

SUBJECT:	UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND/UPDATE ON THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	19TH JANUARY 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To receive an update following approval of the Council's £2.04M bid to the UK Community Renewal Fund.
- 1.2 To receive an update on the Vale of Usk Rural Development Programme which is due to cease in September 2022.
- 1.3 To seek approval to proceed with additional funded rural economic development programmes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 Cabinet to consider the benefits that the approval of the UK Community Renewal Fund will bring to the County alongside the potential impact of the loss of the Rural Development Programme.
- 2.2 Cabinet to approve the delivery of the additional rural economic development programmes in line with confirmation of funding being received.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 UK Community Renewal Fund

- 3.1.1 Following the UK's decision to leave the EU, all structural funds will end in 2023. UK Government has committed to at least matching EU receipts through the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will average around £1.5 billion p.a. and will be launched in 2022. The Fund will operate throughout the UK and will play a part in uniting and levelling up the whole country.
- 3.1.2 The UK Community Renewal Fund (UK CRF), launched in April 2021, is providing £220M, for 2021/22 only, to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity fund in 2022. The Fund aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK, to pilot programmes and new approaches, that will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment.
- 3.1.3 Following a vigorous bid development and submission process and approval by [Cabinet](#) the Council submitted £2.04M worth of projects in June. In November, the Council were informed that all of the submitted projects had been approved and need to be completed by end of June 2022. Details of all the projects can be found in Table One that follows:

Table One: UK CRF Monmouthshire projects

Name of Project	Lead Applicant	Description
iConnect	Monmouthshire Housing Association	A place-based pilot in Monmouth, Abergavenny and Caldicot to bring affordable, fast, and accessible digital infrastructure to tenants who have no digital footprint or are in digital poverty.
Space for Local Production	Monmouthshire County Council	A collaboration with the Sustainable Food Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Astario Systems, Wye and Usk Foundation, Farming Connect and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. The project will pilot the on-farm sustainability tool 'Global Farm Metric'.
Carbon Free Future	MHA, Melin, Sero Homes and Coleg Gwent	A cooperation to investigate retrofitting housing stock to improve Energy Performances Certificate ratings, ensuring that correct apprenticeships are in place to cover a wide range of current and future skills requirements.
Wye Valley River Festival CIC 'Growing Community Interests'	Wye Valley River Festival	Project to span Monmouthshire and borders, providing crucial access to creative resources, personal development training, enhanced employment opportunities and live cultural experiences to those living in rurally deprived areas.
Transforming MonLife's Major Assets	Mon Life	Project to deepen community involvement, reach new audiences, improve the experience, and promote sustainability and regeneration to help preserve Mon Life's important local assets and enhance accessibility and future opportunities.
Digital Customer Acquisition: 'Moving the Needle'	Alacrity Foundation	A cutting-edge, bespoke package of training and mentoring in digital customer acquisition and retention, focused on micro and small businesses. The programme has the ability to 'move the needle' for the entire economy from an organic farmer to a high street retailer to a biotech company. The programme will have a direct positive impact on an organisation's ability to market and sell their products and services locally, nationally and internationally.
The Zero Carbon Llanarth Village Plan	Llanarth Estates Trust	To investigate the most appropriate energy loss interventions in the social houses in and around the village. To investigate potential renewable energy sources for each property and renewable energy solutions in and around the village. To share these findings with organisations intent on looking at zero carbon housing schemes.

The Future is Us	MCC Borough Theatre and the Melville Theatre	A youth arts project delivered through partnership and consortium working, putting young people at the centre of its development and design. The project promotes ownership of individual opinions/views and shared creativity. Identifying workable and sustainable mechanisms acceptable to young people to help them build their skills.
Caldicot Community Partnership	GAVO	Revenue funding for 'Together Works', the Wellbeing Workshop and Community Hub in Caldicot, offering people free access to equipment that supports carpentry, product design, plastic recycling, engineering and art. The project will support spaces for community activities, training, an outdoor meeting area and community kitchen.
CELT - (Connect Engage Learn Transform)	Torfaen CBC leading on behalf of the 10 LAs in Cardiff Capital Region	Project to enhance the current Employment and Skills service by taking a regional approach; developing a Triage system –to ensure clients are referred to the right support: Employing a Wellbeing Engagement Worker; Enhancing Digital and Outreach Engagement; Sourcing employment opportunities in Construction and Digital and Targeting employment for homeless/at risk of homelessness.
Food 4 Growth	Torfaen CBC leading on behalf of MCC and Caerphilly CBC	A cooperation project working with partners, sponsors, local businesses, producers and landowners to deliver a range of food projects that will create new opportunities to improve the future sustainability of the food eco system in Monmouthshire.

