

**TO:- Cabinet**

Councillor Roger Lees J.P. ,Councillor Victoria Wilson ,Councillor Rita Heseltine ,Councillor Kath Perry M.B.E.  
,Councillor Robert Reade ,Councillor David Williams ,

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Cabinet will be held as detailed below for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.

Date: Tuesday, 05 December 2023

Time: 14:00

Venue: Council Chamber, Community Hub, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX



D. Heywood  
Chief Executive

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**A G E N D A**

**Part I – Public Session**

- |          |   |                |
|----------|---|----------------|
| <b>1</b> | Minutes<br>To approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 3 October 2023.   | <b>3 - 4</b>   |
| <b>2</b> | Apologies<br><br>To receive any apologies for non-attendance.   |                |
| <b>3</b> | Declarations of Interest<br><br>To receive any declarations of interest.  |                |
| <b>4</b> | Customer Feedback Policy<br>Report of the Corporate Director - Chief Operating Officer and Corporate Policy Manager | <b>5 - 18</b>  |
| <b>5</b> | Allocation of Rural England Prosperity Funding<br>Report of the Assistant Director Enterprise and Growth            | <b>19 - 26</b> |

**RECORDING**

**Please note that this meeting will be recorded.**

**PUBLIC ACCESS TO AGENDA AND REPORTS**

Spare paper copies of committee agenda and reports are no longer available. Therefore should any member of the public wish to view the agenda or report(s) for this meeting, please go to [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/council-democracy](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/council-democracy).

Minutes of the meeting of the **Cabinet**  
South Staffordshire Council held in the  
Council Chamber Community Hub,  
Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South  
Staffordshire, WV8 1PX on Tuesday, 03  
October 2023 at 14:00

**Present:-**

Councillor Rita Heseltine, Councillor Roger Lees, Councillor Kath Perry, Councillor David Williams, Councillor Victoria Wilson

10      **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 September 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

11      **APOLOGIES**

Apology was received from Councillor R Reade.

12      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

13      **MEMBERS UPDATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIONS**

**RESOLVED:** Members note the reported progress and achievements made during 2022 -23, and the proposals for 2023-24.

The Meeting ended at: 14:05

**CHAIRMAN**



**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET - 5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK POLICY**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND  
CORPORATE POLICY MANAGER**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – DAVID WILLIAMS, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND  
ESTATE MANAGEMENT**

**PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report presents an updated Customer Feedback Policy (appendix 1) to Cabinet for approval. Alongside this policy, a new procedure is being introduced for the management of customer complaints, comments and compliments, underpinned by a new on-line system which will improve the management of these processes. The management of these processes through the online system will also enable regular reporting and data analysis to inform service changes.

**2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	Customer feedback relates to all of the Council Plan priorities and the proposed changes are facilitated by making better use of the technology now available to us through recent investments.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	Yes	
	Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been completed?	
	Yes	
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	Yes	The Constitution and associated protocol provides that front line Councillors, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer will have five clear working days following dispatch of a notification of a proposed decision in which to call in for scrutiny, decisions proposed by the Cabinet or its members. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and associated protocol, any two or more members wishing to request that this proposed decision should be called in for scrutiny should do so by giving notice to the Director Legal & Governance either by e-mail or in writing before the end of the fifth day specifying the reason or reasons therefore. The Director Legal &

		Governance will then call in the proposed decision and arrange for it to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/relevant Scrutiny Panel. A copy of such notice must also be sent to me either by email or in writing by the end of the fifth day. This proposed decision will be confirmed and implemented or, where appropriate, referred to the Council for consideration at its next meeting, on or after the date to be notified upon circulation of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, unless called in for scrutiny by that date.
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE		
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	Costs are within the broader programme of system improvements.
LEGAL ISSUES	No	<p>The Policy incorporates provisions for complaint investigations which can potentially be escalated by customers to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.</p> <p>Equality data collection is being introduced in line with our Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable	None	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	None

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

3.1 The current Customer Feedback Policy was introduced in April 2014. While most of the policy remains unchanged, the significant proposed updates include:

- A new online dedicated form being made available on the Council website for people to make complaints and submit comments and compliments. This form is linked to a Verint based system to manage these interactions.
- People choosing to use this method to provide feedback will be asked to voluntarily complete equality profile questions to improve insight into this important aspect of customer interaction. Previously, equality data was

collected in the occasional surveys of people who had made complaints. Collecting this information at the start of interactions is recommended as a key improvement.

