

22nd February 2021



To Members of the Regeneration Committee

You are hereby summoned to a virtual meeting of the Committee to be held on **Thursday, 29th April 2021** at **10am** to conduct the following business.



Helen Bojaniwska
Town Clerk

The meeting will be held via the Zoom meeting platform.

To attend the meeting please follow this [meeting link](#) or use ID **829 4176 2826** – password **263303**.

For more information about attending Council meeting via Zoom please refer to the [guidance on our website](#).

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive declarations of interest
3. To consider requests for dispensations
4. To receive questions from the public
5. To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Regeneration Committee on 11th February 2021, previously circulated
6. To receive a budget report to end March 2021
7. To receive the Project Officer's report (for information only)
8. To receive an update on the Street Spaces project
9. To receive a verbal report on the development of Stroud District Council's Economic Development Strategy
10. To discuss the "Levelling Up" fund
11. To discuss the "Welcome Back" fund

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith, marital status and disability); Crime and Disorder (Section 17); Health and Safety; and Human Rights.

Regeneration Committee Budget report to end March 2021

Expenditure			
Town Centre/Regeneration	Budget	Spent	Balance
Christmas lights erect	8,000	6,890	1,110
Town Centre Project/cleanliness (Note 1)	4,500	10,512	-6,012
NDP projects (Note 2)	89,500	18,093	71,407
Equipment Maintenance	630	60	570
Wallbridge Project	0	331	-331
Site Materials	1,200		1,200
Legal Expenses	0	0	0
Regeneration Committee Total	103,830	35,886	66,834

Income			
Town Centre/Regeneration	Budget	Received	Balance
Community Infrastructure Levy	500		500
Grants	17,000	750	16,250
Use of reserves	72,000	-	72,000
Precept	14,330	14,330	-
Grant -Cycling project	-	300	-300
Total	103,830	15,380	88,450

Notes

1 includes traffic management for London Road closure to be recharged to Stroud District Council

2 funded from use of reserve so will carry forward to new financial year

Project Officer's report for Regeneration Committee

29/4/2021

NDP Review Update

The application for further funding from Locality is progressing. Publication of further guidance for 2021/2022 applications is awaited before submitting the application.

Commonplace consultation platform

The Commonplace platform is currently under development and will incorporate consultation elements for the Street Spaces project. Alternative, non-digital approaches will also be made available to enable those unable to access or unfamiliar with on-line consultation to take part.

Air quality monitoring

The town council has a complete set of data for 2020. The Defra adjustment bias has been applied and the data corrected to reflect this. This shows that in general the figures for nitrogen oxides in the town centre are low when compared to the average. Clearly lockdowns through 2020 impacted upon the levels and the continued monitoring throughout 2021 will allow for comparison. In November 2020 Members agreed to engage an environmental consultant to analyse and write an accessible report on the data. A brief for this work will now be developed.

Signage Project – Phase 1 Welcome and arrival signage

Work is progressing on the content of the maps for the welcome signage. Given no further issues, it is anticipated that manufacture and installation will commence in May.

Ally Rood
Project Officer
21st April 2021

Levelling up fund

AUTHOR

Project Officer and Town Clerk

CONSULTEES

Stroud District Council

FOR MEETING

Regeneration Committee 29/4/2021

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that an offer is made to Stroud District Council to commit staff time and funding to the development of a bid.

REPORT

Overview

The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) makes £4 billion available in England up to 2024-2025 for capital investment in local infrastructure projects. It is a competitive fund with first round bids open until 18th June 2021. Funding decisions will be announced autumn 2021. For this first round the focus is on the following types of projects - smaller transport; town centre and high street regeneration; and support for maintaining and expanding cultural and heritage assets. Bids able to begin delivery in the current financial year will be prioritized. Details on how the LUF will operate from 2022-23 onwards will be set out later this year.

Local MPs have a significant role in the process as they are required to provide formal written support to the one bid they see as a priority. Engagement with the MP is paramount.

Funding is delivered through the local authority (LA), SDC. As the highway authority GCC may submit their own bid for transport projects. If SDC submit transport bids, GCC need to approve it. Individual, package or joint bids are possible.

Type of bid	Description	Amount
Individual	Submission made up of 1 project from 1 bidding entity/ local authority	Up to £20m, or £50m for larger transport projects if supported by GCC
Package	Submission made up of 2 or 3 projects from 1 bidding entity/ local authority	
Joint	Submission made up of 1 project or a package of up to 3 projects by more than 1 bidding entity or local authority	Each local authority max £20m (e.g. 3x authorities = £60m)

LAs have been assigned to either Category 1 or 2. Category 1 authorities will usually be given priority. SDC is in Category 2 (Category 1 local authorities in Gloucestershire are Forest of Dean and Gloucester City).

