



Report of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

Cabinet – 17 November 2022

Communities Renewal Fund

Purpose:	To outline the successful outcome of a grant submission by the Council to the UK Community Renewal Fund for the sum of £2,471,029 in revenue grant for the period November 2021 to December 2022. To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.5 (Budgetary Control) - to monitor and control revenue budgets effectively.
Policy Framework:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The grant application as detailed together with the financial implications that have been submitted and approved by the UK Government is noted. Approval is given to accept Communities Renewal Fund Grant Award Letter which is revenue grant Nov 21 – Dec 2022 for £2,471,029.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides background information on the successful outcome of application submitted by Swansea Council. The UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF) was announced in the government budget on 3 March 2021. It will provide £220 million additional funding to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The UK Community Renewal Fund aims to support people and communities

most in need across the UK, creating opportunities to trial new approaches and innovative ideas at the local level. Through this Fund, UK Government aims to strengthen the relationship between government and places across the UK. 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

- 1.2 At a local level fund, funding is focussed around assisting voluntary / community organisations in creating opportunities and trialling new approaches and innovative ideas in Swansea area.
- 1.3 Swansea Council as a Lead Authority invited project proposals from a range of local applicants, including local district councils, voluntary and community sector organisations and local education providers including universities.
- 1.4 Swansea Council has ensured that all applicants are assessed in the same way and that any conflicts of interest are avoided or appropriately managed e.g. where the Swansea Council is an applicant the staff involved in the development of that project must not be involved in the assessment of projects or have access to any information that is not available to other applicants.
- 1.5 Following initial review Swansea Council shortlisted the projects and submitted them to UK government for assessment and approval.
- 1.6 Each local authority's allocation was capped at £3m with the Council supporting a range of projects by theme and size, but applicants were encouraged to maximise impact and deliverability through larger projects (£500,000+) where this is possible.

2.0 CRF Schemes in Swansea

- 2.1 Back in November 21 the Council received confirmation that a total of 9 projects had been approved for funding as part of UK Government's Community Renewal Fund. In April 2022, the Council received confirmation that the funding period had been extended from 30th June to the 31st December 2022. These are:
 - **Co-work Local (Swansea) - Town Square Spaces Ltd.** Co-Work Local will provide a platform, and support package, to link up co-workers with hosts of co-working spaces. It will enable a long-term cultural shift towards more people working closer to home, and revitalise our communities, protect our environment, and strengthen our foundational economy.
 - **Pathways to Work - Swansea Council** - This project will provide employability support using multiple partners who will bring different

specialisms to provide a cohesive approach. Piloting a new approach for local employability provision with multiple partners, to address current gaps in provision and provide a co-ordinated approach and more holistic support offer. The project will create employment pathways with Pre-engagement, Employability, skills and placements activity.

- **Time to Learn and Work The Centre for African Entrepreneurship** The project will support BAME individuals to get into education, employment or self-employment, reduce barriers, and tackle loneliness and isolation. The project will focus on those groups that face additional barriers i.e. refugees, asylum seekers, ex-offenders, disengaged young people and women, language barriers, mental health.
- **Enterprise Swansea Business In Focus Ltd** The project will support 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 and unemployed individuals it supplements mainstream provision, working closely with community partners.
- **Dragon Energy Island - Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon - Swansea Council** Dragon Energy Island utilises the natural tidal energy production opportunity in Swansea to deliver a world leading integrated renewable energy hub. Funding was requested for a detailed feasibility study up to Outline Business Case. This will progress the project in readiness to issue a formal procurement process.
- **Swansea Business Support and Green Recovery Swansea Council** Moving out of Covid and looking to the future, Swansea is focussed on a green and sustainable future. With sustainability at its heart, this project encompasses a range of actions to: support new business; grow SME businesses; develop new sectors and provide visibility for their businesses.
- **Penderi Green Regeneration Pobl Group** Local partners will lead a programme of activities to improve regeneration decision making and engage local people in Penderi. It will create a showcase for green energy technology, green infrastructure and food growing. Deliver practical, community-based, GI improvement activity, learning and events. Bring lifelong learning opportunities directly into communities
- **Community led Sustainable Transport Solutions - Investing in Communities and Place SCVS (Swansea Council for Voluntary Service)** Delivery of activities to strengthen sustainable transport and active travel in Swansea, focussing on what communities can do for themselves to solve travel and transport challenges. It will address social isolation, promote community cohesion, enable better access to services and employment, improve health and wellbeing, and tackle the decarbonisation imperative
- **People with Disabilities Employability and Enterprise Project (Swansea Project) Walsingham Support.** The People with Disabilities Employability and Enterprise Programme will introduce participants to the world of work and improve their employability through: an employability skills development programme; internship job tasters and job experience in a community enterprise setting; and progression to further learning, training and (supported/ unsupported) employment with local employers.

