

MAKING MANSFIELD PLACE BOARD

Agenda Item 6

Subject:	Levelling Up Fund / Mansfield Connect Update		
Presenting authority / representative:	Mansfield District Council		
Report author and contact details:	mrobinson@mansfield.gov.uk		
Value of decision: n/a			
Partners affected: Full Place Board		Date of consultation: 6/10/21	
Purpose – This report provides an update on the Levelling Up Fund, Mansfield Connect project.			
Background – <p>The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) was initially announced at the 2020 Spending Review with further details announced in March's budget. The fund focuses on capital investment in local infrastructure, building on existing Local Growth Fund and Towns Fund programmes, aiming to prioritise bids that invest in regeneration and growth in places in need and areas of low productivity and connectivity.</p> <p>Local Authorities can submit one bid for every MP whose constituency lies wholly within their boundary and the bid must be backed by the MP. Bids could be submitted for an individual project or a package bid consisting of multiple projects (up to a maximum of 3) and both can request up to £20 million of funding.</p> <p>The first round of funding closed on 18th June 2021 and focused on the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transport investments including (but not limited to) public transport, active travel, bridge repairs, bus priority lanes, local road improvements and major structural maintenance, and accessibility improvements.• Regeneration and town centre investment, building on the Towns Fund framework to upgrade eyesore buildings and dated infrastructure, acquire and regenerate brownfield sites, invest in secure community infrastructure and crime reduction, and bring public services and safe community spaces into town and city centres.• Cultural investment maintaining, regenerating, or creatively repurposing museums, galleries, visitor attractions (and associated green spaces) and heritage assets as well as creating new community-owned spaces to support the arts and serve as cultural spaces. <p>Within the competition, funding will be targeted towards places with the most significant need, taking into account the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for economic recovery and growth• Need for improved transport and connectivity• Need for regeneration			

Based on this, areas have been ranked 1-3 with one representing places with the highest levels of identified need, with preference being given to those areas in decision-making. Mansfield has been ranked in position one and qualifies for £125,000 capacity building funding to support the creation of the bid.

The assessment process for the funding will focus on the following key criteria:

- Characteristics of the place – each local authority will be sorted into category 1, 2 or 3 based on our assessment metrics, with category 1 representing the highest level of identified need.
- Deliverability - will be based on supplementary finance, management and commercial cases, with bids able to demonstrate investment or which begin delivery on the ground in 2021-22 financial year prioritised in the first round of funding.
- Strategic fit with local and Fund priorities – this should be addressed in the strategic case of submissions and should include support from stakeholders.
- Value for money – an economic case should be submitted to explain the benefits of the bid and how it represents value for money.

Current Situation –

In light of the tight timescales of the first bidding round, concurrent work required on Towns Fund and applications for the Community Renewal Fund, the Council made the decision to work towards round two for the submission of a bid. In addition, the release of the capacity building funding from MHCLG, only coincided with the submission of round two bids. Further information has been requested from government in terms of timing of the next round and we are awaiting clarification.

The capacity funding of £125,000 has now been received from MHCLG and work to progress the work up of the bid can progress. It is anticipated that this funding will be used to secure additional capacity to support the preparation of the LUF bid in respect of the Mansfield Connect project.

Governance –

Mansfield District Council has established a Steering Group to guide the development of this important project for Mansfield Town Centre. This includes a Partner needs sub group which Andrew Cropley is leading on in securing commitment from respective partners for their own operational requirements within the new civic hub. As part of the Council's emerging Town Centre Masterplanning work, consultants Allies & Morrison have undertaken an options analysis on the preferred site and a reserve potential TC site, linking this with the LUF opportunity.

The Council has also engaged the professional services of ARC Partnership to further support the development of the project feasibility and design options and resultant costings for the project on the Council's preferred site. Once we have secured the further partner needs in greater detail we expect to translate this into the project on the ground and build the case for the LUF bid. As yet the timing and criteria for round 2 of the LUF bid remains unknown, but every effort is being made to maximise the time currently available to best anticipate the criteria (based on round 1) and develop the bid. Currently the users of the facility potentially include; MDC main office base; DWP (relocating as a tenant of MDC from current civic centre site), NCC (both potential back office and customer facing service needs), WNC (Hair & Beauty plus Hospitality & Fine Dining relocation from Derby Rd campus, plus possible training suit / Gaming suit), NTU (students services?/ Enterprise space for graduates), CVS, Health sector (both potential back office and customer services),

private sector opportunities for Food & Beverage offer/convenience goods, and possible residential element depending upon site capacity and funding. It may be possible to secure some additional leisure/cultural users but the operating model must reflect the market realities on the potential risks in any one partner being left with an unsustainable operational overhead costs. These details will continue to be worked upon as the project proposals progress.

Exempt information:

None

Recommendation(s): That the progress in respect of the LUF bid to support the Mansfield Connect Project is noted

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

N/A

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

N/A

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 N/A

4 DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT

4.1 Project Initiation Documents (Appended)