

Item: 14

Policy and Resources Committee: 21 February 2023.

Scottish Highlands and Islands Local Policy Innovation Partnership

Report by Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider Council participation in the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Developing Local Policy Innovation Partnership programme.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That the UKRI Developing Local Policy Innovation Partnership Fund seeks to make available £20M over four years for establishing networks of Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIPs) to address social, community, economic and environmental priorities that contribute towards inclusive sustainable economic growth.

2.2.

That the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Robert Gordon's University (RGU) approached the Council seeking support as a collaborating organisation as part of a Phase 1 application to the UKRI Developing Local Policy Innovation Partnership Fund, with a deadline of 12 January 2023.

2.3.

That, in recognition of the urgency and, in consultation with the Convener, Leader and Depute Leader, on 11 January 2023, the Chief Executive exercised emergency powers by providing the Council's support for the bid by UHI and RGU to the UKRI Developing Local Policy Innovation Partnership Fund.

2.4.

That, should the bid be successful, involvement of the Council would be limited from a practical perspective, with no financial requirement, but an expectation to participate in meetings and to help with a landscape review.

2.5.

That successful applications will be announced in March 2023 with a project start date of 18 April 2023.

It is recommended:

2.6.

That, should the Phase 1 bid be successful, powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Leader and Depute Leader, to confirm and finalise the Council's involvement in the Scottish Local Policy Innovation Partnership, including a Phase 2 submission .

3. Background

3.1.

On 9 November 2022, UHI and RGU approached the Council seeking the Council's involvement as a 'collaborating organisation' in the submission of a funding proposal to UKRI.

3.2.

The UKRI funding round in question was the [Developing Local Policy Innovation Partnerships](#) which opened on 6 October 2022. Organisations interested in submitting a formal proposal were required to submit a 'Compulsory intention to submit' by 17 November 2022. Following this there are Phase 1 and Phase 2 submissions. Phase 1 proposals needed to be submitted before 12 January 2023.

3.3.

In addition to the Council other named 'collaborating organisations' included Shetland Islands Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, HiTRANS and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

3.4.

As there was no commitment to anything at the 'Compulsory Intention to Submit' stage permission was granted to UHI/ RGU to refer to the Council as a 'collaborating organisation'.

3.5.

Following the 'Compulsory Intention to Submit' RGU submitted a Phase 1 proposal on 12 January 2023. The Council along with other organisations were referred to within this proposal as 'core partners'.

4. Process Followed

4.1.

On 13 December 2022, the Corporate Leadership Team agreed the following course of action:

- That the powers of the Chief Executive are to be used in consultation with the Leader / Depute Leader / Convener.

- That this will progress to the February 2023 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee where the committee will be informed of the use of delegated powers and support will be sought to sign up to the project should the funding bid be successful.

4.2.

On 5 January 2023, the Programme Manager Islands Deal consulted with the Convener, Leader and Depute Leader, and received their agreement to request the use of the Chief Executive's powers as a matter of urgency to support the submission of the Phase 1 proposal by 12 January 2023.

4.3.

On 11 January 2023, the Chief Executive exercised emergency powers, in accordance with paragraph 2.2.4 of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, to submit the letter of support for the application.

4.4.

RGU submitted the Phase 1 proposal on 12 January 2023 on behalf of the core partners.

5. Local Policy Innovation Partnership Fund

5.1.

This funding programme will provide financial support to establish a network of Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIPs) to address social, community, economic and environmental priorities that contribute towards inclusive sustainable economic growth.

5.2.

LPIPs aim to connect local policy and research partners, providing research, evidence, data and expertise to take advantage of opportunities and find place-based solutions to challenges that matter to local people and communities. Partnerships will be equitable and sustainable with co-creation and co-delivery at their heart.

5.3.

Interactions between the LPIP network, national stakeholders and wider initiatives will be co-ordinated and led by a strategic co-ordination hub (SCH) (to be awarded via a separate application process). This will help connect to broader initiatives, support dissemination and communicate outcomes.

5.4.

The LPIPs will be commissioned through a two-phased competitive process. Phase 1 (submission deadline of 12 January 2022) offers initial seed-corn funding (up to £50K at 100% eligible costs) so that applicants may dedicate time to developing partnerships. The funding is intended to resource the development of high-quality

proposals to the Phase 2 opportunity, by ensuring that partnership building is resourced, reflecting the essential role of partners in the public, third and private sectors.

5.5.

The full LPIP programme will make up to £20M available over 4 years, to include setting up a Strategic Coordination Hub to support LPIPs. For Phase 2, the funding body anticipates awarding a minimum of three grants of a minimum value of £4.3M per award, with a duration of 36 months.

6. The Proposal

6.1.

The overall aim of the proposal is to facilitate an academic, local government and third sector policy network spanning the island groupings of Orkney, the Western Isles and Shetland as well as across the rest of the Highlands. It will result in the development of a plan for a multi-disciplinary, cross sectoral consortium to evidence the policy responses required to some of the island-based challenges. It builds on and expands existing relationships between the partners. It will focus on the social and economic challenges within the island groupings specifically around inequalities and ageing including the challenges around retaining educated young people, the ageing population and long-term financial challenges relating to the public sector.

6.2.

UHI and RGU are collaborating to lead this proposal, bringing together their experience of research and knowledge exchange in remote, rural and island environments with particular reference to health, transport, creative industries and data optimisation and digital. The collaborating organisations referred to in the 'Compulsory Intention to Submit' will be part of the 'Core Partnership' with Associated Partners being recruited at a later date.

6.3.

The purpose of a Phase 1 application is to secure resource and capacity across stakeholders to undertake partnership development and landscape evidence analysis required to design the Phase 2 work programme and enable the submission of a proposal for Phase 2.

6.4.

A successful Phase 1 application would provide a valuable financial resource for partners to develop a proposal for Phase 2.

6.5.

The opportunity builds on and aligns with the following to which the Council is already committed:

- The UHI Islands Strategy and Forum.

- The Islands Growth Deal and UHI/ RGU engagement within this.
- Supporting university growth including UHI and RGU within Orkney.
- The UK Islands Forum.
- Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.
- Scottish Government National Islands Plan.

6.6.

The fact that the LPIPs will link into a Strategic Co-ordination Hub at a national level reinforces the potential for more opportunities as things develop.

6.7.

Liabilities for the Council are limited at this early stage. It will involve time which is expected to include involvement in virtual meetings, supporting a landscape review and local face to face workshops between April and August 2023. There will be no financial ask of any of the partners for Phase 1 and any travel/subsistence costs incurred by any Council staff will be covered through the project at 100% of cost. As this is a phased approach should the decision be to not participate in Phase 2 the Council could do so without any repercussions to the Council or other partners.

6.8.

The Council is asked to delegate powers to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Leader and Depute Leader, to confirm and finalise the Council's involvement in the Scottish Local Policy Innovation Partnership, including in a Phase 2 submission.

7. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

8. Financial Implications

8.1.

There are no financial costs to the Council for involvement in Phase 1 if the application is successful. Any travel and subsistence costs will be covered. Officer time will be required to provide information to support a submission for Phase 2.

8.2.

Should the Phase 2 bid be successful resource would be sought through the bid for the Council to participate more actively.

9. Legal Aspects

If the Phase 1 bid is successful, there will be no requirement for the Council to enter into any formal agreement. During the delivery of Phase 1 the Council would determine its involvement in Phase 2 and could choose to opt out with no impact on the Council or the proposal.

10. Contact Officers

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