

ARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLACE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES TO CABINET ON 26 JANUARY 2022

Public or private report: Public

Community Renewal Fund – Community Boost

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek formal approval for acceptance of £2.39m of national Community Renewal Funding facilitating the delivery of the Community Boost Programme pilot in the Central Area of Barnsley.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet accept the Community Renewal Funding award of £2.39m and provide approval to move forward with the implementation of the Community Boost Pilot Programme.
- 2.2 Cabinet agree to the Council releasing up to £1.2m, on a short-term basis, to support the working capital/cash flow requirements of Community Boost delivery partners up until the closure of the programme on 30 June 2022. This is due to 50% (circa £1.2m) of the total CRF allocation being released retrospectively by the funder (i.e., the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities) after programme closure.

Please Note:

Any cash flow advances made by the Council to support the working capital/cash flow requirements of delivery partners will be recovered in their entirety from the overall CRF grant allocation.

- 2.3 Cabinet note that a further report containing a full evaluation of Community Boost will be provided upon completion of the programme summer 2022.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The UK Community Renewal Fund, (CRF), is a national funding stream intended to support communities to pilot programmes and new approaches ahead of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 3.2 Full details of proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund are yet to be confirmed with government setting out the ambition to use this as a vehicle to replace European Union Structural Funds. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is intended to be a long-term vision and enabling fund aimed at supporting people and places across the UK, focusing on domestic priorities, growing local economies and is seen as being a key component of the wider levelling up agenda.

- 3.3 CRF provides £220m of funding nationally and is intended to be a precursor for the wider UK Shared Prosperity Fund. CRF provides an opportunity for places to develop unique and innovative solutions to the challenges that places face. The overall ambition from the programme is to develop, identify and learn from best practice helping to inform the wider emerging UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 3.4 In line with these aspirations, CRF is a time limited programme with all activity expected to be delivered and concluded by **30th June 2022**. Unlike the majority of existing national levelling up funding opportunities such as Towns Fund, Future High Street and the national Levelling Up Fund, CRF is predominately revenue funding as opposed to capital investment therefore naturally leaning towards the delivery of deliverable short term interventions.
- 3.5 Following a national competitive application process confirmation was received in November that the proposed Barnsley Community Boost programme has successfully secured funding of £2.39m with a partner match funding contribution of circa £0.180m providing an overall programme value of £2.6m. Community Boost will run for a defined period between December 2021 and June 2022 in line with the nationally established programme timescales.
- 3.6 A full prospectus relating to the Barnsley Community Boost proposal is attached as Appendix B to this report.

4. PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

- 4.1 In response the launch of CRF in spring of this year, a decision was taken in Barnsley to develop an innovative partner led place based programme of activity that could be delivered within the CRF programme timescales titled **Barnsley Community Boost**.
- 4.2 The Community Boost programme has been established in recognition of a number of key challenges faced by Barnsley residents, communities and business including:
- Low levels of engagement and participation in community life.
 - Increasingly isolated and disenfranchised communities.
 - Significant deprivation challenges and a worsening gap in livelihoods and wealth
 - Wellbeing and mental health challenges
- 4.3 Community Boost seeks to understand and respond to these key challenges through three distinct activities:

Co-production – Working with our communities to understand the barriers and challenges we face enabling the Council and our partners to develop future solutions increasing engagement, participation and community cohesion.

Direct Delivery – Working with partners, Community Boost seeks to deliver a range targeted interventions during the life of the programme covering the following key areas:

- Investment in skills
- Investment in business
- Community & place

- Supporting people into employment

Learning & Evaluation – The government has stated a clear intention that the Community Renewal Fund is a direct pre-cursor to the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Therefore, an overriding outcome from Community Boost is to directly test, assess and refine the model with a view to developing a framework that can not only be deployed throughout the borough but can act as beacon initiative throughout the country. The Community Boost programme will therefore be subject to comprehensive evaluation assessment inclusive of an assessment report and associated case study material.

- 4.4 Community Boost will initially focus on the Central Area of Barnsley which covers the wards of Central, Dodworth, Kingstone, Stairfoot and Worsbrough. A key overarching aspiration from the delivery of the programme is to develop a model and position Barnsley strongly to secure future funding to facilitate wider delivery throughout the borough.
- 4.5 The Community Boost programme has been developed and will be delivered with a range of partners including business, third sector organisations and wider public sector partners. Utilising a partnership framework of this nature helps to ensure that maximum reach and impact is obtained through the delivery.



