

# Item: 15

**Policy and Resources Committee: 22 June 2021.**

**UK Government Levelling Up Fund – Strategy and Resources.**

**Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

To provide an update on the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund and consider a proposed strategy for submission of future applications, together with the human resources required to support development of bids to the Fund.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is invited to note:

### **2.1.**

That the UK Government has launched a Levelling Up Fund of £4.8 billion to support infrastructure and transportation projects across the UK.

### **2.2.**

That councils are the lead authorities to apply to the Levelling Up Fund, with Orkney having eligibility to submit up to two bids, one for each of the infrastructure and transportation elements of funding.

### **2.3.**

That councils can be successful in only one bid for each category during the four year lifetime of the Levelling Up Fund.

### **2.4.**

That there are to be a number of rounds of funding bids to be invited by the UK Government, with the first round closing on 18 June 2021, and a further round anticipated later in 2021, with decisions in time for projects to commence at the start of financial year 2022/23.

### **2.5.**

That the UK Government will provide capacity funding of £125,000 to the Council, which can be utilised to support development of bids to the Levelling Up Fund, including staff resource.

## **2.6.**

That, in order to ensure appropriate governance, and the highest quality and most beneficial projects are identified, it is proposed that the Council should not submit bids for the first phase of the Levelling Up Fund, which has a closing date of 18 June 2021.

## **2.7.**

The proposal that a temporary post of Projects and Funding Officer be established, to be funded from the capacity funding of £125,000 to be provided by the UK Government, in order to lead on the preparation of bids to the Levelling Up Fund, with the target for that work to be submission of bids to the anticipated late 2021/early 2022 round of funding.

**It is recommended:**

## **2.8.**

That the Council should not submit a bid to the first round of applications to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund, which are due for submission by 18 June 2021.

## **2.9.**

That a temporary post of Projects and Funding Officer, G8, be established, for a period of up to 18 months, to be funded from the capacity funding to be provided by the UK Government, in order to lead in the preparation of bids to the Levelling Up Fund, with the target for that work to be submission of bids to the next round of funding, expected to be late 2021 or early 2022.

## **2.10.**

That the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure should submit a report, to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 23 November 2021, setting out draft project options, proposed funding options for the minimum 10% contribution to project costs and a proposed stakeholder engagement plan.

## **3. Background**

### **3.1.**

A new UK Government Levelling Up Fund has been established. This Fund was first introduced as a concept as part of the Chancellor's Spending Review announcements in November 2020, with detailed guidance only emerging in March 2021 and still being updated during May 2021.

### **3.2.**

The Government states the purpose of the Fund as being to support investment in places where it can make the biggest difference to everyday life, including ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and coastal communities. The Fund establishes priority places across the UK based on various economic criteria. Unfortunately, Orkney is one of seven Scottish local authorities which are in the lowest group of

three priority categories. However, the UK Government has confirmed that bids can still be submitted from all areas and that “the best bids” will prevail through the process.

### **3.3.**

The Fund will run for four years with a budget of £4.2 billion of which at least 9% will go to Scotland. The funding is intended for local transport, regeneration of town centres and high streets, and cultural investment. Every local authority has the right to submit at least one bid of up to £20 million, with additional provision for transport bids to be submitted for £20 million or (by exception) up to £50 million.

### **3.4.**

During the period 2021-24, there is a limit of one successful bid per local authority area or per UK Parliamentary constituency under one of three investment themes:

- Smaller transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas.
- Town centre and high street regeneration.
- Support for maintaining and expanding cultural and heritage assets.

### **3.5.**

In addition, all unitary authorities in Scotland are able to submit one additional bid which must be for transport.

### **3.6.**

Local authorities can only have one successful bid for each of their allocated number of bids over the lifecycle of the Fund. There must be a minimum 10% local cash contribution (local authority or other public/private sector funded) towards total costs expected. The minimum 10% must be a financial contribution and cannot be in-kind funding. The deadline for the submission of bids to the first round is 18 June 2021. Any project applying by the June deadline is expected to have gone through any necessary consultation process and be shovel ready and able to begin spending during the current financial year. Further bidding rounds are anticipated potentially late in 2021 and certainly by early 2022.