- All other channels – including telephone, in-person and written interactions (email, social media direct messaging and letters) are still available to customers but will all be inputted to the new system for recording interactions, sharing comments and compliments and investigating and responding to complaints.
- It is recommended that complaints must normally be submitted within three months of the matter or incident being complained about. This had previously been 12 months. Often, data retention requirements can result in data on interactions being deleted well before the current 12 month limit and no longer available for some investigations. As shorter time limit is consistent with practice elsewhere.

3.2 The review has been undertaken alongside the development of a new procedure for managing complaints, comments and compliments which is supported by a new system based on the Verint Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is being rolled out across many service areas in the Council.

3.3 The Verint CRM will enable improvements to the management and recording of customer interactions. In particular, it will improve the administration of complaints handling and other feedback. The management of these processes through the online system will also enable regular reporting and data analysis to inform service changes. The Verint CRM platform is also being used in the management of other services, such as garden waste accounts and Freedom of Information requests and will be rolled out in many other service areas.

#### **4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 Equality Impact (appendix 2) and Data Protection (appendix 3) Assessments are attached.

#### **5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

5.1 The current Policy was adopted by Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

#### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 The proposed Customer Feedback Policy is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 That Cabinet approve the Customer Feedback Policy.

Report prepared by: Kevin Hubery – Corporate Policy Manager

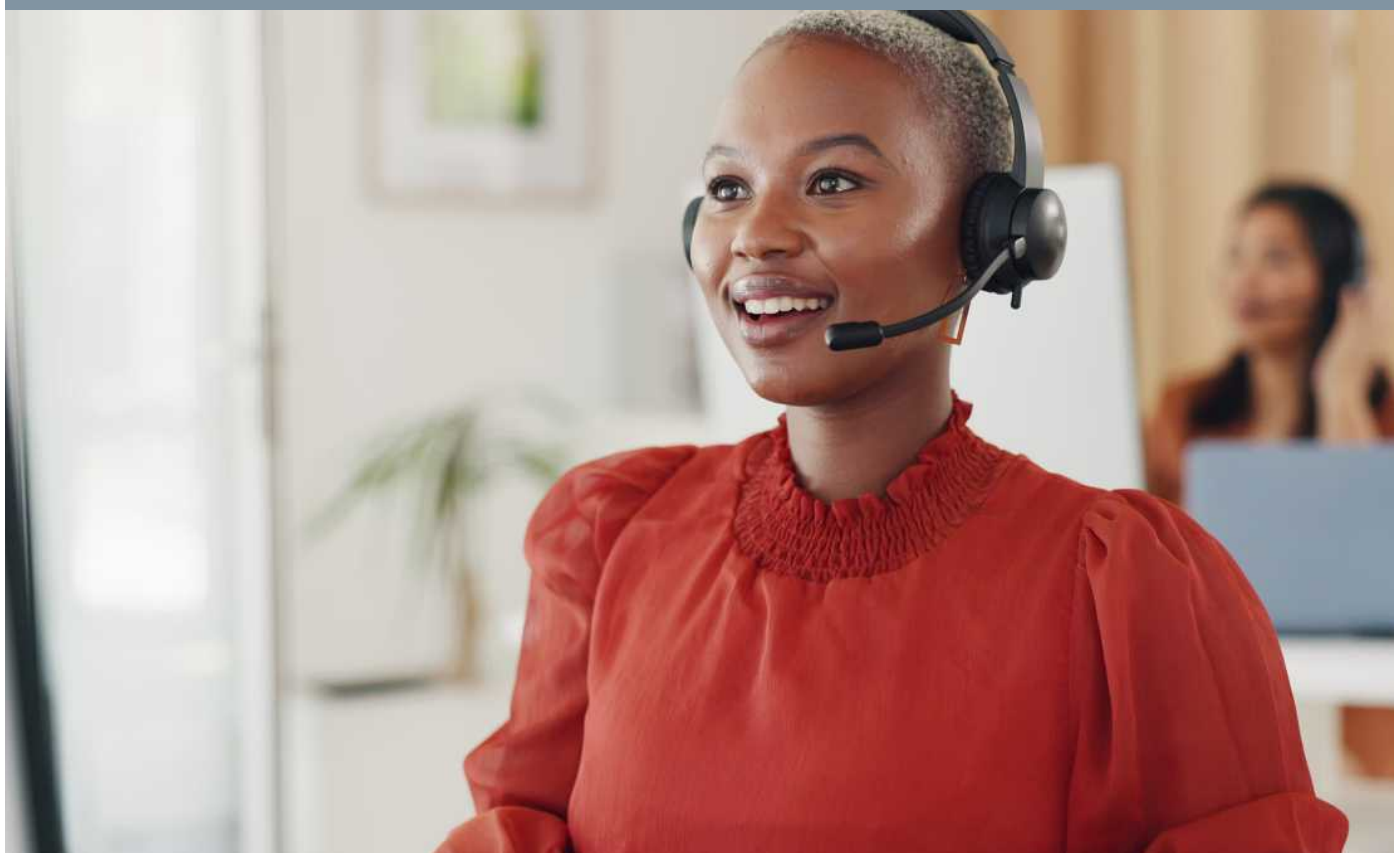




**South Staffordshire Council**

# **Customer Feedback Policy**

**Comments, Compliments and Complaints**



**[www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)**



# Customer Feedback Policy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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South Staffordshire Council continues to being a committed customer focused organisation and wants to work with customers to develop and improve services. The way we handle customer feedback is a key component in this process and the council welcomes comments, compliments, and complaints.

