

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 20 June 2022
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration

Report Title

Levelling Up Round 2 Bids

Summary

The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 2 was announced in the 2022 Spring Statement and is similar to the Round 1 scheme whereby it is designed to invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK. The £4.8 billion fund will support town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets.

The report sets out the three areas that are proposed to be put forward as bids for LUF Round 2.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive:

(i) Approves that three bids are submitted for LUF Round 2 as set out in section 2 of the report.

(ii) Delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration, to develop and submit three bids to the Levelling Up Round 2 Fund as set out in section 2 of the report.

(iii) Delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Place to accept grant offers the Council receives in the event any of the bids are successful.

(iv) Authorises the Director of Legal and Governance to finalise and enter into all legal agreements required to implement the above decisions.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Stephen James (Head of Growth, Communities and Housing)
Oliver Shimell (Inclusive Economy and Communities Manager)

Appendices

Appendix A – Watling Gate Architects briefing document and feasibility drawings
Appendix B – Draft Sale Public Realm and Movement Strategy Review

Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	<i>Supporting applications to the Levelling Up Round 2 Fund supports the Corporate Priorities of Reducing health inequalities, Supporting people out of poverty, Addressing our climate crisis.</i>
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	<i>Delivery of the projects, if successful, will support the growth ambitions articulated within the Paces for Everyone Plan and the GM Strategy. The projects will be delivered in the context of the GM 2040 Transport Strategy, GM Congestion Plan, and Made to Move walking and cycling plan to identify improvements tackling traffic congestion, promote sustainable modes of travel and better integrate transport and new developments.</i>
Financial	<i>The Council has received capacity funding for Round 2 of £125k and has used this funding to develop bids in preparation for the Round 2 scheme opening. The bids make reference to match funding and it is anticipated that this will be provided using budgets already approved by the Council, and including existing aligned partner funding.</i>
Legal Implications:	<i>It is noted that if the Council were to be successful with any of the bids that there would likely be a form of grant agreement that would require signing on the terms and conditions that the grant was being provided on.</i>
Equality/Diversity Implications	<i>None as a consequence of this report</i>
Sustainability Implications	<i>None as a consequence of this report</i>
Carbon Reduction	<i>Each of the proposed areas which are to be submitted as bids to the Levelling Up Fund will have elements which support the reduction of carbon as key elements.</i>
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	<i>Existing resources have been identified to support the overall delivery of the projects should the Council be successful in its bids although it is recognised that additional resources may be required to project manage a number of the schemes required as part of the projects or to provide specialist support.</i>
Risk Management Implications	<i>The delivery of the projects, if successful, will be supported by a risk plan setting out the key risks to delivery and proposed mitigation measures.</i>
Health & Wellbeing Implications	<i>Each of the proposed areas which are to be submitted as bids to the Levelling Up Fund will have elements of health and wellbeing as key components to the bids.</i>
Health and Safety Implications	<i>None as a consequence of this report.</i>

1.0 Background

- 1.1 LUF Round 2 was announced in the 2022 Spring Statement and is similar to the Round 1 scheme whereby it is designed to invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK. The £4.8 billion fund will support town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets. Due to the tight time constraints in submitting a bid for the first round of funding and the requirement for detailed information and Treasury Green book compliant costings; it was agreed that Trafford would not submit bids for the first round. However, being as Trafford has been designated as a Category 1 area in the Levelling Up Fund Index of Priority Places, the Council received capacity funding of £125k to develop bids for Round 2. The second round of the Fund focuses on the same three investment

themes as the first round: local transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas; town centre and high street regeneration; and support for maintaining and expanding the UK's world-leading portfolio of cultural and heritage assets.

- 1.2 The prospectus attached to LUF Round 2 sets out the government's guidelines for the Fund and states that it is open to projects that can demonstrate spend in 2022-23 and that all funding is to be spent by 31 March 2025; and by 2025-26 on an exceptional basis. The Fund will focus investment in smaller scale, local projects that require less than £20 million of funding. The closing date for bids for LUF Round 2 is noon on the 6 July 2022. Utilising the capacity funding received from government, three commissions are underway to provide the information necessary to submit bids for LUF Round 2 covering Partington Regeneration, Connecting Culture and Transforming Sale Town Centre.
- 1.3 Due to the bid submission timeframe, it is not possible to attach the bids as part of this report since they are in final review stage. However, section 2 below provides an overview of each proposed bid and their focus.

2.0 Proposed Bids for LUF Round 2

- 2.1 Three bids are being developed to meet government guidance and Corporate Priorities. In addition, the bids comply with the government guidance in that LA's can submit one bid for every MP whose constituency lies wholly within their boundary and bids can be supported by an MP where their constituency lies in more than one local authority boundary. Bids need to be in the form of HMT 'Green Book' compliant business cases, which will require clear and robust evidence of how each proposed investment has been fully option assessed and will deliver quantifiable and measurable economic, social and environmental benefits. This is a key area which the consultant commissions are focusing on.
- 2.2 The proposed three bids for LUF Round 2 are:

(i) Regenerating Partington

The focus for this project is to create a broad health and wellbeing offer that connects with the local community and provides a coherent collection of services that reflect the needs of local residents while complementing existing assets. An offer that delivers community led and owned programmes supporting health and wellbeing outcomes. This approach is aligned to Levelling Up outcomes but also equally aligned to Trafford's Corporate Priorities including reducing health inequalities and supporting people out of poverty, and addressing our climate crisis. It's also tightly aligned to Trafford's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, Trafford Moving, Trafford's Playing Pitch Strategy, and our independently written Leisure Investment Strategy known as a Strategic Outcomes Planning Model.

