



HM Government



City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**

# COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND PROSPECTUS

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## STOKE-ON-TRENT

# FOREWORD

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**Councillor Abi Brown**  
Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Over recent years, Stoke-on-Trent has benefited from significant economic growth.

Pre-pandemic, the city was outperforming much of the UK in terms of economic growth and job creation. Like all areas of the UK, the pandemic has had a negative impact; however, through the City's resilience and diversity there is shared confidence that we will quickly return to a positive economic path.

In February, the City launched its 'Powering Up Stoke-on-Trent' Prospectus, mapping out the key issues that the City needs to address in order to accelerate both our economic fortunes and the ambitions and needs of our communities. We need to ensure that as we create economic opportunities our communities are ready to benefit from them. That means investing in better skills, in business start-up and growth, in supporting people into work and in strengthening local infrastructure.

The Community Renewal Fund is one of the first Government initiatives to be rolled out under their Levelling Up agenda and as a City we want to take every advantage that this fund has to offer. The first step is to engage with organisations across the city to identify the best ideas and programmes we should be supporting through this Fund.

This Prospectus is an invitation to submit proposals against our identified national and local priorities.

As you will note within this prospectus, there are Government guidelines which identify the types of projects that the Community Renewal Fund can support. Whilst applicants who are able to meet Government criteria, are not dissuaded from applying, there is a limited amount of funding and it is vital that wherever possible we target it towards key local issues within the City. This prospectus aims to identify these key areas for investment where applications are particularly encouraged, and where there is a greater likelihood of gaining support and funding.

With this in mind I look forward to receiving ambitious proposals that serve the City well, address our needs, and assist us in a speedy return to a path of strong growth, health and prosperity.

# BACKGROUND

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The UK Government recently announced the launch of the Community Renewal Fund. The announcement confirmed that the Government are preparing for the successor to the European Structural Funds, now that the UK has left the European Union. The Community Renewal Fund is viewed as a forerunner to the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Government views the Community Renewal Fund as an opportunity to pilot and develop new and innovative ways of working which could potentially influence UKSPF, the details of which will come later in 2021.

Stoke-on-Trent has been identified as one of 100 priority places where Community Renewal Funds are to be targeted. The City Council has been assigned the role of 'Lead Authority' in coordinating the bidding process within the City.

The Government have identified four priorities for Community Renewal Fund investment, these being:-

- Investment in skills
- Investment for local business
- Investment in communities and place
- Supporting people into employment

Under these broad criteria the scope for potential projects is huge and could result in the Community Renewal Fund within the City being overwhelmed by potential projects. In order to mitigate against the very many organisations likely to be left disappointed, the City Council has identified a number of 'local' priorities, where it would particularly like to see funding applications being made.

The identification of these local priorities is the core function of this prospectus and potential applicants are asked to consider whether or not their proposals align against these local priorities when they are deciding whether to apply or not.

As Lead Authority the City Council is charged with inviting applications from delivery organisations able to meet the criteria of the fund, appraise the submissions to create a shortlist and then submit this shortlist of proposals back to Government in June when Government will itself appraise the shortlisted submissions and subsequently make financial awards. In creating its shortlist the City Council will give priority to those projects which best align to the local priorities as identified within this prospectus.

# BIDDING PROCESS

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The Lead Authority have to submit its shortlisted proposals to Government by the 18th of June 2021 and so in order to meet this deadline the following timetable will apply.

- Launch of Local Prospectus & Open Call – 16 April 2021
- Application Submission Deadline – Midnight 24 May 2021
- Submission Clarification – 25 May to 28 May 2021
- Lead Authority Shortlisting – 1 June to 8 June 2021
- Preparation of final national submission – 8 June to 18 June 2021
- Submission to Government – 18 June 2021
- Government Awards Announced – Late July 2021

Prospective applicants should ensure that their proposals demonstrate alignment with the objectives set out in the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus along with the eligibility rules. These can be found at [www.gov.uk/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22](http://www.gov.uk/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22)

In addition, applicants are asked to take account of the following guiding principles:

- Project proposals should demonstrate alignment to the City Council's Powering Up Prospectus, as well as other strategic plans and policies.
- Applicants are encouraged to consider how the project could be delivered in the event that not all of the funding being requested is awarded.
- Government guidance encourages bids of £500,000+ where this is possible, however strong applications of a lesser value will be considered (See National Guidance).
- Applications which address gaps in existing service provision are encouraged.

