



WRITTEN QUESTION FOR SUBMISSION TO MORAY COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2021

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR EAGLE

It is good to see the wide range of projects approved as part of the UK Community Renewal fund announced last week. Whilst it is disappointing Moray on this occasion did not succeed, I recognise we were not in the highest priority group. However, it does create questions on our ability to compete for external funding. I am concerned that Moray often misses the opportunity to attract external grant support. Given the huge potential funding coming from the UK levelling up fund and other national and local schemes can the convenor provide an absolute assurance that the Council is staffed to ensure detailed and high-quality bids for national grant schemes and that we as a council are committed to projects, including ensuring their place in the capital plan?

RESPONSE

The decision taken on the Moray UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) should not be viewed as indicative of an inability to compete for external funding. This funding stream opened with a very short application window and minimum project size. Bids for Moray were community based and complied with guidance. Of the 56 grants awarded in Scotland, only 14 were to local authorities that were not in the top priority group and so it is clear that competition was strong.

Officers across the Council are currently focussed as a priority on work to finalise documentation needed to enable draw down of the Moray Growth Deal funding which will leverage in excess of £100m into the Moray economy.

Whilst unsuccessful in the CRF process, Moray has been successful in many other funding streams and recently received confirmation of an award in terms of a separate round of economic development funding (details currently embargoed) with work ongoing to bid for Levelling Up funding, learning from the first phase of bids.

Officers from services across the council work in an agile way to consider bids for a wide range of funding opportunities as these arise. However, the nature and extent of funding opportunities is currently greater and emerging more rapidly than in previous years, typically with limited detail as to bid criteria available in advance and so it is hard to predict and plan for these opportunities. So for example, detail is currently awaited for the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and future elements of Climate Change funding from the Scottish Government. Staffing needs across Economic Development and Growth (which tends to lead on the bidding process) are currently under review including areas of budget pressure previously

shared with members and where increased staffing to meet reasonably anticipated funding streams is required such as in climate change, this has been progressed. It should be recognised however that staffing is only one factor in compiling a successful funding bid.