

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 05 MARCH 2024

ALLOCATION OF UK SHARED 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 UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) resources to the following:

- £125,000 from a previously approved allocation for the improvement of open spaces to the 8 Council owned open space areas at various locations throughout the district.
- £99,475 from the residual unallocated UKSPF funds to the Edward Marsh Centre, Kinver, for underpinning work to the building and refurbishment of the changing rooms and disabled toilet.

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,

		<p>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.</p>
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	UKSPF 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 UKSPF 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 programme has now been added to the corporate risk register. 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 UKSPF provides an excellent opportunity to improve the prosperity of our residents, 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 outlines the specific opportunities the funding brings to the residents and community groups in South Staffordshire.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Perton, Wombourne, Great Wyrley Landywood, Cheslyn Hay, Penkridge, Bilbrook, Kinver and Brewood

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 South Staffordshire Council was allocated £3.82m (revenue and capital) across three funding years from 2022/23 – 2024/25 but had to submit an investment plan in Summer 2022. The plan needed to set out a degree of local context, what our priorities were, what outcomes and interventions we would be looking to target with the funding, and whether we had the capability and capacity to deliver this level of funding.
- 3.4 Our draft Investment Plan was put together focusing on existing Council priorities in consultation with Members and partners. The Plan set out the interventions we

would target with the funding and included projects in all three of the investment priorities as prescribed by the Government. Broadly they could be headlined as:

- A strong and effective package of business support across our business sectors
- Skills and support for access to employment for our residents
- Investment in our village centres
- Environmental improvements
- Decarbonising our assets
- Extending our Warmer Homes activity
- Active Travel improvements

3.5 Our Investment Plan was approved in December 2022 with the funding tapering up from year 1 (22/23) with £464k allocated, in year 2 (23/24) £928k and in year 3 (24/25) we have been allocated £2.43m.

3.6 In September 2023, Cabinet approved the allocation of UKSPF to several projects, some of which were more of an indicative allocation whilst specific proposals were being worked up. One of those indicative allocations was £125,000 allocated for the enhancement of open spaces, which would meet the funding intervention of the 'Creation of and improvements to local green spaces'.

3.7 The Council's Street Scene team have submitted proposals to utilise this allocation. The total cost of the proposals is £183,763 and the full £125,000 has been requested. The remaining costs will be met from existing Council budgets. The specific proposals are set out in the table below.

Location	Project description & cost
Perton Lake	£36k- Boardwalk improvements, creation of new Breedon paths
Wom Brook, Wombourne	£25.5k - Improved and new interpretation boards, Giggetty section fencing, Poolhouse wood carving sculpture, contribution towards bridge improvements.
Landywood, Great Wyrley	£15k - Improvements to entrance and existing footpaths
Meadowbank Grange, Cheslyn Hay	£19k- Improvements to existing footpaths, new lighting columns, gate and fencing
Swamp, Penkridge	£11.5k - Improved interpretation boards and improvements to existing footpaths.
Jubilee Wood, Bilbrook	£10k - Improvements to existing footpaths
Brockleys Walk, Kinver	£5k - Improved interpretation boards, new path to bridge, improvements to existing footpaths.
Barnfield Sandbeds, Brewood	£3k - Improved interpretation boards and fencing.

3.8 The report approved by Members in September 2023 also indicated that there was circa £1.2m residual UKSPF funding unallocated and available for organisations to bid for to deliver projects in line with the Council's Investment Plan priorities and interventions.

- 3.9 The first project to progress to a full application for the residual funding is for the Edward Marsh Centre in Kinver, which provides well used sports pitches, recreational facilities and a community centre, in the village.
- 3.10 The wider project is to protect the future of the building by replacing the roof, deal with some subsidence to the building and strengthen it for the roof replacement, upgrade outdated sports changing rooms into a modern accessible area suitable for teams and individuals to change and shower, and to increase the numbers of children participating in sport. These three packages of work are linked but independent. The UKSPF application is for the underpinning, and upgrading the changing room facilities, including the addition of a disabled toilet. The completion of this part of the project will then help to unlock significant levels of lottery funding to complete the much-needed roof replacement.
- 3.11 The total cost of the underpinning work and changing room improvements is approximately £142,000 and the Centre is asking for £99,475, slightly under the maximum grant available. The remaining costs will be met by the Centre and they have the funds already in place to meet that cost.
- 3.12 The Edward Marsh Centre is heavily used by a wide number of local community and sports groups. It's a volunteer led, not for profit charity and community centre, that has no external funding. All income is generated through user hire, community café, fundraising events, and successful grant applications. The Centre will also shortly be receiving the King's Award for Voluntary Service from the Lord Lieutenant for their outstanding community service.
- 3.13 The project meets two of the interventions set out by the government required to access the funding, namely, 'Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together, renovation/maintenance of existing sports facilities', and 'Funding for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups, improved perception of facilities or amenities and increased users of facilities or amenities'.
- 3.14 Both bids were evaluated by a Panel against how the projects 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. In this instance, the three-person Panel was made up of two persons not employed by South Staffordshire Council.
- 3.15 In March 2023, Members approved a governance structure for UKSPF that required ultimate sign off of bids by Cabinet. Prior to being brought to Cabinet for approval, both recommended bids were evaluated and scored by the above-mentioned Panel and reported to the Corporate Leadership Team, who concurred with the recommendations of the panel for both bids.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 4.1 The impacts of the 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 None

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Cabinet approves the new allocation of UKSPF to the Edward Marsh Centre, Kinver, and confirm the previously agreed allocation of funding for the improvement of Open Spaces to this Council, for the open space improvements set out above in the report.

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