Applicant Information

Bidding City Region: The Bedfordshire Functional Economic Area (FEA)

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Additional evidence, such as letters of support, maps or plans should be included in an annex.

The use of statistics, from both government bodies and well-respected independent sources, is encouraged. The suitability and validity of these will be scrutinised as part of the bid.
SECTION A – Definition and challenges

This section will seek a definition of the bidding city. City regions should:

- Explain the city geography, with a clear city region identified
- Indicate workday population (the Fund seeks to target the larger city regions in England)
- Describe the key transport challenges across the city region at a high level. This could include a discussion of productivity, or how transport connectivity is affecting this.
- Further evidence to support this argument – such as congestion, air quality or journey time impacts.

A1. Constituent Local Authorities: Luton Borough Council (LBC)-Lead Authority
Bedford Borough Council (BBC)
Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC)

A2. Geographical area:

Please provide a short description of area covered by the bid (in no more than 100 words)

The 3 Council areas are well connected to strategic north-south routes but have poorer east-west links in southern Bedfordshire. The M1 and Midland Main Line (MML) sever Luton from Dunstable/Houghton Regis, the MML/Great Ouse the Bedford-Kempston area, and the Ouzel/canal the Leighton-Linslade area. Each of these 3 urban areas are further constrained by environmentally-sensitive areas both within/around them (Annex A2.1/2.2).

Luton meets its future jobs needs, but relies on development in neighbouring council areas, particularly 8000 homes in Central Bedfordshire and 1900 in North Hertfordshire. In this context Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis is largest, most densely populated of the 3 urban areas and the main city-region of the Bedfordshire FEA.

A3. Population

Please include the workday population of the city region and relevant references.

The workday population adds or subtracts net commuting (the difference between total in and out-bound commuting) totals to or from the resident population. At the time of the 2011 census, the resident population of Luton was 203,147, 112,481 in Bedford Borough and 95,360 in the Central Bedfordshire towns of Dunstable/Houghton Regis and Leighton-Linslade, a total population of 410,988.

Commuting between the 3 Council areas (ONS, 2011) is set out in the following table; further information is included in Annex A3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From \ To</th>
<th>Bedford Borough</th>
<th>Central Beds</th>
<th>Luton</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedford Borough</td>
<td>39,779</td>
<td>5,514</td>
<td>1,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Beds</td>
<td>6,986</td>
<td>33,150</td>
<td>12,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton</td>
<td>1,252</td>
<td>8,401</td>
<td>41,083</td>
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</table>

This results in a total estimate of workday population of 486,130 in 2011.
A4. Discussion of key transport challenges:
The 3 Councils are currently co-operating in the Sustainable Transport Access to Rail Stations (STARS) programme currently being funded by the DfT’s Access fund. The STARS funding submission indicated that, of those commuters living within 2-5 miles of the rail stations, 50% of commuters in Bedford, 48% in Leagrave and 32% in Luton travel by car. However 20.6% of Bedford and 27.4% of Luton households do not have access to a car/van (ONS, 2011).

The combination of constraints in the 3 urban areas (Annex A2.1/2.2) coupled with the considerable number of trips<10km being made within Bedford Borough (50.8%), Central Beds (35.4%) and Luton (53.6%) results in significant congestion at peak times. This has a significant impact on journey time reliability for moving people and goods in and between the 3 urban areas, impacting on business operations and productivity.

Luton is the 4th worst UK congested town (out of 110) whereas Bedford is 57th. Motorists in Luton spend about 29 hours/year in gridlock traffic and on average 11% of their total drive time stuck in traffic, costing each driver £1, 143 per annum (INRIX, 2017). The high congestion in Luton is not helped by the fact that Luton-Dunstable is not bypassed, resulting in through traffic travelling around the town centres. Businesses in Luton also suffer from congestion, with drivers sitting in traffic 12% of the time during the day.

As shown in the following Table, since the Luton Dunstable Busway opened late September 2013, local bus use has risen, counter to trends in much of the UK.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average passengers per Autumn day</td>
<td>23,100</td>
<td>22,600</td>
<td>22,800</td>
<td>21,800</td>
<td>24,700</td>
<td>25,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of stations (ORR) in Bedford, Leighton-Linslade and Luton also continues to rise.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leighton Buzzard</td>
<td>1,588,972</td>
<td>1,646,360</td>
<td>1,664,590</td>
<td>1,727,358</td>
<td>1,788,662</td>
<td>1,840,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leagrave</td>
<td>1,686,524</td>
<td>1,757,188</td>
<td>1,810,120</td>
<td>1,894,294</td>
<td>1,914,952</td>
<td>1,861,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton</td>
<td>3,440,298</td>
<td>3,443,910</td>
<td>3,443,468</td>
<td>3,548,262</td>
<td>3,626,272</td>
<td>3,682,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton Airport Parkway</td>
<td>2,429,604</td>
<td>2,504,794</td>
<td>2,567,232</td>
<td>2,754,700</td>
<td>3,188,146</td>
<td>3,819,812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The greatest increase in rail passengers is at Luton Airport Parkway; Annex A4.1 indicates there is a close relationship between air passenger numbers and rail/car journeys together with jobs growth at the airport. Most passengers access the airport from the M1 Motorway, although the airport is also signed from Junction 8 of the A1(M) via the A602 and A505 through Hitchin. Annex A4.2shows the origin of airport employees who travel by car; indicating that 1,500 residents from the Luton-Dunstable conurbation drive to work [http://commute.datashine.org.uk/]

AnnexA4.3 summarises the patterns of journeys to work by car for the main corridors subject of this bid (section B) in the 3 urban areas, showing that the greatest number of these are local trips which could be undertaken by more sustainable modes.

