

Please note this document replaces the previous Outline Business Case template and should be used for all non-transport Outline and Full Business Cases. Please also consider the accompanying Business Case Guidance

Expectations at Outline and Full Business Case

Outline Business Case – this will confirm the strategic context, make a robust case for change and identify the preferred option for delivery from a shortlist of options considered based upon how well it meets scheme objectives.

Full Business Case – the project should be developed to a level where it is capable of being given final approval, including detailed design and having secured all necessary powers, consents and land to enable the delivery of the scheme.

Transport Schemes

Please note that submissions for transport schemes at Outline and Full Business Case should use the template and approach provided in [DfT guidance](#).

A local guidance note has been produced to help promoters which sets out WECA expectations. This is available [here](#) and a summary is provided [here](#)

For these purposes a transport scheme is one that significantly changes the transport network infrastructure, whatever its objectives.

A letter from the Chief Finance Officer/Council S151 Officer in the form of that provided in WECA's guidance should be provided.

Land Acquisition Fund

Please have particular regard to the specific requirements in sections 2.1 & 4.2

West of England

Full Business Case

Scheme: Community Recovery Fund (CRF)

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1	Version 1.0	Jane Vivian	Naomi Logan	SOG CEOs	08.03.21 15.03.21X
2	Version 2.0	Jane Vivian	Naomi Logan	SOG SMT	07.04.21 05.05.21; 02.06.21 22.6.21
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Executive Summary

Reference was made to a Community Grant Scheme in the WECA Employment and Skills Plan (ESP). Since the ESP was published, the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the need to support residents and localised communities who, by the very nature of the pandemic, may have been especially hit by the pandemic, and thus have been pushed even further away from engaging with training, learning, work or other positive engagement.

The West of England Regional Recovery Plan (September 2020) sets out the regions plan to support recovery and renewal following Covid-19. Key responsibilities of the recovery plan include identifying challenges and opportunities and finding ways to help people to access employment, skills and training to support economic renewal and resilience.

The Recovery Plan priorities are:

- Rebuild business
- Get residents back into jobs
- Strengthen inclusion – which includes ‘Launch new Community Grant scheme to build local capacity and resilience in the ‘hardest hit’ communities creating pathways to employment and skills.’
- Green recovery
- Renew Places.

A key requirement of this project is to support residents to take the first step towards participation in learning, training and work and contributing to the region’s Employment and Skills Plan Objective 3: *‘Supporting everyone who is able to work by helping to address their barriers to employment.’*

Through the Community Recovery Fund (CRF), WECA is looking for innovative solutions which improve access to skills and education whilst at the same time building capacity and resilience within communities, encouraging longer term sustained impacts and benefits as a result of the funding.

A key requirement of the CRF funding will be to progress residents onto employability, skills training and education that already exists i.e. through AEB funded provision, other programmes such as Future Bright, Workforce for the Future, Careers Hub, Employability and Skills Portal, Digital Skills etc, as well as wider provision available through other key strategic partners such as DWP, Seetec and the local authorities.

Priority will be given to funding projects (and organisations) which have a clear economic outcome and which reach the most vulnerable, including those who have suffered disproportionately from Covid-19. This will include those individuals, groups or communities (including the BAME community), who face the greatest risks and detrimental social, health or economic impact(s) as a result of the pandemic.

Projects submitted under the fund must demonstrate need through submission of a detailed evidence, with outcomes, impacts and benefits to be measured against the baseline evidence. This will help WECA to measure the impact of the CRF as well as identify potential future priorities for funding.

CRF will be looking for projects which, as well as the above, also support capacity building within the VCS groups themselves, helping to strengthen their ability to a) support individuals and b) as employers themselves.

Key update and revisions

The FBC was approved with some comments by CEOs on 15 March, following which we published a call for a voluntary and community sector (VCS) Managing Partner. Although there was initial interest from a number of VCS organisations and consortia, no proposals were submitted. A number of the groups commended WECA for providing much needed support through the community recovery fund proposal and were particularly pleased that WECA had reached out on this basis to the sector, however no bids were submitted. The organisations provided very similar reasons for their decisions:

- The targets (particularly for progression) were unachievable given the target group;
- The amount set aside for managing the fund was too low;
- Timescales for the delivery of the project were too tight and it was felt that they wouldn't be able to deliver within the timeframe;
- The monitoring and evaluation requirements are too onerous – the sector is not used to monitoring and evaluating in this way.

Having consulted the Skills Officer Group on 5 May, a number of alternative delivery options were presented to them on 2 June. The recommended delivery option, as agreed by Skills Officers, has been incorporated into this amended FBC along with revised financials and other small amends requested by CEOs previously.

1 Strategic Case

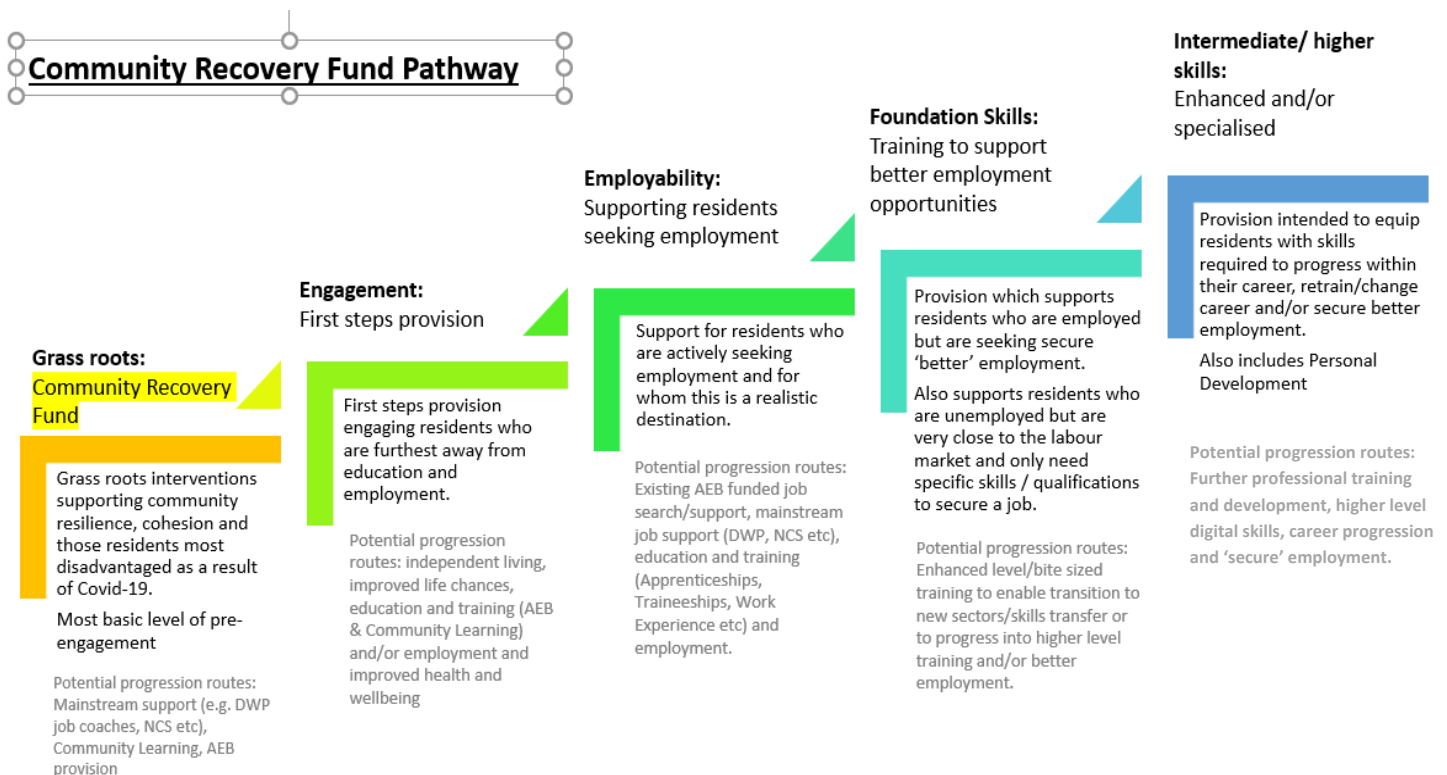
1.1 Project Description

Please read this section in conjunction with the Scoping Paper which provides a detailed description of the project.

The Community Recovery Fund (CRF) will reach the most disengaged within our communities, including those who have suffered disproportionately from Covid-19. This can include those residents, groups or communities who face the greatest risks and detrimental social, health or economic impact(s) as a result of the pandemic.

WECA is looking for innovative solutions which build confidence, capacity and resilience within communities, encouraging longer term sustained economic impacts and benefits as a result of the funding. To be clear, this project aims to support individuals to take the first step towards participation in learning, training and work and will contribute to the region's *Employment and Skills Plan Objective 3: Supporting everyone who is able to work by helping to address their barriers to employment.*

A clear requirement of the fund (and projects that it supports) is that it does not sit in isolation to other programmes and areas of delivery. The CRF is a 'grass-roots' intervention aimed at establishing progression routes for individuals, into training, education employment and/or career progression.



Therefore, projects supported through this fund will not only be required to demonstrate need, they will also have to detail how they will help to signpost onto current employability and skills provision, thus ensuring that the CRF has a legacy impact beyond the community projects that it supports.

1.2 Project Objectives and Case for Change

Government published the ‘Long Shadow of Deprivation’ Social Mobility Commission research report in September 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-long-shadow-of-deprivation-differences-in-opportunities>). There are many more papers and policy documents detailed in the Community Recovery Fund Scoping Paper which collectively set out the case for change, however, the following findings from the Social Mobility Commission report highlight perfectly the case for change:

- “the impact of COVID-19 is felt most by those already facing disadvantage. This is creating new and immense challenges for policy. We may expect the hardest-hit areas, with shrinking labour market opportunities, to face the longest impact.” (page 4).
- “This new evidence tells a story of deep unfairness in the context of place. However, it is not a story of north versus south or urban versus rural; it is a story of local areas side by side that have vastly different outcomes for the disadvantaged growing up there. And crucially, this is not a problem that equalising education alone can fix. We find compelling evidence that the greatest inequality is driven by factors outside education, and in these areas it is far harder to escape deprivation.” (page 3).

As set out in section 2.1 and the logic model later in this paper, the CRF will aim to deliver the following outputs as a minimum:

- Improved pathways to employment and skills by strengthening community and social cohesion which allows people to (re)engage
- Improved pathways to employment and skills by improving health and wellbeing
- Improve pathways to employment and skills by improving financial inclusion and resilience and removing a key barrier to participation
- Improving opportunities to volunteer in projects that increase pride of place and environmental awareness, leading to an economic outcome

The range of outcomes, outputs and impacts relating to the above, along with specific measures are detailed in the logic model.

