

ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUND OVERVIEW – SPRING 2022

1. Introduction and purpose of this document

- 1.1. This document aims to provide an overview of the Economic Recovery Fund, setting out: its purpose, how it operates, list the approved projects and their maximum funding allocation (a separate summary of the projects is provided) and gives highlights of progress made so far and to be expected.

2. What is the Economic Recovery Fund?

- 2.1. As part of a range of activity stemming from the Covid-19 [Business Recovery Plan](#), the Council repurposed £2m of its in-year budget (2020-21) to create a new one-off fund to commission new ideas and projects that support economic recovery, particularly in district and local centres.
- 2.2. Its **objectives** are the following:
- To support local economic recovery; helping our businesses and our retail and hospitality centres to rebuild and grow.
 - To help businesses open safely and remain viable – building resilience to future economic changes.
 - To protect jobs and businesses, particularly in hardest hit sectors.
 - To generate demand, to bring back customers and promote consumer confidence – encouraging people to shop locally and buy from Sheffield independents.
- 2.3. These objectives were purposefully broad, to enable applicants to develop ideas that fit local circumstances and needs. The Council wanted to try a new approach – instead of leading with a narrow set of aims that would stifle local discussion, it rather aimed to work with and through people to collaborate openly and develop interventions that are right for each partnership and place.
- 2.4. Ultimately, this Fund is piloting a new way of working for the council and establishing relationships and networks that, it is hoped, will be able to feed into the work of the new Local Area Committees (LACs). Despite being a one-off Fund, the aim is to achieve an ongoing legacy by continuing conversations and collaborations locally through the LACs and other mechanisms.

3. How does the Fund work?

Governance

- 3.1. In order to manage the work of the Fund, agree core principles, score and approve project proposals and oversee delivery, a Steering Group was established. Following the May 2021 local elections, the members include:
- Executive Member for Inclusive Economy, Jobs and Skills – Chair (Cllr Turpin)
 - Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Community Engagement and Governance (Cllr Grocutt)
 - Liberal Democrat Councillor (place remains open)
 - Private sector representative: Louisa Harrison-Walker
 - Private sector representative: Emma Marshall
 - Director of Finance and Commercial Services (Phil Moorcroft deputising for Tim Hardie)
 - Director of Economic Development and Culture (Diana Buckley)
- 3.2. Also in attendance are the following officers, who provide day to day leadership and support:
- Representatives from the Programmes and Accountable Body Team (Ben Morley, Carly Stratford)
 - Economic Policy Officer (Sarah Lowi Jones - acting as Project Manager and Secretariat for ERF)

Structure

- 3.3. The Fund was split into two pots that applicants could bid into, to support a mix of large and small projects.
- **Small projects:** of up to £50,000 were run as an open call to be considered on a rolling basis.

- **Large projects:** of between £50,000 and £200,000 had to go through a two-stage process and were considered as a set. Projects were required to submit an Expression of Interest Form that functioned as a statement describing the concept, idea and collaboration. Once scored, the strongest applications were invited to submit a full application. The intention was to work in detail with bidders, and the relevant council teams, to ensure the viability and value for money of projects.

Eligibility criteria

- 3.4. Projects had to represent a partnership or collaboration and have a named lead organisation. Applications could be developed and led by private sector collaborations, through partner organisations or from within the Council.
- 3.5. In order to apply to the fund, applicants had to pass all of the eligibility criteria for the application to be scored, otherwise it will be rejected as being ineligible:
 1. **Is the primary beneficiary a group of businesses?** It should not be a single business and should benefit a cohort of businesses in hard hit sectors or within district centres
 2. **Is this a genuine collaboration of businesses?** The proposal should bring together a collection of businesses and other organisations, not just represent the interests of one.
 3. **Would this happen without funding from the Recovery Fund?** Where funding is for an existing project additionality should be demonstrated – that it would happen faster or deliver more as a result of Recovery Fund support
 4. **Is Covid security considered as part of the application?** We expect to be living with some restrictions for some time and applications should state how they will acknowledge and adapt to relevant Government regulations.