These are growing and thriving towns; the following Table summarises key economic indicators for the 3 Councils:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Indicator</th>
<th>Bedford Borough</th>
<th>Central Beds</th>
<th>Luton</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic output (GVA)</td>
<td>£3,460m</td>
<td>£5,245.9m</td>
<td>£5,447m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth 2017 402</td>
<td>£5,052m (46%)</td>
<td>£7,700m</td>
<td>£8,047m (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in Employment 2017 402</td>
<td>70300-79100 (12.5%)</td>
<td>96200-110000 (12.5%)</td>
<td>93700-109700 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth 2017- 402</td>
<td>166500-198500 (19%)</td>
<td>278400-325700 (14.5%)</td>
<td>218300-256200(17%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the above trends, the key transport challenges are:

• High levels of single occupancy car use despite fact that most journeys to work are <10km;
• Congestion/delays in peak periods constraining economic growth, and leading to poor air quality in Bedford, Dunstable and Luton town centres (all have declared Air Quality Management Areas);
• Growth in bus use in Luton-Dunstable, but with the potential for smart ticketing to increase patronage;
• Rail patronage is forecast to continue growing but access to stations is poor from some areas and there are no opportunities for additional parking supply both at stations and nearby town centres;
• Luton and Bedford have significantly worse than national deaths attributable to particulate air pollution, from respiratory disease, preventable cancer/heart disease; childhood obesity or physically inactive adults;
• Significant planned housing and employment growth in town centres and on the periphery of the towns.

Please limit responses in section A4 to 500 words.
SECTION B: Who & Where

This section will seek detail on the city’s key priority areas to invest in, and motivations. City regions should:

- Identify and prioritise the main corridors or places for investment, and why. This could include highlighting where opportunities for growth, productivity or business are within these areas of the city region.
- Identify who would be affected by this investment and how user needs are recognised.

Maps identifying the priority areas can be appended as an annex to this section.

Please limit responses to 500 words.

The focus for investment and economic growth in the 3 urban areas is to complete development of Strategic sites identified in the Local Plans for Luton (https://www.luton.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/Regional%20and%20local%20planning/Pages/Local%20Plan%202011%20-%202031.aspx), CBC (http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/policy/local-plan/submission.aspx) and BBC (http://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/PlanningBrowse.aspx?id=d0k0MSusxtFYWFrdtPwXQ%3d%3d). These are either in the town centres or on their periphery and connected to the town centre by main roads (AnnexB1.1/B1.2).

To address our transport challenges (section A4), proposed interventions will be to make the healthier option for residents the easier option by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport use for all journeys including to access jobs, along with schemes to ease congestion on the highway network, thereby reducing Particulate Matter/ NOx pollution, and CO2 and increasing business productivity.

The distinctive identity of the 3 urban areas is summarised in Section A2 above; the green spaces in/around the towns (AnnexA2.1/2.2) form Strategic corridors linking residential areas with town centres and key employment areas. Sections of the National Cycle Network follow these corridors. AnnexB2 contains further information on the potential growth in cycling together with plans of the existing/planned walking/cycling networks in the 3 urban areas.

We will build on existing projects (e.g the STARS programme and SEMLEP LGF funding to deliver Transporting Bedford 2020 and Luton North bypass). The focus of Transforming Cities funding in:

- Luton on 3 routes; the Luton-Dunstable/Houghton Regis corridor, the New Bedford Road/Old Bedford Road corridor and the A505 (East Luton) corridor.
- Bedford on improving connectivity and public realm in the corridor between the Town Centre and Bedford station, including development sites to its south and west;
- Dunstable/Houghton Regis on public realm and traffic management improvements in the High Street (former A5) corridor;
- the corridor between recent developments south/east of Leighton-Linslade and the town centre/station, and improved public transport connections to Luton-Dunstable.

The Mall and Harpur Centre are the main shopping centres in Luton and Bedford; the majority of residents in Dunstable/Houghton Regis and Leighton-Linslade shop outside of the area. AnnexB3 summarises footfall in Luton and Bedford. The higher footfall in Luton is partly as a result of public realm and accessibility improvements in the town centre. The Councils’ Integrated Transport programmes have improved connectivity to other town centre/neighbourhood shopping and community services and have contributed to improving accessibility in the three urban areas.

