

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

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 UKSPF resources to the specific projects set out in the report and appendix.

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	Given the breadth of projects it is proposed that the need for EqlAs will be assessed for each project as they progress.
	Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been completed?	
	No	Given the breadth of projects it is proposed that the need for DPIAs will be assessed for each project as they progress.
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/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	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 and 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 spend occurring outside the remit of conditions set.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The governance for the two grant funding streams is in accordance with government requirements and as set by Cabinet on 7 March 2023. Approvals and reporting to the Cabinet forms part of that governance structure.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable	The UKSPF and REPF provide an excellent opportunity to improve the prosperity and health and wellbeing of our residents and businesses. The nature of the funding also enables us to reduce the impacts of climate change and improve the local environment. The report and appendices outlines the opportunities the funding brings to 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 choose 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 March 2023 the Cabinet approved a new governance structure to enable the Council to deliver the programme with sufficient oversight and challenge from Members, senior officers and partners, whilst meeting the Government's requirements to have an effective governance system in place to properly manage the funding.

- 3.7 Whilst Members have been kept informed of UKSPF progress they are yet to formally approve the allocation of funding to specific projects, which this report aims to formalise. As other projects/bids progress the plan will be to bring those projects forward for Member approval in due course.
- 3.8 Appendix A outlines the indicative allocations across the three priority areas. The scope of these projects was previously agreed through the Investment Plan submitted and most of the projects are now being worked up and planned for. Members will have noted in 3.5 that the rump of the funding is in year 3 and the majority of the allocated, but not yet confirmed projects, will be year 3 projects. As and when these progress, further reports to allocate the resources to those projects will follow.
- 3.9 As part of the People and Skills priority we have created the 'Creating Brighter Futures' (CBF) programme to provide assistance for those residents who are long-term unemployed and furthest from the job market, as well as opportunities for reskilling and upskilling. As Members will be aware, the EU funded Building Better Opportunities programme ceased in March 2023 and the UKSPF funding has enabled us to continue many of those activities. However, it's also allowed us to expand that provision to now cover for those who may have recently lost work and need some assistance to retrain and improve their skills to meet future employment opportunities. £400,000 has been provisionally allocated to these activities across the two remaining years of the programme and this project is currently live and working with residents.
- 3.10 Across the full three years of the programme circa £1.9m has been provisionally allocated to the Supporting Local Business priority, however this encompasses a range of activity including a bespoke business start-up programme with grants, a business growth and grants programme, a research and development innovator programme, a green solutions programme with grants, and a capital allocation to begin to decarbonise our own assets with a focus on Landywood Enterprise Park.
- 3.11 Appendix A also sets out the range of other projects with an indicative provisional allocation of funding, including those outlined in 3.9 and 3.10. Members will note that they broadly conform to the priorities we set out in our Investment Plan submission and as set out in 3.4.
- 3.12 It should be noted that a number of these projects are for indicative allocations and final allocations may differ when fully worked up and delivering. Financial and project performance will be reported back to Cabinet, and more widely through Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at least twice a year.
- 3.13 Members will have also noted from appendix A that there is 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. This funding programme has recently been launched and we are now accepting expressions of interest for projects. If a project is deemed as qualifying the organisation will be invited to submit a formal application, which in turn will be

assessed by a panel consisting of both Council and independent representatives. Recommendations from that Panel will then be made through the formal governance structure to agree grant allocations.

- 3.14 The associated Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) sits outside of the projects outlined in appendix A, given it is a grant funding programme to external business and community applicants, however, allocation of these funds will follow a similar process to the UKSPF residual funding and will be brought forward to Cabinet for approval in due course.
- 3.15 Approval is now sought from the Cabinet to allocate UKSPF funding to the projects outlined in appendix A.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 4.1 UKSPF and REPF provides the Council with a major opportunity to make a difference to all of the district and to all parts of our communities. Members will have noted the breadth of projects with an indicative allocation, with the expectation of more projects to follow.
- 4.2 Given the breadth of interventions and projects, the expectation is that each priority theme or project will undertake their own impact assessments. Some of this will form part of the government's monitoring process and can be reported back to Members, and if outside of this process, then for example, any separate impact assessments can also be reported to Members.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 5.1 N/A

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 N/A

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the allocation of UKSPF funding to the projects outlined in appendix A to enable the delivery of the outputs and outcomes associated with them, and the benefits this will bring to our residents and businesses.

8. APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix A – Indicative UKSPF Project Allocations

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