

Cabinet – 12th April 2021

UK Community Renewal and Levelling Up Funds

Summary: This report outlines opportunities presented to North Norfolk through the Government's new UK Community Renewal and Levelling Up programmes and outlines how the Council might seek to position itself to take advantage of these opportunities.

Options considered: It is considered that these new funding programmes present opportunities to secure external funding for the District to support the Council's Corporate Plan objectives through the Council acting in its community leadership role. Alternatively, the Council could leave it to other local stakeholders to develop project proposals but it is believed that this might not realise the full benefits of a more co-ordinated approach proposed by the Council as outlined in the report.

Conclusions: The Council should seek to adopt a strategic leadership role in seeking to co-ordinate the development of a programme of projects at North Walsham and Fakenham for submission to Government under the UK Community Renewal and, as appropriate, the Levelling Up Fund programmes

Recommendations: Cabinet is ask to:-

- note the opportunities presented to North Norfolk by the new UK Community Renewal and Levelling Up programmes
- endorse the proposals made that a programme of complementary projects be developed in respect of the future planned growth of North Walsham and Fakenham as sustainable locations for future housing and business development at scale supported by provision of key transport, health, education community and green infrastructure and submitted to the County Council as lead body for endorsement and onward submission to the Government
- to agree that in developing any proposals the Council establishes a Strategic Stakeholder Board and Steering Groups for North Walsham and Fakenham to support project development and oversee programme delivery

Reasons for Recommendations: To realise opportunities to secure UK Government funding into North Norfolk to support investment in projects which meet priorities outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan as they relate to provision

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of housing, economic growth, environment and climate change and quality of life.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr Sarah Butikofer, Leader of the Council	All
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Steve Blatch, Chief Executive Email:- steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk Tel:- 01263 516232	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Government's Budget announcements on Wednesday 3rd March 2021, two new funding programmes were announced - the UK Community Renewal Fund and the Levelling Up Fund, which are now being promoted as a fore-runner of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to be launched in 2022.
- 1.2 North Norfolk is one of 100 priority areas able to submit proposals for funding through the UK Community Renewal Fund – the prospectus for which can be accessed via the following link:- [UK Community Renewal Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).
- 1.3 Under the Levelling Up Fund the North Norfolk District is a Priority 2 area and can therefore bid for funds under this programme – the prospectus for which can be found via this link – [Levelling Up prospectus.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 1.4 Both programmes therefore present new opportunities for the District to submit proposals which could lever Government funding into North Norfolk in the short and medium-terms and potentially in the longer term if proposals are developed for submission under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund budget from 2022.

2.0 The UK Community Renewal Fund

- 2.1 The headline issues of the programme are as follows:-
 - £220 million programme in 2021, aiming to support community renewal, including skills development, economic renewal, infrastructure deficits etc

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- 100 priority areas (including North Norfolk, Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk)
- Projects with a value of up to £3million could be supported per area, with 90% of the funding for revenue spend and spend to be incurred by 31st March 2022
- Locally in Norfolk, the programme will be led by the County Council
- Bids for project funding to be submitted by lead authorities by 18th June 2021

3.0 The Levelling Up Fund

3.1 The headline issues of the programme are as follows:-

- Focuses on capital investment in local infrastructure, building on Growth Deal, Town Deal and Future High Street Fund programmes.
- Key themes of Transport Investments; Regeneration & Town Centre Investments; Cultural Investments.
- North Norfolk is a Priority 2 area under this programme, where projects would need to be “exceptional” to be successful
- Round 1 projects must have investment/delivery in 2021/22, with bids submitted by Friday 18 June 2021.

4.0 Opportunities for North Norfolk

4.1 Both of these new Government funding programmes present potential opportunities for North Norfolk to secure public funds to support project delivery within the District over the next few years. Considering the programme objectives and the Council’s priorities as laid out in the adopted Corporate Plan and emerging new Local Plan initial thinking is that a programme of investment projects could be developed at North Walsham and Fakenham which seek to build upon proposals for new housing and economic growth to be accommodated at scale at these locations through new Urban Extensions supported by good quality community infrastructure – including new link roads, health and education facilities, leisure and green infrastructure and business investment / employment opportunities. Proposals could be developed based on the two towns and their immediate economic geography, which in the context of North Walsham would include the Scottow Enterprise Park and the Bacton Energy Hub site recognising the contribution of the terminal site to UK gas supply and future potential as a site for production of blue and green hydrogen; and at Fakenham would include future opportunities at the former RAF West Raynham Technical Site and potentially the Tattersett Business Park site.

4.2 In order that the Council can demonstrate community and stakeholder support for any project proposals developed, and based upon knowledge of recent Government funding programmes such as the Future High Street Fund and Town Deal programme, it is recommended that the District Council establish a Strategic Stakeholder Board and Steering Groups for North Walsham and Fakenham to build capacity to develop a programme of investment projects in each location which can be “presented” as a coherent package to the County Council as lead local body before submission to Government. The Council should therefore look to establish such groups as

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a matter of priority to take this workstream forward and hopefully realise the opportunities for the District presented by these new Government funding programmes in the short and longer terms.

5.0 Alignment with Corporate Plan objectives

5.1 The UK Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Fund would present new opportunities to secure external funding into North Norfolk to deliver a number of priorities identified in the Council's adopted Corporate Plan and should therefore be seen to align well with the Council's established priorities.

6.0 Medium Term Financial Strategy

6.1 As noted at paragraph 5 above, these new Government funding programmes would support the ambitions of the Council's Corporate Plan and therefore contribute to investment in the District and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy through adding value and capacity to the Council's priority objectives.

7.0 Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 See comments made at Section 6 above.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 Any projects developed for submission under either programme will consider the legal issues / implications as part of development and appraisal through the Council's recently adopted Corporate Governance and Project Management Framework.

9.0 Risks

9.1 There are no risks associated with this report at the present time. Any potential project risks will be assessed as project proposals are developed and appraised through the Council's recently adopted Corporate Governance and Project Management Framework

10.0 Sustainability

8.1 None as a direct result of this report.

11.0 Equality and Diversity

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9.1 None as a direct result of this report.

12.0 Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

10.1 None as a direct result of this report.

13.0 Recommendation:-

Cabinet is ask to:-

- **note the opportunities presented to North Norfolk by the new UK Community Renewal and Levelling Up programmes**
- **endorse the proposals made that a programme of complementary projects be developed in respect of the future planned growth of North Walsham and Fakenham as sustainable locations for future housing and business development at scale supported by provision of key transport, health, education community and green infrastructure and submitted to the County Council as lead body for endorsement and onward submission to the Government**
- **to agree that in developing any proposals the Council establishes a Strategic Stakeholder Board and Steering Groups for North Walsham and Fakenham to support project development and oversee programme delivery**