- Bids need to evidence that the project complements and does not conflict with UK government policy.
- Bids should complement and not duplicate existing programmes.
- Bids must be able to evidence impact for multiple individuals, businesses or other organisations.
- The funding available consists of 90% revenue funding and 10% capital funding – where necessary, applicants should calibrate their bids accordingly.
- Projects should demonstrate the extent of contribution to net zero objectives or wider environmental considerations
- Project applicants should consider equalities impacts.
- Projects must deliver in accordance with branding requirements set out in Fund Eligibility Rules and Guidance.
- Projects should meet the expectations for monitoring and evaluation.
- All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as per UK government guidance – as well as all other relevant legal obligations such as procurement.
- Interventions must be financially completed (i.e. all delivery activity concluded) by 31 March 2022 and will be for this year only.

A standard application form is available from the Gov website and a copy can be found on the City Council's website [stoke.gov.uk/communityrenewalfund](http://stoke.gov.uk/communityrenewalfund)

# SELECTION CRITERIA

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As has been noted above, proposals will be assessed through two phases and applicants are asked to address both the local and national criteria within their submissions.

As the Lead Authority, Stoke-on-Trent City Council will appraise all the applications in order to produce a shortlist of schemes that fall within the £3M ceiling. This shortlist will then be forwarded to Government who will in turn appraise projects in line with the criteria set out in their guidance; [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/972992/UKCRF\\_assessment\\_criteria\\_v1.1.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612992/UKCRF_assessment_criteria_v1.1.pdf)

The City Council's shortlisting assessment will clearly have to take the Government guidance into account, however there will be a focus on the following;

## Strategic fit

- Whether the proposal addresses the Priority Investment Themes as outlined within this local prospectus
- How the proposal aligns with local strategy, in particular addressing the issues raised within the Powering Up Prospectus [stoke.gov.uk/poweringup](https://stoke.gov.uk/poweringup)

- How the project works alongside, supplementing existing provision.
- Providing good value for money in terms of outcomes against investment
- The extent to which the project demonstrates innovation in service delivery, through:
  - introducing new delivery approaches
  - integrated approaches across policy themes or
  - collaboration between partner organisations

## Deliverability, effectiveness, and efficiency

- Confirmation that projects can be established, delivered and completed by March 2022.
- Project risks have been identified and are adequately mitigated
- The applicant sets out an efficient mode of delivery including an assessment of value for money taking account of the level of contribution to programme outputs for funding sought

# LOCAL SELECTION CRITERIA

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## Gateway Checklist

The Government have established a set of criteria which has to be satisfied in order for projects to be considered, it is therefore prudent that this be applied at the local level.

Projects are therefore asked to ensure that:-

1. Project proposals will be delivered and all expenditure incurred by March 2022
2. Projects do not duplicate other national or local provision.
3. The project responds to the themes and needs identified in the Governments Community Renewal Fund Prospectus.
4. Projects will be delivered by a legally constituted organisation able to receive public monies.
5. Projects will be delivered in line with all subsidy control requirements
6. Projects will be delivered in accordance with the Governments branding guidelines.

Failure to satisfy this checklist is likely to prevent applications progressing onto the City Council's shortlist

Projects that are able to confirm that the above criteria can be met will then be considered at the local level. The lead Authority will establish a specific appraisal panel to undertake the task of shortlisting applications.

Submissions to Stoke-on-Trent City Council will be scored at equal ratios on the following criteria.

