

UK CRF in North Ayrshire - guidance

The UK Community Renewal Fund

CRF is a new UK Government fund that is part of a process of replacing EU structural funds. It will provide largely revenue support for initiatives to:

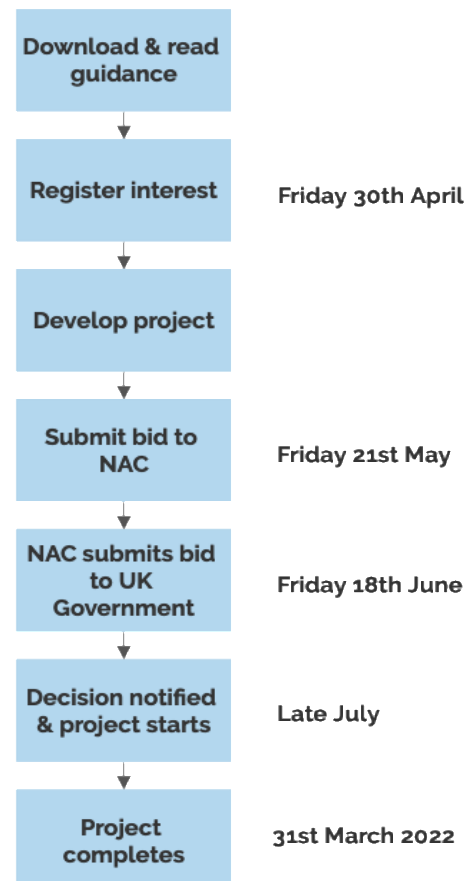
- Invest in skills
- Invest for local business
- Invest in communities and place
- Support people into employment

Councils have been asked by UK Government to submit applications – and in doing this to coordinate bids in the Council area from any eligible body seeking funding from this source. North Ayrshire has been identified as one of 100 priority Council areas in the UK for this funding. Timescales are very tight – any bids to the Council must be submitted by 17.00 on 21st May. Any funds allocated must be spent by 31st March 2022.

Developing & submitting a bid

This guidance will help you submit a bid to North Ayrshire Council. The Council will then collate bids into a package to submit UK Government. The guidance summarises documents available elsewhere and you should read the full UK Government guidance before submitting your bid to the Council. The process shown here is not open to change, but North Ayrshire Council will support you through the process as much as possible. The Council have appointed Hall Aitken Associates to deliver this support. Contact details for help, and links to other documents appear later in this guide.

If you do wish to submit a bid, please register your interest by Friday April 30th – by completing the simple registration form on the website. The flowchart opposite shows the rest of the process and deadlines.



Developing and submitting your bid

Registering your interest

Please register your interest by 17.00 on Friday 30th April. This is essential so that the Council can offer support and start the process of writing the overall bid to Government. You can change your project after registering, but please register by the deadline if you can.

The process should take no more than ten minutes.

Support to help you develop your bid

There will be a series of webinars – the dates will be on the website. These will provide general information and the opportunity to ask questions.

One to one support or small online group support may also be available from Hall Aitken on behalf of North Ayrshire Council, depending on the number of likely bids and support requested. This will be confirmed as soon as the deadline for registering interest has passed.

There is a *preference* stated in the Government guidance for bids of £500,000 or more. It is unlikely that any further clarity on this will emerge before you make your application. So you may wish to consider combining smaller projects with others to exceed this amount.

Submitting your application

You should complete the application form (which is published by UK Government) you can download from the website and submit it to the Council by 17.00 on Friday 21st May. Bids received after this date will not be accepted. North Ayrshire Council will take your bid and combine it with other applications in the final package. UK Government will not accept direct bids. Lead Authorities like North Ayrshire Council are eligible to submit a shortlist of projects up to a maximum of £3 million. So if the total bids submitted to the Council exceed this total, the Council will select the bids to submit – this is explained in the next section of this guide.

Delivering your project

A decision on funding should be made by July and funds should be available shortly afterwards. But this is the responsibility of UK Government, not The Council. More guidance on project implementation may be forthcoming and all successful bidders will need to agree to follow any UK Government guidance before receiving any payments. There will be a monitoring and evaluation requirement and you should build in resources for this.