### Comments

South Staffordshire Council welcomes all feedback and recognises that customers may wish to comment on services or decisions. These comments can play an important part in improving service delivery and will be recorded and forwarded to the relevant service area for consideration and action.

### Compliments

Customers may also provide compliments or expressions of gratitude to particular employees or council teams. These are equally useful and very much welcomed as they tell us that we are doing things right. These will also be recorded and forwarded on to the relevant service area for feedback to their teams.

Customer feedback can be made by email, social media, telephone, in writing or by completing the council's feedback form.

We will also ensure we deliver better services by continuously monitoring our performance when dealing with comments, compliments and complaints, by following a standard procedure to achieve consistency and will ensure that we use the feedback to improve council services.

### Complaints

It is important to remember that reporting a fault or a problem is not necessarily a complaint, but may simply be a request for service, such as reporting a missed bin collection which can be resolved quickly. It might also relate to a minor fault, such as a broken locker at a leisure centre, which will usually be dealt with immediately. It is only if the customer remains dissatisfied with our response or there is evidence of multiple service failures for the same request that the complaints procedure (outlined below) will apply.

#### Feedback, including complaints, can be made by:

- Email: **customerfeedback@sstaffs.gov.uk**
- Website: **Comments, compliments and complaints**
- X: **@south\_staffs**
- Facebook: **facebook.com/southstaffs**
- Post: **South Staffordshire Council, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, WV8 1PX**
- Telephone: **01902 696000**
- In person by visiting the council premises

# Customer Feedback Policy

## 2. TIMESCALES FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

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Complaints must be made no later than three months after the date on which the matter occurred. If there are good reasons for not having made the complaint within the above time frame and, if it is still possible for the council to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly, we may decide to still consider the complaint.

