

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Executive on 11th September 2023

Scrutiny Response to Outcome of Levelling Up Fund Round 2 Application

Report of the Chair of Local Growth Scrutiny Committee

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| Classification | This report is Public |
| Contact Officer | Joanne Wilson, Scrutiny & Elections Officer |

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To present recommendations to Executive from Local Growth Scrutiny Committee as a result of the outcome of the Round 2 Levelling Up Fund bid.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 At their Committee meeting on 27th June 2023, Local Growth Scrutiny Committee received an update on the outcome of the Round 2 Levelling Up Fund bid.
- 1.2 Officers highlighted to Members the key findings of the review body and the strengths and weaknesses of the bid.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 Feedback to Scrutiny Committee on the bid acknowledged that the gap in match funding, 8% rather than 10%, had been a factor in failure of the bid. The Council were not able to commit any financial resource to the application and was only in a position to contribute its UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) allocation, land and buildings, and match funding from Old Bolsover Town Council. While DLUHC encouraged bids to include a local financial contribution of at least 10% of total costs, this could not be met.
- 2.2 Officers also noted that due to the area not qualifying for capacity funding, the bid was not as detailed as other areas, and this had also limited the resource available for local consultation. This was highlighted in the feedback:

“There were other risks where it would have been helpful to have seen more work completed to demonstrate that the programme was truly deliverable. Such works could have included more advanced designs, a plan for purchasing the shop, pre-application advice - especially important given the potential impact on the conservation area, more detailed costs, support

from shop owners, and the preparation of a business plan for project 1. Without these, there was little confidence in the deliverability of the project within the time allowed for the LUF programme.”

- 2.3 As a result of the feedback, the Chair suggested that an additional recommendation to those contained in the report (attached at appendix 1) – that an internal group be formed to monitor funding streams and ensure the Council was best placed to act quickly as they arose. Members agreed that the group should include Executive Members, Scrutiny Members, Development team and Leader’s Executive & Partnerships team and possibly external partners too.
- 2.4 The Business Growth Manager noted that moving forward Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd. would lead on formulating funding applications for all economic funding with the Leader’s Executive and Partnerships Team supporting community led funding. Funding streams currently being delivered in the area would feature as part of Business Growth Strategy updates going forward.
- 2.5 Scrutiny Members note the Council had only contributed £14,000 to the overall project that was costed at just over £15m and queried whether a decision for the Council to contribute more should have been considered. The officer noted that due to time constraints when completing the bid, it had not been possible to secure confirmation of additional funds. They acknowledged this was a weakness and had the Council been in a position to obtain the vacant buildings identified this would have provided a much higher match figure and enabled more detailed plans to be progressed. Without ownership of the full site identified the bid required the LUF monies to progress further.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 Members conclude from the information presented that while the Development team is committed to exploring funding opportunities, which involves consultation with other service areas, there is insufficient resource to enable the Council to submit bids of the quality expected.
- 3.2 The creation of the group would enable a more coordinated approach.
- 3.3 The allocation of additional financial resource to support future calls for grant funding, as and when requested by officers, would enable the Council to develop bids of a higher quality ensuring maximum opportunity for securing investment.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Executive could choose not to endorse the recommendations, where they feel the course of action recommended is beyond the delivery capacity of the Authority.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the creation of an internal group including representatives from Scrutiny, Leader's Executive and Partnership Team, Executive and Dragonfly to identify, action and jointly write bids for future opportunities available via national and regional funding streams be recommended to Executive.
2. Executive consider the allocation of additional financial resource to support future calls for grant funding both for Levelling Up Fund and other calls for funding to ensure the maximum investment for the District can be captured.

Approved by Councillor Tom Kirkham, Chair of Local Growth Scrutiny Committee

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details: There are no cost implications to the internal working group and it is hoped that the operation of such a group would lead to the Council securing additional external funding. Improved coordination across services should also lead to decreased risk of bids failing.

Any future bids for grant funding would require submission of reports and approval by Executive/Council, including identification of any additional resource required to complete the bid process.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details: The internal working group would enable improved communications and a coordinated response to funding opportunities – it would have no legal status or implication, or decision-making powers. All proposals would still go forward to Executive/Council for approval.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details: While the creation of the group is not directly linked to meeting the carbon neutral target, it may ensure outcomes in support of the carbon neutral target within future funding bids.

Staffing: Yes No

Details: This could be accommodated within existing staffing structures.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

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| <p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p> | No |
| <p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p> | No |

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| <p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p> | All wards |
| <p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p> | Details: |

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| <p>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.</p> |
| <p>Economy</p> |

| DOCUMENT INFORMATION | |
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| Appendix No | Title |
| 1 | 8. Levelling Up Report June 2003 |
| 2 | 8.1 Appendix 1 – Bolsover Town Proposal Map |
| 3 | Minute Extract LGSC 27 th June 2023 |

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| <p>Background Papers</p> |
| <p><i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).</i></p> |
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