

Cabinet

16 June 2021

Levelling Up Fund

Key Decision No: REG/03/21



Report of Corporate Management Team

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Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the guidance and bidding requirements for access to the Levelling Up Fund and to seek approval of the ongoing process for the Council to develop and prioritise potential proposals across County Durham.
- 2 This report seeks approval for the submission of one first round levelling up bid for the Bishop Auckland Parliamentary Constituency, covering projects for the South West Durham area.
- 3 The report outlines the proposed approach to submissions for Round One and identifies a £4.78 million match funding requirement to lever an initial £20 million Levelling Up Fund investment towards the proposed South West Durham scheme.

Executive summary

- 4 In the 2021 Budget, Central Government announced the new Levelling Up Fund (LUF), to provide investment in regeneration and growth in places with low productivity and poor connectivity.
- 5 County Durham has been identified as one of the areas of greatest need of levelling up in the UK and has been classified as a Tier 1 area by Central Government.
- 6 Beyond the announcement of the LUF, the Government White Paper on levelling up is expected in the Autumn and is due to set out a more comprehensive position on what levelling up will mean nationally. For County Durham, it's clear that levelling up will require a blend of investments that create different outcomes for communities. This will include place-based regeneration that improves the quality of our city, towns and villages, alongside broader investments to unlock sites for housing and employment and support the labour market.
- 7 Further guidance for the Round One levelling up bids was released in March and April 2021. The LUF is a competitive fund totalling £4 billion for England, with £600 million made available for Round One bids (refer to Appendix 2 for key headlines). Further guidance on future bidding rounds will be set out in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper, which is expected in Autumn 2021.
- 8 Each parliamentary constituency within the local authority area can submit one bid. Local authorities can only have one successful bid for each of their parliamentary constituencies over the lifecycle of the Fund, which is expected to run over three phases or bidding rounds. County Durham, with six parliamentary constituencies, would be in a position to be able to submit six bids up to the value of £120 million. The Government guidance suggests that a minimum of 10 percent match funding is recommended in support of each bid but this is not stated as a mandatory requirement.
- 9 Local authorities are the accountable body for all bids and the guidance is clear that engagement with, and the support of, the local Member of Parliament for each area is required.
- 10 There is also an opportunity for a wider regional transport bid of up to £50 million, which would need to be supported by the seven local authorities that constitute the Joint Transport Committee for the wider region.
- 11 Bids of up to £20 million per parliamentary constituency can include a maximum of three cohesively connected projects and must be delivered

with financial completion by March 2024. Business cases must demonstrate need, deliverability, strategic fit and value for money. Round One criteria highlight three priority areas for scheme investment:

- Transport;
- Regeneration and town centres;
- Cultural investment.

- 12 The Government has specified that projects should target improvements in pockets of deprivation and contribute towards carbon net zero targets. The deadline for submitting a Round One proposal for 2021/22 funding awards is **18 June 2021**, and priority will be given to projects that can commence capital spend on the ground in 2021/22. Successful bids will be announced in the Autumn.
- 13 Government has been very clear that projects must be ready to deliver and have an advanced business case for this deadline, which realistically means that only those projects that were already at an advanced stage and “shovel ready” at the March 2021 announcement could reasonably be submitted for the 18 June 2021 deadline.
- 14 Government has stated that there will be future opportunities to bid in subsequent rounds for delivery up to 31 March 2024, or exceptionally into 2024/25 for larger schemes. Further details of this and wider priorities will be outlined in a Levelling Up White Paper.
- 15 Local authorities, as Responsible Bodies for developing the bids, have received £125,000 capacity funding to support the development of future bids, however, it is expected that the development costs of a full programme of levelling up proposals will be substantially higher overall. An earmarked reserve of £1 million has been created to accommodate the estimated cost of developing robust bids for future bidding rounds.
- 16 It is expected that substantial master planning will be required for proposals across the six Parliamentary Constituency areas, where community and business engagement is a key priority and bid requirement. The Council will also be seeking a range of appropriate investments across County Durham to support transport connectivity, culture, heritage and regeneration in the city, town centres and villages. Schemes put forward will be based on the needs of each community.
- 17 The Council is committed over the three phases of the levelling up funding to seek investment for each of our six Parliamentary Constituencies of up to £120 million Levelling Up Funding in total across all the bids. It is clear that whilst there is still considerable work to do to

deliver robust and fully ready business cases, the need, opportunity and ambition is there across the county.

