

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 15.6.2021

Title: UK Government Levelling Up Fund and Community Renewal Fund applications

Purpose of the report: To Seek Authority to submit funding applications to support economic growth and regeneration projects

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member: Economy and Regeneration, Cllr Rhodri Evans

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. THE UK Levelling Up Fund (LUF)

The UK Levelling Up Fund, which will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery. The Fund is jointly managed by HM Treasury, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Department for Transport.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-prospectus>

- 1.2. All areas in the UK are able to access the Fund. Specifically, in Great Britain: Unitary authorities (including metropolitan borough councils), London borough councils and district councils in two tier areas in England; and, unitary authorities in Scotland and Wales are eligible to submit bids in line with paragraph 1.4.
- 1.3. County councils with transport powers, combined authorities, mayoral combined authorities and the Greater London Authority (GLA) are eligible to submit one transport bid; and unitary authorities in Scotland and Wales, and unitary authorities in England with transport powers are able to submit one additional bid which must be for transport.
- 1.4. Members of Parliament, as democratically elected representatives of the area, are expected to back one bid that they see as a priority. The number of bids that a local authority in the first category can make will relate to the number of MPs in their area. Accordingly, local authorities can submit one bid for every MP whose constituency lies wholly within their boundary. Every local authority can submit at least one bid.
- 1.5. Bids for up to £20m can be submitted for the Levelling Up fund, and a further bid for up to £20m for transport bids, although bids for up to £50m can be submitted for larger scale transport bids.

- 1.6. Local Authorities across GB have been placed into priority areas, based on an assessment of economic need. Ceredigion, along with 15 other Local Authorities in Wales has been placed in category 1. This means a higher priority will be given to projects from these areas that meet the assessment criteria.
- 1.7. Up to £4.8 billion is being made available until 2024-25 across the UK, with at least £800 million intended to be invested in projects in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. A commitment is being made that 5% of first year allocation for the UK will be invested in Wales.
- 1.8. A first round of applications is being invited from applicants who can demonstrate that elements of their proposals are deliverable in year 1 (this financial year).
- 1.9. The deadline for applications is 18 June 2021.

2. UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF)

- 2.1. The UK Community Renewal Fund, which will provide local areas across the UK with access to £220 million of additional funding as they prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund due to launch in 2022. It is targeted to help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need in a manner distinct but complementary to the Levelling Up Fund, through investment in skills, enterprise and employment.

[UK Community Renewal Fund: prospectus 2021-22 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97222/uk_community_renewal_fund_prospectus_2021-22.pdf)

- 2.2. In Great Britain, the UK Government is inviting lead authorities to:
 - invite bids from a range of project applicants;
 - appraise and prioritise a shortlist of projects up to a maximum of £3 million per place (as defined by UK Government and set out in the [list of 100 priority places](#)) (For Ceredigion, the place is defined as Ceredigion, and Ceredigion County Council defined as the Lead Authority)
 - and submit a shortlist of projects to UK government.
- 2.3. The purpose of the fund is 'to nurture innovative thinking and offer flexibility, projects may align with one, or deliver across several, of the following investment priorities:
 - Investment in skills
 - Investment for local business
 - Investment in communities and place
 - Supporting people into employment'
- 2.4. As well as meeting the objectives set out in the prospectus, projects must also demonstrate a contribution to the delivery of a relevant local strategy – in the case of Ceredigion, the ambitions laid out in the Economic Strategy document 2020-35.

2.5. The revenue funding is to be spent during the 2021/22 financial year

3. Proposed bids from Ceredigion county Council

3.1. The proposed approach to developing potentially two LUF applications and a CRF application by Ceredigion County Council has been discussed at the Council's Development Group meetings in March 2021, and then 24th May 2021.

3.2. Ceredigion County Council launched an open call for LUF and CRF projects from interested parties that could present deliverable capital or revenue projects that met the requirements of the funds. Two assessment panels were set up to assess the LUF and CRF applications according to the criteria set by UK Government and explained in the prospectuses.

