

Levelling Up Fund

Submission options for the
Elmet & Rothwell constituency

January 2022

The Rt Hon. Alec Shelbrooke, M.P.
Member of Parliament for Elmet & Rothwell



Foreword

HM Government introduced the Levelling Up Fund with the aim of bringing together the Department for Transport, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, alongside the Treasury, to work with local authorities on high priority local projects, focusing on the needs of individual places and the strategic case for investment.

The fund is open to any local area and is especially intended to support investment in places where it can make the biggest difference to everyday life.

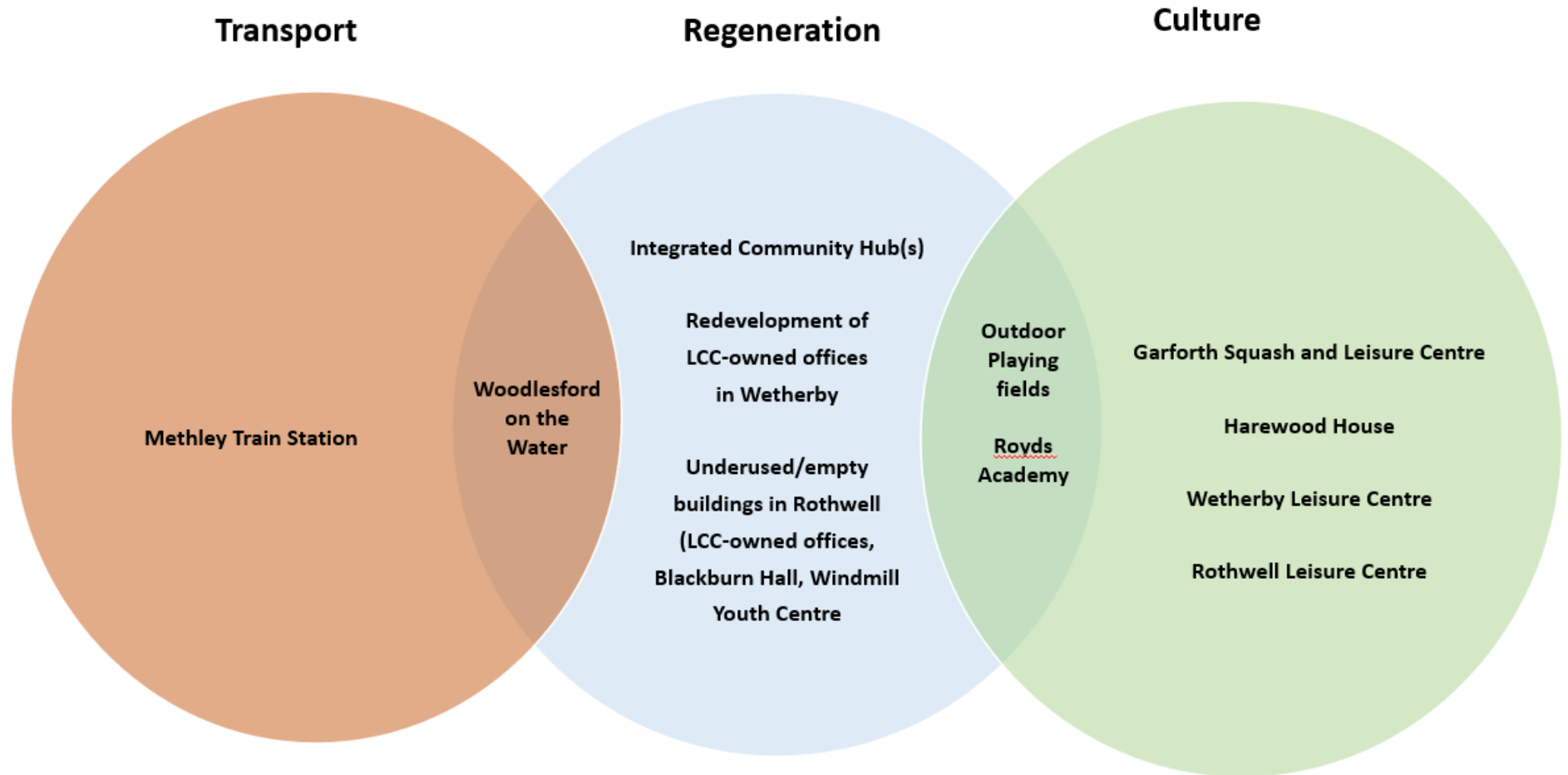
Members of Parliament are encouraged to work with local authorities to submit bids for their area. So, I decided to bring together Leeds City Councillors from each electoral ward in my constituency: Garforth & Swillington, Harewood, Kippax and Methley, and Wetherby with the main purpose of putting together a comprehensive list of ideas for the Levelling Up Fund that would benefit my constituents in Elmet & Rothwell.