1.3 Rationale for Public Intervention

The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) Nov 2020 painted a bleak picture:

- over 300,000 young people had been made redundant;
- Covid has caused exceptional hardship for individuals, families and businesses;

- Major health emergency;
- Unprecedented economic uncertainty and the deepest recession on record; and
- millions of jobs at risk.

‘The Long Shadow of Deprivation’ national study and report findings have direct synergies with individual geographies and communities across the West of England. We have recently heard from our multi-contract AEB partners, our Local Authorities, SAP partners and other strategic partners (such as DWP, the Princes Trust programme delivery partners and training providers), that the impact of Covid is being ‘felt’ hardest by already vulnerable groups such as NEETs, over 50’s, young people, lone parents, BAME communities and those with additional learning needs. Worryingly, these groups and communities are experiencing deepening disadvantage, isolation and disengagement, a situation which is not surprising given the findings of the above report which highlight the differences in social mobility opportunities within communities.

Many national and regional employability and skills programmes, services and interventions already exist including AEB funded provision, Kickstart, Restart, National Careers Service, Work and Health Programme, Job Entry Targeted Support (JETs) etc. However, these programmes do not drill down into the very localised socio-economic causes or impacts of joblessness, poverty, deprivation, isolation and other factors which lead to those within our communities to become vulnerable.

The CRF will fund and support projects and interventions that address the very localised and specific impacts of Covid on our most vulnerable communities, many of which are ‘outside of education.’ CRF will deliver grass-roots interventions (pre-education and training), which:

- address new and emerging social inclusion and mobility issues. As detailed above, these issues are often driven by factors outside of education and which therefore cannot be funded through pre-existing WECA funded provision and/or addressed through ‘mainstream’ employability and education provision; and
- support with fostering greater community cohesion and resilience to support positive outcomes for the disadvantaged residents living there.

As detailed in 1.2 above, an essential part of any delivery will be to establish, measure and report on progressions and pathways. Therefore, the CRF will serve as a ‘pre-employability or education/training’ intervention, helping to establish stronger links to wider support programmes and provision available. This will enable providers to continue to support an individual for which a sudden ‘end’ in support could be catastrophic in terms of sustaining any new found confidence, connections, individualised support and action planning and ‘good’ mental health.

1.4 State Aid Considerations

What is the new Subsidy Control regime?

As the UK has exited the EU, there is no longer a ‘safe harbour’ for State Aid issues as none of the ‘old’ Block Exemptions exist anymore.

Public bodies offering subsidy must self-assess themselves for compliance (ie the onus is on WECA ensuring aid is being awarded in a compliant manner; the onus is no longer on the applicant) with the following separate sources of legislation issuing any subsidy:

- 1 – TCA (UK-EU trade agreement)
- 2 – Withdrawal agreement (for ESIF funds)
- 3 – Northern Ireland protocol
- 4 – WTO rules (subsidies and countervailing measures)
- 5 – existing UK trade agreements with other countries.

Compliance with the TCA

The TCA is the most important one. Public bodies offering subsidies need to assess their proposed subsidy against 6 common principles **before they offer it**:

- 1 – subsidy must have a clear policy objective. The subsidy is aimed at achieving something deemed to be a social good; addressing a (proper) market failure.
- 2 – subsidy must be proportionate (max amount, intervention rate etc)
- 3 – subsidy must clearly bring about additionality, something that wouldn't have happened without it (the old incentive effect test)
- 4 – no subsidy must be awarded for projects that have already started or would have happened anyway.
- 5 – grant is the appropriate measure and that no less distortive methods of achieving the same objective are available.
- 6 – The benefits of the subsidy outweigh the negatives impacts on the market (in the context of free money always being distortive)

Exceptions

Article 3.2 (4) of the TCA provides that the Chapter on subsidy control does not apply to subsidies where the total amount granted to a single economic actor is below 325,000 Special Drawing Rights (SDR) over any period of three fiscal years (this is similar to the 'old' de minimis exemption).

325,000 SDR is calculated by the International Monetary Fund and is currently the equivalent of £344,600.

This means that a commercial undertaking may receive subsidies up to a total value of £344,600 over a rolling 3-year period provided that it keeps records of the total amount of aid received.

For the purposes of calculating the value of subsidy received, where an entity controls another company, the entity must include all subsidies received within the group. In addition, entities must 'reach back' to any aid received under the previous state aid rules.

The approach for CRF Programme

The CRF Programme will be utilising TCA Agreement Clause 3.2 (4) which can award subsidy aid below the level of 325,000 Special Drawing Rights (£344,600). This means that assessment of compliance with the TCA six common principles is not required.

However, a light touch assessment of compliance against the five overarching legislation/regulations (i.e. TCA; Withdrawal agreement; Northern Ireland protocol; WTO rules; existing UK trade agreements with other countries) will be required and the justification for treating grant as no subsidy.

Using TCA 3.2 (4) will also require the following:

- An agreed template for recipients (i.e. individual groups applying for grants) to declare how much other TCA 3.2 (4) subsidy they have received. VWV have provided a declaration template for this.
- Notify recipients on an agreed template / grant offer letter that they are receiving aid under TCA 3.2 (4). VWV have amended the standard WECA grant offer letter which can be used.
- Subsidies that are granted must be either notified on an official website or a public database within 6 months of the subsidy being granted, providing information including the legal basis and policy objective or purpose of the subsidy, the beneficiaries, the amount of the subsidy and the date of the grant of the subsidy and its duration.

WECA would not be in receipt of Subsidy Control if this Business Case was approved as none of the activity proposed to be carried out by WECA represents economic activity – we are not offering a good or service to the market.

1.5 Strategic Fit

West of England Local Industrial Strategy

The West of England Local Industrial Strategy sets out the region's ambition for clean and inclusive growth. This includes introducing new measures to help all individuals contribute to and benefit from economic success by:

- Targeting support to communities facing challenges;
- Delivering the right employment and skills provision so that businesses can find the talent they need; and
- Linking everyone to jobs, training and services via improved physical and digital infrastructure that is accessible, sustainable and low carbon.

As detailed in section 1.1 above, the CRF is placed at the ‘grass-roots’ of any interventions. The CRF (and the projects which come forward under it), will build confidence, capacity and resilience within communities, encouraging longer term sustained impacts and benefits.

Further, as illustrated by the diagram in section 1.1, a key requirement of the CRF will be supporting our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents to progress onto other pre-existing employability and education provision, helping to contribute to the overall ambitions of the Local Industrial Strategy.

West of England Employment and Skills Plan

Our Vision as set out on page 2 of the above is *“By 2036 the West of England will be internationally recognised for its sustainable, inclusive and diverse economy, providing a high quality of life, prosperity and opportunities for all its residents. Our people will be skilled, healthy and able to access a ‘ladder of opportunity’ to achieve their potential and or businesses will be able to find the skills and talent they need to innovate, add greater value and thrive.”*

The Skills Plan sets out 5 priorities:

- Integrating our employment, skills and education system to ensure it is aligned with demand and responsive to changing patterns of employment;
- Encouraging all young people to achieve their potential;
- Supporting everyone who is able to work by helping them address their barriers to employment;
- Empowering people to progress within employment;
- Ensuring employers are able to recruit and retain a diverse range of skills.

This project will primarily contribute to achieving objective 3 – supporting those able to work by helping them address their barriers to employment. The CRF will work towards this objective and will contribute to WECA’s vision by helping create ‘opportunities for all our residents’, support people to be ‘skilled and healthy’ and enable access to ‘a ladder of opportunity.’ It will also help individuals to ‘address their barriers’ and ‘empower’ individuals to ‘achieve their potential.’

RECOVERY PLAN ON A PAGE...



Rebuild Business

- Significantly expand the region's **business support offer** to help businesses of all types to adapt and survive, finding sustainable, low carbon pathways to recovery and growth
- Implement a targeted approach to **inward investment, export and trade**, unlocking new growth and job opportunities
- Drive job creation through significant investment in new **regional innovation projects**, to creatively address global challenges such as the climate change, health and equality of opportunity



Get residents back into jobs

- Enhance our **Redundancy Response Initiative**, including a new **B2B Talent Retention Platform** to help re-deploy workers
- Develop a regional **Employment and Skills Opportunities Portal** to help unemployed residents find new jobs, careers support and advice, and training opportunities
- Ramp up **re-training** with new packages developed and deployed in partnership with recruiting employers and aligned with growth areas (health and social care, construction, low carbon and digital)
- Address **youth unemployment** with a regional apprenticeship support service and expansion of sector based approaches



Strengthening Inclusion

- **Strengthen engagement** to help under-represented groups access skills and enterprise support through **community champions and a regional network of outreach facilities**
- Launch a new **Community Grant scheme** to build local capacity and resilience in 'hardest hit' communities, creating pathways to employment and skills
- Creating a **Good Employer Standard** led by anchor institutions across the region to create good accessible jobs, which are paid the Real Living Wage



Green Recovery

- Upscale the **Low Carbon Challenge Fund** through an enhanced Green Business Grant programme and **Local Energy Schemes**, helping existing businesses to transition to low carbon approaches, as well as creating new businesses and jobs
- Make significant investments to **decarbonise our energy and transport systems and enhance our green infrastructure**, building on the positive behaviour changes brought about by lockdown
- Maximise the region's share of **national green stimulus packages**, including retrofit



Renew Places

- Secure investment in **infrastructure and affordable housing** to achieve strategic place making and decarbonisation objectives
- With our communities, re-imagine and re-invigorate our towns and city centres with an **innovative town centre re-structuring programme**, building on the increased need for 'local liveability'
- Help the region's tourism and cultural sectors recover through the development of a **Regional Tourism Zone** and new **Cultural, Creative and Digital Development programme**

As can be seen from the 'Recovery Plan on a page' the launch of a Community Grant scheme sits at the heart of the strengthening inclusion priority of the Recovery Plan.

Please read the accompanying scoping paper which provides further detail on the strategic alignment of the CRF and the Recovery Plan.

1.6 Options Appraisal

Option A: No intervention

The CRF has been identified as a key action under the Recovery Plan priority 'Strengthening Inclusion.' Many mainstream support programmes are focused on employability, employment and training and education, however these do not address the localised socio-economic factors that result in isolation, deprivation and disadvantage within communities.

