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Local Innovation Partnerships Fund (LIPF) decision and next steps

Worcestershire LEP Board

WORCESTERSHIRE GROWTH HUB

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LIPF – Outcome

I am sorry to inform you that we are not able to take forward your proposal on this occasion. This was a highly contested fund, with more high-quality bids than we are able to support. We will confirm the successful bidders in England, Wales and Northern Ireland on 2 April, having previously announced the outcomes in Scotland on 25 March.

We have made this decision after considering UKRI's independent advice, which was informed by an expert assessment panel, and with wider regard to how bids could support national strategic priorities. UKRI officials will be in touch shortly with detailed feedback from the expert panel.

The Local Innovation Partnerships Fund has highlighted the depth of innovation opportunity across the UK and has helped build valuable new local connections. We remain committed to ensuring that regions continue to have access to opportunities to grow their innovation capability.

We will explore alternative funding routes for high-potential clusters and how these align with the priorities set out in our Modern Industrial Strategy and the government's record £86 billion public R&D investment more broadly. UKRI officials will provide feedback on your proposal and will also consider its alignment with R&D strategies for priority sectors.

Although I appreciate that this will be disappointing news, I wanted to acknowledge the time, effort and ambition reflected in your proposal. Thank you again for your commitment and positive engagement throughout this process.

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LIPF – UKRI Feedback

Feedback:

The proposal sets out an ambition to position Herefordshire and Worcestershire as a national hub for health and social care innovation, centred on digital health, med-tech and social care solutions, with a strong emphasis on real-world testbeds for early adoption. While the region's ageing population, rurality and integrated care structures create a credible environment for testing technologies, the overall case does not convincingly align with the Local Innovation Partnerships Fund (LIPF) objective of building nationally or internationally significant clusters.

The programme is heavily weighted toward applied deployment, SME support, and testbed activity rather than high-growth cluster development. The regional research base is comparatively small, with limited evidence of world-leading outputs, major anchor institutions, or industrial R&D capacity. The University of Worcester provides an important local anchor, but its strengths lie more in teaching and applied health work than in biomedical research or large-scale innovation leadership. This raises questions about the maturity of the proposed cluster and its ability to attract high-value investment. Much of the match funding appears already committed and largely public-sector in origin, and the proposed project pipeline is relatively modest in scale, making it unlikely to deliver the transformative impact expected by LIPF.

Overall, while the proposal addresses genuine regional challenges and articulates a clear desire to improve health and social care outcomes, the evidence of research strength, industrial pull, operational capability, and cluster-building potential is limited.

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Comparison & UKRI

- **Total fund:**
  - £500,000,000
- **Maximum award available in Competed Strand:**
  - £20,000,000
- **Earmarked (£300M) - Greater Manchester, West Midlands, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, North East England, Greater London, Cardiff Capital Region, Glasgow City Region, Belfast and Derry/Londonderry**
- **Competed (Our Strand) - 6 Regions announced successful. Only one area announced with monetary amount currently (£30M)**

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Competitive Strand Comparison (As of Announcement)

- **South West** - Autonomous technology (Drones)
  - MP – Labour
  - Councils – Majority Lib Dems
  - Funded Body – South West Innovation Partnership
- **Oxford-Cambridge** – Autonomous Vehicles & Space Technology
  - MP – Labour Majority
  - Councils – Lib Dems
  - Funded Body – The Open University & Silverstone
- **Greater Lincolnshire** – Agri-Tech & Defence
  - MP – Labour
  - Council – Reform / Conservative
  - Funded Body – Great Lincolnshire CA
- **South-West Wales** – Green Energy & Materials Security
  - MP – Strong Labour
  - Councils – Labour
- **East Midlands** – Manufacturing Clean Energy
  - MP – Labour Majority
  - Councils – Reform with Labour Mayor (EMCA)
  - Funded Body - East Midlands Combined County
- **East Yorkshire & Tees Valley** – Clean Energy & Industrial Decarbonsiation (£30M)
  - MP - Labour Majority
  - Council – Labour (Tees Valley)
    Yorkshire (Con Min)
  - Funded Body - Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority and Tees Valley Combined Authority

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Next Steps

- **Additional feedback requested from the Head of UKRI Place team.**
  - *Minimal feedback given outside of current information*
- **Learning from successful regions and review comparable bids**
  - Visits planned to competitive strand winners (e.g. Greater Lincolnshire)
- **Convene a dedicated workshop session to agree clear actions, priorities, and direction for Worcestershire's Innovation Strategy**