## 3. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

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**The council, takes complaints seriously and has adopted the following definition from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.**

*“A complaint or concern is an expression of dissatisfaction about an act, omission or decision of the council (whether that is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner on our behalf) either verbally or in writing, and whether justified or not, which requires a response”*

Any person receiving a service from the council can make a complaint if they feel that there has been a failure in the service, they have received which includes the following:

- Delay in providing a service requested.
- A failure to provide a service as detailed in the council's published standards.
- The unhelpful attitude or conduct of a council employee or contractor.
- Neglect or unreasonable delay in responding to a request for service.
- A failure to follow the council's agreed policies, rules or procedures.
- Malice, bias or discrimination.

**Note - there is currently a consultation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to introduce a new complaint handling code which will become the single gold standard for the local government sector – we will update this policy when the code is finalised.**

# Customer Feedback Policy

## 4. COMPLAINTS THAT CANNOT BE CONSIDERED UNDER THIS POLICY

Certain types of complaints are not intended to be dealt with by this policy and will be dealt with through other channels by a more appropriately placed member of staff in the organisation, including our customer advisors. We will aim to deal with these in line with our commitment to providing good customer service and we will always explain why a complaint cannot be dealt with and of any alternative rights of appeal or review where appropriate. These include:

- Some matters raised with us are requests for service and will be responded to without being treated as complaint.
- Complaints relating to established council policy or the council's implementation of government policy.
- Matters for which there is a right of appeal (either within the council or via an employment tribunal), or a legal remedy (e.g., a penalty charge notice, parking ticket, housing benefits, and planning applications); although a complaint regarding how the process was carried out will be considered.
- Insurance claims.
- Requests for the council to engage with a third party over a problem which the council may have some control/regulating function.
- Ombudsman complaints (except for those which the ombudsman asks the council to deal with through its complaints procedure).
- Complaints from former and existing staff about human resources issues, including appointments, dismissals, pay, pensions and discipline.
- Commercial or contractual matters, for example contracts for the supply of goods and services to the council.
- Freedom of information, and data protection subject access requests, or complaints about the decision, the information provided or how a request was handled.
- A complaint that is to be dealt with or has already been dealt with by a court or other statutory body.
- Complaints about restrictive contact arrangements, such as but not limited to, single point of contact arrangements and bans.
- Complaints that are the subject of on-going legal action, which also includes complainants who themselves are subject to an investigation for any breaches of legislation enforced by the council.
- A complaint or an allegation of criminal or unlawful conduct should be made to the councils monitoring officer by emailing **monitoring\_officer@sstaffs.gov.uk**
- Allegations of fraud or corruption by council staff should be made to the Counter Fraud Manager either by emailing **fraud@staffordshire.gov.uk** or by ringing the fraud telephone line on **0800 7311 890**
- Complaints that are unreasonably persistent or vexatious.

# Customer Feedback Policy

## 5. COMPLAINT STAGES

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### Stage 1 - Complaint

You will receive immediate confirmation that we have received the complaint and we will investigate and aim to provide a full response to your complaint within 10 working days.

If we need more time, we will let you know and when you can expect a response.

In a response to your complaint, we will explain whether the complaint has been upheld or not, the reason for the decision and let you know the grounds on which you are able to appeal should you disagree with the outcome.

If you are unable to make the complaint yourself you may ask someone else to do this.

### Stage 2 - Review

Once you have received your stage 1 response, if you are still not satisfied, you may ask for a review.

Examples when an outcome may be reviewed:

- **Not all aspects of the complaint were addressed at Stage 1 (in these circumstances the original investigating officer may be asked to look at the complaint again).**
- **If the complainant feels the response to their original complaint was not fully addressed and any wrong has not been adequately addressed or rectified.**

The complainant will be expected to explain, the grounds for seeking a review and give clear reasons why.

You must ask for a review no later than 20 working days from our initial stage 1 reply.

We will immediately acknowledge receipt of your request for a review. A detailed response will be made within 20 working days. If we cannot meet this target, you will be sent a progress report.