3.3. Five expressions of interest were received for the LUF fund and 18 applications were presented for assessment for the CRF bid.

Levelling up Fund

3.4. As a result of the exercise, a Levelling Up Fund application is currently being finalised focused around investment to bring forward the vision to further regenerate an area of Aberystwyth stretching from the Harbour to the Hen Goleg, including improvements to the South Prom.

3.5. The programme that will form part of the application represents a co-ordinated series of investments that combine to help regenerate a part of Aberystwyth that has the potential to drive significant economic growth for the town and for Ceredigion, including:

3.5.1. Further development of the Hen Goleg investment to unlock new opportunities and deliver additional economic benefit, working in partnership with Aberystwyth University.

3.5.2. Key strategic investments in the harbour area, including new pontoons, improvements to Harbour House, the erection of a bridge to link both sides of the harbour, and the development of further retail, leisure and commercial facilities on the north side of the harbour. Working with the Marine Group, this investment will unlock private sector funding, as well as other future public sector investments to support the long-term plans.

3.5.3. Public Realm Improvements along Aberystwyth Promenade (Ceredigion CC - Highways and Environmental Services). The proposal is to improve the public realm and associated assets along the promenade in Aberystwyth in order to complement and co-ordinate with other development opportunities being pursued through this funding opportunity. This will include the upgrading/improvement of the lighting along the promenade to install

decorative LED lanterns thus reducing energy costs and carbon emissions, together with the opportunity of installing EV charging points at key locations.

- 3.6. The proposed investment represents a key phase in the delivery of a long term, ambitious vision for the regeneration of Aberystwyth that will improve its leisure and hospitality provision whilst celebrating and enhancing its cultural and maritime heritage assets. The proposed investment will generate new jobs directly, and will attract more visitors to Aberystwyth, thus ensuring that indirect benefits will also be delivered to the wider economy in Aberystwyth and Ceredigion.
- 3.7. Further detailed assessment work is being carried out by consultants on each aspect of the proposed project, to ensure that the projects have the best possible opportunity of meeting the needs of the programme of funding. As part of this process, certain elements of the project may be excluded from the current programme, therefore the full final size of the final bid remains unknown currently.
- 3.8. A second LUF application around transport is being prepared.
- 3.9. The aim of the project is to support the growth of Ceredigion's economy (including tourism) and decarbonisation of transport/travel through a transport delivery project to deliver new and improved Active Travel routes to link and connect communities across Ceredigion.
- 3.10. The proposed project seeks to provide improvements within and between the three active travel destinations of Aberystwyth, Cardigan and Lampeter. The communities and locations that act as local service centres for the surrounding rural areas, have lower and dispersed population patterns and have few viable travel choices as alternatives to private car ownership due to infrequent passenger transport services and very few existing safe pedestrian and cycling routes.
- 3.11. As for the first LUF application, further detailed assessment work is being carried out on each aspect of the proposed project, to ensure that the projects have the best possible opportunity of meeting the needs of the programme of funding. Therefore the full final size of the final bid remains unknown currently.

Community Renewal Fund

- 1.1. Following the open call for projects to potentially be included in the shortlist of projects to be submitted as part of the CRF application, the 18 submitted projects, that included projects from external organisations as well as CCC service area, have been assessed and scored by an internal panel against the objectives of the prospectus, and against their contribution towards the delivery of CCC's Economic Strategy 2020-35.

- 1.2. Initial project bids received totalled circa £4.5m. Following assessment against the key criteria and further work on the projects, a shortlist of projects will be submitted to UK Government, covering a range of actions and priorities and actions identified in the Economic Strategy. The total value of the shortlisted projects included in the application will be below £3m.
- 1.3. A synopsis of the projects that are currently shortlisted is included in the appendix.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why: No. A full Integrated Assessment will be carried out on each project prior to each project commencing, should the applications be supported, but a synopsis is included below.

