

**Teignbridge District Council
Council
24 May 2022
Part 1**

Levelling Up Fund Round 2

Purpose of Report

To approve the preparation of a bid for funding through the Levelling Up Fund; a local financial contribution towards the scheme; and implementation of the project if the bid is successful.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee RESOLVES to:

- (1) Approve the preparation and submission of a Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid for funding to deliver a strategic cycle route between Newton Abbot and Torbay.
- (2) Approve a contribution of up to £500,000 towards the scheme from our capital programme.
- (3) Delegate authority to the Head of Place and Commercial services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy and Jobs, and the Executive Member for Planning, to:
 - a) Confirm the final funding bid and submit it to the Government;
 - b) Enter into all necessary legal agreements associated with the scheme; and
 - c) Oversee implementation of the project.

Financial Implications

Please see Section 5.1 - £500,000 to be contributed from the existing provision in the capital programme via external funding/CIL

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Legal Implications

No further advice provided but legal implications are addressed in Section 5.4

Risk Assessment

The main risks are described from Section 5.9.

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Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

Environmental and climate change implications are addressed from Section 5.13

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Executive Members

Executive Member for Economy and Jobs, Nina Jeffries
Executive Member for Planning, Cllr Gary Taylor

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map indicating main scheme elements.

Background Papers

[Devon County Council Cabinet report: Bid into Government Levelling Up Fund: Round 2](#)
[Levelling Up Fund Round 2 Prospectus](#)
[Heart of Teignbridge Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)
[Torbay Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)
[Teignbridge Capital Programme](#)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Department for Transport, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Treasury are investing in local infrastructure through the £4.8 Billion Levelling Up Fund. Approximately £1.7 Billion of the Fund was allocated in October 2021. Round 2 has now been announced and the deadline for submissions is 6 July 2022.
- 1.2 Nationally, three tiers of levelling up priority have been identified and the Teignbridge area has been assigned the lowest priority level (category three). Category one proposals are more likely to be successful but category two and three bids will still be considered for funding if they are shown to be deliverable, value for money and a good strategic fit.
- 1.3 Support from the local Member of Parliament is required for schemes to succeed and MPs are only allowed to prioritise one bid.
- 1.4 Funding must be deployed by the end of March 2025 and it is important for bids to demonstrate that those timescales can be met. A 10 per cent local contribution is also required and bids are generally capped at a value of £20 million.

- 1.5 Teignbridge's Council Strategy identifies sustainable travel investments as a key priority, particularly through the Moving up a Gear super project. It is proposed to submit a Levelling Up Fund bid to deliver a strategic cycle route between Newton Abbot and Torbay, as well as links to the new neighbourhood at Wolborough.

2. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

- 2.1 Through the Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton Garden Community Programme, Teignbridge worked closely with Devon County Council to prepare a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the Heart of Teignbridge. This was the first such strategy to be prepared across the Devon County Council area. According to government guidance, putting these strategies in place helps authorities to make a strong case for future investment.
- 2.2 The LCWIP was endorsed by Teignbridge Highways and Traffic Orders Committee on 3 March 2022 and explains that Torbay is the top destination for commuters travelling from Newton Abbot. Around 10 per cent more people commute to Torbay than Exeter. Similarly the greatest number of commuters travelling to Newton Abbot originate from Torbay.
- 2.3 Following extensive public consultation, the LCWIP prioritised strategic cycling improvements along the Torquay Road through Kingskerswell for investment. It also identified important links to the new development at Wolborough, which would involve construction of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the railway at Langford Bridge before connecting to the existing high quality cycle route along Kingskerswell Road.
- 2.4 Torbay Council (Levelling Up Fund category one) has also introduced an LCWIP for the bay and similarly identified the Torquay Road corridor as a priority for investment, as well as onward links to Torbay Hospital through Edginswell and past the planned new railway station.

3. Proposed Scheme

- 3.1 The strategic cycleway improvements will comprise three main elements:
- a) Segregated route between Newton Abbot and Edginswell
 - b) Onward connection between Edginswell and Torbay Hospital
 - c) Link between Kingskerswell and Wolborough development, including a new rail bridge.
- 3.2 An indicative map is available at Appendix 1. It is recommended to delegate decisions associated with defining the precise form of the submission to the Head of Place and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Executive Members for Planning, and Economy and Jobs. These decisions will be subject to technical and high level design work and input from prospective delivery partners, including Devon County Council and Torbay Council.
- 3.3 The majority of the route would be within existing highway land and would not require planning permission. However, this position will be reviewed in more detail and the County Council have indicated that they would seek to secure necessary consents by the end of the year.

4. Local and stakeholder support

- 4.1 With almost 400 survey responses, LCWIP consultation confirmed at least 70% support for the main elements of the proposed scheme. This included the cycleway through Kingskerswell, which was proposed to take the form of a two-way link on the west side of the Torquay Road. However, some concerns about this element of the scheme were raised as part of the consultation, particularly in relation to safety. These matters will need to be addressed through the bid preparation process.
- 4.2 Through a Devon County Council Cabinet decision on 11 May 2022, Devon County Council has already indicated support for the overall project and a willingness to deliver upgrades within the County Council's administrative boundary.
- 4.3 For reasons of good place making, the scheme would also include improvements outside of Teignbridge and Devon's administrative area, extending into Torbay. Whilst initial informal discussions have indicated that Torbay Council would support delivery of the project, formal confirmation of this is awaited. The alternative would be to take the upgraded route only as far as the administrative boundary at Edginswell.
- 4.4 A briefing with Anne Marie Morris as MP for Newton Abbot has been arranged. At the time of publishing this committee agenda the meeting had not taken place. A further update will be provided at the Full Council meeting.

5. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

Financial

- 5.1 A 10 per cent local contribution is required. Based on a project cost estimate of £15.4 million, £1.54 million would be needed from the local area. Devon County Council has confirmed that it would meet two thirds of these costs and pay approximately £1.1 million. There is an existing provision in Teignbridge's Capital Programme for walking and cycling improvements that would be sufficient to make up the remaining local contribution.
- 5.2 At this stage we are working with cost estimates that could change over the course of bid preparation. It is therefore recommended to approve a contribution of up to £500,000 over the period to March 2025. This approach will build in flexibility to provide one third of the local funding, even if costs increased by a small proportion.
- 5.3 Whilst Community Infrastructure Levy funding is available, it should be noted that committing this budget would impinge on our short-term ability to fund other walking and cycling priorities such as the Teign Estuary Kingsteignton to Teignmouth cycle link. However, there are still matters to address with that scheme before it can be brought forward, by which time additional funding is expected to be available from developer contributions.

Legal

- 5.4 Various agreements will need to be completed between Teignbridge Council, Devon County Council, Government departments and, potentially, Torbay Council. Amongst them are likely to include funding and delivery agreements.
- 5.5 The Council has recent experience of completing such agreements.
- 5.6 Works to implement the scheme will also need to be procured but it is expected that this will be transport authority led.

Equality

- 5.7 The decision in hand is about submitting a bid to deliver a scheme that has already been consulted on and endorsed through existing strategies. As the recommendation is consistent with existing approved strategies, it is not considered that there have been material changes that would lead to different equality impact assessment conclusions. No further equality impact assessment is required at this stage.
- 5.8 It is also worth noting that, as the main delivery body for the project, the County Council Cabinet report confirmed that once more detailed project development work has been undertaken, 'Successful schemes will be subject to a further Cabinet report and the inclusion of an Impact Assessment'.

Risks

a) Teignbridge's Category 3 Levelling Up Status

- 5.9 Teignbridge's Category 3 status makes it less likely that the funding bid will be successful. Despite recent analysis showing that Newton Abbot, Teignmouth and Dawlish have been amongst the hardest economically hit towns across Devon, our Levelling Up Fund status has not changed from round 1.
- 5.10 Only 7 per cent of successful bids in round 1 were from category 3. In response to this challenge:
- The total value of the proposal has been set much lower than the £20 million threshold.
 - The scheme that has been identified is considered to be deliverable, already benefits from strategic and local support and initial design work has been undertaken.
 - It is intended to draw together existing information, evidence and analysis in order to produce a Strategic Outline Business Case for the project in support of our bid, further demonstrating to the Government that the project is credible and deliverable. This approach goes beyond the fund's bidding requirements but should help to maximise our chances of success.
 - Whilst the benefit cost ratio (a key metric when bids such as this are being assessed) of the project has yet to be reviewed in detail, it is expected to compete favourably.
 - The proposed scheme would link into a Category 1 area, benefitting staff, residents and visitors to the Teignbridge and Torbay area.

b) Project Delivery

- 5.11 The proposed scheme will involve coordination across local authority boundaries. Devon County Council has confirmed a willingness to deliver elements within Teignbridge, including more complex aspects like the Langford Bridge rail crossing. However, it is likely that Torbay Council would need to manage aspects of the scheme within their administrative area.
- 5.12 Officers are liaising to confirm capacity to undertake this work and a project board structure will be put in place to oversee delivery if the scheme funding bid is successful.

Environmental / Climate Change Impact

- 5.13 The proposed strategic cycle link has strong environmental credentials. It will make better use of existing infrastructure and support increased cycling along one of Teignbridge's most important commuter corridors. This will both encourage more healthy lifestyles, easier access to employment and low carbon, low cost transport choices.
- 5.14 Teignbridge Council is already supporting other key transport upgrades across the district where carbon management plan arrangements are being put in place. Similar arrangements will be sought for this project as well.

6. Alternative Options

Do Nothing

- 6.1 Teignbridge's Category 3 Levelling Up Fund Status reduces the likelihood that the proposed bid will be successful. The Council is already working on a number of important initiatives and there may be a case for focussing our resources on those projects instead.
- 6.2 However, our main role with this scheme would be in assembling the bid and much of the information needed to do so already exists. It would be for others to lead delivery of the project and the resource implications are therefore considered to be limited.
- 6.3 Additionally, there is a strong case for the proposed scheme and, even if it does not succeed, making the submission will raise the profile of this project and associated priorities like the Kingsteignton to Teignmouth section of the Teign Estuary Trail

Submit an alternative project

- 6.4 The Levelling Up Fund prospectus encourages bids focussed on (i) transport investment; (ii) regeneration and town centre investment; and (iii) cultural investment. Teignbridge is already taking forward significant town centre and cultural investments through the Future High Street Fund and it is considered less likely that further proposals within these themes would succeed.
- 6.5 There are no other well-developed projects that would be able to meet the March 2025 timescales.
- 6.6 Consideration has been given to submitting the Kingsteignton to Teignmouth Teign Estuary Trail for investment. Clearly this is a priority project and one that benefits from significant public support. Whilst this scheme now has planning permission, there remain further matters that need to be addressed before it can be delivered. This isn't considered feasible within the permitted time.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Bringing forward the Newton Abbot to Torbay strategic cycle route bid is a priority that reflects existing local strategies. The scheme represents Teignbridge's best opportunity to harness the fund and secure long-lasting benefits for people living, visiting and working in the area.

Appendix 1 – Map Indicating Main Scheme Elements