There are some circumstances in which the council will decide it not appropriate to review the complaint further and, in these circumstances, you will receive a response providing you reasons as to why this is the case.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint or the way the complaint was managed, you can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Details are on page 9 (section 10).

You may ask someone else to do this on your behalf.



# Customer Feedback Policy

## **What will happen when you send us a comment?**

You will receive an acknowledgment of your comment and it will be sent to the service.

## **What will happen when you send us a compliment?**

You will receive an acknowledgment of your compliment and it will be sent to the service.

## **What will happen when you complain to us?**

You should complain to us within three months of the matter occurring.

We will try to resolve the matter for you.

If you are not satisfied we investigate the matter and respond to you within 10 days.

If we feel that the matter does not need to be investigated we will inform you of this and our reasons for the decision.



## **If you disagree with our response to your complaint**

You should get back to us within 20 working days explaining why you think the matter hasn't been resolved.

We will consider your request and if we agree with you then we will investigate further and get back to you within 20 working days.

If we feel that the matter has been fully investigated we will inform you of this and our reasons for this decision.



If you still disagree with our response you may wish to raise the matter with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

# Customer Feedback Policy

## 6. COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRES FROM AN MP OR COUNCILLOR

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The complaints policy is intended for individual residents to seek resolution to an issue.

The council has a separate process for residents who decide to escalate their issues via a Member of Parliament or councillor.

## 7. PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

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The objective of redress is to rectify any mistakes or problems at the earliest opportunity. The council will acknowledge faults when they occur and take responsibility for putting things right and avoiding a reoccurrence.

Following an investigation into a complaint, if it is recognised that the service did not meet the required standards, the council will:

- Apologise.
- Rectify the mistake or problem within an agreed time frame and provide you with the service you should have received.
- Review practice, policy or procedure as appropriate.

## 8. DATA RIGHTS

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In the process of handling a comment, compliment or complaint the council will be required to collect personal data and, in some circumstances, this would fall under the category of sensitive personal data. It is necessary to collect, store and use this data to administer the process and to investigate all complaints made.

Confidentiality of this information is maintained by storing on a system which is purpose built for recording feedback with limited users being allowed access. This system also maintains the function to fully audit any access to the system.

The council will keep information relating to complaints for a period in line with the latest data retention policies. After this the information will be securely destroyed.

## 9. EQUALITY MONITORING

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Anyone completing the online feedback form will be requested to voluntarily provide equality monitoring information to help the council assess whether those who access and use the feedback system are treated fairly.

# Customer Feedback Policy

## 10. ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

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If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or the way the complaint was handled, they can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, who is completely independent and can investigate complaints about most council matters. The Ombudsman will normally expect complaints to go through all stages of the council's Complaints Procedure before they will consider it.

Full details of how the Local Government Ombudsman deals with complaints can be found on the ombudsman website [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk). Contact details as follows:

**The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

**PO Box 4771,**

**Coventry,**

**CV4 0EH.**

**Tel: 0300 061 0614**

## 11. EVALUATING OUR RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

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It is important that feedback monitoring is effective, and that information is recorded consistently across different council services. A comprehensive monitoring system has been established to allow this to happen. Feedback monitoring will be incorporated into the performance management framework so that managers and councillors can learn from feedback and services can be improved.

Key information relating to feedback including the numbers received, numbers acknowledge and responded to, and service improvements made as a result of feedback will be reported regularly at senior management.

An annual publicly available report will also be produced and will be posted on the council's website.



# Customer Feedback Policy





**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 05 DECEMBER 2023**

**ALLOCATION OF RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUNDING**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ENTERPRISE AND GROWTH**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR VICTORIA WILSON, CABINET MEMBER FOR  
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

**PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The report will seek formal approval from the Cabinet to allocate Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF) resources to the specific projects set out in appendix A.

