

Bid to be submitted to finance first phase of the regeneration of Leicester's railway station

June 17, 2021



Bids are due to be submitted this month to finance three major development projects to help drive the city's economic recovery as it emerges from more than a year of lockdowns.

Leicester City Council is bidding for around £39million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund which is designed for long-term, major capital projects. The money will be used to develop both economic and transport projects designed to create jobs, encourage new investment and enable business growth.

Projects include the redevelopment of the former city council premises at Pilot House, in King Street, for start-up and growing creative businesses, bringing the cluster of heritage buildings back into use as part of the wider regeneration of the Belvoir Street, Market Street and New Walk areas.

The scheme, which would cost about £11m, would create around 250 skilled jobs. If the funding bid is successful, the buildings could be in use by 2023/24.

A £21million project that could create around 400 new jobs is proposed for three related projects in and around Pioneer Park and Exploration Drive, near the National Space Centre. The area is already home to

the innovative Dock workspaces for high-tech industries, and three linked elements would see more Dock-style buildings and high-quality manufacturing spaces created.

The vacant Ian Marlow Centre council depot site in nearby Blackbird Road would be transformed into light industrial spaces to provide much-needed small units, while other land at Pioneer Park would be redeveloped to complement the University of Leicester's Science Park, providing an opportunity to deliver high-quality production facilities linked to space and satellite technologies.

The third Levelling Up fund bid would finance the first phase of the regeneration of Leicester's railway station, which involves remodelling the entrance to create a new gateway to the city centre, creating a taxi rank on Station Street, restoring the booking hall to its original size, and converting the covered entrance hall areas – known as a port cochere – into space for hospitality and retail. The scheme would cost about £22million.

In total the three schemes are expected to cost about £54million, of which £39million could come from Levelling Up fund bids, with the rest made up from existing match funding and council contributions.

The bid proposals are due to be discussed by Leicester City Council's Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Committee on June 16. The bids are due to be submitted on June 18.

Leicester City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: "The bids we are making for this for cash are the latest phase of our work to drive the city's economic recovery, and would finance major, long-term projects to create new jobs, retain skilled workers and improve infrastructure in both the city centre and the Pioneer Park areas, as well as upgrading Leicester's station to meet the modern needs of a city of this size.

"Businesses across the city have suffered greatly over the last 15 months or so, and it is vital we rebuild confidence in Leicester and let people know we are open for business.

"Part of that is ensuring the opportunities for skilled employment are there, meaning we retain skilled workers, develop high-manufacturing facilities and build on our reputation as a place which has much to offer businesses, and with good transport links to the rest of the region.

"Last month also saw the launch of the "We've Missed You" campaign, working with businesses to encourage people back into the city, so they can once again enjoy the retail, hospitality, heritage and entertainment we have on offer.

"As a city we've lived through a hard time recently, and this is the next important step in us being able to bounce back from that."

Photo credit: Leicester City Council