- 18 Given the tight timescales for Round One, gateway criteria within the LUF requirements and the quantifiable economic benefits that need to be demonstrated, one bid is sufficiently developed and capable of submission by the 18 June 2021 deadline. This proposal addresses socio-economic needs, transport barriers and cultural ambitions within its locality. A summary of the Bishop Constituency Parliamentary area bid, a Rural Connectivity and a Cultural Programme is outlined as follows:

South West Durham (Bishop Auckland Constituency) Rural Connectivity and Cultural Programme:

- 19 A £20 million Levelling Up ask is being sought to contribute to the delivery of three schemes that will collectively connect rural communities to services and opportunities in South West Durham, Newton Aycliffe and Barnard Castle by providing localised interventions. The schemes all provide quality of life benefits and support economic development through heritage, transport and cultural led regeneration. The schemes proposed are (see location plan in appendix 3):
- (a) Re-opening Whorlton Bridge to vehicular traffic and non-motorised users;
 - (b) Re-routing of A68 to bypass Toft Hill; and
 - (c) Enabling of Locomotion Building 2 in Shildon including car parking expansion, rail structural restoration and improved walking and cycling links.
- 20 As part of the Locomotion project, a complimentary 18km walking and cycling route will follow the alignment of the railway. The corridor will also allow an active mode route connecting rural communities along the corridor to the employment and education settlements of Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe. Rural communities will include Witton Park, St. Helen Auckland, West Auckland, Shildon, Middridge and School Aycliffe. Connections will be provided from the main route to these communities, including West Auckland as the first phase of the Barnard Castle to Bishop Auckland Corridor.
- 21 The extension of the route to Barnard Castle will be one of the priorities for the next round of Active Mode funding which is expected to be announced this summer. Thus it is envisaged that a walking and cycle route will link the cultural and heritage attractions at Locomotion (Shildon), Auckland Castle (Bishop Auckland) and Bowes Museum and Castle (Barnard Castle), and provide an active mode route connecting

rural communities along the corridor. When Whorlton Bridge is reopened, this will open up further walking and cycling opportunities from Barnard Castle.

- 22 The total forecast cost of the three linked investments is £30.93 million, inclusive of 15 percent quantified risk assessment value (consistent with project development stage). There is an existing £2.25 million match funding available to the Locomotion element of the programme through the Science Museum Group and £3.9 million across the existing County Council capital programme. Whilst the 10 percent recommended match funding requirement for the LUF has already been achieved, there is a funding gap across the three linked schemes that will require further capital contributions from the Council to deliver these schemes should the LUF bid be successful. This report seeks approval for £4.78 million of additional capital investment in support of these proposals, which can be accommodated from the current capital contingency.
- 23 Final costings and economic impact assessments are being refined as part of the business case development process ahead of the LUF submission deadline. In order to meet the tight delivery timescales and spend requirements within 2021/22, additional development costs will be incurred at risk to secure planning, acquire land and procure delivery arrangements in advance of notification of whether the bid has been successful.
- 24 The Council will, with this and all future levelling up proposals, be required to continue to develop projects at risk whilst the funding bids are assessed by Central Government. If the Council does not commit to this continued investment at risk then it may mean that the overall programme of projects is not then deliverable to the Government's timetable for implementation. The costs of developing projects will be met from the earmarked reserve that has been established at year end 2020/21.
- 25 It is proposed that ambitious bids for the remaining five parliamentary constituencies are developed in line with anticipated timelines for Rounds Two and Three, with robust business cases that will meet local priorities and satisfy national guidelines for Levelling Up. Any match funding requirements for these bids would need to be considered as part of the capital bidding process for MTFP(12).