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Strategic Fit	Evidence (example)
How the project contributes to addressing the City Council's Community Renewal Fund Priorities.	Applicants are encouraged to reference data that demonstrates how the project will impact the issue being addressed, and promote 'Levelling Up'.
Alignment to local strategies and policies	How will the proposal address issues raised within the City Council's Powering Up Prospectus/ other policy documents?
Alignment to existing activity	Confirmation of additionality and connectivity
Deliverability	Evidence (example)
Clarification that all delivery can take place by March 2022	Confirmation of recruitment and procurement activity as necessary.
Robust and realistic delivery milestones	A realistic delivery programme
Risks have been identified and addressed/mitigated.	Risk assessment, with particular focus on delivery Embedded monitoring and evaluation
Value for Money	Evidence (example)
The City Council support the Government's approach in encouraging larger scale projects where possible.	The quality of outcomes and outputs in comparison to the amount of the funding being requested' The ability to introduce match funding
Demonstrable impact on key issues	Projects are encouraged to convey the anticipated impact that their proposals will have within the City, including wider benefits and outcomes



# STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY PRIORITIES

This is a key section of the prospectus, it sets out, under each of the priority themes both the Government's priorities followed by what are considered to be key local priorities for the City of Stoke-on-Trent. Whilst applicants are able to submit applications which meet the Government's Guidance, applicants are encouraged to consider how their proposal can address the local priorities identified within both the Stoke-on-Trent Powering Up Prospectus and the priorities listed below. Ensuring that these local needs are met will clearly have some bearing on whether or not proposals make the shortlist of schemes that will eventually be put forward to Government.

## UK Government Priorities

### Investment in skills

Government are interested in proposals for innovative projects that address current and emerging local skills needs and are complementary to broader place-based investment. Bids may include, but are not limited to interventions that address:

- **Work-based training** – for example addressing specific local need from local employers for on-the-job training to support local growth
- **Retraining, upskilling or reskilling members of the workforce** – for example support for relevant training where the local workforce may require new skills to meet the needs of a local employer or sector.
- **Promoting the advancement of digital skills and inclusion** – for example supporting the development of digital skills for digitally excluded individuals.







# POWERING UP SKILLS

Stoke-on-Trent

## Stoke-on-Trent Priorities

### Sector-based skills

Projects which encourage residents to skill, re-skill and up-skill in key sectors across the city, (this includes areas such as manufacturing and logistics, as well as personal services such as child development, health and social care). With a focus on short courses, CV workshops and interview techniques with guaranteed interviews with local employers to encourage residents into these roles. This will also support COVID-19 recovery, helping those who have lost their jobs or at risk of redundancy to find employment in other key sectors.

### Digital Inclusion & Digital Skills

Projects that support digital inclusion and skills in the city to support residents to improve their digital capability which will in turn improve their access to employment opportunities, health and other services/support. There is a good provision of digital skills across the city ranging from basic level to degree level. However, there are individuals and families across the city that do not have access to a digital device and the internet. A particular focus on projects that can provide devices to individuals and families and provide basic digital skills training that will improve digital inclusion.

### Apprenticeships

Projects that promote apprenticeships to businesses in Stoke-on-Trent and bring together all levy paying employers in the city to promote levy sharing to other businesses in the local area. This would support businesses who want to recruit an apprentice but have used all of their allocated funding or for micro businesses who do not have the funds to pay the 5% contribution. This will provide one central hub where businesses can go to receive funding and co-ordinate the apprenticeship provision in the city.



# POWERING UP BUSINESS

——— Stoke-on-Trent ———

## UK Government Priorities

### Investment for Local Business

Government are interested in proposals for innovative pilots and projects that address local business and innovation needs. Bids may include, but are not limited to, interventions that address:

- **Supporting entrepreneurs and helping businesses with potential to create more job opportunities for current employees or take on new employees** – for example enabling access to specialist support, such as investor readiness schemes
- **Encouraging businesses to develop their innovation potential** – for example facilitating small businesses to grow and to develop new and improved products and services by promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing
- **Supporting decarbonisation measures** – for example encouraging local businesses and organisations to reduce greenhouse gases through investment in new technology or energy efficiency measures.



## Stoke-on-Trent Priorities

Projects which support the development of supply chains for businesses within the City. Many companies need support in developing their internal policies, such as financial planning, procurement, social value in order to achieve industry BSI/ISO standards necessary if they are to bid for significant contracts.

The pandemic had both highlighted and accelerated our use of digital technologies and so projects which assist small and medium sized enterprises embrace and develop their use of digital and data technologies to enable productivity advantages and growth are encouraged.