### **3.7.**

Discussions with senior UK Government civil servants have emphasised the importance of the “quality” bids being submitted. They have stated clearly that the first phase deadline should not be considered a prime target and that it is more important for areas to ensure high quality well constructed and meaningful bids are developed than a rush to the first phase deadline in June. This is considered important in the context of the fact that authorities will only be successful in one bid for each allocation (Orkney will have a transport and an infrastructure opportunity). It is therefore considered essential that the two bids which are submitted for Orkney are considered to represent the highest impact/highest chance of success options for this Fund.

## **4. Orkney Project Development Resources**

### **4.1.**

As noted in section 3, it is understood that Orkney will have the opportunity to submit two bids – one transport and one other infrastructure bid over the four year lifetime of the fund. Both bids could be up to £20 million in value, and there may be the opportunity to promote the exceptional requirements of Orkney's lifeline transport needs as qualifying for exceptional allocation of a package of investment of up to £50 million.

### **4.2.**

The UK Government has been very clear that the success of bids will be dependent on the "quality" of the case presented. In this regard they are to establish capacity funding of £125,000 to each local authority to support bid preparation. This funding will not be paid until after June 2021.

### **4.3.**

There are a number of project opportunities which the Council could consider promoting through the Fund. These could include regeneration site development, ports and harbour infrastructure and lifeline transport proposals (ferries and airfield terminals). Given that only one application for each category of application can be successful over the lifetime of the Fund, it is critical to ensure that the best projects are identified, and that there is sufficient governance behind decisions to select particular developments. To be successful, it is clear that each proposal will have to be developed to a high level of business case evidence and pass significant scrutiny – particularly in the context of Orkney not being identified within one of the highest priority category area groups across the UK.

### **4.4.**

Based on these factors it is not recommended that the Council submits a proposal for the phase 1, June 2021 deadline. Rather instead, it is proposed to establish a temporary dedicated project officer resource for a period of up to 18 months, utilising the £125,000 capacity funding that the UK Government is to provide. Key tasks for that officer would be business case development, stakeholder engagement and ensuring appropriate Council governance during 2021.

### **4.5.**

The target should be to submit an infrastructure and a transport bid, both totalling at least the £20 million funding window, with the potential for the lifeline transport bid to total up to £50 million. Development of the bids, in particular the transport bid, could also include engagement with Shetland and other Highlands and Islands authorities where there are shared lifeline transportation infrastructure requirements.

#### **4.6.**

It is proposed that a report is submitted to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee in November 2021, outlining progress with the recruitment of a project officer and, if there has been sufficient time for the officer to develop proposals, present project options, funding options for the required minimum 10% local authority or other public/private sector contributions and a consultation and stakeholder engagement process.

#### **4.7.**

The target for this work will be to be ready to submit formal proposals to a future round of the UK Government Levelling Up Fund, currently expected to take place late 2021/early 2022, with projects to start for the beginning of financial year 2022/23.

#### **4.8.**

In parallel to the Levelling Up Fund application process, work will also be ongoing to engage with the UK Government regarding the categorisation of Orkney, noted at section 3.2 above. Key to this will be to challenge the measures of deprivation and need which have been applied to the categorisation, and Islands Impact Assessment considerations.

### **5. Human Resource Implications**

The report recommends that a temporary post of Projects and Funding Officer is established. A Job Description has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 1. The post has been evaluated at G8, which has a salary range of £29,857 to £32,850, including Distant Islands Allowance. Recruitment to the post would be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Policy on Recruitment and Selection.

### **6. Corporate Governance**

This report relates to the Council's response to new funding opportunities from the UK Government which in the main arise from the recent BREXIT process. Efforts to secure funding and progress development projects for both infrastructure and transportation are considered to be in line with the Council Plan priorities.

### **7. Financial Implications**

#### **7.1.**

The Levelling Up Fund has the potential to deliver two sizeable grant awards to the Council although success with Council applications is not guaranteed. The scale of awards possible is detailed in section 3.3 above.

