



Portfolio Holder Report

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

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) / Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) update

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 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)), 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”.

Financial, Legal/MO and Climate Change implications	
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

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.

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

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.

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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: Agenda for Portfolio Holder Decisions on Thursday, 13th April, 2023, 12.00 pm (moderngov.co.uk)

List of appendices

None