
Subject: Investment Fund Update and Funding Approvals

Report of: Interim Director of Inclusive Growth

Report Summary

The purpose of the report is to ask Cabinet Members to make decisions on the applications for funding that were considered at the Cabinet meeting on 5 February, to provide an outline of the proposed call for bids for a programme of interventions designed to inspire more children and young people to engage with the STEM subjects and digital skills, and to outline the next stage of the work programme around the investment fund. It also proposes that delegated authority be given to deal with a potential allocation of funding to support a North of Tyne stage of the Tour of Britain cycling event.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. approve the following funding awards:
 - a. £1,265,307 (over 4 years) to Northumberland County Council for the North of Tyne Rural Business Growth Investment Fund;
 - b. £175,000 to Northumberland County Council for the Northumberland to Newcastle Line – Economic Transformation Masterplan;
 - c. £75,000 to Northumberland County Council for the Local Full Fibre Network;
 - d. £200,000 to North Tyneside Council for the North Shields masterplan and Business Case Development Study.
 - e. £48,965 to Northern Stage for the Raby Street Creative Hub Feasibility and Business Plan;

2. authorise the Interim Head of Paid Service to finalise the conditions to be attached to the above funding awards and authorise the Interim Monitoring Officer to complete the necessary documentation;

3. approve a budget of up to £1,250,000 over 3 years for the STEM and Digital Skills Programme as set out in section 1.4 of this report, and authorise the Interim Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Interim Mayor and portfolio holder for Education Improvement, to finalise and publish the call documentation;
4. authorise the Interim Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Interim Mayor and relevant Portfolio Holders, to commission the Investment Fund development work and any other steps as set out in section 1.5 of this report;
5. authorise the Interim Head of Paid service, in consultation with the Interim Mayor and relevant portfolio holders, to consider an allocation of funding to support a North of Tyne stage of the 2019 Tour of Britain Cycling event as set out in section 1.6 of this report, subject to the normal appraisal processes.

1. Background Information, Proposals and Timetable for Implementation

1.1 In November 2018, NTCA Cabinet agreed to invite several projects to apply for project delivery funding or Business Case Development funding.

This report provides summaries of the applications and appraisals for:

- Project funding for the North of Tyne Rural Business Growth Fund;
- Business Case Development Fund applications in relation to:
 - The Northumberland to Newcastle Line – Economic Transformation Master Plan
 - Local Full Fibre Network Expansion
 - North Shields Master Plan and Business Case Development Study
 - Raby Street Creative Hub Feasibility and Business Plan.

An outline of a draft funding call for projects that would form a programme of interventions designed to inspire more young people to engage in STEM subjects and Digital Skills is also included in this report for consideration.

1.2 Application for Investment Fund Project Funding

North of Tyne Rural Business Growth Project

This 3-year project aims to support economic growth in rural economies and the economic rebalancing of rural communities. The programme will help drive increased productivity and business performance, encouraging more overseas trading and incentivising business innovation.

Proposal Name	North of Tyne Rural Business Growth Investment Fund
Lead Organisation	Northumberland County Council
Partners	n/a
Delivery Areas	The rural areas of Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside, as defined in the DEFRA Rural classification guidance dated 2011
Timescales	1st October 2019 to 30th September 2022

The project comprises two linked components:

- A Capital Grant Investment Fund to support investment in projects that enable rural businesses to expand productive capacity and / or diversify into new markets or products;
- Business Advice and Support Services to support the development of growth plans and guide businesses towards appropriate sources of finance.

The project aims to deliver the following outputs / outcomes:

- 300 businesses receiving information, diagnostic and brokerage support, of which:

- 200 businesses will be supported¹ with a minimum of 12 hours support to develop growth plans, via workshops or one-to-one advice; and
 - 62 businesses will benefit from a capital grant to invest in growth plans.
- 200 new FTE direct jobs created in businesses supported with a capital grant.
 - £2.8m of private sector investment from businesses supported with a capital grant.

An application for European Regional Development Fund to resource Capital Grant Investment Fund has been made and is progressing. NTCA Investment Fund resources are sought for the Business Advice and Support Services component.

North of Tyne Rural Business Growth Project Funding					
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
ERDF	226,652	986,144	2,102,603	499,908	3,815,307
Private Sector	0	700,000	1,820,000	280,000	2,800,000
NoT Investment Fund	226,652	356,144	432,603	249,908	1,265,307
Total	453,304	2,042,288	4,355,206	1,029,816	7,880,614

Outcome of the Independent Appraisal

Overall the outcome of the independent appraisal is positive:

- The project has a strong fit with the NTCA's strategic priorities;
- The business case provides a good explanation of the rationale for the investment and need for the programme;
- The project is projected to make good contribution to the NTCA's key measures:

Measure	Estimated outputs / outcomes
New FTE jobs	200
GVA Growth	£16.98m (up to 2025/26)
Private sector leverage	£2.8m

- A Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 3:1 represents a strong positive value and the estimated impacts were considered to be at the lower end of the scale so the actual BCR achieved could eventually be higher;
- A clear procurement plan is in place and clear governance structure is in place.