- 4.6 Following a national competitive application process confirmation was received in November that the Barnsley Community Boost proposal has successfully secured funding of £2.39m. The programme. Community Boost will run for a defined period of time between December 2021 and June 2022 in line with the nationally established programme timescales.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

- 5.1 The CRF provides a one-time opportunity to secure external funding facilitating delivery of the proposed Community Boost programme. Realistically there are no other funding sources available at this point in time to progress this area.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS

- 6.1 The Community Boost project will work closely with local people, businesses, and a variety of organisations. It directly supports our vision for Barnsley - the place of possibilities.

- 6.2 Strategically the programme seeks to support the following objectives:

- Ensuring everyone can live a good life in Barnsley - through lifelong learning, doing meaningful work and staying healthy.
- Making sure Barnsley is a great place to grow; a place where our businesses and institutions commit to giving something back to its people and to sustaining the environment for future generations.

- Our economy is diverse and everyone in Barnsley contributes to our good growth agenda to create social and economic value.

6.3 Specifically the programme will see:

- People engaged in shaping their communities
- People engaged in learning, training & good employment
- Businesses supported to adapt, thrive and generate good local employment
- Improved health & wellbeing outcomes

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director - Finance (S151 Officer).

7.2 Per recommendation 2.1, approval is sought for the Council to accept the Community Renewal Funding (CRF) offer of £2.39m from South Yorkshire MCA (SYMCA) to deliver the Community Boost programme in Barnsley

7.3 From a structural perspective Members are requested to note the following arrangements both in terms the CRF programme that will be operating in Barnsley and more widely across South Yorkshire:

- SYMCA will be the accountable body for the overall £8.2m CRF Programme running across South Yorkshire. As accountable body the MCA will be required to enter into a funding agreement with DLUHC to accept the SY CRF funding (*final agreement pending*).
- BMBC will be required to enter into a separate funding agreement with SYMCA to secure release Barnsley's element of that funding. It should be noted that the final terms of that agreement are also pending but from a financial perspective SYMCA proposing that the phasing of funding to the Council will be on the following basis:
 - i) 50% (£1.2m) of CRF to be released upon execution (approval & signing) of the Grant Agreement between BMBC and SYMCA.
 - ii) The balance of funding (£1.2m) to be released after the closure of the programme on 30th June 2022.
- Separate funding agreements will need to be put in place between BMBC and local delivery partners. These agreements will place the onus on local delivery partners to achieve pre-determined outcomes and will also require them to accept any funding claw back conditions linked to non-delivery of those outcomes. This will effectively mitigate the financial impact of non-delivery of outcomes by partners on the Council.

7.4 In respect of delivery timescales it should be noted that CRF is time-limited revenue funding which has been granted to deliver a programme of short-term interventions commencing November 2021 and concluding in June 2022 (paragraph 3.5 refers). All eligible spend against the programme must therefore take place between those dates otherwise the opportunity to draw down that element of grant will be lost.

7.5 It is important to note the Council will not be required to provide any 'match' funding to accept the grant – all 'match' will come from private sector resources and has been confirmed as 'secured'.

7.6 Due to the retrospective nature of 50% (£1.2m) of the total CRF allocation it is recommended that Cabinet approve provision of a temporary cash flow support mechanism, up to a total

combined value of £1.2m, to support partners in effective programme delivery (recommendation 2.2. refers).

- 7.7 Members should be assured that any requests for support cash flow would be subject to a review of eligibility by BMBC Finance Officers, who would also ensure that the value of any request sits within the CRF financial envelope allocated to individual partners.
- 7.8 Whilst the provision of cash flow support comes with a cost attached (i.e. in that any funds used to support cash flow could alternatively have been invested by the Council elsewhere in order to generate an investment return) this cost is considered minimal given the short time period over which support will be required and also the current state of the investment market and low interest rates available.
- 7.9 It is important to note that any cash flow support provided by the Council will be recovered in its entirety from the overall CRF allocation. Also, should any partner spend be subject to clawback (due for e.g. to non-achievement of outcomes) funding agreements will be in place to ensure the responsibility for repayment rests with the delivery partner; whether this be in the form a repayment of grant to SYMCA or repayment of cashflow support directly to the Council.
- 7.10 In terms of the management of the overall programme any cost increases/decreases on the individual projects will be managed within the total resource funding envelope assigned to the programme - there is therefore no financial ask of the Council in terms of financial support needed to manage cost variations that arise across the programme.
- 7.11 In addition to the mitigations referred to above, a CRF Programme Board has been established, which includes officer representation from Financial Services. The Board will monitor the progress of programme delivery and associated risks via regular monthly monitoring and reporting.
- 7.12 The financial implications of the proposal are summarized in Appendix A.

8. EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no employee implications associated with this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A fully aligned grant funding agreement which complies with UK subsidy control regime has been developed to provide funding for the Community Boost Programme ensuring that full transparency and alignment is established in respect of the national funding requirements of CRF and the associated delivery responsibilities of all partners involved in the programme. Where a Grant funding agreement cannot be used for whatever reason the services will be procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

10. CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Working with support of our Communications Team and supporting customer digital portal has been established for Community Boost helping to raise awareness of the programme and act as a signpost to relevant support and activity. Our Customer Services team have been fully briefed and are aware of the programme

11. COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Community Boost is supported by a full communications strategy developed and operated in conjunction with our partners.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 Extensive consultations have been undertaken through the development of Community Boost. This has been a fundamental element facilitating the evolution of the programme from bid submission to delivery.

13. EQUALITY IMPACT

13.1 A high level impact assessment has been undertaken for this proposal. The overall impacts of the programme are anticipated to be positive.

14. THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

14.1 The Community Boost programme directly support our Barnsley 2030 aspirations with activity directly contributing to:

- Healthy Barnsley
- Growing Barnsley
- Learning Barnsley
- Sustainable Barnsley

15. TACKLING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

15.1 One of the key overarching aspirations of the programme is to deliver activity that will directly help to address the challenge of **significant deprivation and a worsening gap in livelihoods and wealth** therefore directly contributing the tackling the impact of poverty.

16. TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

16.1 One of the key overarching aspirations of the programme is to deliver activity that will directly help to address the challenge of **wellbeing and mental health** therefore directly contributing the tackling health inequalities.

17. REDUCTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER

17.1 One of the key overarching aspirations of the programme is to deliver activity that will directly help to address the challenge of **increasingly isolated and disenfranchised communities** therefore directly contributing to some of the fundamental underlying causes of crime and disorder.

18. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

18.1 The Community Boost initiative has a full and comprehensively monitored risk register. Key risks include:

Risk	Mitigation
COVID – The emerging Omicron position could have a significant impact on the deliverability across the programme. Specifically, it will be difficult for delivery partners to engage with residents, communities and businesses should significant COVID controls be adopted nationally or regionally. This in turn will impact on the ability for the programme and partners to achieve contractual requirements.	The risk and impact of COVID has been recorded as a category 1 risk with a programme wide assessment on deliverability being undertaken. This risk has also been formally raised with the both the Mayoral Combined Authority and Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities. The main mitigation for this risk should impacts fully manifest would be a national extension to the programme delivery timescales.
Time – Delivery of a complex programme of activity within 7 months is a significant challenge.	Programme Management resource is in place and work has progressed with delivery partners to mobilise for delivery throughout the application window.
Attainment of outcomes – The programme fails to deliver expected outcomes.	Extensive due diligence has been undertaken with partners to ensure deliverability of activity. This will be complimented with ongoing monitoring throughout the programme.
Compliance with funding requirements – None compliance results in risk of financial clawback.	Development of grant agreement framework providing golden thread of compliance from accountable body through to delivery partner. Framework developed with support of the BMBC legal, finance, procurement and audit teams.
Programme demand – Inability to generate sufficient demand to meet the programme outcomes	Communications strategy in place and mitigated through wider partner networks.
Finance – Government has set out that funding will be released on the basis of 50% at commencement and 50% at programme completion resulting in a cashflow challenge.	Mitigated as detailed in the financial implications section.

19. GLOSSARY

- CRF - Community Renewal Fund
 UKSPF - United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund

20. LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Financial Implications
 Appendix B: Community Boost Prospectus

21. BACKGROUND CABINET PAPERS

None

Report author: Paul Clifford (Head of Economic Development) / Rachel Payling (Head of Communities)