

---

## UK LEVELLING UP FUND – UPDATE

---

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from Elected Members to adjust the Levelling Up Fund Bids, following on from the update provided in February 2022, and the Members Seminar in March 2022.
- 1.2 The Council has determined to submit 2 bids to the next round of the Levelling Up Fund, by the deadline of 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022. One bid will be for an area regeneration town centre project, maximum £20m and the second a Transport Bid, up to £50m.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- a) Approve the removal of the Active Travel Route for Helensburgh to Dumbarton Cyclepath due to the inability to meet Levelling Up Fund delivery deadlines, but note that officers continue to pursue this option via other funding opportunities;
- b) Approve the removal of the Active Travel Route from Kennacraig to Tarbert, due to the inability to meet Levelling Up Fund delivery deadlines, but note that officers continue to pursue this option via other funding opportunities

---

**UK LEVELLING UP FUND – UPDATE**

---

**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 This report provides an update on the progress of elements within the bids, which now require to be adjusted, to ensure that the bids are deliverable within the timescale set by the UK Government.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- a) Approve the removal of the Active Travel Route for Helensburgh to Dumbarton Cyclepath due to the inability to meet Levelling Up Fund delivery deadlines, but note that officers continue to pursue this option via other funding opportunities;
- b) Approve the removal of the Active Travel Route from Kennacraig to Tarbert, due to the inability to meet Levelling Up Fund delivery deadlines, but note that officers continue to pursue this option via other funding opportunities

**4.0 DETAIL**

4.1 The Levelling Up Bids are currently being prepared, taking account of the UK Government Business Case guidance which was issued on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022, which requires a considerable amount of supporting information. It is a highly competitive fund and there is no guarantee of a successful Bid or Bids.

4.2 The Bids subject to feasibility consideration are included in two separate programmes:-

- The Regeneration Bid up to £20m – Argyll and Bute Western Seaboard Marine Gateways Initiative – Rothesay and Dunoon.
- The Transport Bid up to £50m – Connected Argyll and Bute – Whisky Islands; Helensburgh and Lorn Economic Growth Zone.

4.3 The UK Government's Guidance on bids is clear in regard to the timescale of projects and their deliverability. Projects included with the bid must be delivered by 2025 and those which are not anticipated to be delivered by that timeframe will negatively impact the overall application and this is deemed to lower the chances of a successful bid. Should the bid(s) be unsuccessful, the Council will not be able to deliver on any of the projects within the bid(s) and will require to look at alternative funding options.

4.4 There are two elements within the Connected Argyll Bid which officers have reviewed and are proposing should be removed. It should be noted that the Active Travel options will still be pursued outwith the Levelling Up Fund, via other sources of funding such as Sustrans.

4.4.1 Active Travel Route – Cardross – Helensburgh to Dumbarton Cyclepath

This is a long running project designed to provide an off-road walking and cycling path linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton. Due to the long history of the project with the landowners between Helensburgh – Cardross, it is considered unlikely that it will be possible to secure a voluntary agreement with any of these landowners within the timescale of the Levelling Up Fund.

4.4.2 Active Travel Route – Tarbert to Kennacraig

Members were advised at the Seminar held in March this year that the Tarbert to Kennacraig active travel route was being considered for inclusion within the bid, which would provide a safe off-road alternative to the busy A83 trunk road, linking Tarbert with the Kennacraig Ferry. Officers have looked at the design of the route and landownership permissions, and have concluded that this element will not be deliverable within the UK Government's timescales as set out in their guidance.

4.4.3 Helensburgh and Lomond Electric Buses

Members are aware that Helensburgh is home to the HMNB Clyde, which continues to expand through the Maritime Change project. To assist the continued integration of the base with the wider community, officers considered a further substantial investment would be required in terms of transport connectivity. The development of a hydrogen/electric bus service and the purchase of buses to serve the community and the workers at the base and Colgrain with a possible link to Glasgow Airport together with the development of an additional rail halt at Garelochhead was being reviewed and subject to feasibility work.

In reviewing this option further, it is considered that this option would place too much recurring revenue costs on the Council. Officers are still exploring whether we can get support for ongoing revenue costs but if this is not forthcoming, it makes this option less attractive.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 In line with the Guidance issued by the UK Government, officers are recommending the removal of two Active Travel elements of the bid, which they consider could affect the overall success of the bids.

5.2 Officers will hold a Members Seminar, which will provide detail on the key elements of each of the bids, prior to a final report going before full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy – The projects selected all comply with Council established policy.
- 6.2 Financial – The £125,000 received from UK Government to develop the bids is and the February approval of a further £150,000 from the recovery and renewal fund is sufficient at this time to make the bids.
- 6.3 Legal – None arising from this report however legal agreements may have to be entered into with relevant partners.
- 6.4 HR – none arising from this report
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
  - 6.5.1 Equalities – None identified at this stage.
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – the projects are designed to offer improve socio-economic opportunities for local communities.
  - 6.5.3 Islands – A number of the projects have positive implications for island communities.
- 6.6 Climate Change – The projects are aiming to help Argyll and Bute reach net zero through active travel, repurposing town centre buildings, low carbon buses and integrated travel.
- 6.7 Risk – The main risk remains in not having sufficient time, information and partner buy-in, or resources to prepare suitable bids within the timescale that is yet to be confirmed.
- 6.8 Customer Service – nothing arising from this report

### **Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure**

Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth

Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure

10 May 2022

For further information, please contact:

Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth on 01546 604293