Recommendation and Proposed Funding Conditions.

It is recommended that the application for funding is approved subject to the following conditions to be included in the funding agreement:

¹ Using the ERDF definition this equates to each business benefiting from at least 12 hours of support

1. Northumberland County Council to provide a detailed project delivery plan, including a timeline / critical path, key activities and performance measures. This should be provided by June 2019.
2. Northumberland County Council to provide evidence of ERDF match funding being secured at the level specified prior to project commencement.

1.3 Applications for Business Case Development Fund

The Northumberland to Newcastle Line – Economic Transformation Masterplan

Programme:	Business Case Development Fund.
Project:	The Northumberland to Newcastle Line – Economic Transformation Masterplan
Applicant Organisation	Northumberland County Council
Legal Status of the applicant:	Local Authority
Location:	The A189 corridor in the North of Tyne (Ashington to Newcastle via Bedlington, Blyth, Seaton Valley and Northumberland Park).

The application relates to the development of the Northumberland to Newcastle Line Full Business Case. As part of the wider business case development process for the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the line between Ashington and Newcastle, Business Case Development funding (BCDF) is sought to develop an Economic Masterplan of the whole corridor which will identify the current and future economic potential of the corridor and set out how the potential of the opportunities can be maximised.

BCDF is requested to produce a strategic economic masterplan for the “corridor” area that covers the following broad stages and tasks:

- Define the specific study area that is to be covered by the Economic Masterplan;
- Baseline the existing state of the economy to identify the main challenges and opportunities for the masterplan area;
- Identify a vision, objectives and strategy for the economic masterplan in consultation with key stakeholders.

Estimated Total Cost - £250,000
 NTCA funding requested - £175,000 (70% intervention rate)

Outcome of the Appraisal

The project that has a strong fit with the NTCA's Vision and is identified as a key strategic priority in the Devolution Deal and local Strategic Economic Plan. The project for which development funding is requested has the potential to make a significant

contribution to the NTCA's success measures. The supporting rationale demonstrates a clear case for the proposed project. Overall the application achieved a high score.

Recommendation and Proposed Funding Conditions.

It is recommended that the application for funding is approved subject to funding conditions outlined below:

1. NTCA funding to be made conditional on the formal confirmation of match funding;
2. NTCA funding to be made conditional on the NTCA having the opportunity to contribute to the study specification, including the geographical scope;
3. NTCA funding to be made conditional on the completion of a full procurement exercise;
4. NTCA funding is awarded based on the scope and timescales outlined in the application; any changes in scope or timescale will need NTCA approval.

Local Full Fibre Network

Programme:	Business Case Development Fund
Project:	Local Full Fibre Network
Applicant Organisation:	Northumberland County Council
Legal Status of the applicant:	Local Authority
Location	Sites throughout the North of Tyne area

The application relates to the proposal to improve digital connectivity across all three local authority areas, by extending the full fibre infrastructure in the area. Extending the availability of high speed, affordable and reliable connectivity to faster broadband will have the benefit of connecting communities, some of which are extremely isolated to employment and training opportunities and businesses to markets.

Business Case Development funding is sought to develop the full business case bid into the Government's Local Full Fibre Network Challenge Programme or other possible funding opportunities. If successful, Government would provide up to 50% of the total estimated cost of £24m with the private sector providing the remainder.

BCDF is requested to develop the business case necessary to satisfy the requirements of the next stage of the application process and provide the platform for project implementation. Specifically, the work needed to proceed with the application consists of:

- Developing the necessary Scenario Modelling and Project Plan;
- Completing the Draft Outline Business Case according to the requirements of the Government's Green Book appraisal and evaluation Guide;

- Finalising the Full Business Case according to the advice provided at EOI stage.

Although designed to meet the requirements of the Local Full Fibre funding programme, the outcome of the work can also be used to support project development for a priority action identified in the NTCA Vision document.

Estimated Total Cost - £75,000
 NTCA funding requested - £75,000 (100% of the intervention rate)

Outcome of the Appraisal

The project that has a strong fit with the NTCA’s Vision and is specifically identified as a key priority in the Vision document. The project for which development funding is requested has the potential to make a significant contribution to the NTCA’s success measures. The supporting rationale demonstrates a clear case for the proposed project. There is no match funding identified for the development work but overall the application achieved a high score.