Please note that due to operational issues this project has decided not to proceed with the delivery of the scheme.

3.0 Application of the scheme in Swansea

- 3.1 The UK Community Renewal Fund will provide Swansea Council with funding to be used towards the costs incurred in managing Fund awards. A flat rate of 1.33% of the value of the UK Community Renewal Fund spent by each project may be used by Swansea Council for the costs incurred in managing Fund awards. This forms part of the £3m maximum available per place.
- 3.2 To ensure that funding is used solely for the purposes for which it was awarded and minimise the risk of fraud at all stages of the grant cycle the Council has established appropriate and proportionate systems and processes (including addressing any potential conflicts of interest) to:
- manage payments to project deliverers
 - monitor performance of project deliverers
 - ensure that money has been spent in line with the funding agreement
- 3.3 Swansea Council has established a monitoring process to identify possible weaknesses or risks in the delivery of projects and provide for corrective action to be taken. This may include checking claims and progress reports, testing samples of expenditure, and or undertaking monitoring visits (on-site or remotely). These processes are proportionate to the scale and complexity of and risk attached to projects.
- 3.4 Payments to project deliverers will be supported by a grant claim from the project deliverers that sets out the amount of total expenditure incurred and the amount being requested from the Lead Authority. The Council will undertake a reconciliation at the end of the project to ensure that there is no over or underspend.

4.0 Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 In order to comply with the relevant equality regulations, an Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form has been completed. Whilst this assessment concludes that no full report is required, it is the projects intention to engage positively and realistically as possibly. Currently engagement with statutory bodies is underway, including all Project Deliverers.
- 4.5 Internal projects are fully compliant with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The project objectives align with the Council's obligation to act in a sustainable way and the examples of public and private sector investment demonstrate compliance with the 5 Ways of Working promoted by the Act and will make a significant contribution to the 7 well-being goals.
- 4.6 Each scheme will be subject to its own IIA assessment

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Communities Renewal Fund Grant Award to Swansea Council, funded by the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities amounts to £2,471,029 of revenue grant for the period Nov 21 – Dec 2022.
- 5.2 The resources required to monitor and manage Project Deliverers and submit claims to UK Government will be met by existing officers time within the Economic Development and External Funding Team.
- 5.3 UK Community Renewal Fund expenditure incurred through procurements by public sector bodies is governed by UK procurement regulations. The Council has put in place appropriate and proportionate controls to ensure that procurement undertaken by non-public sector project deliverers or beneficiaries represents value for money and minimises the risk of fraud.

- 5.4 The Council will monitor the expenditure incurred under each UK Community Renewal Fund project and will be required to report on each project as part of progress reports to the Secretary of State.
- 5.5 The Council will receive stated 1.33% management fee amount as listed in the CRF Funding Agreement, even if an individual project does not achieve its full spend.
- 5.6 Details of the proposed expenditure are shown in the financial summary which is included as Appendix 2 to this report. Match Funding by CCS is required for two of the projects – Dragon Energy Island £50,000 and Swansea Business Support and Green Recovery £56,450. The £106,450 has been met from existing revenue budgets.
- 5.7 UK Community Renewal Fund will be paid to Lead Authorities in two tranches – 62.5% on commencement, and the balance on completion.
- 5.8 All works must be completed by 31st of December 22 and the last claim needs to be submitted to UK Government by 31 of Jan 2023.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 As the accountable body for UK Community Renewal Fund expenditure Swansea Council is responsible for establishing appropriate funding agreements with each project deliverer (including in relation to projects that are delivered solely by the Council) to ensure appropriate financial governance and compliance with the grant conditions agreed between Swansea Council and the Secretary of State.
- 6.2 The Council will need to comply with the terms and conditions attached to the grant funding offer letter.
- 6.3 All contracts for works, goods and services necessary to deliver Swansea Council projects will be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – IIA Screening Form

Appendix 2 – Financial breakdown