Departure from the European Union has introduced a number of challenges for businesses that are involved in international trade. Projects which create a dedicated resource to assist local companies with importing and exporting globally are also encouraged

The City has a broad and robust business support offer, however there are gaps in support around new business start -ups. Projects which assist in the establishment of new start-up businesses are welcomed.

Projects that foster knowledge transfer activity. This may include nurturing further join up between higher education institutions and small businesses, leading to new product development, commercialisation, diversification and productivity benefits.

Our economy, if it is to be sustainable long term, has to continue to address its carbon footprint. Projects therefore that can start to make further inroads by growing a greener economy are also encouraged





# POWERING UP COMMUNITIES

— Stoke-on-Trent —

## UK Government Priorities

### Investment in Communities and Place

Government are interested in proposals for innovative pilots and projects that address community needs and support local places. Bids may include, but are not limited to, interventions that address:

- **Feasibility studies for delivering net-zero and local energy projects** – for example assessing opportunity and viability of green projects that contribute towards our green agenda or net-zero objectives
- **Exploring opportunity for promoting culture-led regeneration and community development** – for example investing in culture focused feasibility studies and community facilities to attract people to places
- **Improving green spaces and preserving important local assets** – for example enhancing natural assets, including green spaces in neighborhoods and housing estates, to enhance quality of life to attract and retain talent, and attract tourism.



## Stoke-on-Trent Priorities

### Digital Technologies within our City

Project proposals that look to bring the real and digital worlds together through the creative use of technology and digital to engage with young people around remixed town and city centre offers. There is a rapid growth of introducing technology into urban centres, as can be seen through the 'Playable City' concept. Projects are able to explore new ways of engaging with our urban centres and public spaces as well as building a testbed for new ideas to engage people and communities to create an animated 'playable mash up' of arts, culture, heritage, and retail experiences.

### Developing a more Sustainable City

The pandemic has impacted and in some ways accelerated how we look to access goods and services. Projects that explore the concept of the 15-minute city principle which aims to provide residents with everything they need within a 15-minute walk or bike ride of their homes through the creation of a sustainable, self-sufficient centres, particularly our key town centres. Proposals will be able to utilise Stoke-on-Trent's polycentrism as a tool for sustainability, transforming the city into greener and more people-friendly places and spaces.

### Stimulating Creative Enterprise

Projects that build on Stoke-on-Trent's history and heritage as a 'makers city' of artists, designers and creatives. The development of these skills can bring new opportunities and attracting collaboration which can help Stoke-on-Trent position itself as a creative and forward-looking city by securing a pipeline and demand for affordable workspace, supporting areas to become creative hubs and providing job and training opportunities that will ensure local communities, artists and entrepreneurs are supported to become future creative leaders. There is a particular interest in projects that also make creative re-use of the city's heritage.







# POWERING UP EMPLOYMENT

— Stoke-on-Trent —

## UK Government Priorities

### Supporting People into Employment

Government are interested in proposals for innovative pilots and projects that focus on delivering bespoke programmes, utilising a needs-based approach to support individuals to overcome their multiple or complex barriers which inhibit their ability to gain employment.

- **Supporting people to engage with local services which support them on their journey towards employment** – such as bringing together multi-agency teams to join up a variety of services around an individual to address the variety of barriers to employment they may face.
- **Identifying and addressing any potential barriers these individuals may face in gaining employment or moving closer to the labour market** – such as the use of key-worker support to work with beneficiaries to identify barriers to employment..
- **Raising aspirations, supporting individuals to access Plan for Jobs employment support, jobs and find sustainable employment** – such as providing holistic support to address the long-term barriers to employment
- **Supporting people to gain the basic skills they need to develop their potential for sustainable work** – such as English, Maths, Digital and English for Speakers of Other Languages skills and training courses.
- **Testing what works in helping people move towards work** – such as testing new initiatives which support people along the employment journey.

### **Supporting employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups**

Projects that support disadvantaged groups such as ex-offenders, veterans and the homeless to move closer to the labour market by providing wrap around support to address the multiple barriers they face. This should include the opportunity to gain basic skills, employability support and pastoral support to address other barriers such as health, finance and housing.