Growth in mobile network technology in recent years provides opportunities to reduce congestion (e.g providing real-time travel information, more flexible work locations etc). The 3 urban areas are well-placed to benefit from this digital revolution because between 95% and 99% of properties have access to superfast broadband (speeds >100 MB/sec).
BBC and LBC are implementing Variable Message Signs on approaches to their town centres along with real-time information on availability of town centre parking spaces which, along with the coordination of signalised junctions forms part of the approach to managing congestion in Bedford-Kempston and Luton-Dunstable and can act as a platform for Mobility as a Service (MaaS) applications. All 3 Councils are members of England’s Economic Heartland; Luton are on its Innovation sub-group, and are planning various MaaS proposals in conjunction with private companies to encourage modal shift, including “docking” cycle share schemes and demand-responsive public transport (e.g. Arriva’s Click). Such applications use Mobile Networks for booking and payment of journeys, and Transforming Cities funding could help deliver these across the area.
SECTION C: Ambition for change

This section will seek evidence of how investment will tackle these challenges, and wider fit with existing plans. City regions should:

- **Articulate their vision for improved connectivity** from the Fund and how this links to the assessment of need outlined in the previous sections.
- **Demonstrate support from stakeholders** for investment in the identified areas, such as from the relevant Local Enterprise Partnership(s), employers and transport providers. This could also include commitments of further local and private funding.
- Highlight ambition to align with existing funding streams and to **utilise new approaches** and **powers available** to improve public transport.
- Demonstrate how the Fund would link to **wider long term plans** and spatial strategies around housing, local growth, productivity and air quality.

Supporting letters may be attached as an annex.

Please limit responses to 500 words.

We will drive development of strategic housing and employment sites as well as the continued regeneration of our town centres through One Public Estate programmes and Town Centre improvement Grants. We will nurture and build on our towns’ distinctive identity – making them places of choice to live, work and visit.

The adopted Luton Local Plan and those submitted for Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire are the basis of development in the 3 urban areas over the next 15-20 years. The Luton Investment Framework (LINK) sets the context of the town’s longer term ambition to change. Much development is already underway, reinforcing the town’s position as a major location for economic and business growth and demonstrates support for investment including private funding (currently 15%, the highest in the UK). Also, in December 2017 London Luton Airport Limited published a long-term vision ([https://www.llal.org.uk/vision2050.html](https://www.llal.org.uk/vision2050.html)) to expand the airport to handle 36 million passengers by 2050.

Our priorities for implementation of a modern integrated transport network in the three urban areas and to connect them to each other and neighbouring FEAs are defined at two levels:

- improving east-west travel between the 3 urban areas and the Oxford-Cambridge corridor, which is reliant on East West Rail and the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and improved local connectivity to these schemes. LBC, CBC and North Hertfordshire, along with Hertfordshire, are also collaborating to understand the transport infrastructure implications of the significant planned and future housing/economic growth in both the Oxford-Cambridge and London-Stansted-Cambridge corridors, and undertake a comprehensive review to identify potential passenger transport and highway improvements.

- improvements to strategic corridors within the 3 towns (section B) will depend in part on the timing of associated strategic developments coming forward. The Councils will continue with their Integrated Transport programmes, an holistic approach to improving public realm and increasing accessibility, safety and quality of life in existing local neighbourhoods, as well as improving their connectivity to new strategic development sites. This will include work to address health inequalities, in particular interventions to increase walking and cycling and reduce associated personal safety fears, such as improving lighting.

Based on the constraints and challenges faced by the area (sections A2/A4 respectively), the mix of schemes in the three towns to improve connectivity will include:
• Implementation of Park & Ride proposals on two strategic sites in the south and east of Luton, along with extension of the Busway from Dunstable to Leighton, exploring options to deliver these using Powers in the Bus Services Bill 2017;
• New and improved pedestrian/cycle routes based on recent studies to improve connectivity to the rail stations and town centres;
• Improvement of congestion ‘hotspots’ in the 3 towns, along with the introduction of UTMC in Luton-Dunstable; and
• Improvements to Luton station and public realm at Leighton-Linslade station and the planned Wixams station.

Annex C includes letters of support from various stakeholders, which refer to various interventions they would support.

A balance of the above interventions is consistent with the Councils’ approach to reducing congestion and improving air quality which will require a step-change of investment in sustainable transport infrastructure.

When authorities submit a bid for funding to the Department, as part of the Government’s commitment to greater openness in the public sector under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, they must also publish a version excluding any commercially sensitive information on their own website within two working days of submitting the final bid to the Department. The Department reserves the right to deem the business case as non-compliant if this is not adhered to.

Please specify the weblink where this bid will be published:

www.luton.gov.uk/transport-and-streets

Submission of proposals:

Proposals must be received no later than 2359 on Friday, 8 June 2018.

An electronic copy only of the bid including any supporting material should be submitted to: TCFproposals@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Enquiries about the Fund may be directed to TCFenquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk