

Note of intention to issue 'Call for Bids' UK Community Renewal Fund

Overview

Greater Manchester Combined Authority has been designated by the UK Government as a 'Lead Authority' for the UK Community Renewal Fund in the Greater Manchester region. We will shortly be issuing a Call for Bids for the Fund, which will fund six-month pilot projects in the second half of the 2021/22 financial year.

The UK Community Renewal Fund is a UK Government programme for 2021/22. This aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches to prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It invests in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment. For more information visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus>

Aim

The main aim of the UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF) is to help local areas prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (which will replace EU Structural Funding from April 2022). The UK Government (UKG) are interested in bids which build on local insight and knowledge, align with long-term strategic plans for local growth, target people most in need, support community renewal, and which demonstrate innovation and new ideas. The National prospectus is also particularly strong on the need for UKCRF projects to demonstrate a contribution to national net zero and carbon reduction ambitions and this forms a key part of the UKGs assessment criteria.

The UKCRF has 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.

Eligibility and available funding

Any legally constituted organisation can bid for funding from the UKCRF. However, bids from private sector organisations and registered charities will only be considered where they are for projects that will provide a service to benefit other organisations or individuals (i.e. not if the intention of the project is to further their own business/organisation). The UKCRF will not provide funding to individuals to deliver projects.

A total of £220m is available across the UK, 90% of which is revenue funding. GMCA will shortlist projects totalling no more than £3m per GM local authority area. The UKG will then make final decisions about which projects are funded.

The UKG has designated 100 places across the UK as '[Priority Places](#)'. Projects in these places will be prioritised in the final UKG assessment. Four Greater Manchester areas are 'priority places': Bolton, Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale. Further information about how projects in these places will be prioritised by the UKG can be found in the 'UK Community Renewal Fund: Assessment Criteria', which have been published here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972992/UKCRF_assessment_criteria_v1.1.pdf

The UKG anticipate starting to announce successful projects in late July 2021. GMCA will be the accountable body for UKCRF spending in Greater Manchester. That means GMCA will establish funding agreements with successful bidders and issue grants to them. GMCA will endeavour to do this as quickly as reasonably possible after the UKG has announced successful projects. UKCRF funding is only available for the 2021/22 financial year, so all activity will need to be complete by March 2022.

Outcomes

UKCRF projects will need to demonstrate how they will deliver against one of more of a range of strategic outcomes set by the UKG:

- **Skills and Training:** Including getting people into education/training, supporting them to gain a qualification, getting people engaged in life skills support, and/or
- **Employment:** Including supporting people to start looking for work, getting economically inactive people engaged with the benefits system
- **Business support:** Including business introducing new products (internally or to the market), creating new jobs, safeguarding existing jobs and/or developing innovation plans. This also includes creating new businesses, improved digital connectivity to business premises, and getting organisations involved in knowledge transfer activity.
- **Net Zero:** Including estimated CO2 equivalent reductions, the development of decarbonisation plans.
- **Community and Place:** Including attracting investment, adding new green/blue infrastructure, boosting footfall or visitor numbers and/or building or renovating buildings.

Further information can be found in the 'Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers', which has been published here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972988/UKCRF_Technical_Note_for_Project_Applicants_and_Deliverers.pdf

Selection process

The UKCRF has a two-stage appraisal and assessment process.

1. GMCA (as the lead authority) will run an open and fair 'Call for Bids' for UKCRF projects in one or more of the ten local authority areas of Greater Manchester. This document is a Notice of our Intention to issue this Call shortly. GMCA will then appraise all submitted bids and is required by the UKG to produce a shortlist of projects of *no more than £3m per local authority area*. GMCA must submit this shortlist to the UKG no later than 18 June.
2. The UKG will assess all bids submitted by GMCA (and other lead authorities) against national assessment criteria. The final decision about which projects are funded sits with the UKG, who will announce the outcome of the assessment process from July 2021 onwards.

Application process and timeline

The Call for Bids documents will be available for download via The Chest portal (Ref DN535893) from mid-April. If you are interested in applying for this opportunity, you will need to register your organisation on The Chest (www.the-chest.org.uk) for current opportunities at GMCA.

The anticipated timeline is as follows:-

Key milestones	Key dates
Issue of Call for Bids the CHEST	Mid-April 2021
Deadline for return of bids	Mid-May 2021
GMCA completes appraisal and submits shortlist to UKG for consideration	18 June 2021
Issue of intent to award letters*	August 2021
Issue final funding agreements*	Early Sept 2021
Commence implementation*	Early Sept 2021
Projects complete	31 March 2022

** please note that these dates are indicative and subject to the UKG taking timely decisions about which projects will be funded, and issuing further guidance in a timely manner.*

Further reading

The UKG has published a full Prospectus (and associated technical documents) setting out how the UKCRF will operate across the UK. Organisations considering a bid should start reading this. All documents can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus>

The key documents for prospective bidders are:

- The Prospectus itself
- The 'Technical guidance for project applicants and deliverers'
- The Application form (which has been set nationally)
- The 'Assessment criteria'

Contact details

For further information, please contact:

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