Recommendation and proposed Funding Conditions

It is recommended that the application for funding is approved subject to the funding conditions outlined below:

1. NTCA to review the outcome of each of the 3 stages before deciding to provide funding for any subsequent stage in the process.

North Shields Master Plan and Business Case Development Study

Programme:	Business Case Development Fund
Project:	North Shields Masterplan and Business Case Development Study
Applicant Organisation:	North Tyneside Council
Legal Status of the applicant:	Local Authority
Location:	North Shields

The application relates to Business Case Development Funding to develop the evidence base that will inform a detailed Masterplan and Business Case for the regeneration of North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay. The outcome of the work for which funding is sought will be used to attract investment from several sources and could support an application to the Government’s Future High Streets Fund.

BCDF is requested to carry out:

- Transport modelling and Design work;
- Ground conditions investigations for key development sites.

Estimated Total Cost - £249,000
NTCA Funding Requested - £200,000 (80% intervention rate).

The match funding identified in the application relates to funding that has been committed to an options appraisal covering the relocation of the ferry landing at North Shields: a key element of the redevelopment proposals.

Outcome of the Appraisal

The project that has a strong fit with the NTCA's Vision and is a stated priority for the local authority. The project for which development funding is requested has the potential to contribute to the NTCA's success measures, particularly increasing the rate of homebuilding. The supporting rationale demonstrates a clear case for the proposed project. Overall the application achieved a high score.

Recommendation and proposed Funding Conditions

It is recommended that the application for funding is approved subject to:

1. The production of a full project plan for the development of the detailed Masterplan and Business Case.

Raby Street Creative Hub Feasibility and Business Plan.

Programme:	Business Case Development Fund
Project:	Raby Street Creative Hub Feasibility and Business Plan
Applicant Organisation:	Northern Stage
Legal Status of the applicant:	Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee
Location:	Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne

The application relates to Business Case Development Funding (BCDF) for a feasibility study to explore how a former youth centre on Raby Street could be developed by Northern Stage and local partners to be used as a creative, multi-use space which offers a locally unique rehearsal space for the creative sector and employment and enterprise opportunities for local people. The rehearsal space is considered crucial if Northern Stage and other production companies in the area are to produce large scale productions that have national reach and significance.

BCDF is requested to carry out the work necessary to:

- Develop a business plan for the proposed facilities and use;
- Produce a physical improvement plan with design plans and costings;

- Develop a fundraising plan and strategy.

Estimated Total Cost - £69,950
NTCA Funding Requested - £48,965 (70% intervention rate)

Outcome of the Appraisal

The application sets out a project that has a strong fit with several elements of the CA's Vision and which has the potential to contribute to the CA's success measures. The supporting rationale demonstrates a clear case for each component of the proposed project. Overall the application achieved a high score.

Recommendation and proposed Funding Conditions

It is recommended that the application for funding is approved subject to funding conditions outlined below:

1. NS required to provide evidence that the necessary match funding has been committed;
2. NTCA and NS to jointly review the outcome of each stage before deciding to proceed with funding for subsequent stage in the process.

1.4 STEM and Digital Skills – Proposed Call for Projects

In November 2018, the NTCA Cabinet agreed that further development work should be undertaken on a STEM and Digital Skills Programme. This will deliver school-based interventions that will inspire more young people to pursue STEM subjects and get involved in the development of coding skills.

Prospective applicants for this programme will be invited to submit applications for funding following the formal announcement of the call details on the CA website.

Proposed Call Outline

Leaders of Tomorrow, one of 6 pillars framing the NTCA vision, focuses on supporting a high quality, inclusive education system, which ensures our young people have the skills and qualifications to take up good quality training, apprenticeships and jobs. The NTCA, recognises that providing an excellent education is crucial to producing good outcomes in later life. At present, educational outcomes for most of our young people are very good, particularly for children up to the age of 11. However, there is variation in performance and areas for improvement, particularly in relation to the need to raise outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. We also need to improve the transition from education into work by ensuring our young people have the right skills and qualifications needed to maximise their future opportunities and promote ongoing learning and development.

The NTCA is committed to bringing forward a programme of activity which supports the delivery of the North of Tyne Education Challenge and the North East Ambition

programme. The STEM and Digital Skills programme aims to inspire the development of STEM and Digital skills in children and young people and will provide support for high-performing STEM and Digital Skill programmes that are shown to:

- Add capacity and variety to existing provision;
- Offer innovative and effective delivery models that are differentiated from existing provision;
- Are clearly designed to inspire interest and increase take up in STEM subjects and digital skills;
- Link directly to the Good Careers Guidance.