Recommendation(s)

26 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) agree draft outline approach for the Levelling Up submission for Round One and support a first round submission for investment across South West Durham within the identified Bishop Auckland Constituency;
- (b) agree the total scheme costs estimated at £30.93 million and a LUF ask of the maximum of £20 million towards the cost of the proposed scheme;
- (c) agree to fund an additional £4.78 million of capital investment from Council capital contingencies to meet the funding gap that exists with regards to these proposals;
- (d) note that additional capacity funds will be required alongside the £125,000 received from Government to develop robust Green Book Business Cases for Future Rounds that will meet LUF requirements. This funding is committed to support the development of business cases across the County and will be funded from a £1 million earmarked reserve established at year end 2020/21;
- (e) delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Regeneration, Economy and Growth and Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources Investments and Assets and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance to take all such decisions necessary to progress and finalise Levelling Up proposals for Round One;
- (f) note that further reports will be presented to Cabinet in the Autumn on the further bidding phases, which will seek ambitious Levelling Up proposals for the remaining five Parliamentary constituencies;
- (g) to agree that the overall commitment of the Council is to bid for and secure an ambitious programme across all parliamentary constituencies in the county from this fund and to seek to maximise funding with strong proposals for every eligible area in future bidding rounds;
- (h) to note that the match funding requirements for future bids will need to form part of the capital bidding process for MTFP(12).

Background

- 27 In the 2021 Budget, the Chancellor announced details of the new LUF to provide investment in regeneration and growth in places with low productivity and connectivity. The LUF will supersede existing local growth funding streams such as Local Growth Fund, Pinch Points Fund and future rounds of Towns Fund. County Durham is identified as one of the areas of greatest need in the UK (a Tier 1 area) and this should illustrate a priority for funding. The deadline for submitting proposals for 2021/22 funding awards is 18 June 2021, and priority will be given to projects that can deliver spend on the ground prior to March 2022. There will be future opportunities to bid in subsequent rounds for delivery up to 31 March 2024, or exceptionally into 2024/25 for larger schemes. More details on this are anticipated within the Autumn Statement, with further guidance on future bidding rounds will be set out in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper, which is expected in Autumn 2021.
- 28 The fund for England is £4 billion in total, with £600 million made available for Round One bids. There can be one bid submitted for each parliamentary constituency within the local authority in the bidding round, with up to £20 million or exceptionally, up to £50 million available for major transport schemes. Local authorities can only have one successful bid for each of their parliamentary constituencies over the lifecycle of the LUF. There are three main priority areas outlined for the scheme investments:
- (a) **Transport** - public transport, active travel, bridge repairs, bus priority lanes, local road improvements, major structural maintenance, and accessibility improvements;
 - (b) **Regeneration and town centre** - upgrade eyesore buildings and dated infrastructure, acquire and regenerate brownfield sites, invest in secure community infrastructure and crime reduction, and bring public services and safe community spaces into town and city centres; and
 - (c) **Cultural** - regenerating, or creatively repurposing museums, galleries, visitor attractions (and associated green spaces) and heritage assets as well as creating new community-owned spaces to support the arts and serve as cultural spaces.
- 29 The bids need to be backed by local MPs, supported by local stakeholders, target pockets of deprivation and contribute to net zero carbon output. Local authorities, as Responsible Bodies have received £125,000 capacity funding to help support the development of business

cases and future bids. This funding is not sufficient to cover the anticipated costs of developing bids to the required standard in Durham.

Developing a Levelling Up Pipeline

- 30 A desk top review of potential projects and schemes that could be considered for a LUF bid has been undertaken, taking into account known priorities across the county in line with parliamentary constituency areas and the funding criteria to determine strategic fit and deliverability position of potential proposals to assess the best opportunity to try and secure Levelling Up funding.
- 31 The potential projects that meet the criteria are at varying development stages from initial scoping to outline business case. In order to develop LUF proposals consideration of development position, sequencing within constituencies, demonstrable economic impact and best fit with LUF criteria needs to be considered.
- 32 Substantial master planning will be required for all proposals, where community and business engagement is a key priority. The Council will also be seeking a range of appropriate investments across County Durham to support transport connectivity, culture, heritage and regeneration in the city, town centres and villages. Schemes put forward will be based on the needs of each community.

