

# Which new government funds can support building back better through the good food economy?

This document provides a little more information for food partnerships, following on from the [published blog](#).

## £220 Community Renewal Fund

(trialing the UK Prosperity Fund)

UK Community Renewal Fund aims to “support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment”. It is a great opportunity for communities to invest in community-food projects and good food jobs.

The Fund is targeted at [100 places](#) around the UK based on an economic index, so areas of high unemployment, low household income etc. (although arguably, many areas with high need and deprivation [have been omitted](#)). The fund is led by the local authority, which will be different in each place but will either be Mayoral Combined, County Councils or Unitary Authorities. The priority authorities will have received £20,000 to support with the bid collation and submission but all other local authority areas are also welcome to apply for the Fund.

The local authority must have an open bidding process and can accept bids from academia, voluntary and community sector, umbrella business groups but can only shortlist bids that benefit the wider community rather than furthering the aims of the business/organisation. The £3m can include various projects but preferably larger scale (ie. 500k+) and all funded projects within that bid must complement each other.

Your local authority should now have bidding open on their website, an example is [Greater Manchester Combined authority](#).

The aim is to provide funding for local areas to pilot new approaches and projects to target those most in need and support community renewal ahead of the implementation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which comes in 2022 to replace the EU funding.

In Northern Ireland, £11 million has been pre-allocated and is being delivered slightly differently.

Projects must relate one or more of the following:

- Skills and Training: Including getting people into education/training, supporting them to gain a qualification, getting people engaged in life skills support, and/or
- Employment: Including supporting people to start looking for work, getting economically inactive people engaged with the benefits system
- Business support: Including business introducing new products (internally or to the market), creating new jobs, safeguarding existing jobs and/or developing innovation plans. This also includes creating new businesses, improved digital connectivity to business premises, and getting organisations involved in knowledge transfer activity.

- Net Zero: Including estimated CO2 equivalent reductions, the development of decarbonisation plans.
- Community and Place: Including attracting investment, adding new green/blue infrastructure, boosting footfall or visitor numbers and/or building or renovating buildings.

For ideas on what projects this could fund, check out [this blog](#).

Applications are more likely to be successful if they are predominantly revenue based, climate-friendly and are innovative and not duplicating existing national or local provision. The pilots are also opportunities for the Government to see what can be scaled up for other local partners and UK government as part of the UKSPF.

The yearlong pilots will begin in July with funding given in July and March 2022. Local authorities have to submit their shortlist of projects to the Government by **noon June 18** and the Government will select the successful projects by **late July**. This means, most local authorities will have set a **deadline for Mid-May** for local stakeholders to submit bids to the local authority to give them time to collate.

The successful bidders in each 'place' will be responsible for rolling out the project and the local authority will undertake monitoring and assurance activity.

#### *What is the UK Shared Prosperity Fund?*

*A long-term fund to replace the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and aims to 'level up' the country. The fund will be available to access in specific areas of the UK where there are high levels of deprivation, job insecurity etc. It is expected to be introduced in 2022 and total £1.5bn a year. UKSPF intends to support domestic priorities and grow local economies and will be locally led to focus on place-based projects but the Government has yet to announce who will be responsible for these funds.*

## **£4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund**

The £4.8bn levelling up fund was announced in the 2020 Spending Review and focusses on capital investment in local infrastructure for towns over four years (2021/22 to 2024/25). Local authorities (Unitary, metropolitan borough, London borough councils or district councils) can access up to £20million for projects and up to £50million specifically for transport infrastructure. Priority local authorities will receive £125,000 to support with collating bids.

Local authorities can submit a number of bids determined by the number of parliamentary constituencies (one bid per MP). Where an MP's constituency crosses more than one local authority, one local authority must take responsibility as the lead bidder. Local areas should work together and with the local MP to designate that lead bidder.

Councils with transport powers can submit one extra bid with a transport focus.

Bids must focus on at least one of the following:

- Transport investment
- Regeneration and town centre investment
- Cultural investment

Check out [this blog](#) for food-related ideas

### **How the bids work**

A bid can be for one project of up to £20m or a package bid containing up to three complimentary projects that clearly state how they support each other. Eligible authorities can also submit a joint bid where local authorities are collaborating on a project or package bid that crosses boundaries. Bids must be submitted by **noon June 18** to the Government.

There is a three stage shortlisting process and bids need to prove their deliverability, value for money and strategic fit.

Ministers will make final funding decisions based on bid strength but also a reasonable thematic split of projects across the country and a fair spread of projects and existing funding in each place.