Summary:

Long term: All proposed interventions and investments included in the application tackle long-term economic weaknesses identified in the economic strategy, and offer at least part of the solutions required to mitigate the long-term weaknesses identified.

Integration: The applications integrate fully with the objectives and actions identified in the Economic Strategy (Boosting Ceredigion's Economy, a Strategy or Action 2020-35). Plans also integrate with other key regional and national economic growth and transport strategies.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Collaboration: The investments would represent significant partnership working with key stakeholders in the public, education and private sectors in Ceredigion.

Involvement: The opportunities for investment and interventions have come from a range of engagement actions that supported the development of strategies and action plans, including place planning work in Aberystwyth and the development of the Economic Strategy. The specific project ideas included in the proposed bid came from open call processes that enabled key stakeholders to submit ideas for projects.

Prevention: Many of the project ideas that are included in the proposed shortlist of projects for the CRF application include measures to prevent future hardship associated with poor skills and job opportunities for people in Ceredigion.

Recommendation(s):

That Members:

1. Agree to the principle that Ceredigion County Council submits applications for LUF and CRF funding as set out in summary in the paper.
2. Approve Ceredigion County Council's role as a lead authority for the bids, and subsequently enter into legal contracts with delivery partners should the applications for funding be successful.

Reasons for decision: To enable application for key strategic investments in economic growth to be made.

Overview and Scrutiny: N/A
Policy Framework:

Corporate Priorities: Boosting The Economy
Investing in People's Future.

Finance and Procurement implications: The investments represented in the applications would be funded from UK Government sources matched by other public or private sources of funding. Some further work will be required on securing other sources of funding. Some cost implications may arise from works proposed on land owned or managed by CCC. The sums associated are currently unknown. Mitigation of financial risks from CCC's role as a lead authority on the application will be covered in the contracts to be set up between CCC and the respective project proposers.

Legal Implications: Legal contracts will be required between CCC and each of the project proposers should the application be successful. The legal agreements will cover how each of the Council's appropriate legal obligations linked to the funding offer are transferred to the respective project proposers.

Staffing implications: None

Property / asset implications: Some council owned assets are likely to be included in the application, and as such, there may be implications on existing leases.

Risk(s): Main risk associated with this paper is from a potential failure of the application. This cannot be eliminated by is mitigated by the detailed work still being undertaken on

the bid, to ensure that the strongest possible application is submitted.
Each project within the application includes and assessment of that project's risk and means of mitigation.

Statutory Powers:

Background Papers:

Appendices: List of proposed shortlisted project for the CRF.

Corporate Lead Officer: Russell Hughes Pickering

Reporting Officer: Arwyn Davies

Date: 24.3.21

Ceredigion County Council – Cabinet – 15/06/21

ATODIAD / APPENDIX 1

Expressions of Interest Received – Community Renewal Fund

Below is a list of all the EOIs received following the open call for expressions of interest for the UK Community Renewal Fund in Ceredigion.

The applications are currently being assessed and shortlisted before submitting to the UK Government before the deadline.

PLEASE NOTE: Not all projects on this list will be submitted to UK Government for consideration – as the assessment process will check on eligibility, deliverability, due diligence – and prioritise according to local need.

This appendix is provided for information – to demonstrate the totality of EOIs received in Ceredigion.