Round One: Pipeline Shortlist

- 33 It is important to consider the right bids in the right places and at the right time to give them the best chance of success and to deliver local levelling up priorities. Government has strongly guided against submitting bids that are not substantially developed or rushing proposals. Whilst not specifically exempted, the expectation from Government is that schemes that are not successful are not resubmitted in later bidding rounds unless the specific shortfalls that were identified in the consideration of that bid (reasons for failing to secure the LUF award) are fully addressed.
- 34 Within the time constraints set by the Round One funding process and the need to submit robust and quality bids, it is considered that only one funding bid will be ready for the deadline of 18 June 2021. This submission meets gateway criteria and has demonstrable and quantifiable benefits that address the socio-economic needs, transport barriers and cultural ambitions within its locality. A summary of the Bishop Auckland Parliamentary Constituency area bid, which focuses on Rural Connectivity and a Cultural Programme and benefits are outlined within the table below:

South West County Durham (Bishop Auckland Constituency) - Rural Connectivity and Cultural Programme

RCCP Schemes	Levelling Up Ask	Need	Benefits
Reopening of Whorlton Bridge to vehicular traffic and non-motorised users	£20m	Quality of life impacted by current A68 route in Toft Hill including high volumes of traffic and disproportionate percentage of HGVs.	Improved connectivity for rural communities to access employment and education opportunities, including via active mode measures.
Realignment of A68 to bypass Toft Hill		High level of road user accidents. Severed vehicular and active mode routes in rural communities, including closed Whorlton Bridge.	Quality of life improvements for local communities. Air quality improvements contributing to net zero carbon output targets
Enhancement for Locomotion in Shildon including parking, structural restoration, public Realm and Walking/cycling route improvements.		Need to improve active mode routes to employment and education. Promote and maintain transport heritage assets in the area, acting as a catalyst to drive forward heritage led regeneration	Enhanced visitor offer and heritage transport assets Increased GVA, visitors and visitor spend, aligning with other tourism strategies in the constituency

35 The total forecast cost of the three investments is £30.93 million, based on preliminary design and bill of quantities inclusive of 15 percent quantified risk assessment value (consistent with project development stage). There is an existing £2.25 million match funding available to

Locomotion through the Science Museum Group and £3.9 million across the existing capital programme.

- 36 The proposal currently presents a funding gap of £4.78 million. In the LUF guidance, the Government suggests that a minimum of 10 percent match funding is recommended in support of the bid but this is not articulated as a mandatory requirement. This requirement is already achieved. Whilst the schemes outlined are already priorities for the Council with local stakeholder support, a further £4.78 million match funding is required to secure a full funding package, which can be accommodated from the capital contingencies. The table below outlines the funding profile and match funding requirements:

Rural Connectivity and Cultural Programme Funding Profile

RCCP Scheme	DCC	Science Museum Group	Levelling Up	Total
Whorlton Bridge	£1.25m* (38%)	-	£2m (62%)	£3.25m
Toft Hill Bypass	£1.2m (10%)	-	£10.8m (90%)	£12m
Enhancement for Locomotion in Shildon including parking, structural restoration, public Realm and Walking/cycling route improvements	£2.65m* (17%) £3.58m (23%)	£2.25m* (14%)	£7.2m (46%)	£15.683m
Total	£8.68m (28%)	£2.25m (7%)	£20m (65%)	£30.93m

* existing secured match funding

- 37 As part of the development of transport capacity improvement proposals, stakeholder and community consultation has taken place to consider local priorities, needs and potential improvements. The submission addresses socio-economic needs, transport barriers and cultural ambitions within the locality in line with the national levelling up agenda to boost growth.
- 38 Final costings and economic impact assessments are being refined as part of the business case development process ahead of the LUF submission deadline. In order to meet the tight delivery timescales and spend requirements within 2021/22, additional development costs will

be incurred at risk to secure planning, acquire land and procure delivery arrangements in advance of notification of whether the bid has been successful.

- 39 Following the submission of the bid, further consultation will be undertaken to embed proposals and to outline the next development phases. The Council does not own all of the land necessary to deliver the proposed project. Discussions with landowners are underway, however further negotiation is required. Anticipated costs and risks to deliver the Toft Hill Bypass scheme have been built into estimated project costs. These next project development stages prior to funding announcements are paramount in order to commence delivery prior to March 2022.

