



Community Renewal Fund Applications Assessment Meeting

Wednesday, 7th May 2021

Via Microsoft Teams

Town Deal Investment Panel (TDIP) and Town Deal Board (TDB)

- Chair: Steve Williams (SW) Force Technology (TDB/TDIP)
- Daryl Platt (DP) Blackpool & The Fylde College (TDIP)
- Cllr Mark Smith (MS) Blackpool Council (TDIP)
- Martin Long (ML) Napthens Solicitors (TDIP)
- Wendy Swift (WS) The Ashley Foundation (TDIP)
- Ben Mansford (BM) Blackpool Football Club (TDB/TDIP)
- Tracy Hopkins (TH) Citizens Advice Blackpool (TDB)

Blackpool Council

- Nick Gerrard (NG) Growth and Prosperity Team (overall coordination)
- Rob Latham (RL) Growth and Prosperity Team (overall coordination)
- Mark Gillingham (MG) Growth and Prosperity Team (overall coordination)
- Michael Hodgson (MH) Growth and Prosperity Team (overall coordination)
- Peter Legg (PL) Economic Development (Business and skills, arts, culture & heritage)
- Dave Slater (DS) Economic Development (Business and skills)
- Mike Taplin (MT) Adult, Community and Family Learning (skills, adult education, NEET)
- Donna Clayton (DC) Adult, Community and Family Learning (skills)
- Chloe Pieri (CP) Public Health Directorate (community engagement and equalities)
- Scott Butterfield (SB) Corporate Delivery Unit (community engagement & net zero/low carbon)

Ekosgen

- John McCreadie (JM) Ekosgen
- Kirsten Powell (KP) Ekosgen

Apologies

- Jane Cole (TDIP) Blackpool Transport (TDB/TDIP)
- Lyn Saggerson (TDIP) Blackpool Volunteer Centre (TDIP)

Notes and Actions	Owner
<p>1. Introductions and Declaration of Interests</p> <p>a) The Town Deal Investment Panel (TDIP) Chair, Steve Williams welcomed all to a special meeting of the TDIP enhanced by representation from the Town</p>	



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<p>Deal Board, colleagues with particular expertise from Blackpool Council, and independent consultants, Ekosgen.</p> <p>b) Attendees introduced themselves and the Chair reminded e the group aware of the need to declare any interests in particular schemes, some of which had been notified before the meeting and others which may arise during the meeting (as it was not always evident, until the individual schemes were discussed, the range of partners involved in various bids</p> <p>c) The following interests were declared and noted and the individuals took no part in the decision making on those schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackpool Pathways to Employment, Blackpool Citizens Advice Bureau (TH/MS) • Piloting Place-Based Innovation Catalysts: Supporting innovation leadership, clean growth and secure digitalisation, Lancaster University (SW/DP/ML) • Grundy Art Gallery as a new Cultural Hub, Blackpool Council (MS/PL) • Blackpool as a gaming and e-sports destination in the UK, True Limited (BM) • Let’s Get Digital!, Blackpool and the Fylde College (SW/DP/ML/MS) • Waterloo Masterplan, Blackpool Council (MS) • Re:Gen Blackpool, Digitecher Ltd (ML) • Blackpool Youth Hub, Blackpool Council (MS/PL/VDF) 	
<p>2. Purpose of the meeting</p> <p>a) NG gave a recap of the Town Deal Board’s agreement to support Blackpool’s CRF bid utilising the Town Deal Investment Panel and summarised the purpose of the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting is the second stage of the assessment process, whereby TDIP members are asked to apply their expertise knowledge to review and the recommendations put forward by Ekosgen for all 27 CRF applications received by the closing date deadline and agree the strongest possible bid to ensure that Blackpool is successfully awarded CRF funding. • The Town Deal Board will be informed of the outcomes from today’s discussions at the next meeting to be held on 14th May 2021. • The CRF bid will be subject to final agreement by Blackpool’s Executive before being submitted to government by the 18th June 2021 deadline. <p>b) The TDIP panel agreed to the process as outlined.</p>	



