



## Portfolio Holder Decisions

### **Festive Lighting Grant Support, UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) / Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) update**

1. **Festive Lighting Grant Support** (Pages 3 - 8)  
Report of the Director of Transformation and Change.
2. **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) / Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) update** (Pages 9 - 12)  
Report of the Director of Communities.

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## Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Sarah Palmer, Director of Transformation and Change	Cllr Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council	08 November 2024

### Festive Lighting Grant Support

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To agree to an increase in grant support for festive lighting / displays for 2024/25 to account for increased costs caused by inflation.

#### 2. Council priorities

- 2.1 Develop Wyre's town centres to be thriving and welcoming places to live, work and visit.
- 2.2 Support and champion Wyre's growing tourism economy by promoting our coast to countryside offer, tourism businesses, attractions and events.
- 2.3 Build pride in our borough by ensuring our town centres and neighbourhoods are clean, attractive and well looked after.

#### 3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the revised festive lighting grant scheme be approved to account for take-up across the town centres, high levels of inflation and the rise in costs since the previous allocations were agreed.

#### 4. Background

- 4.1 The council's original aim when agreeing to provide grants for festive lighting was to encourage local sponsorship and promote economic vitality in Wyre's Town Centres.
- 4.2 The contribution has been paid to a recognised body in each town who decides how the grant will be spent. A Portfolio Holder Report dated 31

May 2018, set out the existing allocated amounts for the below town centres, which are:

<b>Area</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
	<b>£</b>
Fleetwood	3,200
Cleveleys	1,000
Thornton	2,300
Poulton	3,200
Hambleton	2,300
Preesall with Knott End	3,200
Garstang	3,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,400</b>

- 4.3** The allocations were based on applications received during a trialled bidding scheme in 2016/17 and 2017/18. However, the current distribution of funds no longer aligns with the initial allocations as some towns have increased the amount they spend on festive lights.
- 4.4** For example, Cleveleys had their base allocation increased to £2,000 several years ago whereas Hambleton have not claimed any of their allocated fund for the past two years. The current reality can be seen in the table at 5.4. This includes an unallocated sum which has been used to top-up festive lighting grants in exceptional circumstances including to offer additional support to reflect the impact of high inflation.
- 4.5** The previous Portfolio Holder Report required each of the seven areas to submit evidence demonstrating that match funding had been provided prior to receiving their grant. Following the pandemic this requirement was lifted to encourage the take up of grants and to reduce the administrative burden. Despite this, the council continues to encourage match funding from organisers.
- 4.6** The previous Portfolio Holder Report set out that the application process was open to constituted groups which were associated with the seven town centres, this included but was not exclusive to parish and town councils. Applicants had to have public liability insurance of £10 million pounds in place before funds could be released.

## **5. Key issues and proposals**

- 5.1** The previous decision which allocated the amount of grant support was made in 2018/19. Since then, we have had high levels of inflation and an increase in operating costs.
- 5.2** The new amounts will provide a baseline which will be reviewed in line with the September consumer price index annually. This will ensure that funding continues to keep pace with costs.

**5.3** It is recommended that the festive lighting grant support is rebased to reflect 2023/24 actuals and current inflation. This will support active town centres to continue to promote economic vitality and increase footfall during the festive period.

**5.4** The previous two years' actuals and current budget versus the new allocations are shown in the table here:

<b>Area</b>	<b>2022/23 Actual</b>	<b>2023/24 Actual</b>	<b>2024/25 Original Budget</b>	<b>2024/25 Proposal</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Fleetwood	3,200	3,900	3,200	4,000
Cleveleys*	3,415	3,900	2,000	4,000
Thornton	2,300	2,750	2,300	3,000
Poulton	3,205	3,900	3,200	4,000
Hambleton	0	0	2,300	3,000
Preesall with Knott End	3,200	3,900	3,200	4,000
Garstang	3,200	3,900	3,200	4,000
General unallocated fund	0	0	2,840	6,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,520</b>	<b>22,250</b>	<b>22,240</b>	<b>32,000</b>

\*2022/23 and 2023/24 actuals adjusted for £1,415 that related to 2022/23, invoiced late in 2023/24.