LUF Future Rounds

- 40 The Government has announced that a Levelling Up White Paper is expected in the Autumn 2021. This is anticipated to detail further criteria in relation to future LUF rounds and wider expectations around a package of measures to level up opportunity across all parts of the UK through policy approaches, specific funds and interventions including Growth Deals, Freeports and UK Shared Prosperity.
- 41 It is proposed that the remaining potential shortlist priorities for the other five parliamentary constituencies are refined and developed for future rounds, with business cases being developed appropriately to ensure that the remaining five parliamentary constituencies have robust proposals for submission.
- 42 It must be recognised that potential proposals are at varying development stages and will require significant resourcing and support to be sufficiently developed to meet funding requirements for Rounds Two and Three. These proposals will be developed with stakeholders to tackle local priorities whilst being mindful of the funding criteria and the need to demonstrate quantifiable benefits that tackle economic needs and support the levelling up agenda.
- 43 Whilst the Council has received £125,000 capacity funding to support the development of future bids, it is expected that the development costs of a full programme of levelling up proposals will be substantially higher overall. An earmarked reserve of £1 million has been created to accommodate the estimated cost of developing robust bids for future bidding rounds.
- 44 Proposals will have due regard to existing strategies and plans as well as identified priorities by local Members and Members of Parliament. All proposals will be developed with communities wherever possible and

there will be focused work on master planning development, where community and business engagement will be a core focus.

- 45 The Council will work alongside its regional partners to explore and develop potential cross boundary transport proposals that could see an LUF investment ask of up to £50 million that would deliver benefit for residents and businesses within the county. This funding ask will be in addition to the five further constituency bids of up to £20 million (plus match funding).
- 46 Match funding requirements for future bids will need to form part of the capital bidding process for MTFP(12).

Next Steps

- 47 The next steps are to finalise the South West Durham (Bishop Auckland Constituency) bid, undertake briefings with local councillors, local stakeholders, business representatives and further engagement with MPs to ensure the best possible case for the proposal is submitted ready for the Round One LUF funding deadline on 18 June 2021.
- 48 This report seeks delegated authority for the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investments and Assets and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance to take all such decisions necessary to progress and finalise the Levelling Up proposal for Round One in advance of the 18 June 2021 submission deadline.

Background papers

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-prospectus
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-additional-documents>

Other useful documents

- Levelling Up Prospectus and Technical Note
- Levelling Up Funding Application Forms

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Specialist advice about the potential State Aid/Subsidy Control implications will be sought as required for individual Levelling Up proposals. Whilst the UK Government has not yet formalised the new Subsidy Control regime following Brexit, specialist advice is likely if proposals are working alongside private sector partners and is not providing open access infrastructure for the benefit of the public.

Durham County Council does not own all the land associated with potential LUF project proposals. Consideration for land acquisitions and/or development arrangements to work alongside partners will be considered as part of each specific project proposals. For the Round One submission, land ownership and acquisition will need to be considered, along with associated costs and risks to deliver desired ambition associated with the specific scheme of Toft Hill Bypass.

If negotiations to acquire land by agreement are unsuccessful then acquisition of land would need to be through Compulsory Purchase Powers.

Finance

The business case development process, economic modelling and financial assessment is being undertaken to ensure a robust approach to detailed costings and justifying the benefit cost ratio for the scheme proposals. Round One proposals need to commence capital costs in 2021/22 in order to meet gateway criteria and achieve financial completion by March 2024.

The total project costs for the Bishop Auckland Constituency RCCP proposal is £30.93 million, inclusive of 15 percent quantified risk assessment value (consistent with project development stage) with £20 million sought through LUF and £10.93 million as match funding.

There is an existing £2.25 million match funding available to the Locomotion project through the Science Museum Group and £3.9 million is available through the existing capital programme, leaving a funding gap of £4.78 million to be bridged. The additional match funding can be accommodated but largely exhausts available capital contingencies in the current programme.

The match funding secured and proposed against this bid comfortably exceeds the 10 percent recommended (but not mandated) match funding criteria set out in the LUF guidance.

If the LUF grant is awarded, any overspend on the projects contained in this programme would have to be underwritten by the Council in line with other Government funded programmes. This represents a risk to the Council.

Whilst the Council has received £125,000 capacity funding to support the development of future bids, it is expected that the development costs of a full programme of Levelling Up proposals will be substantially higher overall. An earmarked reserve of £1 million has been created to accommodate the estimated cost of developing robust bids for future bidding rounds.

Match funding requirements for future bids will need to form part of the capital bidding process for MTFP(12).