As already detailed above and in the attached scoping paper, Covid is having a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable within our society, which if left unaddressed, could lead to deepening longer term disadvantage and inequality of opportunity.

Option B: Let the market guide provision and support

Other options explored have included continuing to deliver our range of AEB funded provision, support programmes such as Future Bright and Workforce for the Future, whilst working

collaboratively with our multi-contract delivery partners and other strategic organisations to signpost onto a range of programmes and provision. The launch of the Employability & Skills Portal ([Employability and skills portal - West of England Combined Authority \(westofengland-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk)) has helped us to clearly identify and navigate this provision.

This option would therefore entail letting the 'market' address key issues. However, as identified, current employability and skills provision cannot fund and therefore does not (nor will not) address localised, grass-roots community socio-economic factors, issues and impacts. These can become significant and lead to complex and multiple barriers people's ability to access mainstream provision. Thus, mainstream provision becomes 'out of reach' for some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. It is for this reason that the 'let the market guide provision' option has been discounted.

Option C: Targeted intervention to support the most vulnerable

The focus of the intervention and the revised delivery model being suggested, have been developed in direct response to the consultations and lessons learnt elsewhere, gaps identified and lessons learnt. These consultations have also highlighted the need for a specific set of interventions (Option C) which could not be addressed through Options A or B.

An extensive scoping exercise has been undertaken to inform the scoping paper and consultations with the local authorities. This has included consulting with other Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) across the UK about their approach to community recovery which has highlighted the need for a targeted approach.

In addition to the MCA consultations, a CRF Task and Finish Group was convened with the local authorities. These discussions (along with revisions to the scoping paper) have helped to shape 'Option C' which is focused on targeted interventions to support the most vulnerable within our communities.

Following an unsuccessful 'call' for a VCS Managing Partner, alternative delivery models were presented to SOG on 2 June 2021. A preferred alternative delivery model was approved by SOG which, along with amended financials have been incorporated into this revised FBC.

1.7 Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action Considerations

Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept of sustainability in its widest form is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental, and social—also known informally as profits, planet, and people.

In 2015 all United Nations Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address core global challenges including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. [Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals – United Nations Sustainable Development](#)



As can be seen from the 17 core Sustainable Development Goals (which inform UK sustainability policies and action plans), the CRF aims and objectives cut across many facets of environmental sustainability, climate change and wider sustainability goals.

It is anticipated that the CRF projects will help to improve environmental indicators (HACT social impact measures) as well as address many of the above (i.e. poverty, good health and wellbeing, quality education (routes to this), gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, climate action, peace/justice/strong institutions and partnership for goals).

CRF projects will also help to foster community connections, resilience and actions which may feed indirectly into other sustainability goals.

1.8 Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

The recovery taskforce has highlighted urgent needs to reduce exclusion and poverty across the region. The CRF will directly aim to address this by increasing the presence of, and opportunity to access, community based projects, initiatives and activities which are to be directed towards the most vulnerable groups within our communities. Projects funded under the CRF will have a particular focus pm helping those who have (see section 1.2 above), been disproportionately affected and disadvantaged as a result of Covid-19.

In the application process proposals will need to demonstrate how they plan on recruiting target participants. We anticipate that all those benefitting from support will be unemployed and will have been disproportionately affected by Covid. They may also have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Long term unemployed
- Groups that tend to be underrepresented e.g. women, BAME, people with a health condition/disability, people over 50.

Equality and diversity are core principles of WECA and in operating this programme we will promote equality between all applicants, ensuring that the target groups identified above are equally able to benefit from the programme. Through some of the existing programmes being delivered by WECA's ISD team we are reviewing best practice ways of collecting equality and diversity data, which can be reflected in the CRF.

All marketing activity will be audited for unconscious bias with neutral language and imagery a default. Project information can be available in other languages.

2 Economic Case

2.1 Economic Appraisal

The Community Recovery Fund Programme will support the most disadvantaged within our communities, particularly those who have suffered disproportionately from Covid-19, to engage with economic opportunity.

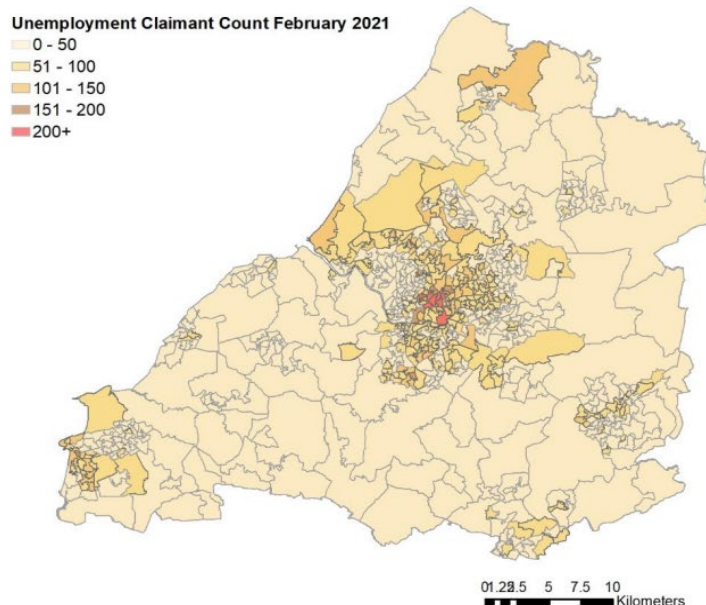
A key requirement of this project will be to support individuals to take the first step towards participation in learning, training and work and contributing to the region’s Employment and Skills Plan Objective 3: *‘Supporting everyone who is able to work by helping to address their barriers to employment.’*

This will include those individuals, groups or communities who face the greatest risks/detrimental social, health or economic impact(s) as a result of the pandemic (including, the young, 50+, disabled, BAME etc), which by their very nature, places them the furthest away from the labour market.

Latest economic intelligence tells us that:

- 5.0% of the working age population in the West of England is claiming unemployment benefits (equalling to 37,335 residents);
- Unemployment remains highest in areas with high unemployment pre-covid (see map below);

Unemployment remains highest in areas with high unemployment pre-covid



- Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) are used widely within the UK to measure and classify deprivation and poverty. The latest IMD data shows us that:
 - Employment – every local authority in the West of England has some lower super output areas (LSOA) that fall within the top 20% most deprived in the UK. Bristol, B&NES and North Somerset (not included under the CRF) also have LSOA’s within the top 10% most deprived in the UK.
 - Education – every local authority within the West of England has LSOA’s that fall within both the top 20% and top 10% most deprived in the UK. Bristol has a significant majority at both levels.
- In Feb 2021, there were 7,225 claimants aged 16-24 (4.7% of the population). Although down on the August 2020 ‘peak’ this still represents an increase of 154% since March 2020;
- In Feb 2021 there were 7,880 claimants aged 50+ (4.0% of the population). This represents an increase of 120% ‘older’ claimants since March 2020. Additionally, the rate of 5.2% in Bristol exceeds the national rate;
- Zero hour contracts place people in a vulnerable economic position. The number of people on zero hours contracts in the south west region increased from 83,000 to 93,000 (April/June 19 – April/June 20). These numbers equate to 3.6% females and 2.8% male working zero hour contracts.
- 16-24 year olds are most likely to be on zero hour contracts, comprising 9.9% of those employed in this age group.
- Sectors which have more individuals on zero hours contracts include a) wholesale and retail; b) accommodation and food; c) construction, d) education, e) health and social work and f) transport, arts and other services – all of which are key sectors within the West of England.

Addressing some of the social and economic impacts of covid 19 will help to forge grass roots ‘steps’ into positive engagement, with the aim of progressing people into employability, skills training and education, thus moving them closer to the labour market.

In line with the region’s *Employment and Skills Plan Objective 3: Supporting everyone who is able to work by helping to address their barriers to employment*, we are anticipating that 65% those supported under CRF will progress into a positive economic outcome (which can include some form of employability (including volunteering), skills training and/or education).

Projects funded under the CRF will address identified issues, gaps in provision and/or areas of need and support one or more of the following **with a clear economic outcome**:

- Addressing the impact of Covid on people – helping to them to ‘rebuild’ (i.e. through new or improved life skills and access to advice, guidance and support), and gain the confidence to move closer to and/or into employment;
- Local voluntary, community or not-for-profit organisational projects which help groups of vulnerable residents and communities across the West of England to recover (both economically and socially) from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Emotional and mental health wellbeing activities helping to foster social community cohesion that will have a legacy impact/benefit on communities post the pandemic;

- Reducing barriers to accessing pre-existing adult education available within communities. Projects must demonstrate how they will support progression/pathways onto adult education which will thus in turn result in improved skills and access to employment and work opportunities with measurable employment and/or skills outcomes and progressions;
- Outreach projects or services (either face-to-face or online) tackling social exclusion. Rather than being digital training courses (for which there is already significant provision across the West of England), these projects or services are likely to be specific, targeted and adapted to supporting the most vulnerable within our communities and addressing the impact(s) of social isolation; and
- Promoting the current digital entitlement offer and provision to residents in the hardest to reach areas. This includes rural communities where inclusion and engagement can be challenging;
- Raise awareness of and access to community and cultural activities (see p24 of the West of England Regional Recovery Plan) which foster strong community links, cohesion and resilience. Projects will be linked and signposted to (where appropriate) to the Cultural and Creative Fund.

As set out in the logic model later in this paper, the CRF will aim to deliver the following outputs as a minimum.

- a. **Improved pathways to employment and skills by strengthening community and social cohesion which allows people to (re)engage** - Formation of new projects, programmes or initiatives which bring people together and lead to improved social resilience and cohesion:
 - i) **330** residents engaged with and accessing new projects, programmes or initiatives;
 - ii) 2 or more HACT social impact measures and outcomes reported by residents accessing the new projects, programmes or initiatives;
 - iii) HACT '**social resilience**' and '**cohesion**' related indicators positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms.
 - iv) **100%** of individuals will be directed towards some form of employability, skills training and/or education
 - v) **65%** of individuals to progress onto some form of employability, skills training and/or education

- b. **Improved pathways to employment and skills by improving health and wellbeing** to enable people to participate in positive activity – Formation of new projects, programmes or initiatives which bring people together and lead to personal and/or social health and wellbeing:
 - i) 330 residents accessing new projects, programmes or initiatives;
 - ii) 2 or more HACT social impact measures and outcomes reported by residents accessing the new projects, programmes or initiatives;
 - iii) HACT '**health**' and '**social wellbeing**' related indicators positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms.
 - iv) **100%** of individuals will be directed towards some form of employability, skills training and/or education;
 - v) **65%** of individuals engaging with an activity/project funded by CRF to progress onto some form of employability, skills training and/or education.