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<p>3. Stage One Independent Assessment Process</p> <p>a) JM and KP gave summary of Ekosgen’s experience and previous work for Blackpool Council which included their appointment as independent appraisal assessors for the Town Deal schemes and their previous work locally on the Lancashire LEP Growth Deal appraisal Panel .</p> <p>b) A total of 27 applications were received by the deadline to deliver UKCRF activity in Blackpool. The 27 projects were seeking £7,434,520 of UKCRF support, almost 2.5 times the maximum Blackpool allocation, thus indicating the success of the awareness raising exercise.</p> <p>c) Ekosgen undertook a stage one, independent appraisal of these bids, focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction of the fund’s gateway criteria • Strategic fit • Applicant capability and experience • Risk • Value for money • Deliverability <p>d) Ekosgen provided an in depth report to the TDIP which outlined a short description of each scheme, the appraisal process undertaken and the scoring methodology, including a score for each project with recommendations of the highest scoring schemes that could be considered for inclusion in the final amalgamated bid. Two of the bids were deemed ineligible owing to their capital requirements.</p> <p>e) KP explained Ekosgen’s assessment process of the applications which had been assessed against the government standard CRF appraisal template.. In addition to meeting the government’s criteria, Eksogen assessed applications to ensure they are deliverable and achieve a balance in meeting Blackpool’s priorities as articulated in the bid invitation.</p> <p>f) Twenty-five projects were assessed as being eligible. Two projects were removed due to the level of capital funding requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Shore FC Community Club • Waterloo Eco-social Community 	



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<p>4. Assessment of Schemes</p> <p>a) The Panel the considered in depth Ekosgen’s recommendations before arriving at an overall recommendation including a number of points that would need to be picked up in subsequent due diligence before the overall bid was finalised..</p> <p>b) Point raised was that a large number of the proposed projects focused upon up-skilling and employment support with very few job opportunities in Blackpool upon completion of training. Further investment into developing new and already existing businesses in Blackpool is required in order to create more jobs with higher wages, which will encourage people to remain in Blackpool rather than seek employment elsewhere.</p> <p>c) It was noted that short-term CRF projects were not seen as a solution to Blackpool’s greater challenges but more of a contribution towards solving them. Other initiatives currently underway including the Council’s Growth and Prosperity Programme, Town Deal schemes, Getting Building Fund and Levelling Up Fund opportunity will help to create the jobs needed to improve the town’s economy. The Shared Prosperity Fund, to which CRF was a precursor, should also prove to be a great future opportunity.</p> <p>d) The meeting involved extensive deliberation and some frustration at the compressed timetable that had to be met to prepare and submit a bid by the Government’s timescales. This meant, for example, that the appraisals had to abide by “what was submitted” rather than an opportunity, perhaps, to ask some projects to resubmit with changes to strengthen their bid as there was insufficient time to undertake this in an open, fair and transparent way.The guidance issued by Government has also discouraged an iterative process/any influence from the lead authority.</p> <p>e) The oversubscription also meant that many projects would be disappointed and several excellent projects, though not supportable for CRF, would be eligible for the much larger Shared Prosperity Fund to be announced later this year, and the lessons learnt from this exercise would be applied to that depending on what administrative process the Government establishes for the determination of submissions.</p> <p>f) The only Ekosgen recommendation not accepted by the Panel was in relation to the possibility of the amalgamation (owing to their similarity and</p>	



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<p>the potential for overlap in the short timescale available) of the Pathways to Employment and Bright Futures bids (under the Supporting People into Employment theme) with a reduced level of funding (noting that both satisfied the threshold for recommended inclusion in the bid but that the Pathways to Employment scheme scored higher). After an extensive discussion it was decided that, even with a proposal to offer a lower combined allocation, supporting both schemes would potentially result in overprovision in the timescale.</p> <p>g) It was agreed that the Pathways to Employment scheme should progress as the higher scoring scheme and the remaining funds should either be unallocated or go to the next highest scoring scheme. As the only next highest scoring scheme that could be funded from the balance related to agriculture (Net Zero Agriculture) it was the Panel’s view that a significant sum had already been allocated to skills activities and, as agricultural production does not form a significant element of the Blackpool economy, investing in the Net Zero Agriculture scheme was not a priority.</p> <p>h) 12 projects were thus agreed should be included across the 4 themes, subject to due diligence as several issues were raised by the Panel to be addressed on some projects. These amounted to a total of £2,684,643 plus £53,693 which is a 2% figure applied to support the lead applicant in monitoring and evaluation activity, creating a total bid of £2,738,335.</p> <p>i) The 12 schemes are outlined in Annex A by theme with the 6 scoring criteria employed by Ekosgen as required by Government guidance (identified at the bottom of each table), together with a brief resume of each project.</p> <p>j) A full list of all 27 applications received is in Annex B.</p>	



