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# UK Community Renewal Fund

## Devon County Council

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- £220m fund aimed at supporting communities to **pilot** programmes, including to promote community resilience and new approaches to support both business and people ahead of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).
- Focus on supporting innovative responses to local challenges and local need across the UK, spanning urban, rural and coastal areas.
- A competitive revenue support programme, but with no ringfencing of funds between themes and no requirement for match funding.
- Four investment areas prioritised by Government:
  - **Supporting Investment in Skills** – with an emphasis on facilitating work-based training, upskilling and retraining of the workforce, and promotion of digital skills and digital inclusion.
  - **Supporting People into Employment** – with an emphasis upon supporting individuals to access local services / provision into employment, identifying and addressing barriers to employment amongst the hardest to reach, raising local aspiration and supporting individuals to find sustainable employment, and seeking to support additional basic skills provision.
  - **Supporting Investment in Local Businesses** – with an emphasis on supporting new entrepreneurs and business to take on new employees and promote existing staff, development new products and services through innovation, and support local decarbonisation measures.
  - **Supporting Investment in Communities and Places** – Enabling feasibility studies to deliver local carbon and energy projects, exploring opportunities for cultural led / community led regeneration activity, improving green spaces and preserving local assets, and promoting rural connectivity.
- Devon introduced fifth local emphasis on **reducing economic and social inequalities**, with a focus on harder to reach people and communities.

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- Up to £3m available per 'place' (District), meaning Devon could bid for up to £24m in total.
- 100 priority places identified nationwide for the fund with a weighting towards rural deprivation and peripherality.
- Torridge and West Devon prioritised in Devon. Did not preclude other areas from bidding, or cross area bids, but reduced scoring if not a priority place.
- Upper tier authorities asked to act as accountable bodies for both collation and appraisal of local bids, and then to act as managing authority for any funds awarded.



Devon County Council has been awarded £9.3m, the largest funding allocation in the UK for a single area, including £5m for priority areas.

Supported 13 innovative projects across Devon:

- employment and training
- business and social enterprise support
- environmental initiatives
- community resilience

# UK Community Renewal Fund Devon CRF projects



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Applicant	Application Name	Brief Description	Total
<b>Devon County Council</b>	Devon Agri Tech Accelerator	Building on Devon's natural capital, an innovative project led by Devon County Council which will support farms to diversify and innovate, and the wider sector to work together.	£503,318.59
<b>The Biosphere Foundation CIC</b>	Biosphere	An integrated economic and environmental development programme, led by the Biosphere Foundation, which seeks to leverage Torridge and Northern Devon's rural and coastal natural capital, as well as the recently remobilised Appledore Shipyard.	£1,350,140.00
<b>Mid Devon Mobility</b>	Stronger Together	A social transport / employment hybrid project, led by the Mid Devon Mobility VCS partnership, working with individuals from harder to reach backgrounds in rural areas to access employment opportunities within the public transport sector.	£500,449.68
<b>Retrofit Academy</b>	Retrofit Skills and Business Accelerator	A retrofit training project led by the Retrofit Foundation, promoting related employment opportunities through a blended learning approach.	£995,284.28
<b>Petroc</b>	Promoting Innovation and Enterprise	A project which seeks to utilise new digital technology (AR, VR, MR) and knowledge transfer to fastrack innovation and upskilling across business in Northern Devon.	£500,939.00
<b>Petroc</b>	Innovation for Youth and Community	Led by PETROC College in partnership with Northern Devon partners, a project focused on filling gaps within existing youth and community provision to create a single programme which will support young people in rural / coastal Devon to return to work and learning.	£503,074.00

