

Committee/Board Name and Date of Meeting:
Local Enterprise Partnership

Meeting Date:
08 September 2022

Report Title
Levelling Up Fund Bid Update

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Reason why exempt:	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Discussion
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not applicable

Director Approving Submission of the Report:
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Executive Summary

The Levelling Up Fund opportunity is the second, and potentially final round of funding from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. SYMCA are eligible for one successful submission, this was not achieved in the first round so a more innovative approach, responding to the evolving needs of the passenger transport network has been developed for round two. The submission was made on August 2nd and feedback is awaited from Government.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

An effective sustainable transport system is a fundamental requirement of delivering a healthy and attractive region and supporting economic growth.

Recommendations

Board are asked to continue to support the submission and any subsequent activity required to secure funding once Government feedback is received.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

N/A

1. Background

- 1.1 The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) is led by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and is designed to invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, supporting town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets.
- 1.2 MCAs are eligible to receive funding for one transport submission, SYMCA were not successful in round one during 2021 and so have produced a submission for round two of the programme. This is expected to be the final round of LUF offered by DLUHC.
- 1.3 Following a review of the feedback from our original LUF submission and successes from other regions, it was determined that revision of the round one proposal was not suitable and a more innovative approach has been developed. The round two submission is centred on the modernisation of the passenger transport network and establishment of a SMART transport system to provide a greater customer offering and experience.
- 1.4 The proposal has three main pillars; the ability to plan better journeys through the provision of technology and customer information improvements at stops and interchanges, the ability to 'buy better' through an integrated and simple ticket purchasing process and better travel opportunity through improvements to the reliability of scheduled services and the creation of a new Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service capability.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 At a national level the LUF round one programme was heavily over-subscribed and it is realistic to expect that this will happen again with round two, this increases the risk of proposals not being funded.
- 2.2 The activities within the LUF submission, in particular the development of DRT capability, is innovative and a new area of work for SYMCA. This has required the proposals to be developed from a zero base as there wasn't existing delivery experience to build from, and this work has had to be undertaken at pace to meet the DLUHC submission schedule. Considerable progress has been made to get the submission developed as far as possible however further definition is required. The commitment to delivering this definition has been clearly stated in the submission made on 2nd August.

- 2.3 The DLUHC process now requires an Outline Business Case to be submitted before any funding will be committed, the work to progress the proposals to this OBC level has commenced.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

The online submission has been made, until any feedback is received from DLUHC the options would be to either pause activity or continue to develop the business case. To avoid future deadlines creating increased pressure on the business case development the plan is to continue with this now.

3.4 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

The worst-case scenario is that DLUHC do not award any funding to SYMCA. This does not necessarily mean that the business case development work is abortive, the three projects within the proposal can stand alone and to varying degrees are scalable. If no funding is secured through DLUHC each project can be reviewed and considered for local funding, any decision to progress at this point would still require the OBC work to be completed for that project.

3.13 Recommended Option

It is recommended that the business case development continues in advance of DLUHC feedback on the submission.

4. Consultation on Proposal

- 4.1 Local authority partners have been engaged with during the LUF submission processes. This engagement will increase as the proposal gains more definition through the Outline Business Case phase, wider stakeholder engagement, e.g. with operators, communities and customers will also be part of the OBC development.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 DLUHC have not advised a schedule for responses to the submissions or for the subsequent production of business cases. It is expected however that funding awards will be confirmed through the autumn budget and so this timescale is currently being applied.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

- 6.1 Initial work indicates that the project should not lead to additional revenue costs. In the event the bid is successful and this does not prove to be the case mitigation strategies will need to be determined to ensure financially viable delivery of the project is possible.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

- 7.1 There are direct legal implications arising from this report.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

- 8.1 None directly arising from this report.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 9.1 All interventions will be designed in full compliance with equality and diversity legislation and expectations

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

- 10.1 Surface transport in South Yorkshire accounts for around 37% of our total carbon footprint and has additional impacts on air quality and road safety. Currently private car use is around 60% of that figure. Modal shift from cars to public transport is critical to the delivery of the region and members' net zero goals and keeping us within the 6th carbon budget.

- 10.2 Investments made in improving the bus service have the potential to produce a two-fold environmental impact, both in increasing use rates and also in decarbonising the fleet.

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

- 11.1 None directly arising from this report.

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

- 12.1 Once an award has been fully confirmed and grant conditions provided it is expected that there will be a duty for SYMCA to publish details of the award on the website.

- 12.2 Community and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken for all schemes and interventions within both programmes.

List of Appendices Included

- A None

Background Papers

Further information is available from the SYMCA Strategic Transport Team on request.