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<p>5. Next Steps</p> <p>a) The Chair thanked the Panel for their help and support in a challenging process and confirmed the overall recommendations as set out in Annex A. He also noted that had the timescales been longer, and there had been the opportunity to iterate applications in the light of local knowledge, the outcomes might have been different. Nonetheless, the conclusions reached gave Blackpool the strongest possible bid against the scheme criteria but there were lessons that could be applied to the Shared Prosperity Fund process in future.</p> <p>c) Next steps agreed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Report to Town Deal Board – 14th May (shared with TDIP)b. Bid to be finalised by Blackpool Council including due diligence (by 31st May)c. Blackpool Executive to be sign off final application by 18th Juned. Bid to be submitted by 18th Junee. Outcomes known – “late July onwards”f. If successful, contracting and delivery – August 202 – 31st March 2022	



Annex A

Schemes recommended to be included within the Community Renewal Fund Bid

The 12 schemes are outlined below by theme with the 6 scoring criteria employed by Ekosgen as required by Government guidance (identified at the bottom of each table), together with a brief resume of each project.

Investment in Skills Theme Assessment Scores

No.	Project	CRF Cost	National Strategic Fit	Local Strategic Fit	Applicant Capability	Delivery Risks	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Total
1	Let's Get Digital! – Blackpool & The Fylde College	£112,743	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
2	Skills for Work 2021/22 Post Covid 19 – NW Skills Academy	£500,000	3	3	3	2	3	3	17
3	Right to Succeed, Pathways for All project – Right To Succeed	£100,000	2	3	3	3	2	2	15
Total CRF		£712,743							

Let's Get Digital (UKCRF £112,743.15)

This project will develop the digital skills of a minimum of 100 Blackpool residents who have not had the opportunity, access or finances to secure an understanding of technology and the benefits it can provide them in their daily lives, with training delivered in community venues. The project will be delivered by a community digital skills champion and a digital skills champion based at Seasiders, offering training at community venues.



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Let's Get Digital will be delivered by Blackpool and Fylde College, building on a strong track record of delivering digital related training, its recently opened a Digital Skills Lab and its approval to deliver the new Essential Digital Skills Qualification.

Let's Get Digital will assist 100 beneficiaries, with 50 people moving into education and 50 people gaining a recognised qualification.

Skill for Work (UKCRF £500,000)

This project will deliver construction and digital related training, with a focus on high demand skill areas including low carbon construction and digital cybersecurity. The focus on low carbon construction and digital skills will provide beneficiaries with qualifications relevant to future industry demand and the training offer is expected to also appeal to Blackpool employers and people in employment looking to up-skill.

This project will be delivered by the North West Skills Academy and UK Skills Academy. The NWSA is a Lancashire based training provider and will deliver the project. has a good track record of delivering training, benefitting from experienced staff and well-established project and student management systems.

Providing over 200 industry relevant skill qualification, with 80 low carbon NVQ 2-3; 40 Construction NVQ 2-6; 64 Level 2 Digital Marketing/Cybersecurity and 134 Digital qualifications NVQ 2-4.

Right to Succeed, Pathways for All (UKCRF £100,000)

The Pathways for All project will provide support to young people in Blackpool at risk of becoming NEET, using engagement coaches to provide a range of support to young people during their transition points plus additional sessions together with their parents or carers working collectively with schools, PRU, FE providers, Blackpool Council and the Blackpool Opportunity Area (OA).

Right to Succeed CIO will deliver the project. The project will assist 150 beneficiaries, with 150 people in education/ training following support.



Investment for Local Business Theme Assessment Scores

No.	Project	CRF Cost	National Strategic Fit	Local Strategic Fit	Applicant Capability	Delivery Risks	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Total
4	Piloting Place-Based Innovation Catalysts – Lancaster University	£180,579	3	2	3	3	3	3	17
5	Create to Innovate - UCLAN	£99,000	3	2	3	2	2	2	14
Total CRF		£279,579							

Piloting Place-Based Innovation Catalysts (UKCRF £180,579)

The piloting place-based innovation catalysts project will bring together businesses, industry experts, academics, public sector bodies and others to identify and explore local goals, challenges, and innovation needs that can support Blackpool’s sustainable recovery, growth and regeneration. Investigative and action focused sessions are proposed to ensure a place-based focus to support. Activity will focus on open innovation, clean growth and digitalisation, supporting innovation progress in cross-sectoral fields.

Lancaster University will deliver the project alongside delivery partner Blackpool and the Fylde College.

The project will deliver 1 to many support to 50 businesses/organisations and 1 to 1 support to 15, with 15 innovation plans developed and 15 organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support.