## **7.2.**

The report highlights that the UK Government will provide capacity funding of £125,000 to the Council, which can be utilised to support development of bids to the Levelling Up Fund, including staff resource with a proposal to establish a temporary post of Projects and Funding Officer at G8 for a period of up to 18 months to develop the Council's bids to the Fund.

## **7.3.**

The grade for a temporary post has been evaluated at G8 with an annual cost of between £38,000 at the bottom point on G8 and £42,000 at the top of G8, inclusive of employer on costs. The maximum employment costs for an 18-month appointment would therefore be approximately £63,000 and could be accommodated within the capacity funding.

## **8. Legal Aspects**

There are no significant legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

## **9. Contact Officers**

Gavin Barr, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, Email [gavin.barr@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.barr@orkney.gov.uk)

Roddy Mackay, Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services, Email [roddy.mackay@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:roddy.mackay@orkney.gov.uk)

Jackie Thomson, Development and Regeneration Manager, Email [jackie.thomson@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.thomson@orkney.gov.uk)

Stuart Allison, Economic Development Manager, Email [stuart.allison@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.allison@orkney.gov.uk)

## **10. Appendix**

Appendix 1 – Draft Job Description – Projects and Funding Officer.



|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>1. Service</b>                  | Development and Infrastructure                      |
| <b>2. Area</b>                     | Planning, Development & Regulatory Services (D&R)   |
| <b>3. Job Title</b>                | Projects and Funding Officer                        |
| <b>4. Location</b>                 | School Place, Kirkwall                              |
| <b>5. Reporting To</b>             | Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services |
| <b>6. Grade</b>                    | G8  |
| <b>7. Job Evaluation Reference</b> | A5243   |
| <b>8. Competency Band</b>          | B1  |

#### **9. Job Purpose**

To assist in the delivery of Council-led and inward investment projects and oversee the delivery and management of third-party projects funded by the Council or by funds that the Council is responsible for.

#### **10. Job Specific Duties and Responsibilities**

Initiation and development of appropriate development and regeneration projects.

Engagement with potential investors and developers and exploring investment opportunities.

Developing evidenced-based submissions to present in support of Council bids to government for grant support towards projects and infrastructure, which can extend to projects or schemes valued at several million pounds.

Developing policy submissions, conducting socio-economic research, and leading consultation responses to put forward the economic case the Council to lobby for funding from UK and Scottish Government Structural & Investment funds, for example from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to support the Orkney economy and to replace previous European Structural and Investment Funds

Co-ordinating surveys/feasibility studies or other support required to progress projects.

Identifying and pursuing all potential sources of project funding available to Orkney from a range of external funders.

Assisting and advising senior management and third parties with applications for funding from UK Government and Scottish Government programmes.

Leading applications and business case preparation to secure funding for a range of strategic projects across the Council..

Ensuring that third parties funded by or via the Council comply with all conditions of funding.

Preparing and delivering project presentations to Senior Management Team, the Council, the public, and potential funders and investors, as applicable.

Project post-evaluation and presenting evaluations to Council Committees.

Ensuring that funded projects are progressed and delivered timeously, within budget, and in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and all applicable grant conditions.

To liaise with grant funders and project managers to ensure that grants are appropriately drawn down and that the necessary evidence of expenditure is complete.

The preparation and presentation of reports to senior managers and relevant committees as may be required.

To perform any other duties and responsibilities as may be directed to help ensure that projects deliver against the Council's strategic priorities and objectives.

The post may involve travel out with the mainland of Orkney, which could include overnight stays in the Isles and on Mainland UK. You may, on occasion, be required to work at times out with normal office hours.

## **11. General Duties and Responsibilities**

### **Working Environment**

The post-holder will normally be based at the School Place offices although some homeworking may be possible.

### **Communication**

The post-holder will be expected to communicate effectively with other Council employees, Senior Managers, including Executive Directors and the Chief Executive, relevant Consultees, Councillors, External and Partner Organisations, parliamentarians, and Government Officers.

### **Responsibility for Employees**

No direct responsibility for other employees.