**5.5** There will be an expectation that match funding will be sought and this will be communicated to organisers in the application form for the grant. However, this will not be an essential requirement for the base budget allocations, recognising that it is not always possible on that scale for every town centre. The application process will remain open to constituted groups associated with the seven town centres. Applicants will continue to need to have public liability insurance of £10 million pounds in place before funds can be released. The organisers will also be required to provide the council with evidence of relevant spend prior to release of the funds.

**5.6** The general unallocated fund will be made available as top-up funding to the seven areas. This will require evidence of match funding from the organisers as an essential criteria. Those areas which have been allocated £4,000 in 5.4 will be able to apply for up to £1,000 in additional funding and those which were allocated £3,000 may apply for up to £500. The same requirements around insurance and evidence of spend will apply.

## **6. Delegated functions**

**6.1** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the council's constitution): "To determine payment of grants to outside bodies within the Council's scheme and budget".

<b>Financial, Legal/MO and Climate Change implications</b>	
Finance	The proposals outlined in this report require a budget increase of £9,760 which will be drawn from general balances and for the budget will rise in line with September CPI annually.
Legal/MO	The Council has powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the overarching well-being power contained in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to incur expenditure to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. There is no statutory provision to provide such funding, i.e. it is a discretionary service therefore must be exercised reasonably. Organisations will need to be properly constituted and ensure that they have public liability insurance of £10 million pounds in place before the funding can be released.
Climate Change	This report has an overall negligible impact on climate change due to the narrow impact of the decision. The report does encourage the installation of lights which will increase energy demand. However, this is for a brief period of time and is limited to a small area of our town centres. The decision may have consequences past 2030, subject to any revisions to the scheme.

### **Other risks/implications: checklist**

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

<b>risks/implications</b>	<b>✓ / x</b>
community safety	<b>x</b>
equality and diversity	<b>x</b>
health and safety	<b>x</b>

<b>risks/implications</b>	<b>✓ / x</b>
asset management	<b>x</b>
ICT	<b>x</b>
data protection	<b>x</b>

### **Processing Personal Data**

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
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Joshua Potts	01253 887621	joshua.potts@wyre.gov.uk	15/11/2024
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<b>List of background papers:</b>		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

**List of appendices**

None

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## Portfolio Holder Report

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Marianne Hesketh, Director of Communities	Councillor Lesley McKay, Resources Portfolio Holder	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2024

<b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) / Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) update</b>
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**Key decision:** No.

### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an update regarding UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund capital allocations for Garstang Community Sports Club and the Wyre Estuary Gateway Project.

### 2. Council priorities

- 2.1 Secure external funding and investment to make improvements to places across the borough.

### 3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Under the authority given to the Director of Communities, in conjunction with the S.151 Officer (Item 3, Decisions; [Agenda for Portfolio Holder Decisions on Thursday, 13th April, 2023, 12.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2023/04/13/agenda-for-portfolio-holder-decisions-on-thursday-13th-april-2023-12.00-pm)), that the reallocation of funding to the Garstang Community Sports Club and the Wyre Estuary Gateway Project, detailed in section 5 below, is noted.

### 4. Background

- 4.1 The UKSPF provides significant support across the UK. It provides £2.6bn 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. Wyre's investment plans were approved by Government, and the council was awarded an allocation of £3,949,132 (which included £20,000 for preparing the Investment Plan) for projects in the Wyre Borough. All projects funded by UKSPF must be completed by 31 March 2025.
- 4.2 The overarching aim of the funding is to build pride in place and increase life chances.