3.1.4 In order to manage the delivery of the UK CRF projects, the Council has received a management fee of £45k, which will be utilised to pay for the time of Officers within the Rural Development Programme team who are managing the UK CRF programme.

3.2 Rural Development Programme

3.2.1 In 2014, Monmouthshire County Council was awarded £2.79M of Rural Development Programme (RDP) EU funding to aid the delivery of the Vale of Usk LEADER programme in Monmouthshire and the rural wards of Newport.

3.2.2 LEADER is a community led programme, which aims to improve the quality of life and prosperity of rural areas through the delivery of locally inspired and delivered projects, that are distinctive, innovative, involve partners and represent good value for money.

3.2.3 Whilst the Council is the Administrative Body for the programme, receiving funding to employ a team of seven Officers to animate and manage the projects, all projects are assessed against the Local Development Strategy and overseen by the Local Action Group (LAG) a body of volunteers representing the public, private, third and community sector.

3.2.4 Over the last five years, a range of [LEADER projects](#) have been delivered focussing on rural economic development including digital innovation, renewable energy, community development, rural transport, support for the farming community, rural tourism, sustainable food production and environmental projects.

3.2.5 In September 2022 however, the RDP funding will cease so the team are presently identifying alternative sources of funding to deliver projects to ensure progress is maintained. It is not yet known whether the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will support rural economic development activity, or whether this will continue to be separated into objective-led projects. Nor is the amount of funding or the delivery mechanism known at this stage.

3.3 Developing Projects

3.3.1 Over the last few months, the team have been submitting applications for several projects in order to provide additional funding to support and maintain the RDP delivery team during and post the September 2022 cut off point and the submissions are now being assessed. Detailed below in Table Two are details of the project that have been submitted, none of which will incur additional revenue costs for the Council but will require recruitment of staff to assist in delivery:

Table Two: Developing Projects

Project	Fund	Description of Project	Resource Requirements
Funding Approved:			
1. Food Growth 4	UK CRF. Funding approved	*As per Table One above: Working with partners, sponsors, local businesses, producers and landowners to deliver a range of food projects that will create new opportunities to improve the future sustainability of the food eco system in Monmouthshire.	1 x FTE until June 2022 Post to be merged with 1 x PTE Astaro Local Food Engagement Officer (see project 2 below) to enable recruitment of 1 x FTE Sustainable Food Engagement Officer until September 2022
2. Astaro Data mapping -	WG Innovation Fund and WG Foundational Economy Fund Funding approved	Strand 1: Initial WG Innovation Fund grant to enable the Astaro system to be developed around data gathering and its presentation for supply and demand of local food supply chains. Strand 2: Funded by WG	1 x PTE April to September 2022 Local Food Engagement (link to project 1 above) ***** 1 x FTE to September 2022 Energy Mapping Officer to be resourced internally via RDP team.

		<p>Foundational Economy to enable farmers to have direct opportunities with public sector food supply</p> <p>Strand 3: Engage with WG and RSLs to investigate opportunities for Welsh energy related manufacturers to increase manufacturing around retrofit opportunities in RSL housing stock.</p>	
Funding Pending:			
<p>Local Food Supply Chain Development * Link to 'Space for Local Production' UK CRF Project</p>	<p>WG RDP Cooperation and Supply Chain Development Scheme Project.</p>	<p>An RDP project collaborating with Aberystwyth Uni, (Living Wales), NRW, Astario Systems and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water. The project will use high-resolution satellite mapping to predict the best use of land in Monmouthshire, and by default the land's real value.</p>	<p>1 x FTE Project Manager 1 x FTE Project Engagement Officer February 2022 – June 2023</p>
<p>Local Food Cooperation project with Cardiff CC</p>	<p>CCR Challenge Fund.</p>	<p>Harnessing the power and potential of land, technology and people to increase the sustainable production and supply of locally grown food in the CCR. This will consider Controlled Environment Agriculture, and diverse soil based growing techniques.</p>	<p>1 x FTE Project Manager February 2022 – December 2024</p>
<p>Digital Transformation BETA Fund</p>	<p>Welsh Government. Application submission February 2022</p>	<p>A continuation to the current DTF ALPHA programme that ends January 2022. Extension requested from LEADER until March 2022 to</p>	<p>1 X FTE project Support Officer, from RDP team extended from September 2022 until March 2023</p>