### **Financial Resources**

The post-holder will not be a budget holder for the Council but will be responsible for ensuring that grant-funded projects are delivered in accordance with Financial Regulations, that all applicable grant terms and conditions are met, and that any grant funds are appropriately claimed from external funders and disbursed.

### **Information Systems**

The post-holder will be required to be competent in the use of a range of information systems and software applications.

## **12. Corporate Responsibilities**

As an employee of Orkney Islands Council, the postholder is required to:-

Observe the Council's policies regarding the data protection and confidentiality of information.

Observe the Council's Health and Safety and Risk Management policies

Be aware and adhere to the Council's policy on Equal opportunities and Diversity.

Undertake any training as necessary to carry out the duties of the post.

Participate in the Employee Review and Development Scheme as appropriate.

Undertake any other work as required up to and commensurate with the grade for the post.

The post holder may be called upon to support the response required to an emergency in line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

**13. Criminal Records Checks - please select the relevant option(s)**

- This post does not require a check on criminal conviction history
- Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2015 you are required to disclose all criminal convictions from the 'offences which must always be disclosed' list and non-spent convictions from the 'offences which are to be disclosed subject to rules' list.
- This post requires a satisfactory Basic Police Act Disclosure check.
- This post requires a satisfactory Standard Police Act Disclosure check.
- This post requires a satisfactory Enhanced Police Act Disclosure check.
- This post requires PVG Scheme membership in respect of regulated work with Children.
- This post requires PVG Scheme membership in respect of regulated work with Adults.

**14. Significant/Regular demands associated with the Role**

| Task  | Relevant<br>(please tick) ✓ | Task                                       | Relevant<br>(please tick) ✓ |
|---|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Driving (Car/Van)                                 |                             | Exposure to Excessive noise                |                             |
| Driving (HGV/PCV)                                 |                             | Use of vibrating tools                     |                             |
| Display screen use                                | ✓                           | Contact with skin irritants                |                             |
| Food handling                                     |                             | Contact with lung irritants                |                             |
| Lone working                                      |                             | Work involving strenuous effort            |                             |
| Shift working                                     |                             | Working at height                          |                             |
| Night working                                     |                             | Working in static and/or awkward positions |                             |
| Working with people requiring physical assistance |                             | Working in confined spaces                 |                             |
| Working with people with challenging behaviour    |                             | Sea going post                             |                             |
| Working with vulnerable adults                    |                             | Wearing breathing apparatus                |                             |
| Working with children                             |                             | Working near traffic                       |                             |
| Administration of prescribed medication           |                             | Other (please specify)                     |                             |

**15. Politically Restricted Post**Yes  No 

This post is classed as a politically restricted post under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

**16. Contractually Required Professional Registration**

Holding, maintaining, and evidencing as requested registration with the identified professional body/organisation is a contractual requirement of working in this post. The specific level of registration required to be held is specified in the Person Specification under Qualification/Attainments.

- General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
- Scottish Social Services Council\* (SSSC) \* or other relevant professional accepted by the SSSC.
- The Law Society of Scotland
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Unsocial and Other working arrangements relevant to this post**

The working pattern for this post requires that contractually you are required:

- To work on a rota that requires regular 5 day over 7 working including weekends for which you will be paid 10% Unsocial Hours Allowance.
- To work on a rota that requires regular 5 day over 7 working including weekend and nights for which you will be paid 15% Unsocial Hours Allowance.
- To work all contracted hour at weekends, for which you will be paid a 25% Unsocial Hours Allowance.
- To work all contacted hours during the night, for which you will be paid a 33% Unsocial Hours Allowance.
- To participate in a rota of Sleep-In cover at your place of work, for which you can claim sleep over allowance.
- To participate in a standby duty rota, for which you can claim standby allowance.
- To work additional hours depending on the exigencies of the services.

