uk) . Joining instructions will follow shortly.