		ensure we maintain the OT support	
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4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation Assessment undertaken in Appendix A, anticipates that the projects detailed within this report will have a positive impact on peoples’ social, emotional, health and wellbeing, education, and skills. This will develop resident’s resilience and improve their life chances.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

An options appraisal has been undertaken in Table Three that follows:

Table Three: Options Appraisal

Option	Benefits	Risks
Do nothing – Don’t proceed with additional projects	None Identified	Loss of expertise, knowledge, and support for our rural communities and local businesses.
Implement projects as described in Table Two above	Projects align with the principles of the Rural Development Programme and help to maintain momentum whilst the SPF priorities are being clarified.	Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) priorities have not been launched; there is a risk that the projects will not align to these priorities. To migrate this risk, we have reviewed the priorities of the Community Renewal Fund which is seen as a precursor to SPF and submitted projects that will help progress the renewable energy and sustainable food agendas in the interim.

6. REASONS:

6.1 The end of RDP funding presents local challenges; however, this also presents the Team with an opportunity to reflect on what has worked well and to use the lessons learned to inform additional funding applications.

6.2 The loss of the RDP programme will impact on local businesses and communities who have participated in and benefited from project activities. Not forgetting the human impact, potential loss of 7 FTE staff who are highly skilled experts in their specialist field.

6.3 The development and delivery of a pipeline of successor projects that align with the Council’s priorities for sustainable food production, digital inclusion and innovation and renewable energy will help maintain progress whilst further detail of successor programmes is awaited.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 The RDP currently provides approximately £280k per annum which is made up of £240k RDP grant income and £40k match funding. There is no core funding to support the programme.

7.2 As there are currently no successor programmes in place and not all the projects detailed in Table Two above have received approval at this time, it is not yet possible to give an accurate illustration of how the impact of the loss of the RDP funding will be addressed. A further report will therefore be provided later in 2022, once details of future funding opportunities have been clarified.

8 CONSULTEES:

- DMT – Enterprise;
- Cabinet;
- Strategic Leadership Team

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS: N/A

10 AUTHOR:

Cath Fallon – Head of Enterprise and Community Animation

11 CONTACT DETAILS:

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Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty)

<p>Name of the Officer Cath Fallon</p> <p>Phone no: 07557 190969 E-mail: cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To provide an update on Council's £2.04M bid to the UK Community Renewal Fund and the Rural Development Programme which is due to cease in September 2022.</p> <p>To seek approval to proceed with additional funded rural economic development programmes.</p>
<p>Name of Service area: Enterprise</p>	<p>Date 14th December 2021</p>

1. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	<i>Although the projects are not targeted at older residents, there will be a positive impact being part of the wider community.</i>	There are no negative impacts anticipated.	
Disability	As above	As above	

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	.Not applicable	Not applicable	
Marriage or civil partnership	<i>Not applicable</i>	Not applicable	
Pregnancy or maternity	<i>Not applicable</i>	Not applicable	
Race	<i>Although the projects are not targeted at specific residents, there will be a positive impact being part of the wider community.</i>	No negative impacts anticipated	
Religion or Belief	.Not applicable	Not applicable	
Sex	Not applicable	Not applicable	

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation	.Not applicable	Not applicable	

