

Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool – SEDF Funding Assessment

Central Gloucestershire Mass Transit

Gloucestershire Economic Growth Senior Officer Group's consideration of SEDF application against eligibility criteria

The bid is from a 'sponsoring' partner authority of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee ('Joint Committee') or the Gloucestershire Local Economic Partnership
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Senior Officer Group assessment:

<i>Gloucestershire County Council is the sponsoring partner and scheme promoter for this Bid.</i>

The bid relates to one off or fixed term funding

Senior Officer Group assessment:

<i>The bid relates to a one off revenue funding of £850,000 towards development funding to complete the Option Assessment Report (OAR) in 2022/23 financial year. The funding would also subsequently include the commissioning, development and completion of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) in 2023/24 financial year.</i>
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The bid relates to revenue support for enabling activity which:
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support economic growth projects, partnership support or• Enable the commissioning of economic research, intelligence, pre development work or feasibility studies or• Provide pump priming funding contributions or• Provide essential leverage match funding to support the delivery of broader local economic projects or programmes. |
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Senior Officer Group assessment:

<i>This bid does support future economic growth and projects and partnership support, will enable the commissioning of economic research, intelligence etc, and also likely to provide essential and additional leverage to support the delivery of broader local economic projects/programmes.</i>

The bid provides evidence of clearly demonstrating the economic benefits and contribution it is likely to make in supporting the delivery of growth of the local economy and communities, as well as planned outcomes.

<p>The development of mass transit has been identified as a key intervention to address the climate emergency declared by all Gloucestershire councils in 2019 and to help achieve the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision, as well as support the county's significant growth aspirations.</p>

<p>SOG are supportive of this bid, and recognised that GCC are in the early stages of developing a potential mass transit scheme in central Gloucestershire, and that the study has identified several broad corridors in central Gloucestershire where there is sufficient demand to introduce mass transit. Planning for strategic transport connectivity is an essential part of plan making. It is vital that sustainable growth is properly managed for, including all required associated infrastructure to enable this growth to be delivered. The funding will support the next phase of development work required to continue with options appraisals of the corridors.</p>
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Mass transit will help enable the essential step change in public transport provision, and will significantly improve connectivity, travel times, accessibility, frequency and affordability in central Gloucestershire. It is also recognised, through case studies, that mass transit provides mobility, can shape land use and development patterns, generate jobs and enable economic growth, as well as supporting public policies regarding energy use, air quality and carbon emissions. It is also recognised as a key to economic growth as it will improve connectivity, thereby increasing productivity and accommodating sustainable future growth.

Mass transit will also support rural-urban linkages through connectivity via well located interchange hubs. This would enable residents from other districts in the county (e.g. the Forest of Dean and Cotswolds) to travel to an appropriate interchange hub.

The OAR and SOC work is a significant and essential part of this work and is expensive to undertake with many phases and stages to carry out. GCC have already made substantial financial contributions to this project, having funded both the pre-feasibility and feasibility studies (total cost £195,000) and committed a further £100,000 for mass transit for 2022/23, and also officer resources to lead the project.

Further conditions if the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Committee approves the bid:

Section 151 Officer's confirmation that sufficient funds are available in the Strategic Economic Development Fund during the relevant financial year.

The SEDF does not have sufficient funding to allocate at this time. It is likely that, once received, the 2021/22 allocation would be enough to fund this bid, but this amount is not confirmed at the current time. The Committee has not previously allocated funds in advance of them being received. It is recommended that all currently available and future SEDF funding is allocated to the mass transit project to secure the total request of £850K. This funding is able to be split between the next two financial years.

It is suggested that any shortfall in SEDF is underwritten by the City Region Board allocation within SEDF – if SEDF income for the project proves to be insufficient. There will therefore need to be a funding drawdown plan to match the mass transit project plan.

Local Strategic Fit Scoring Criteria - Assessment of the ranking of the bid in terms of alignment against 'Strategic Fit' (as outlined in Annex A)

This request for funding was assessed and given a score of 4 and seen as a 'strong fit'

Terms and conditions of the approved bid (to include any binding conditions to any approved funding to which the applicant body will be required to agree before any release of funding, plus reporting requirements)

Details of the timing and release of funding, and details of reporting back to GEGJC on the project, would be agreed, in consultation with the project promoter and outlined in an offer letter.

Recommendations to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee

*The Gloucestershire Economic Growth Senior Officer Group recommend the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee **approve** the bid as set out above.*