AGENDA ITEM

Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Meeting: 4th April 2019

A SUMMARY OF EXTERNAL FUNDING ACTIVITY IN SUPPORT OF
REGENERATION

Report of the Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Council has a history of working closely with partners to access external funding to support its Change Here investment priorities. This is targeted to funds which we believe we have a reasonable opportunity of success. These funds are predominately Government, European Union and national lottery based. Some are direct bids from the Council, others are via organisations such as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), through which the borough benefits as part of a larger initiative.

1.2 This report provides a brief update on recent funding activity that supports the Council’s regeneration and town centre objectives. Excluded from this summary is allocated funding from Government such as Local Growth Deal monies for the Town Centre Access Package. Also provided is an historical overview of lottery funding awarded in the borough and known funding from the European Union.

1.3 Whilst we have tried to capture all funding bids, those made by third parties without reference to the Council are not detailed, although as Council support is usually required for any bids of significance, it is unlikely any major bids are not recorded.

1.4 The decision to apply is based on strategic fit, availability of match funding, community support and whether a project idea is bid ready. The general success rate is very high for those funds that the Council is able to take to full application. Note that all these external funds are very competitive and some are commercial in confidence until announced.

2. RECENT FUNDING ACTIVITY

2.1 A summary of some of the most recent funding activity is provided below.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

2.2 In 2018 Stockport Council was successful in achieving three Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) awards from the Government agency Homes England. Only 18 were awarded in the North West. Around £11m will support the delivery of some 500 homes on Brownfield land in the town centre. These are the proposed Stockport Interchange, Weir Mill conversion and Hopes Carr Phase 3. The Council was the first in the whole country to take a HIF project all the way through clarification to grant agreement.
**Townscape Heritage**

2.4 The Council has now secured £1.8m National Heritage Lottery grant, through a two stage approval process, for the five year Rediscovering the Underbanks Townscape Heritage (TH) programme. The TH will repair and renovate some 24 historic buildings, support public realm and deliver public engagement programme. This fund was extremely competitive and one of very few to be recently approved.

**Cultural Development Fund**

2.5 The Cultural Development Fund (CDF) was launched by Arts Council England (ACE) on behalf of the Government. The monies are part of the Government’s Industrial Strategy and the fund was open to towns and cities outside of London who want to make the most of culture’s contribution to their local economy. Out of a budget of £20m a handful of projects were expected to be successful at between £3m to £7m each. The Fund is aimed at unlocking the potential that the creative sector can bring to place making.

2.6 Stockport Council supported the creative organisation Madlab to submit an Expression of Interest in August 2018. The bid was to repurpose properties in the Market & Underbanks area to kick start a new creative cluster based around digital arts. Following an assessment stage Stockport submitted a full submission in October 2018. It was announced in January 2019 that the full submission was not supported, no projects in the North West were successful, the five approved were Wakefield, Plymouth, Worcester, Grimsby and Thames Estuary. Recent feedback from Arts Council England has been very positive. The Council is exploring ways of bringing elements forward in a phased manner as new funding opportunities are launched later this spring.

**Future High Streets Fund**

2.7 The Government’s £675m Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) was launched in December 2018 and is part of a package of measures to address the decline in core retail areas. The fund can be used to adapt struggling shopping centres to new uses with investment showing impact and change. Projects are expected to be around £5m to £10m. The Council submitted an Expression of Interest in March 2019 for £7.1m for Stockport Central.

2.8 The vision for Stockport Central is to create an exciting new social hub, an arrival point for all generations to socialise, access information and services and use facilities. This family centric hub will offer joined-up cultural, leisure, health and employment & skills related services within a first class environment. These will be wrapped around a central core that includes an interactive digital informatics area, hotel style reception, new seating, toilet and changing areas located within currently vacant areas of the Merseyway centre.

**Digital Investment**

2.9 Funding to upgrade digital speed and coverage is part of the Government’s UK’s Industrial Strategy to boost productivity. The nature of digital infrastructure means that most funding has been secured and delivered at a GM scale. Stockport Council
is the lead body on behalf of eight GM districts for the £15m Get Digital Faster superfast broadband programme. Public investment is spread fairly evenly across the intervention area and amounts to £3.44m Government and £3.7m of EU funds along with local authority contributions and private leverage. This project is now going through a closure process.

