

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE

LEVELLING UP FUND PROPOSALS

Purpose of the Report

1. To agree that Nottinghamshire County Council provides its support as the Local Highways Authority, to the Newark and Sherwood District Council Southern Link Road Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid.

Information

2. The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities. At the Spending Review, the UK Government committed an initial £4 billion for the LUF for England over the next four years (up to 2024-25). In England, Scotland and Wales, funding will be delivered through local authorities. The amount of funding each area receives will be determined on a competitive basis to ensure value for money.
3. The Fund will focus investment in projects that require up to £20m of funding. However, there is also scope for investing in larger high value transport projects, by exception. Bids above £20m and below £50m will be accepted for transport projects only, such as road schemes, and can be submitted by any bidding local authority. They will be subject to a more detailed business case process and will need to score highly overall. All bids should have the approval of the relevant authority responsible for delivering them.
4. In the first round of funding, Government will prioritise projects which are able to demonstrate investment or begin delivery on the ground in the 2021-22 financial year. There will be future opportunities to bid in subsequent rounds. Government expects all funding provided from the Fund to be spent by 31 March 2024, and, exceptionally, into 2024-25 for larger schemes.
5. The first round of the Fund will focus on three themes: smaller 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.

Local Planning Authorities

6. The Local Planning Authorities are also working on and looking to submit their own LUF bids. This report however focusses on Newark and Sherwood District Council's bid for transport investment in the Southern Link Road in Round 1, which this County Council has been working with Officers in the District Council to develop.
7. Newark and Sherwood District Council are looking to apply for up to £20m funding to complete the Newark Southern Link Road which will bring network benefits to the local highway in that area as well as the wider economic and regeneration benefits for Newark;

and so constitutes a smaller transport project that will make a genuine difference to the local area. Benefits will include allowing the growth at Newark to continue without putting further pressure on the already congested routes into the town centre, providing an invaluable release valve for traffic during the extended works period once the A46 works at Newark are underway by Highways England, and unlocking significant parcels of land for further redevelopment. An amount of funding has already been set aside for the delivery of the Link Road, however the bid to the LUF will provide additional gap funding to allow the final stage of the works to begin.

Next Steps

8. To apply for investment from the first round of the LUF, eligible local institutions must submit their bids to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by noon on Friday 18 June 2021. The Nottinghamshire County Council will be required as the Local Highway Authority to provide its support to accompany the bid from Newark and Sherwood District Council to Government.

Other Options Considered

9. None.

Reason for Recommendation

10. The County Council's support for the bid, as the relevant Highway Authority, is required and the proposal will support the County Council's own aspirations for transport improvements in this locality.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. 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.

Finance Implications

12. As part of the bid process the County Council, in partnership with Newark and Sherwood District Council, has committed £27,000 from the initiatives budget, as discussed and agreed with the Leader, to develop a fully worked up bid.

RECOMMENDATION

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Committee:

- 1) approves the £27,000 development contribution and,
- 2) as the relevant Highway Authority, confirms its formal support for the Newark and Sherwood District Council Southern Link Road LUF Bid.

Adrian Smith
Corporate Director, Place

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Matthew Neal, Service Director, Investment & Growth, Tel: 0115 9773822

Constitutional Comments (SJE – 08/06/2021)

13. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (RWK 02/06/2021)

14. The report proposes the County Council support the Newark and Sherwood District Council Southern Link Road LUF. Supporting this bid is estimated to cost up to £27,000 and will be met from within the existing revenue budget.

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.

- *Delivering Major Programmes of Work and Bids for Funding – Place Department*, Report to Policy Committee, 17th March 2021, Agenda Item 6
- *The UK Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Funds*, Report to Policy Committee, 21st April 2021, Agenda Item 5

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All