### **Supporting those with long-term health problems and those with additional needs (Special Educational Needs/Care leavers) into employment**

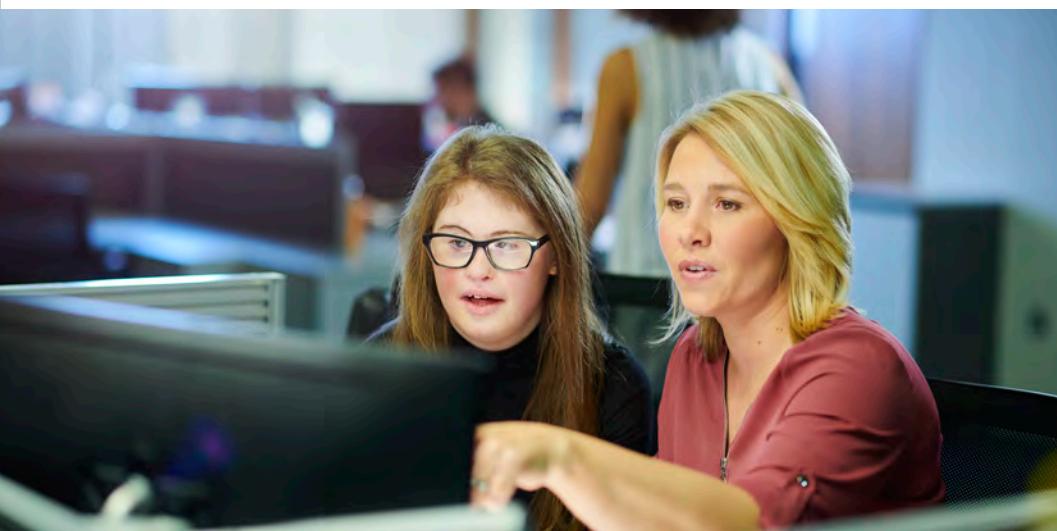
Projects to support people with long-term health problems including mental health and those with additional needs such as care leavers into employment. Supported internships support people with learning difficulties and learning disabilities to gain meaningful work experience through tailored support. This could be extended to people with long-term health problems and care leavers to make sure they receive tailored support to gain meaningful employment. In addition, potential projects would also support employers who employ people with additional needs. This could include disability awareness training or training for mentors in the business.

### **Youth unemployment**

Projects that support our young residents aged 16-24, and in particular disadvantaged groups, with access to training and targeted employability support to support them into employment. Current provision supports our NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) residents aged 16-18 and up to the age of 24 with an Educational Health Care Plan. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected our young residents and more support is needed for those residents who are aged 19+ and looking for employment, complementary to the programmes that have already introduced for example The City's Opportunity Area.

### **Provision of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)**

Projects that supports the creation of CEIAG materials such as career pathways, sector information and job profiles for key sectors in the city. It is important that all residents, not only young people, have access to up to date labour market information that can support them in looking for employment or those looking to re-train and understand the transferable skills they have. This will be particularly important in the recovery from COVID-19 in supporting those new to employment into key sectors and to support those who have lost their job to consider other job roles in growth sectors to support them back into employment.





# TO MAKE AN APPLICATION

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A deadline of midnight on the 21 May 2021 has been set for completed application forms to be returned back to the City Council, these need to be submitted to the following address [communityrenewalfund@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:communityrenewalfund@stoke.gov.uk)

Due to the Government's tight deadline please ensure that all sections of the application form have been completed as there will be little opportunity for clarification. Applicants are requested to run through the Application Checklist, which can be found on the City Council's website, prior to submitting their proposal.

Once the shortlisting exercise has been completed applicants will be informed as to whether or not their submissions have made the City Council's shortlist.

Officers within the City Council can be contacted to discuss applications and address any specific issues. An FAQ has been drafted by Government, a copy of which will be hosted on the City Council's website [stoke.gov.uk/communityrenewalfund](https://stoke.gov.uk/communityrenewalfund)

Please contact either [mark.connell@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:mark.connell@stoke.gov.uk) or [katie.rogers@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:katie.rogers@stoke.gov.uk)

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