2.10 In parallel, Stockport Council successfully led two bids to the Equalities Office for the GM Women & Broadband project (£160k). This supported female entrepreneurs to gain digital skills and was delivered by the GM Business Growth Hub. More recently GMCA was supported by Stockport Council in its successful bid to secure £23.8m for the local Full Fibre Network Challenge Fund in 2018.

**Transport**

2.11 The Council has secured £3.8m grant under the National Productivity Infrastructure Fund from the Department for Transport (DfT) for Roscoes Roundabout to relieve congestion. Programme entry has been secured for three projects for the Mayoral Challenge Fund with further announcements expected later this month on a further 6 schemes. The three projects are the Town Centre Severance Package, Welkin Road, upgrade link between Brinnington and Stockport Town Centre; Gillbent Road, Cheadle Hulme – delivery of new crossing to address severance and Hazel Grove Crossings, a package of crossings improvements. Approval is subject to full business cases. Total value is around £1.4m.

2.12 Some £55k has been secured from the ELENA programme (European Local Energy Assistance) via GMCA to support the LED Street Lighting Investment Programme. Other options for external funding in support of low carbon projects are being explored.

2.13 The Council has been granted some £2.4m of funding from DfT’s Cycle City Ambition Grant 2. This is to provide enhanced cycle and access improvements, particularly with the purpose of improving the cycling network and providing improved links to railway stations in the Cheadle Hulme area.

3. **LOTTERY FUNDING OVERVIEW**

3.1 The various national Lottery funds were launched in 1994. The ‘good causes’ distributing bodies are administrated by the Department of Digital Culture, Media and Sport. At present, 40% is awarded to health, education, environment and charitable causes, 20% to Sports, 20% to Arts and 20% to Heritage.

3.2 Lottery funding is a very useful source of funding for Stockport Council and community groups within the borough. Of particular success for Stockport has been the National Lottery Heritage Fund which has supported key projects such as Bramall Hall & Park, the Future Heritage Skills project, Oldknow’s Legacy (Mellor) and the Stockport’s covered market amongst many others. Recently a £1.8m award has been approved for the five year Rediscovering the Underbanks Townscape Heritage programme. The Council and its partners have developed a strong reputation with the national Heritage Lottery Fund by delivering quality projects to timescale.
3.3 In the last five years, since 2014, the borough of Stockport has secured £4.5m of lottery funding, predominantly heritage and Big Lottery. This excludes recent Townscape Heritage award. Lifetime lottery awards within Stockport, summarized by type, are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lottery Grant Results – Stockport 1994 onwards</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Recipients</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/04/94 - Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Council England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awards for All (England)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Lottery Fund*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Millennium Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Opportunities Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport England</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK Film Council</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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*Includes a large regional Wellbeing project for which Stockport Council was the accountable body.
**Excludes the recent Townscape Heritage approval

Source: DDCMS

4. EU FUNDING OVERVIEW

4.1 EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in Stockport are mostly the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund. The Council has also received transnational funding connected to innovative health and adult social care projects. In the last few EU regional programmes most funding activity that supports businesses, skills and transport has been at the Greater Manchester level either via the Business Growth Hub, GMCA or TfGM.

4.2 Over the last ten years, assuming a standardised exchange rate, the Council has managed in the region of £31m of EU funding. Though not all of this is directly invested in the borough. Projects include Get Digital Faster (GM superfast broadband), Stockport Business Incubator, the NEET Participation & Skills Progression Programme and historically projects in the Market & Underbanks and First House, Brinnington.

4.3 Early expressions of interest have been made for additional EU funds that are available from the current 2014-2020 regional programme. This is in support of competitive business, low carbon and innovation projects.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Members are invited to note the above report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none
Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Paul Richards on telephone number Tel: 061-474-2940 or alternatively email paul.richards@stockport.gov.uk