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Brief Description	Value
Community Land Trust	4CG	This bid proposes a third sector-led approach to community-led housing in Ceredigion. Learning from the model used by Wessex Community Land Trust and embedding the learning within communities in Ceredigion Creating a network of community-led housing cooperatives in Ceredigion that will provide affordable housing for local people and support local supply chains in developing houses as mini powersations. The project proposal is a 6 month pilot with the aim of developing a Community Land Trust Network for the county.	287,435
BioAccelerate	AberInnovation	BioAccelerate is an investor readiness programme designed to help early-stage companies and start-ups develop their business plan and technical development strategies to an investable stage in order to pitch successfully to equity and angel investors.	214,050

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Brief Description	Value
Mid Wales Challenge Led Launch Pad Series	AberInnovation	<p>The Challenge Led Launch Pad Series is a new programme aimed at developing novel solutions to public sector and societal issues through research and innovation whilst offering new market opportunities for businesses and low skilled people in Mid Wales. The programme will enable businesses to analyse and evaluate the potential of concepts and ideas for eventual public sector deployment through collaboration with academia and regional leadership to encourage success and growth. Through a collaborative working model, it will deliver expertise and resources to accelerate the development of innovative businesses in Ceredigion and Powys County Council and accelerate growth through high impact innovation. Challenge Led Launch Pads will address the most urgent issues aligning to policy in Mid Wales and nationally to help support the economic recovery in the region. This new programme will involve stakeholders from public, private, and academic sectors identifying and selecting the most pressing, regional societal issues requiring solutions and working together to support businesses in the development of solutions to the identified problem. This will include tailored support and the potential to utilise unique regional capital assets and technology to support businesses in the development of novel solutions encouraging businesses to generate economic growth. This programme will provide excellent opportunities for businesses to develop and demonstrate technology to a range of stakeholders within the partnership acting as potential customers.</p>	560,187
AberInnovation Productivity Accelerator	AberInnovation	<p>This project will deliver enterprise support, specifically manufacturing- and productivity-related guidance, to enterprises of all sizes within Ceredigion in the Biotech, Agritech, and Food & Drink sectors and the circular economy (referred to as the 'Target Sectors' for the purposes of this application). Support will be delivered over a six-month period, with on-boarding of entrepreneurs/businesses taking place over the first two months, with beneficiaries therefore receiving a minimum of four months support via dedicated Acceleration Support Managers (ASM) (x2, two days per month), the project consortium, RTOs/Centres of Excellence, the likes of the Advanced Manufacturing Catapult, and via expert sessions delivered through a range of support Work Packages.</p>	441,500

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Brief Description	Value
New Skills New Start	Antur Cymru	<p>The project addresses increased numbers of people considering necessity-based entrepreneurship who face barriers to engaging with established business support services, such as Business Wales. With furlough finishing this cohort will grow substantially. The project will empower individuals to acquire transferrable skills through participation in a project delivering basic business skills. The project builds on lessons learned through a previous successful model delivered in Ceredigion which enabled business start and supported clients into employment and training. The project will be delivered bilingually using a coaching based approach and will include recruiting voluntary community champions to enable a project legacy. Included in the project are two start-up hubs where emerging entrepreneurs can test trade and establish outlets for their goods and services. These will be based in Aberystwyth and Lampeter.</p>	226,500.00
ReVerb	Area 43	<p>Area 43 has sourced funding to purchase a building to house a youth café, providing a safe, dedicated, quality meeting space for young people ranging in age from 14 to 25. The provision is determined by young people for young people, in partnership with adults, trusted professionals and community partners.</p> <p>The Youth Café:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a relaxed meeting space, which is safe, friendly, inclusive and tolerant; • a place for all young people from all social and cultural backgrounds to engage in social interaction with their peers in a safe and supportive drug- and alcohol-free environment; • a location for relaxation, recreation and entertainment, and, where appropriate, as a site for information, signposting to services or even direct care/service provision; • a place where young people can develop good quality relationships with their peers and with adults. • An informal, educative space for young people to learn life skills and improve their employment opportunities. 	73,737