- c. **Improve pathways to employment and skills by improving financial inclusion and resilience and removing a key barrier to participation** – Formation of new projects, programmes or initiatives which bring people together and lead to improved financial inclusion

- i) 230 residents accessing new projects, programmes or initiatives;
- ii) 2 or more HACT '**financial inclusion**' measures and outcomes reported by residents accessing the new projects, programmes or initiatives;
- iii) HACT '**financial** inclusion' related indicators positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms.
- iv) **100%** of individuals will be directed towards some form of employability, skills training and/or education.
- v) **65%** of individuals engaging with an activity/project funded by CRF to progress onto some form of employability, skills training and/or education.

d. **Improving opportunities to volunteer in projects that increase pride of place and environmental awareness, leading to an economic outcome** - Formation of new projects, programmes or initiatives which bring people together to participate in a positive activity which can help to reduce barriers to participation create volunteering opportunities centred around project which result in improved environmental factors:

- i) **110** residents accessing new projects, programmes or initiatives;
- ii) 2 or more HACT social impact measures and outcomes reported by residents accessing the new projects, programmes or initiatives;
- iii) HACT '**local environmental**' related indicators positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms.
- iv) **100%** of individuals will be directed towards some form of employability, skills training and/or education
- v) **65%** of individuals engaging with an activity/project funded by CRF to progress onto some form of employability, skills training and/or education.

In terms of the grant sizes that will be made available through the CRF these are:

- Small grants of between £1K - £9,999K
- Medium sized grants of between £10K - £50K
- £50K- £100K for exceptional proposals which are multi-partner approaches addressing the same issues across differing communities and/or cross-boundary geographies. These proposals will be required to bring an element of match funding (either financial and/or in-kind) of 10% or above.

The numbers above are a minimum requirement of the fund. It should be noted that the exact number and mix of projects in each category and funding band are subject to discussion and will be determined through the quarterly funding rounds and assessments/recommendations made by the panel. WECA will reserve the right to have final sign off on any recommendations made to ensure that the fund reaches a range of areas and deprived groups across the West of England.

As can be seen from the above, the CRF will not only deliver multiple social and community benefits (the need for which are well documented as a result of Covid), it will also leverage take up of exiting employability and skills provision. The benefits of this are three-fold:

- Helping to stimulate the take-up of AEB funded provision which has been impacted due to Covid;
- Encouraging individuals to identify employability training and employment opportunities; and

- Supporting the longer-term socio-economic prospects within our communities through the leverage of match funding and legacy projects.

These ‘wider’ economic impacts of the fund go beyond the initial fund investment. Although these are difficult to measure, it can be assumed that the true value of the fund will be greater than the £1.5m investment.

2.2 Value for Money Statement

<i>Total project cost</i>	£1,500,000
<i>Grant sought (IF/EDF/LGF/RIF)</i>	IF/Recovery Fund £1,500,000
<i>Net Quantified Benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1000 individuals supported - Minimum 10% match secured from VSC partner - 100% individuals <u>directed towards</u> some form of employability, skills training and/or education - 65% individuals <u>progressing onto</u> some form of employability, skills training and/or education - HACT social value indicators selected positively in over 70% of feedback forms
<i>VfM indicator*</i>	Cost per learner/individual engaged circa £1,400 Cost per learner progressing circa £2,150

* *Benefit compared to total cost*

The cost per learner engaged is £1,400 with the cost per learner progressing being some £2,150. It has not been possible to benchmark this cost against other programmes to contextualise value for money, as the programme is unique in its community focus and therefore unlike other mainstream employability programmes. However, to give an indication, cost per individual on the Work Programme (an intensive DWP run programme which had the following payments [The Work Programme \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444444/work-programme-costs.pdf)) is £5,387 per individual; the cost per individual on Future Bright is £1,333; and the cost of £1,400 per individual compares exactly to the ESF price per head for recent NEET programmes.

There are a number of assumptions which have been outlined in the narrative throughout this FBC (see section 5.9).

3 Financial Case

3.1 Chief Financial Officer sign off

As WECA is the promoting organisation, a letter of endorsement has been provided from Stephen Bashford, WECA’s Director of Business & Skills.

3.2 Scheme Cost

Revised scheme costs (proposed delivery model and costs presented and supported by SOG on 2 June 2021)

Item	Salary & oncosts	No.	FTE	Oncost	Cost (pa)	No. months	Totals
LA Project Support Officers (0.5 FTE)*	£44,926	3	0.5	£0	£22,463	18	£101,084 (3 x 0.5 FTE)
Project Monitoring Officer (1 FTE)	£44,926	1	1	£16,353	£61,279	18	£91,919
Project Coord (0.5 FTE)	£35,797	1	0.5		£17,899	23	£46,793
Management extension		1	1			3	£15,169
Non staff	£20,000				£20,000		£20,000
							£274,964
Total project funds							1,500,000
Grant Fund Available (cost)	-	-			-	-	£1,225,036

*An element of match would be expected from each LA in the form of overheads including IT equipment, office space, travel expenses etc as well as leveraging in-kind match from existing teams who could support the PSO with the delivery of the role.

In addition to the in-kind match that will be brought into the programme by the LAs, any projects/proposals applying for £10,000 or above will be encouraged to offer 10% or above match funding to the programme.

This will be reported in the monitoring and evaluation process as well as in the overall programme evaluation.

3.3 Spend Profile and Funding Sources

Costs for Project Implementation

Spend (£000s)

	21/22	22/23	Total
Recovery Fund	840,000	660,000	1,500,000
Total	840,000	660,000	1,500,000

4 Commercial Case

4.1 Procurement

The CRF Programme will be administered via grant funding and not via procurement. This is similar in approach to Workforce for the Future (which is also grant funded), and the approach that Greater Manchester Combined Authority took in administering its community fund.

The primary considerations in determining this grant funding are:

- WECA is not a direct beneficiary of any good or service – the output is for a third party beneficiary;
- There is no guarantee of award through the calls for applications.

Following the Call for applications, and prior to the award of any funding, applicants will have to demonstrate that the grant they receive will be spent in a manner compliant with WECA's procurement approach and monitoring of this will be undertaken.

In the event that WECA does need to undertake any procurement, this will comply with all relevant WECA rules, regulations and recommendations on procurement of external services, including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The expertise of the WECA procurement team has also been used to determine the best approach for the CRF Programme and their advice will continue to be sought throughout the duration of the programme where needed.

In addition to leveraging resource from existing WECA staff and funded programmes, a new Project Manager will be appointed for 18 months to manage both the CRF and the Digital Skills Programme, thereby achieving economies of scale in delivery. The funds for the Project Manager are included in the Digital Skills business case, while the support for this is included in this business case. The job advert for both posts were made live on Friday 12 February. Standard recruitment practices have been followed, utilising the expertise of the WECA HR department. All recruitment will have appropriate contract terms to match the timeframe of guaranteed funding.

4.2 Operation and Financial Viability

The CRF Programme will deliver grant funding to voluntary and community groups to help them to rebuild and strengthen their communities. This funding will be administered through a 'hub and spoke' delivery model comprising a central team at WECA and outreach officers at each of the LAs. This will help to ensure that the funding reaches the grass-roots projects and communities that are in greatest need. Existing local teams are already working with their VCS sector to distribute local funds. Ensuring alignment via outreach officers will ensure that additional value is brought, via complementary activity to existing local activity.

Projects which can clearly demonstrate how they will support the strengthening of community cohesion and resilience and reduce social isolation and disadvantage (through positive impact against HACT social value scores) will be funded.

WECA grant funding will only be awarded following a competitive and comprehensive application process which will include VCS groups/organisations demonstrating they have a viable model to deliver a project and that they have sought to offer a level of match funding (10% or above for projects requesting £10,000 or above). WECA officers will assess project applications via an assessment panel approach, undertaking due diligence checks prior to grant award. UA officers will be invited to participate on this panel, with due care to conflict of interest. The panel will ensure that awards proposed align with existing local activity and complement it.

Notwithstanding the relatively short timescales for project delivery, projects (through the application process) will be encouraged to outline how their proposal is sustainable in the longer term, bringing additional benefits and how it will deliver a legacy impact. All of these considerations will form part of the application and assessment process.

Further, any applications which are successful will be required to submit regular monitoring and evaluation of their programme and progress against their milestones. This monitoring will be submitted to and collated by the CRF Monitoring Officer.

WECA has allocated a Project Manager (1 FTE) to deliver both the CRF and Digital Skills Programmes over the course of 18 months. This will be supported with in kind match from WECA officers, providing technical support, advice and guidance. The project budget is fixed, is not a revolving / replenishing fund and hence is not expected to exceed an 18-month delivery window. Due to the nature of the project, long term sustainability is not a consideration, as the project will only last as long as the grant fund is able to support delivery. Legacy and lasting impact from the delivery will, however, be a core consideration as set out above.

Quality assurance and underperformance will be assessed in the end of funding round review and any issues will be reported to the relevant level of project governance and resolved accordingly. All application and evidence of defrayal will be stored in the grant management data base, for the requisite amount of time to enable an independent audit.

All necessary procurement, ICT and legal support/consultation is provided by WECA's in house teams, benefiting the project, with WECA's economies of scale. These officers will form the wider grant group, that will meet regularly to assess the end of funding round reviews and assess any quality and internal process issues.

4.3 Social Value Act

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public authorities to *“have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public service contracts and for connected purposes.”* In essence, the Act is a tool to help commissioners get value for money out of procurement whilst at the same time talking to local communities to design better services and to find innovative solutions to difficult problems.

The Community Recovery Fund project delivers a number of social value outputs, namely:

- Strengthening community cohesion and resilience (social),

- addressing a number of the HACT Social Value measures (social, economic and environmental), and
- creating pathways from grass-roots projects into pre-existing mainstream employability and skills provision (social and economic)

These social value output (see Logic Model) will be recorded, monitored and evaluated throughout the lifetime of the project.

In addition to the above, the fund will give priority to funding projects which can demonstrate that they:

- reach the most vulnerable, including those who have suffered disproportionately from Covid-19. This includes those individuals, groups or communities furthest away from the labour market (including, the young, disabled, lone parents, BAME, women etc) who face the greatest risks and detrimental social, health or economic impact(s) as a result of the pandemic;
- are available to a wide variety of different people/target groups, including: unemployed; individuals who have lost employment/income/education due to Covid-19;
- have a strong social value approach – this will form part of the assessment process when determining which projects to fund. We will require applications to confirm they comply with WECA’s ethical and sustainable procurement standards;
- offer something innovative with the potential of continuing past the end of the project (thus having a legacy impact).