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## Devon CRF projects



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Applicant	Application Name	Brief Description	Total
<b>Devon and Cornwall Training Providers</b>	Digital Devon	A digital skills and training project, led by the Devon and Cornwall training Provider Network in partnership with the HotSW DSP, aimed at aligning current digital skills and training provision, as well as promoting train the trainer and intermediate level digital skills roll out.	£585,200.00
<b>School for Social Entrepreneur</b>	Devon Enterprise Support for Social Enterprise	A targeted social entrepreneur's project led by the Dartington School for Social Enterprise, aimed at supporting individuals who are interested in setting up their own social enterprise from harder to reach / disadvantaged backgrounds.	£649,369.76
<b>Devon County Council</b>	Devon Elevation Fund	A delegated grant scheme led by Devon County Council which will provide support for business innovation and agility, creating new jobs, new products and allowing local business to play a more active role in building back better and improving local economic resilience.	£1,174,928.00
<b>Devon County Council</b>	Ability not Disability	A project focused upon addressing and fast-tracking employment for those with a disability within Devon.	£601,134.00
<b>Project Cosmic</b>	Velocity - VCSE Devon	A social enterprise support programme providing business support, training and peer-group development which builds resilience and innovation in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors.	£500,034.92
<b>YTKO</b>	Devon Start and Grow	A business support / enterprise programme that will support the development and fast tracking of micro business to take up post pandemic opportunities.	£1,050,000.00
<b>Project Eden</b>	Eden Grounds	A feasibility study by led the Eden Project, examining the potential to create a new high-quality visitor and food / green attraction at J27 of the M5.	£250,000.00



- From the Application stage, the DCC CRF team worked closely with the potential bidders to help them identify the best projects for the area and to build sustainable partnerships in a very limited period of time
- DCC acknowledged that CRF was designed as a pilot, therefore we are allowing projects to make delivery changes where necessary. The CRF team adopted an agile approach in the implementation stage and worked closely with all the projects to address their needs accordingly.
- Projects submit monthly written progress reports with risk updates and meet with the DCC CRF team regularly for progress reviews. This allows for project status updates and consideration of mitigation actions where necessary.
- DCC organised occasional full meetings where all the project deliverers asked questions in front of the whole programme and can cross fertilise ideas and knowledge.
- DCC developed a robust management plan with clear responsibilities, deadlines, and controls in place to correctly identify and reimburse eligible expenditure



- Rurality and peripherality were key selection factors in this programme. Not clear yet whether that will happen again.
- Our focus on Green / Blue and Community Inclusion closely aligned with Government's emerging focus for Levelling Up. Government less interested in standard regeneration activity.
- Some smaller organisations were not able to bid due to tight timescales and the minimum £500,000 threshold - too much of a challenge and a risk for organisations with limited capacity.
- Significant resource was required at Devon CC to manage the application process and enable project contracting in short timescales
- Issues with outputs definitions and contracting delays made for a very slow start
- The delivery extension offered by government was helpful, although a 1 year pilot scheme from the start would be preferred
- Most projects applied for a six months extension without requiring any additional funding - a clear indication that the forecasted project budgets were overestimated to cover the projects' risks (triggered by the very short implementation period)



# UK Community Renewal Fund Devon CRF achievement



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Over the last 11 months (up to October 2022) Devon CRF supported:

- more than 3,800 individuals to enter new training opportunities
- more than 600 businesses and 800 organisations (public, private, voluntary sector)
- more than 100 people into in employment (including self- employment and employment increase in supported businesses)

Devon CRF also attracted £470,000 investment in Devon as a result of support

CRF runs until December 2022 so final numbers will be higher



Promoting Innovation  
and Enterprise

Petroc College



# Project Breakdown:

- The project had four elements:
- **Farm Innovation Pilot** - develop a 'Farm Innovation Plan' process and test with farm businesses in West Devon and Torridge. This element by *Duchy College Rural Business School* and *Business Information Point*.
- **Knowledge Exchange and Voucher Scheme pilot** - A Knowledge Exchange Manager will work with 14 businesses across Devon to identify bespoke support, advice or services needed to develop Agricultural technology and innovation or grow your business.
- **Research & Mapping** - Understanding how many farms currently utilise technology, what opportunities may be around the corner and what Agri-Tech developers we have within Devon. The research element ran by the *University of Plymouth*.
- **Building an Agri-Tech Alliance** - Create a group for farmers, Agri-Tech developers and stakeholders like academic institutions who are undertaking research. This will use the research and mapping to plan how to grow and support the sector in the future.





- Project delivery completing by 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 22; Managing Authority financial completion Jan 2023
- Evaluations in progress – one per project. Government to carry out overall programme evaluation.
- So more CRF lessons learned and case study information to follow
- UK SPF is being delivered differently in 2 Tier areas - allocated to 8 individual districts, all awaiting decisions on investment plans
- DevonCC coordination/collaboration role
- Investment Zones – DevonCC coordination/submission role – pipeline !
- Rural England Prosperity Fund – individual districts bids, capital only – linked to UK SPF
- Levelling Up Fund – district schemes and County transport scheme – some good joint working



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Thank you for listening