**18. Agreement of Job Description (digital electronic signatures only)**

Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Human Resources: \_\_\_\_\_

**19. Employee Acceptance of Job Description**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

| <b>Service:</b> Development & Infrastructure              |   | <b>Area:</b> Development & Regeneration |                                    |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Post Title:</b> Strategic Projects and Funding Officer |   |   |                                    |
| <b>Factor</b>   | <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Essential or Desirable</b>           | <b>How Assessed</b>                |
| <b>Knowledge and Experience</b>                           | Experience of project initiation and development.   | Essential                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | Experienced in the appraisal and evaluation of capital and revenue projects.  | Essential                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | Experienced in identifying and securing project funding from a range of sources.  | Essential                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | An understanding of the social and economic conditions experienced by remote rural communities.   | Essential                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | IT literate – fully conversant with Microsoft packages including Outlook, Excel, and Word.  | Essential                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | Knowledge of Government economic development and industrial strategies.   | Essential                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | Experience in the application of the Five Case Model for business cases.  | Desirable                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | Experience of using project management systems.   | Desirable                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | Working knowledge of planning legislation and procedures.   | Desirable                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
|   | Experience of contract management.  | Desirable                               | Application Form and /or Interview |
| <b>Qualifications / Attainments</b>                       | Qualified at SCQF level 9 i.e., degree in a relevant subject area.  | Essential                               | Screening Question and Application |
|   | A relevant post graduate qualification.   | Desirable                               | Application Form                   |
| <b>Other Requirements</b>                                 | Ability to travel efficiently and effectively between various work locations within Orkney to meet the operational requirements of the Service. | Essential                               | Screening question                 |

| <b>Core Competencies – These are the target behaviours the post holder should display</b><br>(Competencies are Essential criteria and are assessed as part of the interview process) |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Being Customer/<br/>client focused</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes the importance of quality customer/client services within the team and aims to exceed customer/client expectations.</li> <li>• Identifies opportunities to improve the way the team delivers customer/client services.</li> <li>• Ensures teams correctly identify customer/client needs and provide satisfactory solutions.</li> <li>• Takes personal responsibility to manage customer/client relationships.</li> <li>• Implements service improvements.</li> <li>• Monitor's quality of service.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Working effectively with others</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treats team members fairly and equally, recognises and demonstrates appreciation of their contribution.</li> <li>• Identifies with and has a shared commitment to achieving team objectives.</li> <li>• Share's knowledge and information with others.</li> <li>• Thanks, others, for their contribution and efforts.</li> <li>• Fosters good working relationships with teams in own service.</li> <li>• Actively seeks others input and values their contribution.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Managing Change</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reacts positively to change.</li> <li>• Is flexible and adapts plans in response to change.</li> <li>• Prepares and supports team members during periods of change.</li> <li>• Constructively challenges current thinking and procedures and offers alternative solutions.</li> <li>• Gains acceptance of necessary changes by communicating their benefits with conviction and enthusiasm.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Taking ownership and responsibility</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes the initiative to start activities or actions.</li> <li>• Recognises when a decision is needed and commits to act.</li> <li>• Is proactive, acts quickly to address current issues.</li> <li>• Seeks feedback and takes appropriate action.</li> <li>• Takes responsibility for personal development.</li> <li>• Modifies own behaviour to influence different situations.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Communicating effectively</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses positive appropriate language in all situations.</li> <li>• Communicates clearly and concisely to influence others.</li> <li>• Uses a variety of methods to communicate in the most effective manner.</li> <li>• Creates a positive confident impression.</li> <li>• Uses interpersonal skills to have a positive impact in meetings.</li> <li>• Keeps written messages simple.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Planning and decision making</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly monitors progress and takes corrective action to ensure priorities are met.</li> <li>• Gathers information from several readily available sources.</li> <li>• Considers information objectively to establish logical options and generate solutions.</li> <li>• Considers options and risks before making decisions.</li> <li>• Determines resources and co-ordinates work logically to ensure tasks are completed effectively.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Leadership</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• critically reflects own leadership skills and abilities, and takes responsibility for using and developing these</li> <li>• seeks feedback and evidence to continually enhance own leadership capability.</li> <li>• resilient and focuses on outcomes.</li> <li>• works collaboratively towards a shared purpose and to inspire change</li> <li>• values and respects the contributions of service users and colleagues</li> <li>• shares information and promotes effective knowledge management</li> </ul>           |