Any procurement activity undertaken through the project will be done so using WECA contract standing orders and will have full consideration of any relevant social value considerations, this could include seeking to procure services or products from business/ suppliers located in the West of England. These actions contribute to both the social and economic considerations of the Social Value Act.

5 Management Case

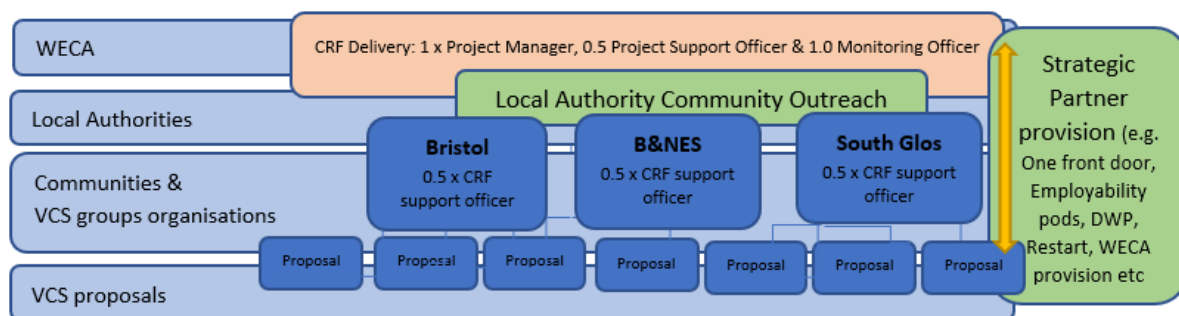
5.1 Promoter and Delivery Arrangements

All activities within the Business Case will be overseen by WECA’s People & Skills Team within the Business & Skills Directorate, working closely with delivery teams from Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire local authorities. As explained earlier, due to an unsuccessful call for a VCS Managing Partner, a new delivery model has been co-designed with SOG. This will operate as a ‘hub and spoke’ model, similar to other successful models eg. Future Bright.

WECA (the hub) will use its extensive experience of managing grant funded projects to manage the overall delivery of CRF. The LAs (spokes) will bring their extensive knowledge of localised need, networks and links into grass roots communities to help generate applications. They will also form part of the board that will assess individual projects/proposals.

The model will be structured as follows:

Revised Delivery Model – supported by SOG via consultation on 2 June 2021



The benefits of this revised delivery model are:

- **Creation of an integrated system** which facilitates links and progression pathways between community projects and other areas of delivery such as AEB funded skills and employability provision, WFTF, Future Bright, Careers Hub, Growth Hub and Employability and Skills portal;
- Ensuring that the CRF projects link into and benefit from (where applicable) other work streams and funded programmes both from a regional and LA perspective;
- Creation of a CRF lead within each LA to engage with and support a range of VCS projects;
- Bring an element of match thus increasing the value, impact and benefits of the CFR;
- Aligning the overall objectives of the CRF with other strategic regional and national programmes;
- Ensuring that individuals and groups can access wider support available to them – thus encouraging progression;
- Identifying where individual community proposals may act as potential referral routes into other work streams (where applicable);

- Having oversight of the fund, thus producing regular progress management reports for circulation to People and Skills Team (WECA), the SOG, CRF Task and Finish Group and Regional Recovery Task Force.

Existing WECA assets and programmes, such as Workforce for the Future, Careers Hub, Future Bright and AEB team and the Growth Hub will play a complementary role in signposting to the programme. The other WECA Recovery Plan projects will also play a complementary and signposting role, and the business case for the CRF Programme has been written alongside the business cases for other relevant Recovery Plan projects.

Further, the PM for the CRF will work closely with external partners such as the local authorities, DWP, Restart programme etc (see Employability & Skills Portal: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/skills/employment-skills-portal/>) to maximise the linkages across provision, as one of the priorities is around creating referral pathways.

5.2 Project Governance and Delivery

Governance will be managed through the existing WECA governance structures. The ultimate owner will be the West of England Joint Committee, with delegated oversight to the Business and Skills Directors (reporting to West of England CEOs), supported by the Skills Officer Group, which includes the skills leads from WECA and each of the Unitary Authorities.

At a Directorate level, the activities will feed into the Business & Skills business plan, and progress reported to SMT.

Day-to-day oversight will be delegated to the Head of People and Skills, within the Business and Skills Directorate at WECA. There will be a full time Project Manager for 18 months dedicated to the Community Recovery Fund and Digital Skills Investment Programmes.

Grant funding will be awarded to VCS groups following an open, transparent and competitive application process. Each submission will be assessed against pre-determined criteria by a panel of assessors. Assessors will be drawn from across the People & Skills, Business and Innovation & Sector Development Teams, the Grant & Assurance Team within WECA and one or more members of the Skills Officer Group, and potentially one further strategic member.

Through this Business Case we are seeking delegation of individual grant awards from the WECA Committee to the WECA Chief Executive, in consultation with Unitary Authority CEOs. This is similar to the delegated sign-off for other WECA administered grant funding, such as the Low Carbon Challenge Fund and the Business Innovation Fund.

Project Delivery

The overall programme will be led by the People & Skills team, working alongside the Unitary Authorities via the Skills Officer Group. As outlined in 5.1, the People & Skills team is highly experienced in developing and delivering a wide range of skills and employability support programmes. A Project Manager has been appointed (18 months), supported by a part time Project Coordinator (18 months), to run the programme (they also run the Digital Skills Investment Project).

Part of their roles in the management of CRF will be to ensure provision/projects are aligned to other relevant skills initiatives already in place to ensure maximum linkage and benefit to the region. The Project Manager (funded by the Digital Skills project) and the Project Coordinator (funded by this project) will work on leading, embedding and aligning the delivery of this project and the Digital Skills project (considered at the 19 March 2021 CEO meeting).

In addition to the Project Manager and Coordinator roles, under the revised delivery model it is proposed that a new Project Monitoring Officer is appointed. They will be responsible for undertaking the monitoring and evaluation tasks that were originally set out in the VCS Managing Partner specification (i.e. previous delivery model). The costs of making grant payments, due diligence and other checks usually performed by WECA in the running of similar projects are not costed to the project and will be offered as match.

Actual delivery on-the-ground will be through the range of small voluntary and community organisations, selected following an open and transparent application process (as set out in 5.1 above).

In terms of day to day oversight, the People & Skills project management methodology will be applied, which is in use across the service. This ensures that the Project Manager routinely reviews budgets, risk and issues, communications, timelines and milestones and reports these on a monthly basis up to the Head of People & Skills and via this route to WECA’s appropriate boards. A benefits tracker will be established (aligned to the HACT methodology) to measure the long term impact of the initiative.

5.3 Programme Plan

The milestones below are based on the delivery of the interventions in this Business Case, assuming approval of the revised Business Case on 1 July 2021. By way of background, they include key milestones which have already been reached in the run up to the submission of this revised Business Case submission.

Substantial preparation work has already been undertaken, specifically around the launch of the initial Call for a VCS partner, and in preparing for the recruitment set out above. This is because, being a Recovery Fund project, there is a need to have activities happening on-the-ground as soon as possible.

Milestone completion dates	Baseline
CRF on the agenda at SOG	11 Nov 2020
Scoping paper sent to CRF Task and Finish Group	w/c 30 Nov 2020
CRF Task and Finish Group to input into scoping paper	8 Dec 2020
CFR Task and Finish Group follow up meeting	14 Jan 2021
Full Business Case submitted for approval	15 April
Recruitment process begins for PM/PSO	Adverts live 12/02/21
<i>Interviews for PM/PSO</i>	9 March 2021 & 11 March 2021
Project Coordinator starts	w/c 19 April
Project Manager starts (0.5 FTE on CRF)	w/c 17 May
Call launched for VCS Partner, full criteria published	25 March 2021

Application deadline – unsuccessful call, no applications were received by the deadline	28 April 2021
Revised delivery model options scoped out	May 2021
Revised delivery model options presented to Skills Officer Group – preferred option agreed and is now subject to this revised FBC	2 June 21
Revised FBC submitted for approval by CEOs	1 July 2021
Recruitment of the Project Monitoring Officer (PMO)	July/August 2021
Recruitment of LA Support Officers	July/August 2021
First round of grant funding launched	Mid September 2021
Monthly Monitoring Reports produced and circulated by the PM	By the 20 th of each month
Task & Finish Group review meetings	Dec 2020, March 2021, June 2021 and September 2021, Dec 2021, March 2022, June 2022, Sept 2022
Mid-point evaluation	April 2022
Full project evaluation (closure)	Mid February 2022

5.4 Risks, Constraints and Dependencies

The project will monitor risk at the project team, service and SMT level. The risk register will be reviewed monthly by the PM as well as quarterly as part of the quarterly review meetings with the Task and Finish Group. If necessary, early intervention around any risks will be actioned, with potential changes to the operation and management of the scheme and project management plan identified and submitted to SMT for approval.