Scoring Process

- 3.6. The purpose of the scoring process was to provide a transparent, fair and standardised way of assessing each project. Only applications that passed the eligibility test were scored by the Steering Group.
- 3.7. Applications were scored collectively by the Steering Group against the same five categories. These categories were scored out of five. Any bids that scored below a 3 in any one category or scored overall less than 15 for small projects / large full application (or less than 9 for Expressions of Interest), were automatically failed. The scoring categories were:
 1. Alignment to project aims
 2. Clarity of the proposal
 3. Does it address a real problem? Why is it needed?
 4. Strength of project management (including Covid security) (not scored at EOI)
 5. Value for money (not scored at EOI)
- 3.8. For both small and large projects, the final versions of applications form the basis of a funding agreement between the applicant and the Council.

4. Progress made so far

- 4.1. Since launching on 19th March 2021, the Fund has recorded over 200 contacts via the main email account (recoveryfund@sheffield.gov.uk). There will have been many more conversations in addition that have not been centrally recorded, where conversations have been led by other Councillors, SCC officers, Business Information Officers (who've been the backbone of how the council has communicated with businesses across the city) and private sector/other interested parties.
- 4.2. These enquiries generated **over 100 submissions – 64 for small projects** (up to £50k) and **40 Expressions of Interest for larger projects** (£50-£200k).
- 4.3. In the early stages of the project an additional £400k was secured through the Additional Restrictions Grant to support the Summer in the Outdoor City campaign that was delivered between July-September 2021.

- 4.4. Since July 2021 over 70 events have been delivered that received ERF funding. In this period, Sheffield was shown to have the most improved footfall across UK cities (a 33 percent increase), bringing the level up to 89 percent of the pre-pandemic average.¹
- 4.5. Over the Christmas period in 2021 the ERF funded the enabling works and installation of Christmas lights, two large Christmas trees and 45 shop front trees in the district centres that wanted to start delivery in that period.
- 4.6. In the coming months we will see dozens more events delivered across district centres, new street furniture installed, planting and banners bringing colour to streetscapes alongside public art and marketing campaigns across ERF funded areas. For more detail on each project area see the attached project summary document, which sets out what each area is aiming to deliver.

Funding allocation

- 4.7. Projects that successful applied to the Fund are listed on the next page, by their Local Area Committee Area. Also shown are other project costs agreed by the Steering Group.
- 4.8. The Steering Group also agreed to extend the contract of the Business Information Officers, a group of six experts brought in to provide support to businesses during Covid, for a further year given their vital importance to business across district centres and the level of success they were able to achieve over the past months.

¹ Sheffield city centre footfall soars to make it most improved in high street recovery tracker:
<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/people/sheffield-city-centre-footfall-soars-to-make-it-most-improved-in-high-street-recovery-tracker-3418808>

| Economic Recovery Fund: Approved Projects | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| | Project name | Large/ small | ERF Funding |
| District centre | Chapelton | Small | £50,000 |
| | Spital Hill | Small | £50,000 |
| | Firth Park | Large | £200,000 |
| | Page Hall | Small | £50,000 |
| | Manor Park | Small | £50,000 |
| | Woodhouse | Small | £50,000 |
| | Mosborough | Small | £50,000 |
| | Netheredge | Small | £50,000 |
| | Abbeydale Road | Small | £18,180 |
| | Totley Rise | Small | £13,771 |
| | Hillsborough Regeneration Project | Large | £207,500 |
| | Walkley Action Group | Large | £200,000 |
| | Broomhill Traders Association | Large | £200,000 |
| | Site Gallery - CIQ animation | Large | £100,000 |
| | Angel Street Kinema | Small | £48,670 |
| Summer in the Outdoor City | Bear Trail Extension | Small | £50,000 |
| | Community in Unity | Large | £98,511 |
| | Division Street Markets | Large | £97,430 |
| | Festival on the Square | Large | £111,720 |
| | Orchard Square animation | Small | £18,090 |
| | Sheffield Music Trails | Small | £46,750 |
| | Tudor Square Animation | Small | £30,000 |
| | Leopold Square Summer Festival of Music | Small | £31,200 |
| | Game City Adventure | Small | £33,104 |
| | Pollen Market | Small | £35,284 |
| | Castlegate Festival | Small | £41,815 |
| Project Costs | District Centre Futures research | N/A | £100,000 |
| | ERF Evaluations | N/A | £50,000 |
| | Other costs and contingency | N/A | £35,000 |
| | Information Officer contract extension | N/A | £263,000 |
| TOTALS | | | £2,380,026 |