- 4.3** The Investment Plan of projects for Wyre, was selected via a project selection group from a shortlist compiled from proposals returned via three routes, namely:
- Town Centre Partnership Boards (established as part of the council's Town Centre Strategy Fund programme) nominating projects from priorities as set out in Town Centre Regeneration Frameworks.
  - A long list of countywide business, people and skills support projects supplied via Lancashire County Council.
  - A long-list of borough-wide projects which picked up priorities that were outside the remit of the Regeneration Frameworks.
- 4.4** Wyre has received an additional £400,000 through the REPF. The REPF is a top-up to the UKSPF, to support activities that specifically address challenges that rural areas face. The REPF objectives sit within the UKSPF investment priorities for Supporting Local Business and Community and Place. Funding must be used on capital projects to be completed by 31 March 2025.
- 4.5** To date, thirty-seven projects have been approved across the borough.

## **5. Key issues and proposals**

- 5.1** With six months of the UKSPF programme remaining, and no indication from Government regarding a potential extension to the March 2025 deadline, local authorities are expected to return funds that have not been defrayed.
- 5.2** Robust local governance arrangements are in place. Projects are regularly monitored against their progress and expenditure, which enables the council's UKSPF Programme Board to make informed decisions regarding deliverability and underspend.
- 5.3** Given the remaining timeframe to deliver in compliance with Government's criteria, the priority is to minimise the risk of significant clawback, in order to maximise the benefits for our residents and the borough. The following capital allocation updates have been made to mitigate this risk, without detriment to the projects that are progressing:
- 5.3.1** An additional £95,000 from the UKSPF has been allocated to Garstang Community Sports Club, to enable the project to go ahead. This funding has been reallocated within the Garstang area, following the assessment of potential underspend and subsequent consultation with the Greater Garstang Partnership Board, and Garstang town councillors.
  - 5.3.2** An additional £73,099 from the UKSPF/REPF has been allocated to the Wyre Estuary Gateway project as a result of underspends elsewhere and a reprioritisation of funds.

**5.4** In reporting this update, it has been noted that Appendix 1, of the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Fund allocation report (see background papers), contain errors. Under the year 2 indicative allocation column, investment in the creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces should read £140,000 and not £100,000, and the funding for rural circular economy projects in the local area, £20,000 instead of £30,000. These corrections are in keeping with the investment plan allocations returned to Government in April 2023. The total REPF allocation of £400,000 remains unchanged. It is suggested that a correction note be added to the 2023 notice.

**6. Alternative options considered and rejected**

- 6.1** Do nothing. This option is rejected; the council seeks to minimise clawback, and this option would see £168,099 returned to Government.
- 6.2** Conduct a further two open rounds of grant applications, that is, for UKSPF and REPF. This is rejected for several reasons, i.e. the timeframe is not conducive to achieving results. Holding two grant application processes, with a further risk of not receiving suitable entries, would mean that projects would have only two to three months to deliver, and to include success measures.

**7. Delegated functions**

**7.1** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder “To determine payment of grants to outside bodies within allocated budgets”.

<b>Financial, Legal/MO and Climate Change implications</b>	
Finance	The reallocation of underspend for REPF – remains within the £400,000 capital threshold. UKSPF spend - remains within the allocation of the Fund and satisfies Government’s capital threshold spend stipulated for year 3 of the programme.
Legal/MO	A monitoring framework has been established to process claims and payments in accordance with each Grant Funding Agreement. Any internally funded projects (for which don't require a Grant Funding Agreement) are managed via the process of approved business cases which form the basis of ongoing monitoring and evaluation via a quarterly claims process.
Climate Change	None.

**Other risks/implications: checklist**

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are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x	risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x	asset management	x
equality and diversity	x	ICT	x
health and safety	x	data protection	x

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund allocations	6 April 2023	Item 3: <a href="#">Agenda for Portfolio Holder Decisions on Thursday, 13th April, 2023, 12.00 pm (modern.gov.co.uk)</a>

### List of appendices

None