The risk register assesses risk against:

- Impact - disruption caused to project progress should the risk not be addressed. Scored out of 5.
- Probability - likelihood risk would happen should the mitigating action not be taken. Scored out of 5.
- Score - Impact x Probability out of 25.
- Ratings - low risk 0 - 9, medium risk 10 -19 and high risk 20 -25

Risk	Impact	Probability	Score	Mitigation	Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Score
Unable to recruit a VCS delivery partner	5	4	20 High	Despite LA's warming up their VCS contacts, extensive publication via WECA website/socials and some positive pre-application discussions, no applications were received. Alternative delivery options scoped and agreed with SOG.	3	3	9 low

Management issues due to a wider hub and spoke delivery model rather than one VCS managing partner	5	3	15 mediu m	Set clear roles and responsibilities for the hub and spoke model delivery partners – similar to the VCS Managing Partner Specification so that roles, responsibilities and expectations are clear from the onset.	2	3	6 low
Lack of take up of the grant funding by voluntary and community groups.	5	2	10 mediu m	Engage with LA's who have been warming up their VCS contacts. The VCS delivery partner will outline in their application how they will ensure successful take up of the fund and many mitigation actions is take up is low. The P&S Team is keeping a list of interested parties and the fund will be publicised via WECA website and comms to ensure wide promotion/take up.	2	1	2 low
Failure to obtain the relevant monitoring and evaluation reports/data/information from projects (via the Monitoring Officer).	5	3	15 mediu m	PM to hold monthly project management meetings with the LA 0.5. project leads to identify any risks early on. The Project Monitoring Officer will deal with any underperformance or failure to supply monitoring information as soon as it is flagged by the LA leads.	3	3	9 low
Failure of individual projects to deliver outputs, outcomes, and benefits (impact)	5	3	15 mediu m	Ensure the application process for the grant funding is clear about the outcomes, impacts required. This will include specific details of the monitoring and evaluation requirements – funding is conditional upon these being met and could be clawed back if relevant data/information / feedback is not received. Project Manager/Project Monitoring Officer to monitor progress of individual projects and ensure relevant monitoring & evaluation requirements are be met – any risks or concerns to be flagged by the LA project leads. PM to hold monthly project management meetings with the LA project leads. Any issues regarding feedback from individual projects will be escalated to the Head of P&S if required.	3	4	12 mediu m
Failure of individual projects to ensure 65% of 'customers' directed onto pre-existing employability & skills provision.	5	4	20 high	Ensure the application process for the grant funding is clear about the need to link with mainstream pre-existing employability & skills provision. Only projects which provide a detailed explanation of how they will ensure this requirement is met will be considered for funding. This will also be a specific requirement of the monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the Project Monitoring Officer. Grant funding will be conditional upon progressions and WECA will reserve the right to claw back if relevant data/information / feedback is not received, however flexibility to be granted if positive progression (eg into volunteering or other positive outcomes) can be achieved. Acknowledging that these targets are 'aspirational'. PM to hold monthly project management meetings with the LA project leads. Any issues/concerns regarding feedback from individual projects will addressed as soon	4	4	16 mediu m - high

				as they are flagged and/or escalated to the Head of P&S if required.			
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5.5 Land Acquisition, Planning and Other Consents

Not applicable.

5.6 Service Diversions

Not applicable.

5.7 Engagement and Consultation

As the CRF Programme directly responds to WECA's recovery taskforce recommendations and is a priority intervention in the Recovery Plan, the engagement undertaken to determine this intervention has been extensive and wide ranging. The Recovery Plan included engagement through a range of specialist sector groups and key strategic partners and the CRF programme was identified as one of the immediate priorities for strengthening inclusion.

In addition, the West of England Skills Officer Group (SOG) has been consulted throughout the preparation of the scoping paper, Business Case and revised delivery model options (see milestones above). The SOG includes the skills leads from across the Unitary Authorities who support the approach set out in this Business Case. As well as providing updates at the monthly SOG meetings, special CRF Task & Finish Group meetings have been convened so that the detail around the objectives, outcomes and delivery model could be discussed and agreed.

The SOG will remain engaged through the project delivery, linking closely to the LA project leads, inputting into the Assessment Board/Panel (meeting quarterly to assess individual projects submitted under each funding round) and in the monitoring and evaluation of the project.

The Assessment Board/Panel will comprise: one officer from each of the LA's, PM (employed by WECA) and a third sector representative. SOG will receive regular updates on project progress throughout the lifetime of the project. The PM and PMO will have responsibility for producing quarterly reports and presenting these at SOG.

Further, fortnightly meetings are held for all eight Recovery Fund projects to share updates and progress. This ensures that all interventions are complementary and do not duplicate provision. Weekly catch-ups and fortnightly reporting has been undertaken with David Henderson to sense check progress of the Business Case and its complimentary nature to the other Recovery Fund projects.

5.8 Project Assurance

The initial Business Case had input from different individuals from across WECA, in particular the Business & Skills Directorate, under the leadership of the Head of People & Skills. It was sense checked alongside the other Recovery Fund projects and Business Cases to ensure it met the aims and objectives of the Recovery Plan. It was approved by CEOs on 15 April. This revised Business Case seeks

approval for a revision to the delivery model (see section 5.1) and resulting scheme costs (see section 3.2), but all other approved project assurance factors remain the same.

Interventions funded through the Business Case will undergo a robust and transparent format assessment process prior to a grant being awarded.

5.9 Monitoring and Evaluation

Each funded intervention/project will be required to submit at monthly updates and quarterly highlight reports to measure performance and success of the projects in line with the logic model.

WECA will review the quality and impact of interventions through these monthly updates and quarterly highlight reports and take immediate action if there are any areas of concern. Additionally, the LA support officers will flag any issues early on, again enabling WECA to take early action.

A full evaluation of all interventions will be undertaken. This will be completed by PMO with input from the LA project leads. The PMO will be responsible for obtaining full evaluations from each project. These will be collated and given to the PM to ensure that the impact of the programme is measured fully. Successful applicants will be expected to share their bids with the PM to help inform the overall evaluation.

Scheme: Community Recovery Fund

1. Scheme background and context

The project is part of the West of England Recovery Plan and is mentioned specifically under the 'Strengthening Inclusion' priority. Critically it will delivery support, projects and interventions at the heart of our communities, reaching those who have been disproportionately affected by Covid. It will help to foster community cohesion and strengthen resilience, with an aim to supporting some within our communities to access pre-existing employability and skills training or at the very least move closer to accessing this provision.

The project will deliver a £1.5m grant funding to voluntary and community groups (VCG'S) across B&NES, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Priority will be given to funding projects (and organisations) which reach the most vulnerable, including those who have suffered disproportionately from Covid-19. This can include those individuals, groups or communities (including the BAME community) who face the greatest risks and detrimental social, health or economic impact(s) as a result of the pandemic.

2. Logic Model

- State *assumptions* between the investment and the predicted outcomes and impacts.

Assumptions

The funding will be awarded to voluntary and community groups and projects. Its primary aim is to support cohesion, resilience and mitigate against the deepening disadvantage which is impacting on the most vulnerable communities as a result of Covid.

Project focus

The number of individuals that are expected to benefit from the delivery of projects and initiatives is 1000. Assumptions have been made around the focus of projects and initiatives and numbers accessing them namely:

- Strengthened community and social cohesion (330)
- Improved health and wellbeing (330)
- Improved financial inclusion and resilience (230)
- Increased pride of place and environmental awareness (110)

These assumptions have been made based on consultations with SOG/community groups, other MCA's who have run similar funds across the UK and also inn reading the context (see top of scoping paper for relevant links). However, the true impacts of Covid are yet to be felt within our communities, so these early assumptions may be replaced by a different allocation of projects across the four main areas above.

Social value measure (HACT)

Given that the main purpose of the fund is to have a positive impact on social cohesion, resilience, value and impact (inclusion), it has been assumed that 70% of individuals accessing one of the projects will provide positive feedback against at least two of the HACT social value indicators. This assumption is based on the current understanding of Covid and its impact(s) on the most vulnerable within our communities. However, as the full impacts of Covid come to light, this may have a positive (i.e. greater than 70%) or negative (less than 70%) result in terms of the HACT social value outcomes and benefits. This will be carefully monitored and evaluated.

Progression onto employability, skills and education

The CRF will primarily contribute to achieving objective 3 of the West of England Employment and Skills Plan, supporting those able to work by helping them address their barriers to employment.

The CRF will work towards this objective and will contribute to WECA's vision by helping to:

- create 'opportunities for all our residents',
- support people to be 'skilled and healthy'
- enable access to 'a ladder of opportunity.'
- help residents to 'address their barriers' and 'empower' residents to 'achieve their potential.'

Projects funded under the CRF will address identified issues, gaps in provision and/or areas of need whilst at the same time delivering a **clear economic outcome**:

One of the key requirements of any project is the need to demonstrate how they will:

- direct 100% of individuals towards pre-existing employability, skills training and/or education to try and positively impact on NEETs (a particular at risk group) and
- 65 % of individuals progressing into some form of employability, skills training and/or education.

This will help to create stronger inclusion within our communities, thus in turn having a wider socio-economic impact. However, this uses the assumption that all individuals accessing a project, programme or initiative under the CRF will respond positively to the activity and potential thereof. It also assumes that relevant and timely information is provided about the types of support available outside of the CRF activity. To account for this the figures above have been differentiated into 'directed towards' and 'progressed onto' .

Geographical area

The programme will operate across the WECA geographical area.

This project aims to support residents to take the first step towards participation in learning, training and work and will contribute to the region's Employment and Skills Plan Objective 3: Supporting everyone who is able to work by helping to address their barriers to employment.

Logic Model

Context and Rationale

Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable within our communities. This impact is deepening as the pandemic continues. Many UK (Government) reports have already begun to report of the social and community impacts of Covid-19. These include Social Inclusion and Mobility: 'The Long Shadow of Deprivation (September 2020), BAME: 'Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups' (June 2020). 'Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19' (August 2020). Mental Health, Wellbeing and Resilience: COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveillance Report(s) and MindUK 'Mental Health Emergency' Report (June 2020). As set out in the Executive Summary, the West of England Recovery Fund (September 2020) has identified 5 clear priorities, one of which is to **Strengthen Inclusion**. This includes 'Launch new Community Grant scheme to build local capacity and resilience in the 'hardest hit' communities creating pathways to employment and skills.' This will help to address the 'market failures' in terms of the socio-economic impact(s) of the pandemic within our communities and amongst our most vulnerable residents. The target communities are those facing significant social and resilience barriers to accessing employment and skills pathways, who as a result are most vulnerable to covid's impacts.

HACT is a sector leader in supporting community investment and has developed impact measures in partnership with the Centre for Excellence in Community Investment, a number of social landlords and other key strategic stakeholders. Bristol City Council is using the HACT value calculator and measures, to report on the social impact of community investment activities. In order to create alignment between the CRF and other community activities being delivered by our local authorities, the HACT impact measures (along with a few additional ones) have therefore been used below.

Please note: once selected projects are likely to bring extensive experience related to activities that have community impact. Therefore, as part of the monitoring and evaluation reporting (including the monthly updates and quarterly highlight reports) they will be encouraged to report on any additional outputs, outcomes measures etc, particularly those which have an economic outcome (i.e. leads to an employability activity being undertaken (including work experience and volunteering), training and/or a job. These will be additional to the mandatory ones below, with the primary focus remaining on the detailed impacts/measures below.