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Brief Description	Value
Enterprise Ceredigion	Business In Focus	<p>Enterprise Ceredigion pilot: Supports people in to self-employment, building skills/confidence. It will invest in digital, employability and entrepreneurial skills, also supporting newly-established microbusinesses. Tailored specifically for economically inactive/unemployed and furloughed individuals it supplements mainstream provision, working closely with community partners.</p> <p>We have developed, tested and refined supportive elements within our existing services, ready for delivery in new geographies. This proposal is for Ceredigion; we aim to replicate in Powys and across the whole mid Wales region.</p>	213,126
Caru Aber	Caru Aber	At the request of young people within the local community, a shelter will be built at the skate park in Aberystwyth, enabling the facilities to be used year round and an alternative to sheltering in a nearby bus stop during the rain. A water fountain will also be installed with a facility to refill water bottles and a dog drinking station	15,000
Llwyddo Gyda'n Gilydd	Cered	<p>Prosiect yw hwn i ddatblygu gwytnwch atyniadau ymwelwyr hanesyddol Ceredigion a thrwy hynny yn cryfhau eu gallu i ddenu ymwelwyr a chefnogi twf yn yr economi leol sydd yn ddibynnol iawn ar dwristiaeth.</p> <p>Nid yw llawer o'r atyniadau yma yn derbyn arian cyhoeddus i'w cynnal ac yn hynny o beth nid yw'n bosib i recriwtio staff cyflogedig ar gyfer pob rôl. Mae gwirfoddolwyr felly yn gwbl hanfodol i sicrhau fod drysau yr atyniadau yma ar agor.</p> <p>Serch hyn, mae yna heriau sylweddol mae atyniadau yn gwynebu parthed gwirfoddoli sef recriwtio nifer digonol o wirfoddolwyr, sicrhau fod ganddynt y sgiliau cywir ac i sicrhau olyniaeth ar gyfer gwirfoddolwyr sydd yn heneiddio.</p>	7,050

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Brief Description	Value
Supporting and investing in the recovery of communities and places in Wales	CAVO	<p>An in depth discussion with communities and places in 9 local authority areas on how best to involve and provide sustainable learning and development support, funding and measure the impact of place-based community work. Pilot and coproduce virtual on-line pilot training programme including peer-led training around financial sustainability, measuring impact, equality, diversity and inclusion and environmental sustainability and climate change.</p> <p>Engage communities of place in 9 local authorities through on-line surveys, virtual meetings, phone calls and networks.</p> <p>Engage CVC's in 9 local authorities in one to one discussions and networks</p> <p>Engage at least 10 non CVC / LA support providers</p> <p>Engage 9 local authorities in discussion.</p> <p>Share and report on lessons learnt from Covid 19 from welsh action research reports to contribute to community recovery and resilience.</p> <p>Look at how to support communities with equality, diversity and inclusion in place based work including the welsh language.</p> <p>Look at the support required for communities and places to enhance environmental sustainability and adapt to climate change to support community recovery and resilience.</p>	7,000
Enabling the Recovery of Ceredigion Towns	CCC	<p>Ceredigion County Council through its Enabling the Recovery of Ceredigion Towns project aims to enable six of Ceredigion's main towns to develop attractive locations where individuals, communities and businesses can thrive. Significant engagement has led to identifying the need for a short term capacity to deliver local plans and identify viable activities for the future. This project will act as a catalyst to trial such new approaches to delivering the support needed by our towns as they emerge from the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>	239,905
Rural Community Engagement and Outreach Project	CCC	<p>We are requesting revenue funding to support us in bolstering our universal and focussed support to rural communities, enabling individuals to live healthily as possible, both mentally and physically, improving their independence, resilience and autonomy. This project will focus on a new, innovative piece of work that will deliver mobile, detached and pop-up provision to communities that have barriers to support or opportunities for participation. In August 2021, our capital Lottery grant will commence with a mobile unit arriving in county which will then be utilised collaboratively to engage with those most hard-to-reach across Ceredigion.</p>	50,000

