

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 30 APRIL 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:
- £3,605 from the residual unallocated UKSPF funds to Perton Parish Council for the remedial works to bring the sports pavilion and community hall back into use.
 - £70,000 from the residual unallocated UKSPF funds to R.J. Bower Ltd for Play @ Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge to convert a redundant farm building into a play barn and associated facilities.
 - £99,318.32 from the residual unallocated UKSPF funds to Energy Bolting Ltd, Four Ashes Enterprise Centre, to purchase specialist thread rolling equipment to meet industry requirements for machined components, special fasteners and associated products for global energy and defences industries.

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	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

		<p>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.</p> <p>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</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable		<p>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.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Perton, Penkridge North and Acton Trussell, Brewood, Coven & Blymhill

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.
- 3.8 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 There are a further 3 projects progressing to a full application for the residual funding, the first of which is an application from Perton Parish Council for remedial works to bring the sports pavilion and community hall, adjacent to Perton playing fields, back into use. The building is currently unusable and continuing to deteriorate, the funding will be used to fix ceilings and improve the toilet and shower areas to enable it to reopen for bookings to local groups.
- 3.10 The total cost of the project is £5.15k and the parish council have requested the maximum 70% grant available of £3.605k. This project is a community-based project and is run by trustees and volunteers, and the increase in user numbers will contribute towards the interventions, outputs and outcomes required of the funding.
- 3.11 The second project is an application from R.J. Bower Ltd for Play@ Lower Drayton Farm, just outside Penkridge. The proposal is to convert a redundant farm building to extend the existing play barn facilities on the site to include a further children's play area, improved disabled facilities, further seating areas and an improved retail/food offer.
- 3.12 The total cost of the project is £132.42k and the applicants have requested £70k, which amounts to 53% of the total project costs. The proposal will create 3 new jobs plus further seasonal opportunities, and aims to increase space and turnover, as such it will contribute towards the interventions outputs and outcomes required of the funding.

- 3.13 The third project is an application from Energy Bolting Ltd located at Four Ashes Enterprise Centre. The company manufacture specialist fasteners, machined components and associated products for global energy and defence industries, but to maintain and expand their market, they require additional thread rolling equipment to enable them to comply with the American Petroleum Institute's higher industry standards.
- 3.14 The total cost of the project is £196k and the company has requested the near maximum grant available of £99.31k, which is approximately 51% of the total project cost. The proposal will create 3 new jobs and a new apprenticeship, and will enable new product development and increase turnover, as such it will contribute towards the interventions outputs and outcomes required of the funding.
- 3.15 In advance of assessing the applications, the Panel were made aware that Energy Bolting Ltd lease their existing business premises from the Council at Four Ashes Enterprise Centre, and that the Council are in negotiations with them to potentially move to bigger premises. It was made clear to the Panel that the application was not dependent on them remaining a tenant of the Council, and that the Council would in no way directly benefit from the proposed award of the funding.
- 3.16 All 3 bids were evaluated by a Panel against how the projects meet 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 5-person Panel was made up of 2 persons not directly connected to South Staffordshire Council, and none of the other 3 members of the Panel are directly involved in managing the Council's commercial property portfolio.
- 3.17 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, all 3 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 all 3 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.

- 4.4 We will aim to link any approved funding bids resulting in job creation, to the UKSPF funded Creating Brighter Futures programme to try and secure jobs for our residents that have, and are currently, receiving employment related support from us.

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 allocations of UKSPF to:
- Perton Parish Council to contribute to the refurbishment of Perton Sports Pavilion and Community Hall.
 - R.J. Bower Ltd to contribute to the conversion of a redundant farm building to expand the offer at Play @ Lower Drayton Farm.
 - Energy Bolting Ltd to contribute to the purchase of specialist thread rolling equipment.

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