As part of the bid, indicative projects and actions are likely to include:

- Contributions towards the refurbishment of Partington Sports Village, creating a health and wellbeing hub that delivers community led and owned programmes supporting health and wellbeing outcomes with sustainability and climate agenda considered within design. Combining an outreach and centre based approach to connect local communities and

change behaviours and culture to better link the assets with the communities it's targeting.

- A focus on resurfacing the current 3g football pitch on Broadoak School / Partington Sports Village and providing an additional pitch – Identified as part of Trafford's Playing Pitch Strategy this would meet local and borough demand and bridge the gap in a lack of 3g pitches in the borough. Works would include resurfacing the current pitch as well as creating another full sized pitch.
- Cross Lane changing room refurbishment - The Cross Lane changing facility was originally considered as part of the Local Football Facility Plans (LFFP). However, when funding for the LFFP was reduced works were unable to proceed.
- Moss Lane Centre - To implement renovation and maintenance works to the centre to make it fit for purpose to enable Manchester Boys and Girls Club to run the community youth facility, and expand its operation to include services which would help local young people into sustainable employment. It would also aid in Moss Lane becoming a Duke of Edinburgh Award centre.
- In addition to the areas of focus above, it will be ensured that there is a strong link to the skills agenda to support the local community running through any bid made to the Levelling Up Fund.

The estimated bid amount for this project is currently in the region of c£13.5m to c£16m.

(ii) Connecting Culture – the spaces between the places

The focus of this bid is to link the cultural, arts, heritage and green networks that Trafford has; the historical parks that are the 'spine' of Trafford from the south with the ancient deer parks of Dunham Massey, through to the world's first industrial park in the north. From the libraries to an award winning Arts venue, and the restoration of a cultural asset which would provide a research, exhibition and community space for archives service. The bid will enhance and develop the cultural offer of the borough to benefit local residents and attract visitors, and promote active travel with associated health and wellbeing benefits.

The Connecting Culture bid has close links to the Levelling Up Investment Theme of Cultural investment which has a focus on maintaining, regenerating, or creatively repurposing existing cultural, creative, heritage and sporting assets, or creating new assets that serve those purposes including theatres, museums, galleries, production facilities, libraries, visitor attractions (and associated green spaces), sports and athletics facilities, heritage buildings and sites, and assets that support the visitor economy.

Key projects include:

- Restoration of Watling Gate within Newton Park which will become a dedicated space for Local Studies providing archive, research, exhibition and community space. In addition to bringing a listed building back into use, the dedicated space for Trafford Local Studies will provide much improved access for community groups, societies, residents and visitors to research and discover Trafford's rich heritage. The Architect's briefing document and feasibility drawings are attached as Appendix A.
- Improvements to the public areas within Sale Waterside to link Waterside (Arts Centre) and Sale Library to create an improved cultural hub in Sale. These improvements will create more opportunities for people to access art and culture as either participants and/or audience members, both of which provide wellbeing benefits. Additionally, there will be greater opportunities for skills development in a range of areas associated with exhibition and event production.
- Creation of a Trafford Heritage Trail connecting parks and cemeteries which includes a provisional list put forward as - Gorse Hill, Victoria, Longford, Worthington and Newton Parks, Walkden Gardens, Sale & Brooklands Cemetery, Stretford Cemetery, Longford Park (HLF Bid), Watling Gate, Urmston Cemetery, Davy Hulme Park, John Leigh Park, Denzell Gardens and Stamford Park. This will include improvements to all and the installation of interpretation boards providing heritage information and links to online exhibitions. The trail will complement other active travel schemes for the borough.

The estimated bid amount for this project is currently in the region of c£10m.

(iii) Transforming Sale Town Centre

The focus of this bid is to deliver comprehensive public realm and highways / active travel improvements building on the 2018 Sale Public Realm and Movement Strategy. The Strategy was reviewed in late 2021 following on from the Covid pandemic to ensure that the ambitions within the Strategy still remained as the highest priorities to the residents and businesses of Sale. In addition, as part of any Levelling Up Funding application, it is critical that the Council is able to demonstrate that a comprehensive approach has been taken to stakeholder engagement and that what is proposed as part of any bid has the support of the local community. Attached as Appendix B is the current Draft Sale Public Realm and Movement Strategy Review.

The Sale bid has close links to the Levelling Up Investment Theme of Regeneration and Town Centre Investment, which is described as 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, accessible community spaces into town and city centres. There is also a close link with the Transport Investment Theme.