Objectives	Resources/ Input	Activities	Outputs	Direct & Indirect Outcomes	Impact (benefit)
The aims/ objectives of the scheme are: (Ensure that <u>all</u> aims/objectives are <u>SMART</u>)	In order to achieve the set of activities to fulfil these aims/ objectives we need the following: (Resources should not be limited to money e.g. grant, match funding, in-kind, project team, specialist support, etc. The inputs define the scope of the project being considered in the logic model)	In order to address the aims and objectives we will accomplish the following activities: (What will the money be used for? e.g. construction, project management, equipment/fit out, etc):	We expect that, once accomplished these activities will produce the following deliverables: (Provide measurable outputs e.g. length of new road/cycle path, m ² of space constructed/refurbished, number of businesses supported, learners engaged, etc)	We expect that if accomplished these outputs will lead to the following <u>change</u> e.g. new products or services, skills, behaviour, new business/contracts, etc: (Ensure that <u>all outcomes are SMART and relevant to the aims/objectives to allow for attribution</u> ; <u>distinguish between direct and indirect outcomes</u>)	We expect that if accomplished these activities will lead to the following changes in service, organisation or community: (quantitative economic impacts e.g. indirect jobs and/or GVA to be <u>cross-referenced</u> with FBC as appropriate)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pathways to employment and skills by strengthening community and social cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding – WECA • VCS match funding and expertise, • PM/PSO – including desk, mobile and IT equipment. • LA lead officer support • Strategic partner support (e.g. referrals). • Knowledge/support of project partners • WECA staff support e.g. Growth Hub, Future Bright, Careers Hub acting as referral routes into the CRF project. • Grants of between £100 up to £100,000K in exceptional circumstances (moved from Activities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resources (WECA employed PM/PSO/PMO) as well as the LA lead officer 0.5 FTE roles – project management, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. • Marketing campaign. • Partner engagement • Grants of between £100 up to £100,000K in exceptional circumstances • Post funding evaluation and review • Additional VCS support. 	<p>Formation of new projects, programmes or initiatives which meet all the following:</p> <p>a) bring people together and lead to improved social resilience and cohesion (linked to the HACT valuation approach);</p> <p>b) lead to an economic outcome; and</p> <p>c) address specific impacts of Covid on target groups.</p> <p>330 residents engaged with and/or attending regularly (i.e. three times over three months) in one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New community project, programme or initiative which encourages community cohesion, resilience and reduces specific impacts of Covid on target groups. • New voluntary group meet up – where signposting to other services can be provided • New community support service • For young people (up to aged 18), a youth engagement related activity • New community related volunteering opportunity. • New cultural community activity. <p><u>Of these 330 residents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of individuals will be directed towards some form of employability, skills training and/or education. <p>HACT indicators will be positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms</p>	<p>Barriers to employment and skills due to community and social cohesion will be reduced.</p> <p>At least 70% of participants will report two or more of the following (see HACT social impact measures and outcomes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved life skills and feeling connected • Increased confidence (adult) • Improvements in confidence (youth) • Able to obtain advice locally • Positive perception of neighbourhood • Feeling of belonging to a neighbourhood • Talking regularly with neighbours • Undertaking regular volunteering • Awareness of employability, skills training and/or education opportunities • Awareness of and access to community and cultural activities • Not worried about crime • Not worried about anti-social behaviour • Awareness of youth related activities, clubs and organised activities. • Awareness of digital support, services and training. <p><u>Of these 330 residents:</u></p> <p>65% of individuals engaging with an activity/project funded by CRF will progress onto some form of employability, skills training and/or education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals in targeted communities engage positively with learning, training, or work • Barriers to employment and skills arising from community cohesion and resilience are reduced (measured by - HACT ‘social value’ and ‘youth’ related indicators positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms) • New community projects and networks established to support community cohesion - leading to greater employability progressions and outcomes for residents. • Existing VCS groups and organisations awarded a grant show improved resilience and management practice and productivity thus having greater impact within the community
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pathways to employment and skills by improving health & wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding – WECA • VCS match funding and expertise, • PM/PSO – including desk, mobile and IT equipment. • LA lead officer support • Strategic partner support (e.g. referrals). • Knowledge/support of project partners • WECA staff support e.g. Growth Hub, Future Bright, Careers Hub acting as referral routes into the CRF project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resources (WECA employed PM/PSO/PMO) as well as the LA lead officer 0.5 FTE roles – project management, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. • Marketing campaign. • Partner engagement • Grants of between £100 up to £100,000K in exceptional circumstances • Post funding evaluation and review • Additional VCS support. 	<p>Formation of new projects, programmes or initiatives which meet all the following:</p> <p>a) bring people together and lead to personal and/or social health and wellbeing (linked to the HACT valuation approach);</p> <p>b) lead to an economic outcome; and</p> <p>c) address specific impacts of Covid on target groups.</p> <p>330 residents engaged with and/or attending regularly (i.e. three times over three months) in one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New health and/or wellbeing related project, activity, programme or initiative • Local health and/or wellbeing service • New health/fitness/wellbeing activity • New health/fitness/wellbeing volunteering opportunity <p>Of these 330 residents:</p> <p>100% of individuals will be <u>directed towards</u> some form of employability, skills training and/or education.</p> <p>HACT indicators will be positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms</p>	<p>Barriers to employment and skills due to health and wellbeing will be reduced. At least 70% of participants will report two or more of the following (see HACT social impact measures and outcomes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence (adult) • Improvements in confidence (youth) • Improved life skills and feeling connected • Relief from depression or anxiety • Good overall health • Relief from drug/alcohol problems • Reduction or cessation of smoking • Feel in control of life • Can rely on family or friends • Feeling of belonging to a neighbourhood • Undertaking regular volunteering • Accessing employability, skills training and/or education opportunities • Feeling in control of money and money management <p>Of these 330 residents:</p> <p>65% of individuals engaging with an activity/project funded by CRF will <u>progress onto</u> some form of employability, skills training and/or education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals in targeted communities engage positively with learning, training, or work • Barriers to employment and skills arising from confidence & wellbeing are reduced, with HACT ‘health’ and ‘social’ related indicators positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms • Existing VCS groups embed improved workforce planning and management practices leading to more resilient workforce, and thus having greater impact within the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pathways to employment and skills by improving financial inclusion and resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding – WECA • VCS match funding and expertise, • PM/PSO – including desk, mobile and IT equipment. • LA lead officer support • Strategic partner support (e.g. referrals). • Knowledge/support of project partners • WECA staff support e.g. Growth Hub, Future Bright, Careers Hub acting as referral routes into the CRF project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resources (WECA employed PM/PSO/PMO) as well as the LA lead officer 0.5 FTE roles – project management, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. • Marketing campaign. • Partner engagement • Grants of between £100 up to £100,000K in exceptional circumstances • Post funding evaluation and review • Additional VCS support. 	<p>Formation of new projects, programmes or initiatives which:</p> <p>a) bring people together and lead to improved financial inclusion (linked to the HACT valuation approach);</p> <p>b) lead to an economic outcome; and</p> <p>c) address specific impacts of Covid on target groups.</p> <p>230 residents engaged with and/or attending regularly (i.e. three times over three months) in one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New project/activity, programme or initiative supporting residents to gain increased money management skills • New project/activity, programme or initiative supporting residents to manage debt or avoid getting into debt. 	<p>Barriers to employment and skills due to health and wellbeing will be reduced. At least 70% of participants will report two or more of the following (see HACT social impact measures and outcomes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased level of financial comfort and management. • management and debt management. • Reduced level of debt and/or debt reduction action plan and support in place. • Saving on a regular basis. • Awareness of how to access employability, skills training and/or education opportunities • Moving from unemployment to either employment or training. <p>Of these 230 residents:</p> <p>65% of individuals engaging with an activity/project funded by CRF will <u>progress onto</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals in targeted communities engage positively with learning, training, or work • Barriers to employment and skills arising from financial inclusion and resilience issues are reduced – HACT ‘financial inclusion’ related indicators positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms • Existing VCS groups and organisations awarded a grant are more resilient and productive, thus having greater impact within the community • 65% of individuals accessing projects funded by a grant progress onto some form of

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New project/activity, programme or initiative which encourages residents to save on a regular basis. • New financial inclusion related volunteering opportunity <p><u>Of these 230 residents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of individuals will be <u>directed towards</u> some form of employability, skills training and/or education. <p>HACT indicators will be positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms</p>	some form of employability, skills training and/or education.	employability, skills training and/or education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pride of place and environmental awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding – WECA • VCS match funding and expertise, • PM/PSO – including desk, mobile and IT equipment. • LA lead officer support • Strategic partner support (e.g. referrals). • Knowledge/support of project partners • WECA staff support e.g. Growth Hub, Future Bright, Careers Hub acting as referral routes into the CRF project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resources (WECA employed PM/PSO/PMO) as well as the LA lead officer 0.5 FTE roles – project management, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. • Marketing campaign. • Partner engagement • Grants of between £100 up to £100,000K in exceptional circumstances • Post funding evaluation and review • Additional VCS support. 	<p>Formation of new projects, programmes or initiatives which:</p> <p>a) bring people together and lead to improved environmental factors (linked to the HACT valuation approach);</p> <p>b) lead to an economic outcome; and</p> <p>c) address specific impacts of Covid on target groups.</p> <p>50 residents engaged with and/or attending regularly (i.e. three times over three months) in one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New project/activity, programme or initiative supporting residents to address localised environmental issues. • New environmental related volunteering opportunity <p><u>Of these 110 residents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of individuals will be <u>directed towards</u> some form of employability, skills training and/or education. <p>HACT indicators will be positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms</p>	<p>Barriers to employment and skills due to health and wellbeing will be reduced. At least 70% of participants will report two or more of the following (see HACT social impact measures and outcomes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No problem with teenagers hanging around • Reduced vandalism/graffiti • Not worried about crime • Not worried about anti-social behaviour • Able to obtain advice locally • Positive perception of neighbourhood • Feeling of belonging to a neighbourhood • Talks regularly with neighbours <p><u>Of these 110 residents:</u></p> <p>65% of individuals engaging with an activity/project funded by CRF will <u>progress onto</u> some form of employability, skills training and/or education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals in targeted communities engage positively with learning, training, or work • Barriers to employment and skills arising from local environment issues are reduced – HACT ‘local environment’ related indicators positively selected in over 70% of feedback forms • Increase in levels of local volunteering - with a focus on increased employability opportunities for residents

3. Evaluation design and methodologies

Evaluation questions

To assess the impact and effectiveness of the fund against the key project outcomes, the following will be evaluated in detail:

- number of individuals accessing a project, initiative or activity,
- the 'impact' of that activity on their social value perception (i.e. at least 70% must score positively against two or more of the HACT indicators)
- number progressing onto pre-existing employability, skills training or education – target of 65% across the entire programme delivery.

These outputs can then be used to further define the direct and indirect benefits of the fund in terms of social value and cohesion (as measured by the national HACT social value measuring methodology).

Additionally, the allocation of funding to 'at risk' groups such as NEETs, lone parents, women, BAME or registered disability, will be monitored to assess the projects 'reach' to those who have been disproportionately affected by Covid (thus becoming more vulnerable) and the resulting levels of inclusion.

