

Coast to Capital Assurance Statement – Getting Building Fund (July 2020)

When taking investment decisions for Local Growth Funding, Coast to Capital is committed to following its published Assurance Framework.

However, this Assurance Statement (July 2020) has been prepared to detail the process operated to distribute the Government's 'Getting Building' Fund. As this is not Local Growth Funding, it therefore requires its own Assurance Statement.

In June 2020, in response to COVID-19, Government asked LEPs to put forward a list of 'shovel ready' projects to support their commitment to kick start the economy. In unprecedented times, the Government's timeline for the 'Getting Building Fund' was exceptionally short with only a week for projects to be submitted by partners, ranked by the LEP and then returned to Government (see attached timeline – annex A).

The 'Getting Building Fund' is a new and separate fund to the other funds the LEP distributes. Government did not provide LEPs with any specific guidance on how to manage the process – noting only the timeline and that they anticipated competitive bids from all LEPs.

In order to meet this deadline and secure investment for our region, Coast to Capital adapted the existing Assurance Framework to accommodate the Government's stated timeline. This statement sets out the process as adapted to provide clarity and transparency regarding the process of identifying projects that will be funded.

It should be noted that for many months the LEP has been consulting with public and private sectors in the region to identify key projects which would fit with the local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The identified requirements of Government fit within the LIS include; digital connectivity, employment generation, green recovery, town centre and high street regeneration, innovation and productivity led schemes.

Government initially indicated that sums of money up to £30m would be available to LEPs to support these themes.

- Within 24 hours of receiving Government's instructions, an initial call was issued to all identified proposed delivery partners of the LEP, as the funding was particularly targeted at the acceleration of existing projects, reflecting the need for projects to be 'shovel ready'. This list included existing Local Authorities (all tiers), Universities and Colleges and existing LEP delivery partners. Simultaneously letters were also issued to organisations that the LEP felt may be in a position to submit projects that aligned with the Government's priorities above, following the LIS consultation process. The LEP also noted that the Communities Secretary had sent a letter inviting bids to a wide range of stakeholders and this letter was published in the public domain, assuring us that the opportunity was broadcast to the widest audience within the available time. In light of the aforementioned the LEP did not undertake any further advertising of the scheme.
- The LEP requested that outline proposals be submitted within 3 days, leaving the LEP executive 2 days to review, rank and submit a bid to Government. As with other funding rounds, this initial ranking was carried out by the Coast to Capital team under the leadership of the CEO. Criteria used were similar to those used for previous funding rounds and were as follows:
 - worthiness and deliverability (50%)
 - strategic alignment (50%)

Response Received

- 117 submissions were returned within 3 working days totalling £306m
- 3 proposals did not meet the above criteria, and 3 proposals were submitted outside of the Coast to Capital area.
- Of the proposals that met the criteria, the highest ranked 22 represented £40m. It was decided therefore to submit these 22 projects in response to Government's request for a prioritised list, in the expectation that they may provide a higher level of funding than originally indicated.
- With the agreement of the Investment Committee, the LEP also notified Government of the full ranked list of projects totalling £306 million.
- Government subsequently advised of an indicative funding allocation of £19.2m and asked the LEP to prioritise projects that in total amounted to this value. As with the process used for allocating other funds, the 22 bidders comprising the £40m list were asked to provide further detail. This additional detail was brought before the LEP's Investment Committee to score each bid, based on the further details provided by bidders. The scoring mechanism involved each member of the committee completing an individual score sheet covering:
 - social value / worthiness
 - deliverability
 - strategic alignment.
- The Committee agreed that the scores would be aggregated and averaged with weightings of 25%, 50%, 25% respectively.
- The scores were aggregated and averaged and a ranked list of projects amounting to 12 in number were submitted to Government for funding, on the 17th July 2020. This list was agreed by the LEP Chair and Vice Chair.
- When the LEP is notified by Government as to approval of the projects list, delivery bodies will be required to submit a full business case and will be subject to the full scrutiny process using the principles of the existing Coast to Capital Assurance Framework relating to Local Growth Fund projects.

END