

Levelling Up Fund

Stroud Bid - Gateways, Landmarks and Access for All

What are we trying to achieve?

The aim is to make Stroud town centre a more attractive and welcoming place to visit, work and live within, which in turn reinforces pride in the town and wider district, helps local businesses, creates more jobs and builds on the private investment that is already doing so much to benefit the town centre.

The bid focuses on the enhancement of two key but long neglected gateways into the town centre, the creation of improved pedestrian and cycle routes and the formation of accessible entrances into the town's historic arts venues making the most of its diverse cultural character.

The bid is not about one large project but a considered package of infrastructure interventions from an active partnership of stakeholders that will together achieve more for the town centre as a whole than the sum of its parts. Public investment is being matched by private funding to make the former go much further for local people.

What are the projects?

The long term vision for the railway station is to create an enhanced 'sense of arrival' to the town and district and a higher quality public realm to encourage people to stay and dwell in the vicinity, to support the private investment in this area at the Imperial Hotel and New Imperial House and to increase footfall to existing private investment at the Five Valleys Centre/King Street. Specific proposals will look to include an accessible route between platforms, public realm improvements at the station forecourt, opening up Brunel Mall to the station, forming better pedestrian and cycle routes through and creating an active, vibrant, art focused area around the improved Goods Shed.

Wallbridge is an important historic gateway into the town centre, where transformational change is proposed to welcome visitors arriving by canal and by walking and cycling routes and to improve connections to the town centre. Specific proposals will include the creation of a festivals and market space, canal mooring facilities, a community hub and public realm enhancements. It will also be a transition and signposting space whereby improved pedestrian



and cycle routes will enhance physical accessibility between the canal and the town centre.



Linking these two gateways is Cheapside where discussions are already taking place with Network Rail to masterplan this area. This will follow on as the next phase for the regeneration of this part of Stroud with investment from both the district council and private developers to deliver good quality energy efficient homes in the town centre.

Stroud has some key historic landmark buildings that are already an important part of the town's cultural identity by housing major arts venues. The bid will include



accessibility and facilities improvements to Lansdown Hall, The Subscription Rooms and the Goods Shed, and the transformation of the public space outside the Subscription Rooms into an attractive town square, supporting the visitor economy and the arts and cultural sector.



Improved cycling and walking routes from these gateways into the town and around these landmark buildings are an important part of the success of these areas and the bid is to also include designed and costed active travel schemes, that can be delivered within the spending timescales for the Levelling Up Funding, from, to and across these areas to improve the accessibility, safety and ease of travelling into the town centre.

Background

The proposed bid to the Levelling Up Fund builds on the groundwork already established by the District Council's Local Plan, the Town Council's 'Shaping the Heart of Stroud' Neighbourhood Development Plan, and other important strategies, feasibility studies and research projects that have been carried out in recent years.

In particular, the District Council's emerging Canal Strategy and Economic Development Strategy and the Town Council's Stroud Street Spaces Report and Stroud Station Feasibility Report, all provide a strong basis for the bid and have been developed with extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement, helping to underpin and support the bid.

The vision for Stroud town centre as a welcoming, healthy and thriving place is realised through these various plans and strategies. The Levelling Up Fund is a great opportunity to put those plans into practice and deliver on some of the key projects.

Any funds allocated through the Levelling Up Fund have to be spent by March 2025 and therefore deliverability will be the final determining factor for the shape and size of the bid. Detailed costings for all aspects of the bid are being finalised and will be included in the submission. We estimate that the overall bid will be in the range £10-15m, although it is possible that the final bid amount will fall outside this range once costings have been updated, to reflect the final designs, and an assessment carried out on their deliverability.

It is important to note that the bid to the Levelling Up Fund is set within a long term vision for these areas. The work done on those items that do not get included will be brought forward through further private and public investment with this funding, if successful, being that catalyst for future development.