Having discussed possible options that require investment in our area, I am pleased to summarise the ideas outlined to me by Councillors. This document is presented to officials at Leeds City Council to undertake more detailed assessments on the ideas proposed.

I am keen to ensure that we continue to work as a team, cross-party, to drive forward genuine priorities for investment that would benefit my constituents in Elmet & Rothwell.

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Levelling Up Fund bid options presented by Councillors in the Elmet and Rothwell constituency



1. Rothwell

1.1. Transport

The Rothwell Ward has good transport links to the nearby Leeds City Centre. Train services are easily accessible via the Woodlesford train station; the town and surrounding areas are in close proximity to motorways (A1, M1, A1(M), M62 and M621).

The Aire and Calder Navigation has been at the heart of the community for hundreds of years: initially carrying large volumes of cargo during its industrial past and now serving as a popular leisure destination.

The Councillors for Rothwell raised the idea of *Woodlesford on the Water*, as a potential transport/regeneration scheme for the area. The canal side is already popular with local residents and with visitors; it connects Woodlesford with the Leeds City Centre, as well as Castleford via Methley, Mickletown and Allerton Bywater.

The Aire and Calder Navigation was one of the main sources of employment in the past and, given its popularity and the current focus on sport and leisure activities both nationally and locally, it can once again become a source of employment by attracting businesses specialising in hospitality, leisure, tourism, events etc).

1.2. Regeneration

There are three public buildings in the Rothwell town centre that are either closed to the public or underused but could be beneficial for the community: Rothwell Windmill Youth Centre, Blackburn Hall and council offices, particularly if a *Community Hub* idea, which is outlined later on in this document, could be considered.

1.3. Culture

1.3.1 Rothwell Leisure Centre is a sports centre owned and run by Leeds City Council. It comprises of a 25m pool and a learner pool, 111 station gym, 5 courts and 1 courts sports hall, spin studio and a meeting room.

Rothwell Leisure Centre, whilst well used, is an outdated facility, built in 1974, that requires significant investment to bring it to a standard acceptable for modern-day use.

1.3.2 Similarly, Royds Academy has an outdated and dilapidating building, and is one of the last remaining former maintained high schools in the Leeds area to be left without significant investment.

2. Kippax and Methley

2.1 Transport

The Kippax and Methley Ward is located close to Leeds City Centre, as well as the nearby town of Castleford. As the local Member of Parliament, I have long been campaigning for the reinstatement of a train station in the village of Methley – an idea supported by local Councillors.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/451407832/Methley-Railway-Station-a-proposal-to-the-Department-for-Transport>

2.2 Regeneration

Kippax and Methley are both former mining villages.

The principal concern that the Kippax and Methley Councillors have raised with me is the lack of a central community hub within the ward that would incorporate public and health services under one roof: GPs, clinics, vaccinations, training, council services such as housing, benefit advice etc.

The local Councillors argue that such a facility would be extremely beneficial for the community, many of whom are elderly and are unable to travel long distances.

2.3. Culture

Kippax Leisure Centre was built in 1971 and comprises of a 25m pool and a 4-court sports hall. The sports centre requires significant improvement and a wider variety of facilities.

The swimming pool is currently closed, until at least the end of February 2022, due to a disrepair issue in the pool plant room.

Similarly to the sports centre in Rothwell, the leisure centre in Kippax requires investment to bring it to an acceptable standard.

3. Garforth and Swillington

3.1. Transport

Garforth is situated in East Leeds. Its proximity to the M1, A1(M) and the M62 allows residents to access the local motorway network quickly and easily.

Garforth has two train stations and, after many years of lobbying the Department for Transport, I'm pleased to have secured funding for new step-free access at Garforth Train Station, which is currently the subject of a planning application with Leeds Council.