Create to Innovate (UKCRF £99,000)

Create to Innovate is a business support programme designed to increase business productivity and develop entrepreneurial skills amongst students building on UCLan’s existing Creative Innovation Zone (CIZ). The project proposes to match third year students, specifically those who



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wouldn't normally have the confidence to engage with employers, to businesses based, working through a creative and disruptive process to meet a business challenge. The students will respond to a brief, pitch their ideas and then develop a final solution with the CIZ team and employer. The business will also benefit from a full concierge support service, provided by UCLan. UCLan will deliver the project.

The project will support around 17 businesses, 1,000-3,000 employed people and 3 voluntary sector organisations. No UKCRF outcome indicators have been identified by the applicant but the applicant reported the project will lead to 30 businesses reporting increased innovation, 30 businesses reporting increased economic impact and 100 students reporting increased employability.



Investment in Communities and Place Theme Assessment Scores

No.	Project	CRF Cost	National Strategic Fit	Local Strategic Fit	Applicant Capability	Delivery Risks	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Total
6	Feasibility Study for Blackpool Central Library, Grundy Art Gallery/ Cultural Hub – Blackpool Council	£190,000	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
7	Digital Museums & Archives in Culture-led Regeneration: A Feasibility Study - UCLAN	£13,339	2	2	3	2	3	3	15
8	Waterloo Masterplan – Blackpool Council	£165,000	2	2	3	3	2	2	14
9	Our Claremont – Magic Club	£249,786	2	3	3	2	2	2	14
Total CRF		£618,125							

* If these projects were to proceed, advice would be recommended to be sought, prior to inclusion in the bid to ensure compliance with fund guidance for the provision of support to private organisations

Blackpool Central Library/ Grundy Art Gallery Feasibility Study (UKCRF £190,000)

This project is focused on culture-led regeneration and sustainable community development through co-production and funding will support a multi-disciplinary consultant team to prepare a comprehensive Feasibility Study for a proposed re-development of Blackpool. The work will include local partners involved in pilot consultation exercise to increase public engagement with under-represented groups.



Blackpool Council will manage the work, building on its strong track record in commissioning major feasibility assignments for multi-disciplinary teams, including setting study specification, selecting appropriate teams and managing work using clear milestones, with regular steering group meetings to ensure oversight.

The project will deliver a series of community consultations events and a detailed report up to RIBA stage 3.

The Role of Digital Museums Feasibility Study (UKCRF £13,339)

This feasibility project will generate tangible insights into the diverse role(s) that Digital Museums (and associated Digital Archives) might play, as social and cultural interventions to enhance awareness of, and civic pride in, provide foci for the promotion and economic exploitation of digital culture (and the digital skills on which this depends) by local communities, businesses and enterprise partnerships; strengthen, extend and sustain social cohesion through community- and place-based cultural renewal.

The project will be delivered through the Centre for Data Innovation (CDI) and Institute for Research into Organisations, Work and Employment (iROWE) at UCLan; and will involve a collaboration with the Lancashire City of Culture 2025 Bid (Lancs2025) team. Specialist research staff at UCLan will take responsibility for designing and delivering the feasibility project's activities.

The project will lead to a number of digital museums and archive projects and up to 20 collaborations between digital museums and archives.

Waterloo Masterplan (UKCRF £165,000)

This project will deliver a feasibility study/masterplan to support the regeneration of the deprived Waterloo ward, determining local needs, the priorities for intervention and potential solutions to be implemented to support commercial and residential development as well as greening and the creation of safe community spaces.

The project will fund a multidisciplinary masterplanning consultancy team with allowance made for a digital platform, pop-up events and a 'week of action' to actively engage the community in emerging plans for the area.

Blackpool Council has experience of commissioning and managing masterplanning commissions of the kind proposed in the application. Staff resource has already been identified within the council to commission and oversee the works with a match funding contribution identified to formalise the contribution. A procurement exercise will ensure that appropriate consultancy support is identified to deliver the work

The project will lead to a completed masterplan in line with the specification.



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Our Claremont (UKCRF £249,786)

Our Claremont project seeks to develop ideas identified in the existing 'Our Claremont' masterplan into construction-ready plans in preparation and will deliver a comprehensive feasibility study for the development of Egerton Square, providing the details of landowners, leases and development costs and funding opportunities, whilst confirming partnerships and proposals with Blackpool Council (planning, highways, etc.), FE & HE providers, local organisations and business.

Magic Club will deliver the project supported by consultants contracted to undertake specialist areas of work.

Expecting to work with approximately 230 beneficiaries across the project (150 Adult Consultation, 50 Young People Consultation 8-18, 30 Resident Working Group), with 50 people engaged in life skills support following interventions, 1 innovation plan developed and 2,926 sqm buildings renovated as a result of support.



