

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) – PROCESS REVIEW

Executive Summary

This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with details of the process by which projects were brought forward for consideration for UKSPF funding and approved by the Executive at its meeting on 18 January 2024.

Following a request from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Officers agreed to submit to the Committee a report on the process followed, including details of how they were determined against the criteria as set out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to review the report and make recommendations as appropriate.

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report, and any associated recommendations, be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 In April 2022 the Government launched the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) (UKSPF). Following a successful bid Woking Borough Council was allocated £1 million pound in funding pending submission of an investment plan.
- 1.2 Approval of the Council's investment plan by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was received in October 2022.
- 1.3 A report on the process for agreeing projects was requested to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 28 February 2024.

2.0 Funding

- 2.1 To be eligible for consideration for funding a project must meet one of 41 criteria, known as interventions, as set out by [the guidance released by DLUHC](#).
- 2.2 The funds were allocated over a period of three years from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The amounts received in years 1 and 2 have been spent and the remainder, £865,483, is to be allocated in the current financial year. Spend to date, £134,517, has focussed on Green Infrastructure and in particular, improvements at Horsell Moor and Oakfield play areas. A £50,000 commitment to the Surrey decarbonisation programme has also previously been agreed and will be taken forward in 2024/25. However, in the light of a key project, the Digital Centre of Excellence, not proceeding, consideration was then given to how the funds for that project (£601,000) could be re-committed.

3.0 Criteria for Selecting Projects

- 3.1 In order to reallocate the £601,000 Officers at the Council were asked to put forward suggestions for projects or schemes that have been key priority areas for members of the Council and would meet the eligibility criteria for UKSPF funding. The Business Liaison Manager then worked with the presenting Officers to score each project or scheme against the following criteria: DLUHC UK SPF criteria; the Woking for All Strategy and the Commercial Protocol; their economic, social, and environmental impact.
- 3.2 A matrix of projects, scored in line with the above criteria, was then shared with the Commercial and Finance Governance Board (consisting of Council Officers and Commissioners) on the 29 November 2023. The Board moderated the officer scores and agreed a number of projects to scope in more detail and bring forward for Member approval.
- 3.3 The process and outcomes were shared with DLUHC colleagues to ensure transparency of process at the earliest possible stage.
- 3.4 A key use of UKSPF funding is to allow organisations that provide significant benefit to the community to aid them in transforming their organisations. In recognition of the reduced grant funding from the Council to Citizens Advice Woking and their need to change the way in which they deliver services and following a cross-party meeting with Councillors to review the equalities impacts of the Council budget proposals, officers considered that UKSPF funding could be considered for allocation to CAW. Any UKSPF funding would be for transformation to allow CAW to transition away from Local Authority funding, so that it could continue to offer important services to Woking residents.
- 3.5 As with the other projects that had been put forward for consideration, funding to CAW was assessed against UKSPF, Commercial Protocol and Woking for All criteria.

3.6 A meeting was held with CAW on 10 January 2024 where the potential for UKSPF was discussed and welcomed. Following this meeting, funding to CAW was added to the list of projects that were put forward for Executive approval.

3.7 A plan to show how the UKSPF funding would be used by CAW was requested. A draft plan was received on 12 March 2024 and a Memorandum of Understanding will now be developed between the Council and CAW.

4.0 Executive Report

4.1 At its meeting on 18 January 2024 the Executive received an Officer report (Appendix 1) on the proposed projects for the remaining UKSPF. The report requested approval of the projects that had been agreed to be carried for Member approval by the Commercial and Finance Board.

4.2 The Finance Working Group reviewed the Executive report on 15 January 2024, with no objections. The Executive [agreed the resolutions of the Officer report](#).

4.3 The Council has advised DLUHC of the projects approved by the Executive.

5.0 Corporate Strategy

5.1 This report supports the themes of the Working for All strategy in increasing transparency of decision-making thereby promoting the Engaged Communities strand.

6.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.2 There are no known risks arising from this report.

Equalities and Human Resources

6.3 There are no known equalities impacts arising from this report.

6.4 There are no known resource implications from this report.

Legal

6.5 There are no known legal implications arising from this report.

7.0 Engagement and Consultation

7.1 Engagement or consultation has not been considered necessary for this report.

REPORT ENDS