Consultation

As part of the Levelling Up Fund criteria all proposals must undergo effective consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

As part of the development of transport capacity improvement proposals including Whorlton Bridge improvement proposals and Toft Hill Bypass proposals, community consultation has taken place to consider local priorities, needs and potential improvements. Much support has also been gained for the Stockton to Darlington proposals from a variety of groups.

Stakeholder consultation has taken place through the Rail Heritage Board and Heritage Action Zone stakeholder groups to consider potential improvements and enhanced visitor experiences. This is supporting preparations for the Bicentenary celebrations of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025. Additional public engagement is planned for July 2021 to showcase development ambitions for the Locomotion Museum.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Council is committed to improving the quality of life for all. The Council will consider its Public Sector Equality Duty and how it is discharged on a proposal and project by project basis.

All design and works included will adhere to design standards and national policies for construction and highways. Consultation on proposals will seek to engage and represent a broad spectrum of stakeholders and the community.

Climate Change

The Levelling Up Fund criteria prioritises the need to contribute towards net zero carbon output. All proposals will consider a quality built environment and seek to use clean technologies and approaches that minimise carbon emissions, encourage active travel and the reduction of non motorised vehicles.

Human Rights

All tenants, land owners and existing site occupier rights will be considered in line with existing licence agreements, with appropriate consultation and notice periods provided as stipulated for each individual agreement/licence.

Crime and Disorder

No issues have been raised to date. During the master planning stages associated with project development proposals and business case development, appropriate consultation and crime and disorder risks will be considered and designed out or mitigated in conjunction with Durham Constabulary where possible.

Staffing

Project development and management resources will be provided by the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Service Grouping where possible. Associated design and management costs will be built into proposals where feasible and additional external expertise will be sought as needed to support settlement masterplans, economic modelling, specialist surveys and assessment to support both the development and delivery of proposals.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

A detailed project risk register will be developed for each individual Levelling Up proposal and is integral to each business case developed.

The main risks to consider for the Levelling Up approach and pipeline development are:

- (a) Financial risk to the Council if projects were to incur cost overruns. Estimates have been developed with all add on costs, including inflation and 15 percent quantified risk assessment value (consistent with project development stage) based on preliminary design and bill of quantities.
- (b) Potential delays and increased costs for Compulsory Purchase Orders for Toft Hill Bypass improvements, although the programme allows for this and discussions are already underway with the land owners.
- (c) Reputational risk should any LUF bid that is submitted be unsuccessful.
- (d) Reputational risk due to timing of submission of bids for individual areas linked to varying degrees of readiness to meet LUF bidding criteria and

capacity issues to develop bids to sufficient standards within the timescales laid out in the guidance.

- (e) The bid will amend existing rights of way which require authorisation and consents.

Procurement

Design and delivery will be procured through either internal Council teams or established frameworks, aligned to funding timeframes and funding criteria.

Appendix 2: Headline Levelling Up Funding Criteria

Criteria	Levelling-Up Fund
Timescales	Delivery to 31 March 2024. Exceptionally into 2024/25 for larger schemes
Funding	£4.8bn (£4bn for England)
Size of bids	Up to £20m. Transport projects can be above £20m and up to £50m Each local authority can submit proposal up to the number of MPs in the LA area.
Bidding process	Competitive; projects or packages. £125k capacity funding per area. LAs can only have one successful bid for each of their allocated number of bids over the lifecycle of the Fund
Bid deadline	18 June 2021 (successful bids announced in Autumn 2021)
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local transport projects • Town centres / high streets • Cultural & heritage assets
Assessment criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need (recovery, growth, connectivity, regeneration) • Deliverability • Strategic fit • Value for money • Leverage; at least 10% of costs
Lead department	HM Treasury
Responsible bodies	Local authorities
County Durham status	Category 1 (highest need) of 3
Spatial focus	UK-wide

Criteria	Levelling-Up Fund
Additional criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For first round priority will be given to delivery on ground in 2021-22.• Government expects bids to be backed by local MPs.• Government encourages local authorities to submit joint projects• Bids needs to be supported by local stakeholders• Bids should target pockets of deprivation• Bids should contribute to net zero
More details	www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-prospectus

Appendix 3: Bishop Auckland Constituency – Rural Connectivity and Cultural Programme Location Plan

