



**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
23 February 2023**

CABINET: 7 March 2023

Report of: Corporate Director of Place & Community

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Adam Yates

**Contact for further information: Gilly Hodgkinson
(Email: gilly.hodgkinson@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: UK Shared Prosperity Fund Spend and Governance

Wards affected: Whole Borough

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To highlight the governance system for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and agree spend approval for key items prior to the primary governance meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- 2.1 That the Executive Overview and Scrutiny consider the recommendations of this report and provide any comments to Cabinet.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

- 3.1 That the Programme Team tender and contract for two Feasibility Studies to the total amount of £50,000.
- 3.2 That the Programme Team tender and contract for professional support to the amount of £8,000, as highlighted on the governance structure.
- 3.3 That the Programme team advertise and recruit a Programme Manager within the remit of the 4% administrative allowance of the Fund.
- 3.4 That the governance structure, as submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing be noted.
- 3.5 That Officers work with Democratic Services to create the UKSPF Programme Board within the guidelines of WLBC governance requirements.
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4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund was announced by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in 2022. West Lancashire Borough Council were given an indicative allowance of £4.24m to spend under the sub-headings of Business, Community and People. The programme runs from 2022/3 to 2024/5.
- 4.2 In July 2022, the Director of Place and Community shared the background and proposals to Party Leaders for agreement. The submission was finalised and shared with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, being signed off by the Leader, Chief Operating Officer and Section 151 Officer.
- 4.3 Central government experienced a national delay in analysis and confirmation, therefore the available timeframe to spend this financial year's allocation has narrowed. Although WLBC and other Councils will now be able to carry over monies to the next financial year, as part of monitoring we will need to evidence some spend in this term. At this point monies will not be moveable from Year 2 to Year 3 of the Fund and therefore it is imperative that indicated projects can commence.
- 4.4 A full governance structure (Appendix A) has been agreed and meetings will be convened for March/April 2023. All proposed projects and spend, other than those highlighted, will be agreed with the Board prior to procurement. The fund also includes a Community Grant (c£1m) which will be devised and managed by the Board who will ensure dedicated outcomes and requirements for this fund are transparent and fair.
- 4.5 There is a 4% budget allowance for administration of the programme. Officers request the ability to advertise and recruit a Programme Manager to join the UKSPF Officer Team until the close of the project. The ability to advertise and recruit in a timely manner will enable any potential post holder to commence work as soon as possible, reducing the time constraints on other Officers and allowing procurement, monitoring and evaluation to be completed in a timely and professional manner.
- 4.6 Two Feasibility Studies have been indicated within our submission and agreed with Stakeholders across the borough as obligated under UKSPF scheme requirements. WLBC require the completion of these studies in a timely manner in order to move promptly onto the projects with relevant independent evidence and proposals. Projects will still require to undergo relevant Council commissioning and procurement processes. The required Studies are:
- 4.6.1 Beacon Country Park. Following Full Council decision to return the management of the golf course space in-house, the Study will ensure that proposed leisure usage of the area is relevant, has a defined audience and is income generating.
- 4.6.2 WLBC/West Lancs College. As part of the requirement to work with key stakeholders, this feasibility study will highlight additional usage of the College's Image Centre across the community, and the key proposed link with the new Skelmersdale Leisure Hub.

- 4.7 Project Support will include 8 days of specialist project support to ensure WLBC comply with all governance, monitoring and planning processes which are required by the government. This skilled advice will ensure we manage, monitor and deliver the programme correctly.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An indicative breakdown of budget by the required Intervention, Outcome and Output was submitted to the government. In order to ensure we do not lose allocated funds we must ensure capability to commence and complete programmes within the government defined timeframe.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 There is no risk associated for the Council. The project will also reinforce working arrangements and partnership engagement with stakeholders such as local businesses, community groups, neighbouring authorities and our health and education colleagues as all parties have been involved in the creation and submission of the grant application under government directed stakeholder engagement.

7.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The proposal will have health and wellbeing benefits across all wards of the authority as it promotes and supports businesses, people and communities to adapt and prosper.

Appendices

A. Governance Structure

B. Minute of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Cabinet only)