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	<i>The purpose of the iConnect project in particular is to bring affordable, fast and accessible digital infrastructure to tenants who have no digital footprint or are in digital poverty. Community support will also be provided via 'Together Works', the Wellbeing Workshop and Community Hub in Caldicot, offering people free access to equipment that supports carpentry, product design, plastic recycling, engineering and art.</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
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How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making</p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably</p>	<p>The delivery team will ensure that they adhere to the Council's Welsh Language Standards.</p>	<p>None identified</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>	<p>Where new posts are required, the need to communicate through Welsh and English as part of the recruitment process and any necessary training offered as needed.</p>	<p>None identified</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Service delivery</p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>	<p>Any advertising about the projects will promote the fact that people can deal with the Council in Welsh by phone, email, twitter, Facebook, letters, forms, website transactions etc.</p>	<p>None identified</p>	<p>n/a</p>

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.




4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>The proposal strongly supports the Prosperous Wales wellbeing goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivering employability support to residents will lead to improved labour market positions for those in employment - Delivering employability support to residents will lead to employment, and increased income for those who are currently seeking work - Delivering employability support to residents will lead to improved productivity and growth for companies in the region. - The Future is Us youth arts project delivered through partnership and consortium working, puts young people at the centre of its development and design - promoting ownership of individual opinions/views and shared creativity. Identifying workable and sustainable mechanisms acceptable to young people to help them build their skills. 	<p>None identified</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)</p>	<p>The proposal strongly supports the Resilient Wales wellbeing goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>employability programmes support community and social resilience within communities and encourage greater levels of community interaction.</i> - <i>Employability programmes focus on building sustainable employment within communities, reducing inequalities between communities.</i> 	
<p>A healthier Wales People’s physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>		
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ‘Together Works’ project, the Wellbeing Workshop and Community Hub in Caldicot, offers people free access to equipment that supports carpentry, product design, plastic recycling, engineering and art. - Mon Life’s Major Assets project seeks to deepen community involvement, reach new audiences, improve the experience, and promote sustainability and regeneration to help preserve Mon Life’s important local assets and enhance accessibility and future opportunities. 	
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Zero Carbon Llanarth Village Plan and the Carbon Free Future projects both support 	

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
social, economic and environmental wellbeing	investigating retrofitting existing housing stock and renewable energy opportunities.	
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	- The Wye Valley Rivers project provides crucial access to creative resources, personal development training, enhanced employment opportunities and live cultural experiences to those living in rural deprived areas.	
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	- Employability programmes focus on building sustainable employment within communities, reducing inequalities between communities. A number of the projects detailed above help people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.	Not applicable

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term for the future</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning</p>	<p>The proposal is well-aligned to a long-term way of working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By supporting households and young people into employment and helping to sustain and improve the quality of that employment, employability activity is a key part of the suite of early intervention & prevention activities. This reduces the likelihood of long-term challenges resulting from deprivation, adverse childhood experiences, and unemployment. 	<p>None identified</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>Many of the projects that have received UK CRFT funding involve a number of partners working to the benefit of the wider community for example CELT, 'Together Works', the Wye Valley River Festival, etc.</p>	<p>None identified</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The application process for the UKCRF was open to all and has encouraged a wide number of applicants to seek views of their views submit funding bids on behalf of their communities and communities of interest.</p>	<p>None identified</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The purpose of the UK CRF is to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity fund in 2022. The Fund aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK, to pilot programmes and new approaches, that will invest in skills, community</p>	<p>None identified</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>.The wide range of projects detailed consider all aspects of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and present an integrated approach to economic and community development activity in the County.</p>	

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Not applicable		
Corporate Parenting	Not applicable		

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

When submitting projects to the UK CRF, applicants were asked to evidence their strategic fit and link to local economic and business need. Applicants were asked to consider included the Vision Monmouthshire 2040: Economic Growth and Ambition Statement; the Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy; the Digital Infrastructure Action Plan; the MCC Apprenticeship, Graduate and Internship Strategy alongside alignment with UK Government Investment Priorities.

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

.This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template It is anticipated that the projects detailed within this report will have a positive impact on peoples' social, emotional, health and wellbeing, education, and skills. This will develop resident's resilience and improve their life chances.

9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Cabinet	Jan/Feb 2022	Cath Fallon, Head of Enterprise and Community Animation

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built-in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Enterprise DMT	20 th December 2021	

2	Cabinet	19th January 2022	

