

Title: Levelling Up Fund Round 2 – Decision to Submit
Lead Officer: Chris Elliott – Chief Executive, Philip Clarke – Policy & Projects Manager, Martin O’Neill – Projects & Economic Development Business Manager, Mark Brightburn – Programme Co-ordinator
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Cooke
Wards of the District directly affected: Leamington Brunswick, Leamington Willes, Leamington Clarendon and Warwick Myton and Heathcote

Summary

This report seeks approval to agree to delegate authority for the Decision to Submit the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 when it is complete.

Recommendation

- (1) That Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Head of Development and the Portfolio Holders for Planning and Place, and Economy and Culture, to make the Decision to Submit the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 submission by the deadline of Wednesday 6th July 2022 as set out in paragraphs 1.2.1 to 1.2.7.
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1 Background/Information

1.1 This section sets out the background of the recommendation.

1.2 Recommendation

- 1.2.1 The Governments Levelling Up agenda is focused on reducing regional and local inequalities that unfairly hold back communities across the UK. The Levelling Up White Paper was published on the 2nd February 2022 and set out the simplified approaches to funding across the Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 1.2.2 Warwick District Council has already successfully secured funding via the Towns Fund in the form of the Future High Streets Fund to a total of £10M for improvements across Royal Leamington Spa’s town centre. The decision was taken not to submit to the Round 1 applications for the Levelling Up Fund in 2021 given that the fund is competitive and Leamington is a Tier 3 area (lowest priority) and so any projects submitted need to be very robust to counter this.
- 1.2.3 The Leamington Transformation Board was established in January 2022 and is now overseeing the production of a Transformation Framework for the town centre with the intention of co-ordinating projects to be ready to submit them for these Government funding opportunities. A review of current projects has identified two projects that are progressed enough and have enough supporting evidence to put forward for the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 application due in July 2022. The Leamington Transformation Board has recently been reviewing projects underway across the town centre in order to establish which projects

are progressed far enough to be able to meet the criteria for consideration in a Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid.

- 1.2.4 Two projects are sufficiently progressed and they are the Bath Street Area Improvements currently being progressed by Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) highways department using WDC Community Infrastructure Levy funds, and the Grand Union Canal Towpath Improvements being progressed by the Canal and River Trust (CRT).
- 1.2.5 Both these projects sit well under the Levelling Up Funds Transport theme and will deliver both connectivity improvements and air quality/environmental improvements in one of the more deprived areas of the town.
- 1.2.6 The timescale to prepare the bid are incredibly tight. WDC have commissioned the same support consultancy that assisted with the successful Future High Street Fund bid and work is underway at a pace, working closely with WCC colleagues and CRT to gather together all the required supporting information.
- 1.2.7 The team believe they can complete the submission in time and a delegation of the Decision to Submit will assist in approving the submission in time for the 6th July 2022 deadline.

2 Alternative Options available to Cabinet

- 2.1 Given the tight timescales, this delegation is the best way to ensure the Decision to Submit can be taken quickly and efficiently to support the imminent submission.

3 Consultation and Member's comments

- 3.1 There have been no comments made on this report.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no legal or human rights implications of the proposal.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 The Levelling Up Fund bid total is yet to be confirmed, but we expect it to be in the order of £10-12M, with a requirement of 10% match funding. Bids can be made up to £20M but advice and lessons learned from Round 1 suggest that Tier 3 areas are not successful at the full amount.

- 4.2.2 Assuming a bid in the order of £10M, £1M match funding will be required. WDC already have £3.7M of CIL funding allocated to the Bath Street Improvements between 2022-27. This will therefore cover the match funding requirement.

- 4.2.3 As the last of these three Levelling Up Government funds, WDC have a pre-allocation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund of £3,484,412 which needs an Investment Plan (for mainly revenue, not capital) preparing to submit by August 2022. This will be submitted for consideration by Cabinet in July.

4.3 Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The Levelling Up Fund supports a number of areas within the Warwick District Council Business Plan including People – Health & Communities.
- 4.3.2 The Creative Quarter, within which Bath Street lies, is a key initiative to support the local economy to provide high quality jobs and increase the prosperity of the town in line with the Business Strategy 2020-23.
- 4.3.3 The Council's Climate Emergency Action Programme is evidence of its

commitment to become a net zero carbon organisation by 2025 and to facilitate reducing the District's carbon emissions as close to zero by 2030. The improvements at Bath Street aim to reduce pollution and improve air quality in one of the worst polluted locations in the District.

4.4 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

4.4.1 The improvements at Bath Street will improve the environment locally by removing through traffic and supporting more sustainable travel options by bus, by bicycle or on foot. The resultant improved environment will then also support local businesses along the street to use the space more effectively and attract in more visitors and customers, improving the local economy.

4.5 Analysis of the effects on Equality

4.5.1 No effects on equality.

4.6 Data Protection

4.6.1 No data protection implications of the proposal.

4.7 Health and Wellbeing

4.7.1 Include a summary of the health and wellbeing implications of the proposal.

5 Risk Assessment

5.1 The projects contained within the Levelling Up Fund bid are not reliant on the funding from this source and so there are no risks associated with the bid in terms of other monies that might be reliant on this being secured.

6 Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation

6.1 The Levelling Up Fund is another important potential source of funding that can be deployed to support the overall Transformation Framework for Leamington's town centre.

Background papers:

None.

Supporting documents:

None.

Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with report

Committee / Date	25.05.2022	
Title of report	Levelling Up Fund Round 2 – Decision to Submit	
Officer / Councillor Approval *required	Date	Name
Ward Members(s)		
Portfolio Holder	11.05.22	
Financial Services *		
Legal Services (*SDC)		
Other Services		
Chief Executive(s)	11.05.22	
Head of Services(s)*	11.05.22	
Section 151 Officer	11.05.22	
Monitoring Officer	11.05.22	
SLT (WDC)	11.05.22	
Leadership Co-ordination Group (WDC)		
Other organisations		
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes Recommendation to: Cabinet	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	Yes	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	