These wider impacts and benefits will provide invaluable understanding and support the People and Skills Team in commissioning further programmes, provision and projects.

Evaluation methodology

This will be through both quantitative and qualitative evaluation and will be focused on the outcomes, impacts and benefits achieved (see logic model). Funded groups/projects will be expected to work closely with the LA support officers and the PM and PMO, collecting and providing regular participant data, information on outcomes, and in some cases taking part in interviews or case studies.

As mentioned above and in the Logic Model, the evaluation process will provide invaluable information about interventions which 'work' in tackling the derivational impacts of Covid on our communities and will help WECA in commissioning further 'people and skills' related provision.

VCS projects funded through CRF are likely to bring extensive knowledge and experience related to activities that have strong community impact. Therefore, as part of the monitoring and evaluation reporting (including the monthly updates and quarterly highlight reports) VSC groups/projects funded via CRF will be encouraged to report on any additional outputs, outcomes measures etc, particularly those which have an economic outcome (i.e. leads to an employability activity being undertaken (including work experience and volunteering), training and/or a job. These will be additional to the mandatory ones set out in the logic model.

Evaluation audiences

Evaluation audiences include WECA, SOG, our local authorities, third sector organisations, MCAs and national government. The evaluation will help us to collectively understand the most successful interventions in terms

of addressing deprivation and fostering community cohesion and resilience. The local authority 'community' teams (including the 0.5 FTE lead officer role) will be working extensively to reach in to our communities and supporting groups to come forward with impactful projects. The evaluation of this fund will help not only WECA from a 'people and skills' perspective, but also our LA's in terms of their own community programmes and interventions.

At a national level, WECA has consulted with other MCA's in the design of the programme and model of delivery. The evaluation (and the understanding this will give us), will help WECA to work collaboratively at a national level with the other MCA's. It has been suggested that this work may include a MCA 'Community' joint working group where best practice, lessons learnt, and new thinking/initiatives can be shared.

Although not a direct 'skills' related programme, the CRF includes an ambition to create pathways onto mainstream, pre-existing employability & skills provision. Therefore, the understanding which will be gained through the delivery and evaluation of the CRF programme, will help WECA to work with key strategic partners such as the Department for Education, DWP (Restart) and other key agencies. The understanding gained will help to shape future skills provision and align to national opportunities.

Scheme beneficiaries

The scheme beneficiaries will need to complete the following:

- VCS groups/organisations bidding for the grant funding will need to complete a grant application form (including baseline data/information), evaluation form and any other monitoring requirements (e.g. interviews, case studies etc). Any groups/organisations who are successful in their application for grant funding will need to sign a grant offer letter in order to receive the funds. This will include a clause to participate in the end of project report.
- Residents/individuals accessing the projects/activities/support to be delivered as a result of the fund will need to complete a feedback form. If and when willing, they may also be approached to provide testimonials and case studies to feed into the overall programme evaluation.

4.1 Data collection methods

The applicants (VCS groups/organisations) will have to complete an application form that will require submission of a range of information (see below). This information along with completion of the application form will demonstrate how proposals will:

- Align with and deliver against strategic and recovery plan objectives without duplicating current provision (see section below);
- Meet the CFR assessment criteria set (see logic model);
- Address identifiable issues, gaps and areas of need that exist within communities. Proposals will be required to provide robust evidence of need. This evidence must be underpinned by supporting information and data including:
 - population figures for the community/area/geography to which the proposal relates;
 - Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) data – a range of LMI data sources are available to view via the WECA website;
 - Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - widely-used datasets within the UK to classify the relative deprivation (i.e a measure of poverty) of small areas. They go down to Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) so are granular geographically. Multiple measures are provided (reflecting types of deprivation), which can be compiled into a single score of deprivation. These individual measures include: Income, Employment, Education, Skills and Training, Disability, Crime, Barriers to Housing and Services, and Living Environment. Proposals need to demonstrate how they plan to tackle one or more (or all) of the above ‘types of deprivation’ many of which have been made worse as a result of Covid; and
 - localised data which illustrates the specific area(s) of need/gaps/issues to be addressed;
 - address specific localised ‘need’ in terms of vulnerable groups such as the young, women, lone parents, BAME, disability, over 50’s etc.
- Deliver on a range of outputs and benefits (see logic model); and
- Plan for sustainability of the project and/or benefits that result from it.

Applications will be accompanied by a statement on the need for the grant funding. Data collected at the beginning, during (monthly updates and quarterly highlight reports) and end of individual project delivery will inform the post funding evaluation. Ongoing monitoring will occur quarterly as well as part of the overall programme closure (post the full dispersal of the grant fund). A full project evaluation will be undertaken by the PM and PMO working closely with the 0.5 FTE LA support officers) to assess the funds impact on community resilience and cohesion (based on the HACT social value measures).

All of this information will feed into the wider Recovery Plan Programme Monitoring as well as into decisions around further commissioning of projects/programmes and services (where applicable).

The grant fund will be positioned under the 'People and Skills' provision, with cross-linkages made from and into other programmes such as Workforce for the Future, Future Bright, AEB funded provision, Careers Hub, Digital Skills Investment Programme and the Creative and Cultural Fund to name but a few. The extent and success of any cross-referrals will be monitored by the PM to ensure that any wider benefits of the CRF are captured and encouraged, thus encouraging a legacy impact of the initial fund investment.

In terms of the baseline data collection and reporting activities these will include:

<i>Metric (inc. Target)</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Data source (& Responsibility)</i>	<i>Baseline date</i>	<i>Reporting to?</i>
Inputs					
£1.5m WECA Investment fund	£	Quarterly	Grant application forms	FBC at full approval	WECA SMT, Recovery Board, Investment Committee
Outputs					
Min 1000 residents accessing projects, activities and initiatives funded via the CRF	Number	Quarterly	End of funding round review	Project start	Recovery Board, Investment Committee, SOG Task & Finish Group
£1.5m grant funding awarded to a range of voluntary and community sector groups	Number	Quarterly	End of funding round review	Project start	Recovery Board, Investment Committee, SOG Task & Finish Group
Minimum number of voluntary and community sector groups receiving CRF funding – to be agreed with VCS partner	Number	Quarterly	End of funding round review	Project start	Recovery Board, Investment Committee, SOG Task & Finish Group
Outcomes and impacts					

<i>70% minimum of residents scoring positively against two or more of the HACT social value indicators – see logic model</i>	<i>Number and percentage</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>End of project review</i>	<i>Project start</i>	<i>Recovery Board, Investment Committee, SOG Task & Finish Group</i>
<i>100% of individuals will be <u>directed towards</u> some form of employability, skills training and/or education.</i>	<i>Number and percentage</i>	<i>Six monthly</i>	<i>End of funding round review</i>	<i>Project start</i>	<i>Recovery Board, Investment Committee, SOG Task & Finish Group</i>
<i>65% minimum of residents accessing a project/initiative/activity funded by CRF to progress onto employability or skills related provision</i>	<i>Number and percentage</i>	<i>Six monthly</i>	<i>End of funding round review</i>	<i>Project start</i>	<i>Recovery Board, Investment Committee</i>
<i>20% minimum of projects to reach target groups (e.g. those furthest away from the labour market and/or employment or skills activity).</i>	<i>Enterprise</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>End of funding round review</i>	<i>Project start</i>	<i>Recovery Board, Investment Committee</i>

5. Delivery plan

Data collection will commence on receipt of the first set of applications. The PM and PMO will produce monthly updates and quarterly fund management reports. These will provide the information necessary to monitor progress against the project outputs and highlight any issues, which will form the post funding round review.

If necessary, the quarterly monitoring reports will be used to steer the direction of activities to be funded under the next quarter. This will ensure that the fund has the intended impact and delivers the required outcomes, outputs, impacts and benefits.

The end of funding review will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the various activities/initiatives and projects funded through the CRF. This evaluation will use both quantitative and qualitative data and information to help assess the success in meeting the stated project outcomes and impacts.

Further, as detailed in sections above, this data and information will be used to a) inform new provision/activities commissioned by WECA, b) forge appropriate links to national provision/strategic partners (e.g. DfE, DWP/Restart etc) and c) establish a national 'baseline' of community related activities/interventions being delivered by other MCA's.

6. Resourcing and Governance

The monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken by the PM, PMO with input from the LA support officers. The funds for the PM role will be taken from the Recovery Fund budget and have been highlighted in 3.2 above.

The project management plan will contain a risk register as detailed in 5.4 and will be monitored via post fund evaluation forms and 'customer' feedback forms. Risk will be escalated as part of the review and sign off process and any necessary mitigations and approvals will be managed through this process. Any operational risks that occur during the operation of the funding will be escalated to the Head of Service for resolution and escalated further to WECA SMT, if a resolution is not possible.

As stated in 4.2, the PMO and LA support officers will be instrumental to the project review and evaluation process, reporting on the process issues and resolutions. Local Authority Skills Officers and Managers within People and Skills (WECA), will also provide input into the review and evaluation process, conveying feedback from their own community teams. This will be via the regular CRF Task and Finish Group meetings (see 5.9 above).

In terms of a named individual, this will be the Project Manager (Nichola Wallworth) who started in post on 17 May 2021.

7. Dissemination

The end of project evaluation will identify the success of the fund against the objectives set out in the business case, this will feed into the overall monitoring framework for the Recovery Plan and potential future WECA managed grant funding programmes. The audience will include WECA officers, WECA SMT, Local Authorities (SOG, Economic Development Teams and Community Teams), WECA Project Teams, Recovery Board and WECA Investment Committee.

The audiences described above are all subject to WECA managed meeting schedules and the evaluation, its outcomes and recommendations will be disseminated via the established structure for delivering presentations and reports to these groups, Panels and boards. There is an opportunity to use the outcomes of the end of funding review to help shape WECA's processes and practices for managing low level, high volume grant schemes in the future.

As mentioned earlier, the findings will also be disseminated (where appropriate) to other MCA's, government departments and delivery agencies such as DWP. Through the collaborative work of the People and Skills Team and launch of the Employability & Skills Portal, it is hoped that a number of local, regional and national employability, skills and education services/programmes can be linked to the CRF to create progression pathways. Although the CRF is not itself an employability or skills programme, projects funded by the grant fund will need to demonstrate links with and referrals onto mainstream employability/skills provision. The dissemination of the evaluation results will help to foster stronger working relationships with other providers and programmes.

The report will also be published via WECA Marketing & Communication channels, for wider circulation.