LAs can only have one successful bid for each of their allocated number of bids over the lifecycle of the LUF. LAs should consider whether first round bids reflect their local priorities, or if they should wait until later rounds to have more time to consider/develop their proposals.

Implications for Stroud

There is potential for Stroud to benefit from the LUF. Any bid would need to be done in conjunction with SDC or by GCC (if a transport project) and would require a collaborative, joined-up approach.

The types of projects the first round is focusing on align with multiple areas of interest relating to the town centre and access to it.

Potential elements of a Stroud town bid

A considerable amount of work and research has already been done on projects which could be further developed for inclusion in a bid. Preliminary design work and community engagement has been completed but none of these projects could currently be considered to be shovel-ready:

- the station masterplan – currently at concept stage – requires technical work and input from Network Rail
- previous bid to Dept for Transport for lifts at Stroud Station
- proposals and research submitted to the High Streets Fund relating to: public realm improvements, development of housing above shops and improvements to shopfronts
- landscaping of Wallbridge (preliminary sketch available)
- research on active travel needs by Stroud Active
- the Golden Valley Route inspiration study
- Gloucestershire Highways research on walking and cycling routes
- SDC funding for cycle lanes on Cainscross Road

Many of these projects link well to SDC's emerging canal corridor strategy. There are also potential connections to development sites identified in SDC's application for One Public Estate funding, for which a decision is awaited.

Other projects currently in progress or development include:

- Stroud Street Spaces project – seeking opportunities to improve the town centre for walking and cycling
- Dransfield Properties incubation office space.

Another opportunity which could be developed is the potential for community bid for Imperial Hotel, to bring back into use much needed hotel accommodation to

support tourism. Refurbishment of the property, including carbon reduction measures, could provide training and employment opportunities both during refit and beyond through potential links to local training providers.

Timing of a bid

There are a number of arguments against submitting a first round bid given the tight timescales involved and the requirement to begin delivery in the current financial year. There will also be competition from other districts in Gloucestershire.

Conversely delaying to the next round may mean missing out on funding should the government decide to reassign funding away from the LUF.

Discussions are ongoing at Stroud District Council about the timing of a bid.

Process and resourcing for development of a bid

As previously mentioned only SDC and/or GCC can submit a bid, but there is scope to assemble a team to support its development (as previously used for the Future High Streets Fund).

Potential participants could include: Dransfield Properties, Stroud Town Council, Stroud Chamber, GFirst LEP, SGS College.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has the General Power of Competence which is “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” as long as they do not break other laws. This power allows the Council to fund projects to improve the environment in the town centre.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Funds are available in the NDP Projects reserve which could be made available for additional staff resource or technical research to support a bid.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Any projects which improve the environment for walking and cycling have potential benefits for people with disabilities. Lifts at the station would be a significant improvement for rail travellers who need step free access.

CO2 IMPLICATIONS

Any elements of the bid which promote walking, cycling or use of public transport have the potential to reduce carbon emissions from private vehicle use. Any building projects or refurbishments could include measures to reduce the use of fossil fuels for heating and to introduce energy generation capability, e.g. solar pvs.

Welcome Back Fund

Overview

In March 2021 the government announced the Welcome Back Fund. The £56m fund will allow local authorities in England to put in place additional measures to create and promote a safe environment for local trade and tourism, particularly in high streets as their economies reopen. Due to the significant impact Covid-19 has had on local economies, local authorities can also use the fund to develop plans for responding to these impacts, e.g. considering how other funding streams could help address such challenges in the future.

The funding can also be used by councils to:

- Boost the look and feel of their high streets by investing in street planting, parks, green spaces and seating areas to make high streets as beautiful and welcoming as possible
- Run publicity campaigns and prepare to hold events like street markets and festivals to support local businesses
- Install signage and floor markings to encourage social distancing and safety
- Improve high streets and town centres by planting flowers or removing graffiti

Local authorities are expected to engage with stakeholders including local businesses, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Destination Management Organisations (DMO), town and parish councils. Where appropriate they are also encouraged to enter into suitable delivery partnership arrangements with town and parish councils to improve delivery outcomes for communities and high streets.

Stroud District Council has been allocated £106,463.

Activities covered by the Fund

1. Support to develop an action plan for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen their local economies.
2. Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.
3. Business-facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.
4. Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.
5. Support to promote a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy. Support local authorities to develop plans for responding to the mediumterm impact of Covid-19 including trialling new ideas particularly where these relate to the High Street.

Activities not covered by the Fund

- i. Activity that provides no additionality e.g. if an existing communications officer, funding cannot be used to subsidise their salary, but it can support overtime of existing staff or a new temporary role to support the implementation.
- ii. Capital expenditure – fund revenue only projects and will not fund permanent changes
- iii. Grants to businesses – funding cannot provide direct financial support to businesses

Full guidance details [Welcome Back Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/welcome-back-fund)