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Brief Description	Value
Learning Through Activity Urdd	URDD	<p>The main activities to take place between August 2021 and March 2022 will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recruitment of 20 FTE jobs ranging from £18,000 per annum - £45,000 per annum -Upskill of 5 FTE currently employed Jobs through training opportunities. -280 hours of guided Volunteering/Work Experience hours for 30 Young People -Develop Water based Activities in the form of a lake and equipment. <p>The project will look at targeted support in a local business through investment in the bilingual workforce at Gwersyll yr Urdd Llangrannog, a residential Centre located in Ceredigion West Wales.</p>	471,600
Ceredigion County Council: Digital Skills Transformation for the High Street	Maybe Solutions Ltd	<p>This project will deliver accelerated digital learning for High Street businesses and their staff through a program of digital skills training, social media grants and a comprehensive digital platform.</p> <p>The program will upskill 500 businesses and 1,500 High Street employees. Businesses will be rewarded with grants for social media marketing for participating in and completing phases of the programme. The project will develop individual skills, improve business profitability and resilience, and is a replicable and scalable process that will deliver quantifiable results.</p>	741,725
Lle i Weithio	Menter a Busnes	<p>It is Menter a Busnes' view that part of the answer to this problem should be addressed by strengthening linkages between key employers across the public, private and third sectors to explore and develop business-led holistic solutions to the challenges being faced that also seek to address organisational requirements. In particular, we think the potential of SMEs is currently being underutilised, in that there is opportunity to enhance the growth and job creation potential of smaller SMEs through acting on a better awareness of their ongoing skill and capacity needs.</p> <p>Over the duration of this pilot, we propose forming a group of like-minded employers to collectively explore and trial initiatives to enhance job creation and retention of younger generations within Ceredigion.</p> <p>To encourage this activity, Menter a Busnes will coordinate an 8-month pilot knowledge transfer project consisting of workshops, expert speakers and core campaigns to introducing leading theory and best practice for the consideration of the group.</p>	99,559

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Brief Description	Value
THE LIFE YOU WANT'	Threshold DAS ltd	<p>A new online learning portal for people seeking to upskill or re-train and offered as a “one-stop-shop” for those who are unemployed, employed, self-employed and those who have a disability but want to improve their life choices. A range of supports is available, with the emphasis on ‘it is never too late to learn something new’.</p> <p>‘THE LIFE YOU WANT’ will be delivered through two individually structured elements that offer tailored and individualised support to individuals, whether they are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. The three elements are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An online learning MOODLE Portal ‘THE LIFE YOU WANT’, offering training and accredited learning and qualifications. 2. Delivery in a classroom setting, offering, training, job searches and Agored Cymru qualifications but also employability support (delivery will be in Ceredigion) 3. Blended Learning. 	200,294
AnTir Feasibility Project	Tir Coed	<p>The project is an action-based feasibility and pilot project for AnTir, our planned 6 year training programme in rural Mid and West Wales. AnTir will support, motivate and enable unemployed or disadvantaged people to acquire practical skills to improve employability for green jobs in growing /land management.</p> <p>It provides capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test methodology, learning units and outcomes of this new aspect of TirCoed’s work through development and practical outdoor training provision, including mentoring and individual action plans • Research and consultation with potential employers - farmers, growers, heritage sites - to scope the skills required • Design ‘land labour bank’ matching potential employees with employers • Train delivery staff • Design/develop monitoring and evaluation framework • Design new AgoredCymru accreditation framework for vocational qualification 	166,923

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Brief Description	Value
Canolfan Tir Glas	UWTSD	Canolfan Tir Glas will establish a network of co-dependant units in Lampeter, which will help to address Ceredigion's Economic Strategy "Boosting Ceredigion's Economy - A Strategy for Action 2020-35" and the needs of rural West Wales. This will include a digitally enabled Rural Business and Enterprise Centre, the Wales Resilience Centre (in partnership with Lampeter Resilience Hub), the Welsh Timber Research Centre and the National Gastronomy Centre (based on The University of Gastronomic Sciences at Pollenzo, Italy and The School of Artisan Food). This far-reaching vision will enable the University to act as a transformational focal point for the area's economy, social infrastructure, culture and environment	488,000