Specific public realm improvements will be targeted at:

- School Road
- Town Hall Junction
- Northenden Road
- Waterside Plaza
- Sibson Road
- Springfield Road
- Ashfield Road
- Hayfield/Hereford Street

In addition, complementing the above public realm improvement initiatives with other key sites in the town i.e. Stanley Square, Sale Leisure Centre and Sale Magistrates Court are currently being reviewed subject to costs/funding bid limit as possible complementary activity to a Sale bid. The estimated bid amount for this project is currently in the region of c£17.5m to c£20m.

3.0 Match Funding

- 3.1 Within the guidance, local match funding of up to 10% is encouraged but there is no indication that it is an essential requirement. However, match funding will be fully taken into account as part of the current bid development process and actual match funding values are currently being assessed. For each proposed bid, there is potential match funding which includes finance from the Council through delivery of the current approved capital programme and funding through the private sector and other external funding bodies.
- 3.2 With regards to Regenerating Partington, there are a number of elements of the potential scheme around the leisure facilities that, if included, could attract a number of external funding opportunities. Early conversations have been had with these bodies making them aware of the potential planned scheme to gain early assurances that funds may be available. For Connecting Culture, there are already a number of schemes through the Council's Parks and Greenspaces capital programme where works are being undertaken that can be identified as match funding. There are resources currently committed to Watling Gate to ensure that the site is safe and secure which could be used to fund initial works as part of the wider bid. In addition, there is significant investment underway as part of Active Travel works through the borough, with works being undertaken to link elements of these elements to the potential route to be considered as part of the proposed scheme.
- 3.3 In terms of Transforming Sale Town Centre, finances are already assigned through the capital programme for improvements at Sale Leisure Centre as part of the council's approved Leisure Strategy. As part of the bid, consideration may also be given to putting forward improvements as part of the Sale Magistrates site.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 Through the development of the three bids that are intended to be submitted for the second round of the Levelling Up Fund, a range of engagement processes and approaches have been utilised to ensure there was stakeholder input into the schemes. It should be noted that evidence of stakeholder engagement will also be a factor that will be considered when the bids are assessed.

- 4.2 The bid focused on regenerating Partington has been informed by work undertaken on a Local Delivery Pilot which included consultation with key stakeholders around sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing and barriers to engagement. A consultation exercise was also held between the 18 April and the 23 May which was then supplemented through a borough wide public consultation exercise which has been programmed to run from the 23 May until the 17 June. The outcome of this consultation will help inform the LUF bid as well as Trafford Moving, the Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. In addition, a local stakeholder consultation exercise has taken place with key local groups such as the Parish Council, voluntary groups along with youth and sports providers. There are also plans to engage with the Positive Partington Group and a site visit has taken place with the Friends of Crosslane.
- 4.3 With regards Connecting Culture, initial consultation has taken place with the former Friends of Watling Gate on the 28 March and a meeting was held on 10 March for Members of the five surrounding Wards. Comments were broadly supportive and are being used to shape the bid. In addition, a public consultation period is planned for two weeks with users and stakeholders of Local Studies, Sale Library and Waterside. This will take place in the week commencing the 6 June both online using Citizen Space and in each location. Engagement is also planned with the relevant Friends of Parks groups in early June 2022.
- 4.4 In terms of Transforming Sale Town Centre, a public consultation process was undertaken to understand the current community concerns and issues, and to gauge support for the Strategy and its projects. The public consultation event took place in December 2021 and an on-line web site was also set up. Sale town centre ward members, and adjacent ward members, were also briefed and involved in the consultation. Over 180 responses were received.

5.0 MPs Role

- 5.1 Under the government guidance, MPs will play a key role in lending their support to individual bids. An MP will be able to demonstrate their support for a bid if it is wholly within their constituency. If a constituency crosses the administrative area of two local authorities, each local authority can submit a bid for that constituency. However it should be noted that MPs can provide formal priority support to only one bid, but can provide general support to one or more bids.
- 5.2 Each MP who covers the proposed bid areas has been contacted and updated on the three proposed bids and been offered a briefing. Each MP will be offered a further briefing and sent a letter of support to sign for the three bids. This will be issued following the June Executive.

6.0 Risk Considerations

- 6.1 In putting forward the bids there are a number of risks that have to be considered such as failing to develop the bids in a timely manner, insufficient consultation and the potential lack of match funding being available. These risks have been mitigated by commissioning consultants to develop the bids well in advance of the submission deadline, establishing internal groups to lead on each bid reporting to a strategic working group, early consultation to assist in developing the bids; and close liaison with Finance to identify match funding.

7.0 Other Options

7.1 The three proposed bids have been considered as key to meeting Corporate Priorities and local need, and in meeting the government’s themes and guidance for LUF Round 2. As a result of the good fit with the funding’s criteria and limited time available to develop the bids, other options have not been considered.

Reasons for Recommendation


The recommendations are aimed at securing funding to deliver key projects that meet the Corporate Priorities of the Council and if successful, will realise significant additional funding for the borough to benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

Key Decision (as defined in the Constitution): Yes

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

Finance Officer Clearance PC

Legal Officer Clearance TR

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR’S SIGNATURE (electronic)... 

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.