

22nd June 2022

Agenda Item:3

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR INVESTMENT & GROWTH

COUNTY COUNCIL'S LEVELLING UP PROPOSAL

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the County's Levelling Up proposal and to seek authority to submit an application to the Levelling Up Fund.
2. This is a Key Decision because it will result in expenditure of £1 million or over and it will have significant effects on two or more electoral divisions.

Information

Funding Background

3. Announced at the Spending Review, the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) 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 funding is for capital investment and is organised via a series of rounds up to 2024/25. Further to the [Levelling Up White Paper](#) published on 2 February 2022, Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund was released on 23 March 2022.
4. Under the guidance for round 2 bids, County Councils can submit one transport-only proposal which must be for at least 90% transport (by value). We would be seeking the local MP's formal and priority support for this proposal.
5. Each local authority area has been given a priority ranking between one and three. The rating is based on governments new '[Index of Priority Places](#)', whereby Category 1 has the greatest priority and 3 is the least. The need for investment is based on the scope of the Fund's investment priorities and considers the needs for: economic recovery and growth (considering productivity, skills, and unemployment); improved transport connectivity (England only); and regeneration (considering commercial and dwelling vacancy rates) (England and Wales only). This would apply to the area in which the county council bid is focused on (which in this case is the Broxtowe constituency).

6. Authorities have from 31 May to 6 July to submit their applications. The full LUF Prospectus (Round 2, March 2022) is available [here](#). The LUF Round 1 successful bids announcement (October 2021) is available [here](#).

Policy background

7. This funding opportunity, if our application is successful, could support the work of the Council Plan in a number of ways:
- **ambition six** – making Nottinghamshire somewhere people love to live, work and visit by helping to facilitate the delivery of the Toton masterplan;
 - **ambition seven** – helping to attract investment in infrastructure, the economy and green growth by securing funding for the delivery of the Toton link road; and
 - **ambition eight** – improving transport connections by creating additional road links.
8. Furthermore, the opportunity to deliver part of the Council's Economic Transition Plan is also applicable. This scheme, if successful, would help to ensure the delivery of much needed homes and jobs in an identified priority area and improve the infrastructure network within this area.

Proposal

9. There were a number of criteria that any proposal would need to satisfy, these include a timetable by which works would need to have started and the total value of works. Given this to be the case it is proposed that a levelling up application is submitted for the Toton Link Road (see Appendix A) for up to the maximum value of £40m. A significant amount of work has already been completed on the proposal following approval by EDAM Committee on 27th July 2021.
10. This proposal will provide a new, multi-connected boulevard joining existing and planned new communities and unlocking vital opportunities for jobs, housing, and investment in the years to come. This will provide combined multi-modal transport connectivity - including active travel, bus, tram, and a future rail station.
11. The Toton Link Road represents the first step in our ambitions to enable three coordinated large-scale development areas via the East Midlands DevCo (EM Dev Co) programme. Alongside development around Ratcliffe-on-Soar and East Midlands Airport area, the Toton-Chetwynd corridor is part of a once-in-a-generation programme which will deliver benefits from community to economy level. With significant feasibility, planning and public consultation work already carried out, and support of key stakeholders, this proposal will fund a project that can be delivered to an accelerated timescale. It will deliver long-term value, generating economic benefits during construction, and opening land for new residential and commercial development.
12. The proposal will make a direct contribution to growth and levelling-up by enabling high-quality, sustainable development of homes and commercial space on a site which will benefit from multi-modal connectivity: close to the A52 and M1, directly connected to the NET tram network, and alongside the potential Network Rail station outlined in the Integrated Rail Plan. The Link Road will also include walking and cycling routes that can be well integrated into the adjacent developments.

13. The new link road would also help to relieve congestion by providing additional highway capacity and network resilience.
14. Toton Link Road has been designed to improve access and connectivity for all modes of transport, including a better interchange with the NET tram network. The major benefits it would deliver are:
- New highway opens up land for development, including sites at Toton and Chetwynd.
 - New highway infrastructure provides further network resilience and relief to congestion points at both Bardills roundabout and B6003 Toton Road.
 - Dedicated off-road cycleways and footways provide an attractive environment for walking and cycling.
 - Direct access to the Toton Park-and-Ride from the west for all transport modes, providing improved connectivity and more options for people to use the NET tram network. This will help to reduce traffic congestion on the surrounding road network.
 - Opportunity to provide new bus routes to better connect people with places.
 - Opportunity to extend the link road westwards to connect with the proposed Network Rail station at Toton.
15. Officers are therefore proposing to submit a levelling up bid to government for up to £40m to ensure the delivery of the Toton Link Road. As there is further consultation planned with key stakeholders to secure their formal support for our proposals and ongoing detailed work on the design and costings of the scheme, the application form is still under review. Therefore, Officers are seeking approval for the application to be submitted to the Levelling Up Fund. A further approval by the County Council would be necessary to deliver the scheme, if any funding bid was successful.

Other Options Considered

16. As already detailed in paragraph 4 of this report, County Councils can submit one transport only proposal. Therefore, following the announcement by Government, previously developed transport related investment schemes were appraised against; 1. the requirements of the Levelling Up Fund and 2. whether they had identified alternative sources of funding or delivery programmes. These schemes and the reasons they were not proposed for this bid (in brackets) are as follows;
- A1/A46/A52 (other delivery programme as a National Highways scheme)
 - Kelham Bridge (timetable uncertainty)
 - Toton Link Road
 - A614/A6097 corridors (other source of funding already being progressed)
 - Dukeries Line (other delivery programme)
 - Maid Marian Line (other delivery programme)

The Toton Link Road was the only option that met all of the funding criteria.

17. The do-nothing option has also been considered, but this would mean that the chance to secure up to £40m from this round of Levelling Up funding would be lost.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

18.If successful, this funding would ensure the delivery of a crucial piece of infrastructure to deliver a key priority regeneration site for the County Council. This would help unlock significant economic and social benefits and would support the Nottinghamshire Plan for a healthy, prosperous, and greener Nottinghamshire, in particular the delivery of ambitions six, seven and eight (as detailed previously) as well as delivering part of the Council's Economic Transition Plan.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19.This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

20.The recommendations themselves have no immediate financial impact, as the preparation for the Levelling Up bids will be covered through existing resources. If the bid is successful however, further County Council approvals will be required to accept the funding. The LUF guidance also states that local match funding contributions will be taken into account during the assessment. A local contribution of 10% or higher (local authority and/or third party) is encouraged. At the moment, it is expected that a contribution will be made by a third party including private sector stakeholders, such as developers.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management:

- 1) Approves the general support for the County's Levelling Up funding proposal for the Toton link road.
- 2) Approves the submission of an application for the Toton Link Road, as outlined in this report, to the Levelling Up Fund.

Matthew Neal
Service Director Investment & Growth

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Joelle Davies, Group Manager 0115 977 4857

Constitutional Comments (CEH 16/06/2022)

21. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management.

Financial Comments [RWK 01/06/2022]

22. The report proposes that a bid for up to £40 million of funding from the Levelling Up Fund, round 2, for the development of the Toton Link Road be prepared and submitted. The costs of preparing the bid will be met from existing financial resources and it is anticipated that any local contribution towards the cost of the scheme will be met by parties other than the County Council. Therefore, there are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report. If the bid is successful further reports will be presented seeking the necessary approvals to accept the bid and progress the project.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All in part, but specific the Broxtowe and Rushcliffe divisions.

Appendix A: Toton Link Road Draft Scheme

