

Record of Officer Decision

Decision title:	Decision to approve and launch the Low Carbon Public Transport Grant Scheme as part of the UKSPF Investment Plan – Measure E1: Improvements to town centres and high streets which support carbon reduction
Date of decision:	
Decision maker:	Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>The cabinet took a decision on the 15th December 2022 to accept and spend the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) allocated to Herefordshire (£6.6m) in accordance with the Investment Plan approved by government. The decision delegates all operational decisions to the Corporate Director for Economy and Environment.</p> <p>Decision - To Accept and Spend Any Approved UK Shared Prosperity Plan and Rural Prosperity Funds Approved by Government - Herefordshire Council</p>
Wards:	All wards
Consultation:	Herefordshire Sustainable Growth Strategy Board, S151 Officer, UKSPF Project Board
Decision made:	<p>To approve the Local Carbon Public Transport Grant arrangements, which will provide eligible applicants a minimum grant of £50,000 and a maximum of £100,000 to fund low carbon public transport which will reduce greenhouse emissions and promote lower carbon transport choices, and improvements in public health.</p> <p>Applicants can apply once in each financial year.</p>
Reasons for decision:	<p>In April 2022, government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), to replace the European Union funded structural funds.</p> <p>The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with the Levelling Up White Paper missions. Funding is targeted where it is needed most: building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training, supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances.</p> <p>The council has been allocated £7,545,330 to be spent between 2022 and 2025, of which, £903,194 is for 'Multiply' adult numeracy support which is subject to a separate decision. Government announced approval of the Investment Plan on the 5 December 2022, and Cabinet took the decision to accept and spend these funds on 15th December, 2022 https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9216</p> <p>The Low Carbon Public Transport Grants will partly deliver measure E1, which supports improvements to town centres and high streets which support carbon reduction.</p> <p>Who can apply to the Low Carbon Public Transport Grant? Any organisation with a legal status can apply. This may include local authorities, public sector organisations, higher and further education institutions, private sector companies, voluntary organisations and registered charities.</p> <p>Who cannot apply?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals • Unconstituted organisations • Taxi drivers and operators

What activities can be supported?

This is a revenue grant which will support a range of low carbon public transport which demonstrates high levels of utilisation and reduction of CO2.

What are the eligible activities?

Any revenue costs involved in delivering low carbon public transport schemes.

Ineligible costs includes, but not limited to the following:

- Purchase of low carbon public transport e.g. electric cars, regular and electric bikes, scooters, etc.
- Vehicle parts, including batteries
- Electric charging points
- Docking stations

Highlight any associated risks / finance / legal / equality considerations:

Finance

The UKSPF allocation for measure E1 is as follows:

Measure	2023/24	2024/25	Total
E1: Improvements to town centres and high streets which support carbon reduction	£106,364	£96,000	£202,364*

*this amount accounts for the 4% revenue contribution to manage the UKSPF programme and is the remainder of the E1 budget allocation as per the Investment Plan. Two projects have already been funded from the E1 allocation, amounting to £37,636.

Outputs/outcomes required to meet in Measure E1: Improvements to town centres and high streets which support carbon reduction.

- Tonnes of CO2 saved - calculated using the government’s greenhouse gas emissions for 2021
- Number of beneficiaries

Secondary benefits (not measured) are improved air quality and benefits to public health.

Legal

UKSPF grant terms (including output/outcome definitions) will be written into the successful applicants’ contracts, and collection of the outputs will form part of these. Applicants will be given two months after delivering the grant for low carbon public transport to collect the evidence relating to tonnes of CO2 saved.

All applicants will need to comply with subsidy control measures, this will be contained with the grant funding agreement. Grant application paperwork is being developed in consultation with the legal department to ensure compliance.

Procurement

This scheme will operate as a grant scheme in line with Herefordshire Council’s Contract Procedure Rules. If there is insufficient interest, the money will be distributed amongst those successful applicants who most closely align to the E1 outcomes of CO2 saved.

	<p><u>Risks</u></p> <p>Reputational risk: There is reputational risk if the council chooses not to deliver this activity. It is recommended that the council delivers support for low carbon public transport to help deliver the council net zero targets.</p> <p>No take up: The scheme will be promoted widely to ensure maximum take up.</p> <p>Not meeting the required outputs: The council has committed to reducing its carbon emissions to net zero. One of the measures is to decarbonise transport.</p> <p>Low utilisation of grant-funded assets: assessment criteria will focus on value for money and forecast utilisation of assets.</p> <p>Each applicant will be required to meet targets to reduce carbon emissions or tonnes of CO2 saved.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>Currently, there is no other funding for low carbon public transport and if the council does not utilise UKSPF funding for this project, or for other activities within measure E1 before March 2024, the money will be lost to the county.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>None.</p>

Signed:

Date:

Ross Cook, Director for Economy and Environment