All funds must be committed and spent by March 31st 2022.

Selection process

The Government guidance sets out the selection criteria that will be applied to bids submitted by Councils. Because the scheme has only just been launched it is possible the guidance may be revised. And there is no history to inform how Government will interpret the guidance and selection process.

North Ayrshire Council will therefore use its best judgement, drawing on external advice, to select bids it deems to meet the Government criteria and local priorities. The guidance indicates that the total bid from the Council should not exceed £3 million. So, if the total eligible bids at the 21st May deadline exceed this figure, The Council will select those it assesses as best meeting local as well as national priorities. The Council reserves the right to reject bids that do not align with local and national priorities.

After the local submission deadline, Council officers, drawing on external support if required, will collate bids and assess them against the criteria set out below. The final selection and approval of the overall bid from North Ayrshire Council, as lead authority, to be submitted to the UK Government for consideration, will be made by the Council through its Cabinet in June.

Selection criteria

The selection criteria for the programme are set out in the [UK Community Renewal Fund Assessment Process](#)

Local assessment process

North Ayrshire Council will assess all bids against:

- The gateway criteria set out in the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus – bids that fail to meet these criteria will be rejected
- The extent to which they meet the objectives of UK Community Renewal Fund
- The extent to which bids would contribute to local strategic objectives

Following assessment, the Council will prioritise, and submit to the UK Government, those eligible bids up to a maximum of £3 million which most strongly meet the UK Community Renewal Fund and local priorities.

On the next page you will find a table setting out the UK national and the North Ayrshire Council priorities – arranged under the four key types of activity and the cross-cutting themes. This will be the basis of the selection process the Council will undertake.

Community Renewal Fund Themes

	Investment in skills	Investment in Local Businesses	Investment in Communities and Place	Supporting People into employment
	Interested in proposals for innovative projects that address current and emerging local skills needs and are complementary to broader place-based investment	Interested in proposals for innovative pilots and projects that address local business and innovation needs	Interested in proposals for innovative pilots and projects that address community needs and support local places.	Investment here will help places provide local, tailored, wrap-around support to those furthest from the labour market - focusing on individuals who find it difficult to engage with mainstream provision or for whom mainstream provision is not an option.
	Cross-cutting themes			
	Net zero objectives: projects demonstrate the extent of contribution to net zero objectives or wider environmental considerations	Work-based training	Supporting entrepreneurs and helping businesses with potential to create more job opportunities for current employees or take on new employees	Exploring opportunity for promoting culture-led regeneration and community development
	Equality: projects should consider equalities impacts	Retraining, upskilling or reskilling members of the workforce	Encouraging businesses to develop their innovation potential	Feasibility studies for delivering net-zero and local energy projects
		Promoting the advancement of digital skills and inclusion	Supporting decarbonisation measures	Improving green spaces and preserving important local assets
				Promoting rural connectivity
		We are looking for applications employing innovative approaches to skills development to maximise the retention of any investment in our communities.	We will support the creation and sustainability of a range of business models including SMEs, social enterprise, employee ownership, cooperatives, municipal activity and community enterprises	We will support the wider regeneration of our communities by maximising all of our land and assets including through alternative uses for community and business benefit.
North Ayrshire Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of working in partnership Leveraged funding Innovation in service delivery 			We encourage applications that further the creation of fair and meaningful jobs with progression opportunities to unlock the potential of our residents.
UK Government criteria				Supporting people to gain the basic skills they need to develop their potential for sustainable work
				Raising aspirations, supporting individuals to access Plan for Jobs employment support, jobs and find sustainable employment
				Identifying and addressing any potential barriers these individuals may face in gaining employment or moving closer to the labour market
				Supporting people to engage with local services which support them on their journey towards employment

Guidance summary

This is a short summary of the guidance provided by UK Government. It is intended to help you decide whether or not to bid and to provide a general background. But it is an interpretation of the full guidance – you should read the full guidance and any additional guidance from UK Government before preparing and submitting your bid.