The STEM and Digital Skills programme will be framed around the following specific call components:

- STEM enrichment activities for young people and CPD opportunities for teachers using the North East's unique assets, opportunities and heritage;
- STEM enrichment activities for young people and their influencers which specifically link to the North of Tyne's key sectors (Ageing and life Science, Digital, tech and data; Energy, subsea and offshore; Culture, tourism and creative industries);
- Digital skills programmes that support young people to move onto higher level digital and technical skills pathways and raise awareness with teachers and influencers of digital skills opportunities.

The aim of the project is to encourage more young people to choose a career in STEM post 18, more young people developing the digital skills to meet demand in key areas of the labour market and STEM embedded into a whole school approach.

Cabinet is asked to approve a budget of £1,250,000 for this work, which would support projects lasting up to 3 years. Cabinet is also asked to authorise the Interim Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Interim Mayor and the portfolio holder for Education Improvement to finalise the and publish the call documentation.

1.5 Next Steps – Work to inform Future Activity.

In February, Cabinet asked for work to be undertaken on several projects to provide the evidence necessary to inform planned future activity and investment. This included:

- Working with key stakeholders to identify investments associated with the Industrial Strategy's Grand Challenges;
- Mapping the existing business support provision with the aim of informing the design of future interventions that add value;
- Reviewing inward investment activities in the NTCA area, including the role played by DiT;
- Reviewing the destination marketing activities and tourism development plans in the NTCA area.

Development work on these propositions is currently being undertaken, with a view to bringing in additional support to ensure that this work is progressed rapidly. This paper has been written before the NTCA business engagement event on 1st March which will discuss this work and BREXIT; it is proposed that the Head of Paid service provides a verbal update to Cabinet on the next steps following this event.

Cabinet is asked to authorise the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Interim Mayor and relevant portfolio holders, to commission this additional support and any other next steps, following further consultation events with the Voluntary and Community Sector later in March.

1.6 Tour of Britain Cycling Event

In addition, an opportunity has recently emerged for the North of Tyne to host a stage of the Tour of Britain 2019 Cycling event, which would travel through a significant proportion of the Combined Authority area. This would be a high-profile event, which would be likely to draw significant visitor numbers and provide an economic boost to local businesses. It would also promote the area through extensive national and international media coverage, whilst also providing opportunities for community involvement and the promotion of health outcomes. However, there is an urgency to put the necessary arrangements in place before the next scheduled meeting of Cabinet. Therefore, Cabinet is asked to authorise the Interim Head of Paid service, in consultation with the Interim Mayor and relevant portfolio holders, to consider an allocation of funding to support a North of Tyne stage of the 2019 Tour of Britain Cycling event, subject to the normal appraisal processes.

2. Potential Impact on Objectives

- 2.1** The projects identified in the report are consistent with the priorities set out in the NTCA Vision.

3. Key Risks

- 3.1** Risks associated with each funding application have been considered as part of the application and appraisal process. The conditions associated with funding approvals relate to the mitigation of risks.
- 3.2** Risks associated with the other proposed activities set out in the report are being considered as an essential element of the project development process.

4. Financial and Other Resources Implications

- 4.1** The financial implications of the funding approvals recommended in this report are as outlined below:

Financial Implications Associated with the funding approvals proposed in this Report

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Rural Business Growth Project	£226,652	£356,144	£432,603	£249,908	£1,265,307
Northumberland Line	£175,000				£175,000
Local Full Fibre	£75,000				£75,000
North Shields Town Centre	£200,000				£200,000
Raby Street Creative Hub	£48,965				£48,965
Total	£725,617	£356,144	£432,603	£249,908	£1,764,272

Resources are available in the NTCA budget to cover the proposed expenditure.

4.2 Resources are also available to cover the estimated costs of the projects set out in 1.4 and the £1,250,000 budget proposed for the STEM and Digital Skills Programme call.

4.3 Resources are available to cover the financial aspects of the proposals set out in 1.5 and 1.6.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Interim Monitoring Officer's comments have been included in this report.

6. Consultation and Engagement

6.1 Applicants and stakeholders have been fully engaged in the development of funding applications and project proposals.

7. Appendices

7.1 There are no appendices to the report.

8. Background Papers

8.1 The background papers to this report are confidential because they contain business/financial information.

9. Contact Officers

9.1 **Tom Warburton**, Interim Director of Inclusive Growth,
tom.warburton@newcastle.gov.uk