**2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	Prosperous and Vibrant Communities
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (Equal) been completed?	
	No	Each bid goes through a formal Panel led evaluation process and equalities implications are considered as part of that process.
	Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been completed?	
	No	N/A
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	Yes	The Constitution and associated protocol provides that front line Councillors, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer will have five clear working days following dispatch of a notification of a proposed decision in which to call in for scrutiny, decisions proposed by the Cabinet or its members. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and associated protocol, any two or more members wishing to request that this proposed decision should be called in for scrutiny should do so by giving notice to the Corporate Director of Governance either by e-mail or in writing before the end of the fifth day specifying the reason or reasons therefore. The Corporate

		Director of Governance will then call in the proposed decision and arrange for it to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A copy of such notice must also be sent to me either by email or in writing by the end of the fifth day. This proposed decision will be confirmed and implemented or, where appropriate, referred to the Council for consideration at its next meeting, on or after the date to be notified upon circulation of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, unless called in for scrutiny by that date.
KEY DECISION	No - This report deals with the allocation of grant funding (outside of the approved budget) as opposed to the incurring of expenditure or the making of savings over the financial threshold for a Key Decision.	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	REPF funding ends in March 2025	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	Yes	There is no financial impact on the Authority's approved budget and MTFS. This is a fully grant funded project with new resources received to be applied as detailed in the report. This report ensures that use of these funds follows the strict conditions set out by DLUHC to avoid any possibility of spending occurring outside the remit of conditions set.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The governance for the REPF grant funding streams is in accordance with government requirements and as set by Cabinet on 7 March 2023. Reporting to Overview and Scrutiny Committee forms part of that governance structure.
STRATEGIC RISK	Yes	The delivery of our UKSPF and REPF will be added to the corporate risk register imminently. One of the key risks identified is to ensure that we're able to distribute the funding fairly and transparently against a set of funding criteria that is clearly set out and publicly available. The approved governance structure provides the mechanism to deliver that.  Another key risk with the programme is to ensure we spend the allocation by March 2025, this report again provides the mechanism to allocate and spend our allocation.

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable	The REPF provides an excellent opportunity to improve the prosperity of our businesses and the infrastructure of our communities. The nature of the funding also enables us to reduce the impacts of climate change and improve the local environment. The report and appendix outline the specific opportunities the funding brings to the businesses and community groups South Staffordshire.	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

- 3.1 UKSPF is a central pillar of the UK Government’s levelling up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. This recognises that even the most affluent parts of the UK contain pockets of deprivation and need support.
- 3.2 Within the context of the Fund’s objectives, each place has the flexibility to invest across a range of activities that represent the right solutions to improve local pride in place, help spread and create opportunity, and a sense of community and belonging. Places were able to choose from investment in three investment priorities of communities and place, local business and people and skills. In addition, there are 41 interventions across the three investment priorities, each with their expected outputs and outcomes. We did not have to target all 41 interventions but they formed a menu from which we could chose whichever ones best met our local priorities.
- 3.3 Late in 2022 the Government also announced an associated funding stream to UKSPF, the REPF, which was only available to certain prescribed rural areas. The funding is a capital grants programme for small businesses and community infrastructure, and we were allocated an additional £489k up to March 2025. Again, this was subject to completing and having approval for an addendum to our UKSPF Investment Plan which was approved in April 2023.
- 3.4 The funding is for new, small, registered, organisations and businesses with a postcode or a project site in a South Staffordshire rural area (under the government criteria not all postcodes are eligible).
- 3.5 The Rural Fund objectives sit within the UKSPF investment priorities for:
- Supporting Local Business
  - Community and Place

3.6 The Rural Fund provides capital funding to:

- support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams.
- support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy.

This funding should not replace funding plans for rural areas under the UKSPF and is a top-up to help address the extra needs and challenges facing rural areas.

3.7 The government have provided a list of interventions, objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Most are the same as UKSPF interventions but there are 2 extra interventions providing funding for:

- small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- rural circular economy projects

As with the UKSPF, investments should demonstrate value for money and additionality, and how investments contribute to net zero and nature recovery objectives.

3.8 The Council opened up REPF for bids in July 2023 and since then we have received a number of expressions of interest, and where eligible, applicants have been invited to submit a full application for funding. These applications have then been assessed against the funding criteria by a panel consisting of both internal colleagues and external organisations, which include the Federation of Small Businesses, National Farmers Union and Support Staffordshire.

3.9 All full bids submitted are evaluated against how the project meets the priorities of the UKSPF interventions, value for money, the need for the project, the financial health and projections of the applicant, and the delivery and sustainability of the project.

3.10 In March 2023 Members approved a governance structure for UKSPF and REPF that required ultimate sign off of bids by Cabinet. Prior to being brought to Cabinet for approval, the first tranche of three recommended bids was evaluated and scored by the above-mentioned Panel and reported to the Corporate Leadership Team, who concurred with the recommendations of the panel for all three bids.

3.11 Appendix A sets out the basic details of the first three bids, all are recommended for approval. In short, the bids are:

- **Springhill Cricket Club**, Lower Penn (community bid) for the installation of PV solar panels on the clubhouse roof – Total bid £9,360 and recommended for approval.

- **OCL Ltd**, Swindon (business bid) for the erection of a woodworking unit on their existing site to make fencing and gates rather than outsourcing, 2 jobs created – Total bid £39,000, recommended for approval subject to planning permission.
- **Hay House Education Ltd**, Dunston Heath (business bid) – for the creation of raised beds and polytunnels to educate school children on growing and farming, 1 job created – Total bid £13,200, recommended for approval subject to provision of up-to-date business accounts of the linked farm.

#### **4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The impacts of the three bids have been considered as part of the application, evaluation and assessment exercise.
- 4.2 All successful applicants will be expected to sign a formal funding agreement setting out the terms and conditions for receiving the funding prior to the transfer of any grant funds.
- 4.3 Under the terms of the funding agreements, applicants will be expected to report back their outcomes and outputs on a quarterly basis. This will enable us to report progress to both Members and to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which is required under the terms of our funding agreement with them.

#### **5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- 5.1 N/A

#### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 N/A

#### **7. APPENDICES**

- 7.1 Appendix A – Recommended REPF Applications December 2023

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Cabinet approve the allocation of REPF to the three organisations set out in 3.11 and appendix A, subject to any additional requirements as also set out in the appendix.

Report prepared by: Grant Mitchell, Assistant Director Enterprise and Growth





## Appendix A

### Rural England Prosperity Fund, Panel Evaluated and Approved Applications for Funding Agreement

£70,000 maximum funding request or 60% of project cost allowable for businesses and 70% of project cost for none profit organisations.

Business/Organisation	Project Location/Locality Area	Project Description for REPF/Supported by	Request=% of Project Cost - Condition/s
Springhill Cricket Club Registered Charity	Springhill Playing Field, Lower Penn, WV4 4TW Locality 5	Solar PV, securing future community use of the club house by maintaining manageable hire costs with the added value of environmental savings. <b>Project Supported by Cllr Victoria Wilson</b>	£9,360.12 = 70% of £13,371.60 No conditions prior to Funding Agreement (FA) <b>Volunteer run, no job creation expected Increase in number of facility users</b>
OCL Kingswinford Limited	Hinksford Lane, Swindon, DY6 0BH Locality 5	New steel framed woodworking centre, cutting and making UK sourced timber fencing and gates rather than outsourcing from abroad. <b>Project Supported by Cllr Roger Lees</b>	£39,000 = 60% of £65,000 Planning to be confirmed prior to FA <b>Creation of 2 new woodworking jobs Increased business space and turnover</b>
Hay House Education Limited	Hay House Farm, Dunston Heath, ST18 9AQ Locality 1	Raised beds and polytunnel for hands on growing by pupils, compost toilet/hand washing station. Extending a current farm tour offer for schools <b>Project Support from local schools</b>	£13,200 = 60% of £22,000 - Sight of satisfactory linked farm business accounts prior to FA. <b>Creation of 1 new job Increased business space and turnover</b>