3.2. Regeneration

With concerns around health at the forefront of the national and local agenda, residents living in the Garforth and Swillington Ward, along with the elected representatives, are keen to see a community hub in the area that would look holistically at health and wellbeing.

Such a hub can incorporate GP services, vaccination and warfarin clinics, council and housing services, benefit advice, space for community coffee mornings and events etc.

Many residents have had to travel long distances for COVID-19 vaccinations - the area needs a hub that would allow such services to be provided locally.

3.3 Culture

Once again, Garforth Leisure Centre, built in 1986, is an outdated facility. It has a 43-station gym, a fitness studio, 5 squash courts, and a 5-court badminton centre. There is no swimming pool on this site.

Additionally, outdoor playing facilities in Garforth and Swillington are inadequate for the size and popularity of two major local football teams - Garforth Rangers AFC and Garforth Villa Football Club. The aforementioned community hub can be utilised by the teams as an when required.

4. Harewood

4.1. Transport

The Harewood Ward is a large, rural ward located in the North East Leeds area. Whilst Harewood has no direct rail links, it is closely located to the M1, A1(M), A61, A58 and A64.

Additionally, the area has recently attracted significant investment for the East Leeds Orbital Road, with the first stage of the project completed in December 2019 and the second stage due to be completed this year.

Any further development is likely to have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt.

4.2. Regeneration

The Harewood Ward Councillors reported that an education, health and wellbeing hub would also benefit this area, particularly the southern part of the ward. Given the proximity of southern villages in the Harewood Ward (Aberford, Shadwell and Scarcroft), to Garforth and Swillington, these areas will also see benefits from a hub located in the neighbouring ward.

4.3. Culture

Councillors reported that the Harewood House Trust were looking at cultural bids.

5. Wetherby

5.1. Transport

Located on the border between West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire, Wetherby is a popular rural market town that attracts a lot of visitors. It has good road links with Leeds, Harrogate and York, although the absence of a working train line through the town is felt by residents.

Additionally, bus services have been reduced in recent years, which impacted those unable to drive, particularly elderly residents, significantly.

Furthermore, with the use of electric vehicles on the rise, it is of significant concern that there are only two charge points in the Wetherby town (at the Aldi Store and the Cluster of Nuts Car Park), only one of which is a rapid charger. Similarly, there is only one charger in Boston Spa; making it a total of three public charges in the whole of Wetherby Ward.

5.2. Regeneration

Leeds City Council-owned offices are now dilapidated and underused. The two anchor tenants that use these premises are the local radio station Tempo FM and Wetherby in Support of the Elderly (WiSE). Other community groups use it for storage facilities.

The Wetherby One Stop Centre has moved to the building occupied by the Wetherby library during the pandemic.

The Wetherby Town Council has been unable to use the building for its regular meetings because it is not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). Instead, Town Councillors have been paying a booking fee to the local Methodist Church to be able to use their meeting room.

Local Councillors, however, believe that, with extra funding, the building can be restored to its former glory and made DDA-compliant in order to be able to use it as a hub for council-run services, including the library, accommodate its current tenants, the Town Council and open it up to a wider use by community groups.

5.3. Culture

The Wetherby Leisure Centre, built in 1975, has had some minor, cosmetic refurbishment in the recent years. This leisure centre has very limited facilities, which include a 25m pool and a learner pool, and a 40-station gym.

The layout of the sports centre and its positioning does not lend itself easily to a large-scale renovation, and a full redevelopment is likely to be more appropriate in future years.

Summary

The Elmet & Rothwell constituency is diverse: with former mining towns, commuter-belt, and market towns. This semi-rural constituency is incorrectly characterised as an affluent part of Leeds, which has led to a lack of investment historically, with the majority of funding being channeled into inner Leeds city areas.

It is clear that funding is needed in leisure, health and wellbeing in all five wards, both from the sport and recreational perspective, and access to healthcare services, particularly as we recover from the unprecedented effects of the health pandemic. Additionally, transport connectivity remains a concern for residents, especially access to public transport.

I am keen to see the formation of projects that would advance opportunities for my constituents by improving access to transportation, leisure, and employment.

I look forward to receiving more detailed project options as a result of this paper.

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