**Decisions will be made by autumn 2021.**

### **What/who does the local authority have to consider?**

#### **MPs**

Members of Parliament can support and champion bids in their constituency and can write letters of support for one bid they see as the priority. A bid may have priority support from multiple MPs and this is considered when shortlisting as part of the submission.

#### **Local stakeholders**

Applications must show evidence that local stakeholders have been identified and consulted with. Question 4.2a in application form: *“Describe what engagement you have undertaken with local stakeholders and the community (communities, civic society, private sector and local businesses) to inform your bid and what support you have from them.”*

#### **Existing Local Plans**

Bids will prioritised that align with existing local strategies (Local Plan, local economic strategy, local Transport Plan) as well as existing funding for example Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund, and Transforming Cities fund.

#### **Local context**

Evidence of scale of local challenges or barriers to growth and an evidenced Theory of Change to outline why funded projects are needed. A Benefit Cost Ratio and Value for Money assessment also needs to be calculated as well as non-monetised impacts.

#### **Match funding**

A minimum contribution of 10% of the bid costs from public or private sector is encouraged.

Each local authority will have been provided with further guidance and package bids shortly after the budget was announced in early March so get in touch with your local authority to request more information. An FAQ document is due to be published this month (April 2021).

## £150 million Community Ownership Fund

£150 million Community Ownership Fund will allow communities across the UK to invest to protect the assets that matter most to them such as pubs, theatres, shops, or local sports clubs. Community groups will be able to bid for up to £250,000 matched funding to run the asset as a [community-owned business](#). The Government are also keen to support assets that are integral to the cultural landscape.

### What are the benefits of community owned assets?

Taking over an asset as a community strengthens local infrastructure because the decision making and strategy planning powers are devolved into the community, ensuring these spaces are used for public benefit over commercial interest. In this sense, it boosts the social economy and the services these assets provide can be dictated by the communities which they resides. They also can boost local jobs and healthier neighbourhoods because for example, the community-owned pub has more flexibility to source from local suppliers, host pop-up enterprises, provide healthier options and offer community services etc.

### Who can apply?

Bids need to come from community or voluntary organisations where there is formal governance in place, for example a Community Trust (more information on setting up a Trust can be found [here](#)). Informal groups may be considered but have to show they are establishing a suitable governance structure.

Groups will have to raise up to £250,000 to match the Fund and the funds cannot be spent on buying an indebted business. Local government cannot apply but Parish councils can support the groups with their bid.

Examples of community owned businesses can be found in [this blog](#)

### When can I apply?

The first bidding round opens June 2021 alongside a more detailed application pack (I will update this doc when more information is published)

## The Towns Fund

101 towns across the UK in 2019 were identified to apply for up to £25 million of the £3.6 billion [Towns Fund](#) to support economic growth through:

- Urban regeneration, planning and land use
  - o Increasingly density in town centres, strengthening local economic assets and using planning tools to bring strategic change
- Skills and enterprise infrastructure
  - o Driving private sector investment and small business development
- Connectivity
  - o Improving local transport schemes as well as improved digital connectivity

Town councils were asked to create a Town Deals Board and include members of public, private and third sector to help outline a Town Deal proposal. In Rishi's March 2021 budget, the first [45 towns](#) were selected to receive the funding to implement their Town Investment Plan and Town Deal.

The remaining Towns will be selected later this year. Whilst towns have already outlined their investment plans, they will now be developing their business cases so there is opportunity here to work with local authorities and the Towns Board to ensure good food projects are part of the plans. You should be able to find your Town Plan online so check through to see if there are any opportunities to develop investment plans with a food focus.

### **Ideas!**

The Towns Fund is primarily a capital fund. Proposals that are sustainable long term, developed with the community, promote economic growth and that target interventions will be prioritised. Ideas outlined in all of the above funds would be relevant to suggest. In the [guidance](#), the proposals are split into intervention theme, outputs, target outcomes. Below is an example:

| <b>Intervention Theme</b> | <b>Outputs</b>  | <b>Target Outcomes</b>  |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Local transport           | Provision of electric vans and bikes for use of local residents as well as enterprises for delivery   | Improved access to affordable, convenient, sustainable travel options for individuals<br>Improved access to affordable, convenient, sustainable delivery options for local enterprises, especially small food enterprises<br>Reduced pollution and congestion |
| Enterprise Infrastructure | Increase amount of affordable commercial floorspace for small food enterprises (shared production kitchens, space for food markets both indoor and outdoor) | Increased access to spaces for local food enterprises<br>Increased number of new enterprises and those employed<br>Increased access to healthy food, locally sourced food<br>Increased investment in local businesses and economy                             |