

# MAKING MANSFIELD PLACE BOARD

## Agenda Item 6

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Levelling Up Fund / Mansfield Connect Update</b>
<b>Presenting authority / representative:</b>	Mansfield District Council Geoff George Regeneration Programmes and Projects Manager
<b>Report author and contact details:</b>	Geoff George ggeorge@mansfield.gov.uk

<b>Value of decision:</b> n/a	
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<b>Partners affected:</b> All	<b>Date of consultation:</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
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### **Purpose**

This report provides an update on the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and the proposed Mansfield Connect project, being developed for submission under a further round of the LUF.

### **Background**

The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) was initially announced at the 2020 Spending Review with further details announced in March 2021 with the release of the Prospectus. The LUF focuses on capital investment in local infrastructure, building on and being complementary to 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.

The LUF is enabled via a series of rounds, with Local Authorities able to submit a bid for every MP whose constituency lies wholly within their boundary, with the bid having the backing of the MP. Under round 1, 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.

The first round of funding closed on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and focused on the following themes:

- 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.

Within the competition, funding will be targeted towards places with the most significant need, taking into account the need for economic recovery and growth; for improved transport and connectivity and for regeneration. The results of the first round were announced in October 2021 and are referenced alongside the Prospectus at paragraph 4 below.

### **Current Situation**

The Board has previously received details of the proposed submission for the Mansfield Connect Project.

After Mansfield was ranked as a priority one area for funding, the Board will be aware that the capacity funding of £125,000 has now been received from MHCLG (now Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities – DLUHC) towards the development of a bid. This presumes that a second round of LUF will be made available and clarification is awaited on this and the associated timings.

In anticipation of Round 2, work has progressed on developing the assumed level of detail required for a submission, with a support from:

- Arc Partnership. Arc has undertaken discussions with potential tenants and partners, scoping out initial massing options for respective and total space requirements. This will be formulated into a fully designed and costed scheme to form the basis of any development.
- Partnering Regeneration Development Ltd (PRD). PRD has been appointed to support the development of a business case for the scheme and specifically to support the commercial, financial and delivery aspects, alongside a supportive financial appraisal model. They have also been appointed to lead on the development of a full bid for submission to the LUF.

Work has also been undertaken through the end user sub-group with potential co-location partners to understand their service and space requirements within the building to further inform the work being undertaken by Arc. Currently the scope of potential users / occupiers of the building includes:

- Mansfield District Council
- Department of Work & Pensions
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- West Notts College
- Nottingham Trent University
- Mansfield Council for Voluntary Services
- The NHS
- Private sector opportunities for integrated convenience shopping and possible residential element depending upon site capacity and funding.

Detailed discussions are taking place with all partners to review the needs as precisely as possible at this stage. It may be possible to secure some additional users as the modelling is progressed but a wider group of partners and service areas are also engaged to ensure the development of the business case reflects existing provision across the town. Ultimately, the operating model must reflect the market realities and sit within the financial scope. These details will continue to be worked upon as the project proposals are progressed.

Of particular significance, Mansfield District Council has secured a town centre site for the development of the project. Details will follow with a likely formal announcement in the new year.

## **Governance**

Mansfield District Council has established a Steering Group to guide the development of this important project for Mansfield Town Centre, sitting within the context of the Town Centre Masterplan, consultation for which formally concluded in late December 2021. This includes a users' group, chaired by Andrew Cropley, designed to secure commitment from respective partners for their own operational requirements.

As the timing and criteria for Round 2 of the LUF bid remain as yet unknown, every effort is being made to maximise the time currently available in anticipation of a call sometime in the new year and based on the criteria and approach set out under Round 1.

### **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 LUF Prospectus (Round 1, March 2021) – available [here](#).

4.2 Round 1 LUF Announcement (October 2021) – available [here](#).