Supporting People into Employment Theme Assessment Scores

No.	Project	CRF Cost	National Strategic Fit	Local Strategic Fit	Applicant Capability	Delivery Risks	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Total
10	Blackpool Youth Hub – Blackpool Council	£443,824	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
11	Ready for Work - Inspira	£125,628	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
12	Blackpool Pathways to Employment - CAB	£504,744	3	3	3	2	3	2	16
Total CRF		£1,074,196							

Blackpool Youth Hub (UKCRF £443,824)

The Blackpool Youth Hub project will fund employment advisors (and associated support) to work in partnership with DWP Work Coaches, local employment and skills providers and employers to collaborate to pilot new delivery approaches to determine what works for young job seekers aged 16-24; connect young people to opportunities; and enhance wellbeing, confidence and skills. A caseworker model will provide personalised support to young people for up to 6 months. Support will be delivered directly by the employment advisors, brokered through other services or commissioned where bespoke requirements are identified.

The project will be delivered by Blackpool Council.

The Blackpool Youth Hub will support 300 beneficiaries, with 75 young people move into paid employment or further or higher education.

Ready for Work (£125,628)

Ready for Work will be deliver pre-employment training, advice and practical support targeting unemployed or economically inactive people, with a particular focus on young adults (18-24 years) who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET).



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Ready for Work will be delivered by INSPIRA.

The project will support 90 beneficiaries, with 45 people in education/training following support, 84 people engaged in job searching following support and 84 people engaged in life skills support following interventions.

Blackpool Pathways to Employment (£504,744)

The project will support 15 Navigators who will provide intense, wrap around support to economically inactive Blackpool residents living in the most disadvantaged wards who are furthest away from the labour market, including help with practical issues and navigating systems, such as Welfare Benefits.

Blackpool Citizens Advice Bureau will deliver the project alongside the 12 VCFSE partner organisations (Volunteer Centre Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde; Blackpool Food Bank; Groundwork; Homestart Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre; Social Enterprise Solutions CIC; Blackpool FC Community Trust; Empowerment Charity Lancashire; Active Lancashire; EPS – Works with Children; Magic Club; UR Potential)

Blackpool Pathways to Employment will support 300 beneficiaries, with 300 people engaged in life skills support following interventions, 300 economically inactive individuals engaging with benefits system following support and 15 Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support.



Appendix B: Full List of CRF Project Proposals Received and Appraised

1. South Shore FC (Blackpool) Community Club, South Shore Football Club Ltd
2. Enterprising Blackpool, Young Enterprise
3. Cybertunity, Lateo Global Solutions Ltd
4. Blackpool Pathways to Employment, Blackpool Citizens Advice Bureau
5. Piloting Place-Based Innovation Catalysts: Supporting innovation leadership, clean growth and secure digitalisation, Lancaster University
6. Training 75 Blackpool TTWA residents on ICT Cloud skills under the AWS re/start Program, Primed Talent Limited
7. Construction Young Trainee Pilot - Blackpool, Skills Construction Centre (SCC)
8. Ready for Work, INSPIRA
9. Idea 2 Scale-up Programme, UCLan
10. Net Zero Agriculture through Rural Investment in Digital Skills Capability, UCLan and Myerscough College
11. Create to Innovate, UCLan
12. The Role of Digital Museums & Archives in Culture-led Regeneration: A Feasibility Study, UCLan
13. Building a Better Blackpool , Blackpool Carers Centre
14. Feasibility Study for re-development of Blackpool Central Library and adjoining Grundy Art Gallery as a new Cultural Hub, Blackpool Council
15. Our Claremont, Magic Club
16. Blackpool as a gaming and e-sports destination in the UK, True Limited
17. Blueprint: models for sustainable community hubs in Blackpool, Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside
18. Let's Get Digital!, Blackpool and the Fylde College
19. Bright Futures (Blackpool), Selnet Ltd
20. Right to Succeed, Pathways for All project (PFA), Right to Succeed CIO
21. Waterloo Ecosocial Community, SNGH Housing LLP
22. Skills for Work 2021/22 Post Covid 19, North West Skills Academy Limited
23. Waterloo Masterplan, Blackpool Council
24. Re:Gen Blackpool, Digitecher Ltd
25. Blackpool UK Capital of Dance, Fit The Bill Limited
26. Blackpool Youth Hub, Blackpool Council
27. Blackpool Time Credits, Tempo Time Credits Ltd