

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 17 May 2021

Portfolio:	Policy and Resources
Subject:	Levelling Up Fund
Report of:	The Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priorities:	Leisure Opportunities for Health and Fun, Dynamic, Prudent and Progressive Council

Purpose:

To provide an overview of the Government's Levelling up Fund and the Council's proposed bid for funding to support the Ferneham Hall and Osborn Road Car Park projects.

Executive summary:

The Government announced the launch of the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund at the 2020 Spending Review. The fund will invest in local authority capital infrastructure projects that support:

- The regeneration of town centres and high streets
- Upgrading local transport
- Cultural and heritage assets

A bid is being developed that focusses on delivering enhanced, modern and accessible cultural facilities in the Borough, that improve the vibrancy and vitality of the town, and represent the first major step of the town centre regeneration vision:

- Construction of Fareham Live, a new arts and entertainment venue.
- Modernisation of the adjacent Osborn Road Multi-Storey Car Park.

Funding of £13.1m will be sought from the Levelling Up Fund, with the Council providing an additional £4.7m, already secured through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.

A successful bid would mean that the capital and financial burden to the Council, as well as the use of future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts would be significantly reduced.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Executive approves the submission of an application from the Government's Levelling Up Fund, seeking a contribution of £13.1m towards the capital costs of the Fareham Live and Osborn Road projects.

Reason:

To ensure that an application can be submitted to the Government's Levelling Up Fund.

Cost of proposals:

There are no costs associated with submitting the bid. Funding of £13.1m will be sought from the Levelling Up Fund, with the Council providing an additional £4.7m, already secured through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.

Appendices: None

Background papers: None

Reference papers: None

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	17 May 2021
Subject:	Levelling Up Fund
Briefing by:	The Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Portfolio:	Policy and Resources

INTRODUCTION

1. The Government announced the launch of the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund at the 2020 Spending Review.
2. Jointly managed by HM Treasury (HMT), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Transport (DfT), the fund will invest up to £20m in a local authority area for capital infrastructure projects that support the following priority areas:
 - **Upgrading local transport:** This priority area has a focus on projects linked to public transport and local network improvements.
 - **The regeneration of town centres and high streets:** This priority could include projects such as, upgrading eyesore buildings and dated infrastructure, acquiring and regenerating brownfield sites, investing in secure community infrastructure and crime reduction.
 - **Cultural and heritage assets:** This priority area has a focus on maintaining, regenerating, or creatively repurposing museums, galleries, visitor attractions (and associated green spaces) and heritage assets as well as creating new spaces to support the arts and serve as cultural spaces.

FAREHAM'S PROPOSED BID

3. A number of potential bid options were assessed against the priority areas outlined above. Two closely linked projects were judged to most closely align with the priorities of both the Levelling Up Fund and the Council.
4. Therefore, it is proposed that the following packaged bid is submitted. It focusses on delivering enhanced, modern and accessible cultural facilities in the Borough, that improve the vibrancy and vitality of the town, and represent the first major step of the town centre regeneration vision:
 - **Construction of Fareham Live, a new arts and entertainment venue comprising:**

An 800-seat theatre, with secondary performance space, studio and community facilities.

Project Cost: £12.3m

- **Modernisation of the adjacent Osborn Road Multi-Storey Car Park:**

Full refurbishment of the car park to modern standards, extending the life by 15 years, whilst upgrading facilities e.g. wider spaces, improved lighting and security, and electric vehicle charging points, to improve the user experience of Fareham Live customers and town centre shoppers.

Project Cost: £5.5m

5. Both projects are closely linked, with work on Osborn Road to be progressed on a similar time frame to Fareham Live. The total capital cost of these projects is £17.8m.
6. Funding of £13.1m will be sought from the Levelling Up Fund, with the Council providing an additional £4.7m, already secured through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions. A successful bid would mean that the capital and financial burden to the Council, as well as the use of future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts would be significantly reduced.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

7. To support the application the Council will need to provide:
 - A written letter of support from the Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP.
 - Evidence of engagement with local interested parties e.g. letters of support from businesses and community representatives.
8. The fund is prioritising bids that invest in regeneration and growth in local authorities defined as being in most need. Fareham is not in this category, but the enhanced venue will serve the wider population in the Solent area, including the borough of Gosport.
9. The bid's 'strategic fit', 'deliverability' and 'value for money' are also important assessment elements and these are areas where the Council's bid should score well.

NEXT STEPS

10. If approved, engagement with residents, businesses and other interested parties will take place and support sought from the Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP. The deadline for submissions is 18 June. The Government expects to announce the outcome of the competition by Autumn 2021.

CONCLUSION

11. Approval is sought for the submission of a package of bids to Government's Levelling Up Fund, which if successful would significantly contribute to the capital costs of the construction of Fareham Live and the modernisation of Osborn Road Car Park.

Enquiries: For further information on this report please contact Roy Brown (Ext 4489)