

Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy

Report to:	Councillor Colin Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism
Date:	02 February 2016
Subject:	Agreement of EU Funding Bids for schemes that meet the Council's priorities
Decision Reference:	I010367
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

This report asks the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism to approve the making of 5 bids for EU Funding.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism:

- i) Approves the making of EU funding bids for business growth, rural broadband, staffing costs, and water management projects as more fully described in Appendix A.
- ii) Delegates to the Executive Director for Environment and Economy the authority to negotiate the detail of the final bids with funding bodies and approve the entering into legal documentation to secure the funding.

Alternatives Considered:

1. Do not apply for funding, but this will be a missed opportunity to attract funding to meet council objectives.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The applications that are proposed are for schemes that meet the council's commissioning strategies, and therefore the funding that is attracted will enable the council's resources to go further

1. Background

Lincolnshire benefits from the EU "transition" programme. This is a programme which has a notional allocation of roughly £100m (dependent on exchange rate fluctuations) for the period 2014-2020. The council's involvement in the programme is threefold:

1. Steering/shaping the strategy and implementation of the programme so that it meets local priorities –this is done in partnership with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership
2. Applying for funding from the programme for schemes that the council wishes to commission
3. Advising partners so that they make strong bids for schemes that they wish to run

This report concerns applying for funding for schemes that the council wishes to commission.

Because of the timetable for the EU programme -in which bids for certain projects can only be made at certain times- the council has recently been able to bid for:

- Business Growth Hub, which will extend funding to the Enterprise Commissioning Strategy's core budget
- Technical Assistance, which will extend the staffing budget in the Enterprise Commissioning Strategy
- Rural Broadband, which will extend funding to the Economic Infrastructure Commissioning Strategy
- Water Management, which will extend funding to the Environment Commissioning Strategy

The bids that will be made are described in more detail in Appendix A.

In addition to the economic outcomes of the bids, there are a number of matters to which the Executive Councillor must have due regard in reaching his decision.

Equality Act 2010

The Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 needs to be taken into account by the Executive Councillor when coming to a decision.

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: [Equality Act 2010 section](#)

[149\(1\)](#). The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149(7).

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (1) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (2) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (3) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to:

- (a) A breach of an equality clause or rule
- (b) A breach of a non-discrimination rule

It is important that the Executive Councillor is aware of the special duties the Council owes to persons who have a protected characteristic as the duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the Executive Councillor. The duty applies to all decisions taken by public bodies including policy decisions and decisions on individual cases and includes this decision.

To discharge the statutory duty the Executive Councillor must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

It is not considered that this decision in itself carries with it any potential for differential impact on people with a protected characteristic. Close attention will be given to the Council's public sector equality duty as further decision-making develops in relation to the projects.

Child Poverty Strategy

The Council is under a duty in the exercise of its functions to have regard to its Child Poverty Strategy. Child poverty is one of the key risk factors that can negatively influence a child's life chances. Children that live in poverty are at greater risk of social exclusion which, in turn, can lead to poor outcomes for the individual and for society as a whole.

Whilst there is no immediate impact on Child Poverty from this limited initial funding decision the potential impact on the Lincolnshire economy from schemes such as those proposed is considerable and would significantly improve the economic wellbeing of the area and with it the potential for the Council to address the issues set out within its Child Poverty Strategy.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

Similarly, the economic consequences of a successful scheme would have a positive impact in dealing with many of the issues highlighted in the JSNA and the JHWS

2. Conclusion

In summary, the bids that are being made meet council objectives and will extend the council's resources. They will have a significant impact on the welfare of the local economy.

3. Legal Comments:

The Council has power to apply for the funding proposed. The legal matters to which the Executive Councillor must have regard are dealt with in the body of the Report.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive Councillor.

4. Resource Comments:

The matched funding required to support these funding applications are within our current revenue budgets (for the staffing elements of matching) and within the current capital programme (for the broadband programme).

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

The decision will be considered by the Economic Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2016 and the comments of the Committee will be reported to the Executive Councillor.

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Details of bids

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Justin Brown, who can be contacted on 01522 550630 or justin.brown@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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