UK Government guidance

Please read the [UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus](#) and the [UK Community Renewal Fund Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers document](#) and the [UK Community Renewal Fund Assessment Process](#) before starting work on a bid.

The prospectus gives information on the objectives of the fund, the types of projects it will support and how it operates. The other documents include the process and selection criteria that will be used to assess Council bids to Government.

A focus for this fund is to support innovation and new ideas, investing in pilot projects that draw on local insights and which will help places to prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from 2022.

North Ayrshire Council role

North Ayrshire Council will

- Publish this information
- Receive bids
- Select the bids to combine into an application to UK Government for consideration
- Pay grants to successful projects and manage their performance.

We are interested in proposals that:

- Build on local insight and knowledge
- Align with our long-term strategic plans for local growth
- Target people most in need

Eligible projects

Projects must deliver activity in at least one of the following priorities:

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

The UK Government wants to maximise impact and deliverability through larger projects (£500,000+) where possible. As 90% of funding available through the UK Community Renewal

Fund is revenue funding and only available in 2021/22, projects should be mostly or wholly revenue based.

Bids can be for up to 100% of the additional funding required to deliver the project.

Project outcomes

Although it will not be clear what sort of projects Government will select, other than as set out in the prospectus, there is a set of common outcomes for the programme. So in designing your project you should bear in mind that projects meeting these outcomes are more likely to be prioritised by UK Government. If you have other outcomes in mind you should articulate these clearly in your application. Detail on the common outcomes can be found in Annexe A [UK Community Renewal Fund Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers document](#)

Monitoring and evaluation

The Community Renewal Fund is intended by UK Government as part of a [suite of interventions](#) to inform the roll out of the [Shared Prosperity Fund](#) in 2022.

Guidance for the Community Renewal fund indicates that monitoring and evaluation will be a requirement, and that 1-2% of funds, with a minimum of £10,000 per project, should be devoted to an evaluation plan. More guidance on this is promised, but the current requirements can be found in section 10 of the [UK Community Renewal Fund Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers document](#).

In developing such plans, it will be useful to bear in mind that the operation of the Community Renewal Fund may help inform the development of the Shared Prosperity Fund. And that success of projects in North Ayrshire may influence future success in securing funds for the area. Careful planning of evaluation would therefore be sensible.

The monitoring requirements are not fully set out, but again the Technical Note indicates broadly what these will be.

Strong bids will make proper provision for both monitoring and evaluation.

Frequently asked questions

Q:1 What is the 90% revenue and 10% capital split?

This is a decision of the UK government. Two other programmes – the UK Levelling Up Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - will focus on capital projects.

Bids should be either wholly or predominantly revenue based.

Q2: Can we have multi-location sites for delivery?

The prospectus provides that regional bids could be considered, but it seems unlikely to be considered across wider geographies. If you do wish to make such a bid please highlight this as soon as possible to allow discussion.

Q3: Can a programme which has already commenced bid for funding?

Projects that have already launched are eligible for support where they meet the selection criteria and investment priorities set out in the prospectus. However, applicants must clearly demonstrate the *additional* impact that funding would have on the scale, scope and/or quality of the existing project.

An assessment criterion is that the project would not proceed without funding or could only be delivered on a smaller scale.

Costs are eligible for support from the date that projects are approved by UK government.

Q4: What about projects that you have planned for future years funding?

There is no indication from the UK government that funding will be provided beyond March 2022 for these projects.

Q5: What is the relationship of this fund to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund?

The 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.

Q6: Who is eligible to apply?

Any legally constituted organisation delivering an appropriate service can submit a bid. Bids may come from universities, third sector organisations, umbrella business groups and the Council itself. Private sector organisations and registered charities may prepare bids where they are providing a service to benefit other organisations or individuals. You cannot apply for funding if the intention of the project is to simply to further your own business or organisation, for example by buying equipment or offsetting additional staffing or other costs.

Q7: How can we apply if we work across different Council areas?

Project applicants can submit to more than one Lead Authority in response to local bidding processes if their project responds to requirements set out across more than one place. If you plan to do this please notify us as soon as possible.