

## Record of Officer Decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	<b>To approve and launch £450,000 of tailored business support and VSCE (Voluntary, community and social enterprises) grant scheme as part of the UKSPF Investment Plan. (E11: Capacity building &amp; infrastructure support to local groups).</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	9 November 2023
<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Corporate Director of Economy and Environment</b>
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	<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) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (£1.7m) 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> <p><a href="https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9216">https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9216</a></p>
<b>Ward:</b>	All wards
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>The UKSPF Investment Plan and the REPF Addendum included extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders across a diverse range of groups, organisations and sectors including Herefordshire Sustainable Growth Strategy Board, NFU, CLA and Herefordshire Rural Hub.</p> <p>Through the Fund, the Council wants to make it easier for community and voluntary groups to access small amounts of funding for projects that will make a difference in their local neighbourhoods.</p>
<b>Decision made:</b>	<p><b>To approve a total fund allocation of £450,000 for capacity development and infrastructure development grants for local groups as part of the UKSPF Investment Plan as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To procure tailored business support for the VSCE sector on Marketing/ branding/ communications/ project management/ trustee recruitment and income generation through a tender process up to a total of £37,000.</li> <li>To generate an opportunity for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VSCE) groups to apply for grants of up to £15,000 to enhance community resilience and infrastructure up to a total of £413,000. This will be coordinated through Herefordshire Council's grants team.</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<b>A RoOD is required to approve the budget allocation and implement of the scheme.</b>

## **Background**

The council has been allocated £7,545,330 to be spent between 2022 and 2025, of which £450,000 (£200,000 for 2023/24 and £250,000 for 2024/25) has been allocated to enhance community resilience and infrastructure and provide tailored business support for the VSCE sector.

## **E11 VSCE Development**

A key finding from the survey of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises, conducted as part of the State of the Sector Report 2021, was the need to support the sector in accessing training, business support and expertise; focusing on marketing and communications, income generation opportunities, recruitment and retention.

Providing training will enable the sector to enhance their skills and knowledge, learn new techniques and strategies, improve their overall effectiveness, increase their capacity to meet the needs of their community and ultimately achieve their goals more efficiently.

Total fund allocation is £37,000 to deliver training in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 to 113 individuals.

## **E11 VSCE Grants**

Recognising the important and valuable contribution that our vibrant VCSE sector makes to the lives of residents across the county, the Community Grant Fund aims to build on this to deliver the aims and objective of the UKSPF Investment Plan.

Through the Fund, we want to enable community and voluntary groups to access funding for projects that will support community initiatives and activities across the county addressing their local needs.

The Community Grant Fund will support community-based activity with grants of up to £15,000 for community groups across Herefordshire.

Projects will need to align with the following priorities:

- Pride in place – improving people’s satisfaction with where they live
- Enhancing engagement with community activity
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Tackles issues related to the cost of living crisis

The aim is to not be too prescriptive of the type of projects which can be funded but they must contribute to the Community and Place theme set out in Herefordshire’s UKSPF Investment Plan and therefore, projects must be able to show how they will:

- Be community-based
- Improve our communities
- Improve people’s satisfaction with where they live
- Increase the number of people engaging with community activity in local neighbourhoods
- Help improve the health and wellbeing of people in the community
- Help improve the quality of life of people affected by the cost of living crisis

This Fund is open to community and Third Sector organisations that deliver locally within Herefordshire and engage local people in the design and development of

services to meet their needs. These can be new or established services

The grants scheme will be delivered through a competitive process managed by Herefordshire Council’s grants team. The funding will represent an opportunity to facilitate the sustainability of community-based activity. Total fund allocation is £413,000 in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025.

**Specific Outcomes and Outputs**

**E11 VSCE Development:**

113 people receiving training (52 in 2023/24; 61 in 2024/25).

**E11 VSCE Grants:**

23 voluntary, community and social enterprise groups receiving grants to enhance community resilience and infrastructure (10 in 2023/24; 13 in 2024/25).

**The Fund has the following overarching outcomes:**

- People and communities have access to services, support and opportunities that improve their lives and well-being.
- People and communities are more self-reliant and are better able to identify ways to improve and take control of their lives and well-being.
- People are better able to gain the skills, capacity and confidence to play an active role in their communities.
- People and communities are better able to influence and participate in decision making and service development.
- People and communities are better able to identify and deliver solutions that meet their needs.
- People and communities are better able to participate in the social, economic and cultural life in Herefordshire.

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

**Finance**

Measure	2023/24	2024/25	Total
<b>E11: Capacity building and infrastructure support – local groups.</b>			
E11: VSCE: Development	£20,000	£17,000	£37,000
E11: VSCE: Grants	£180,000	£233,000	£413,000
4% Revenue costs netted off for administration of UKSPF Programme	(£8,000)	(£10,000)	(£18,000)
10% M&A costs	(£19,200)	(£24,000)	(£43,200)
Total budget to allocate to	£172,800	£216,000	£388,800

In accordance with the council's contract procedure, there is a

	<p>requirement to demonstrate best value or invite appropriately qualified and competent suppliers to submit a quotation for delivering the training.</p> <p>Funding must fully spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. The risk of claw-back is low based on previous similar schemes.</p> <p><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <p>UKSPF Investment Plan grant terms (including grant award/output/outcome definitions) will be written into the contract with the VSCE development provider. The successful provider will be required to deliver these conditions by the specified time frame and before March 2025 to ensure appropriate evidence can be provided to DLUHC.</p> <p><b><u>Equality :</u></b></p> <p>The grant will be given to the supplier based solely on their compliance with the publicised scheme criteria and needs identified in the SPF Investment Plan regardless of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.</p> <p>Will ensure that all documentation, including application information, can be made available in a number of languages and formats, if requested.</p> <p><b><u>Risks</u></b></p> <p><b>Reputational Risk:</b> There is a reputational risk if the council chooses not to deliver this activity. The training and grant schemes are contained within the UKSPF Investment Plan, to meet the needs of local communities and help to deliver the 2050 Economic Plan.</p> <p><b>Revenue Funding Budget is not fully allocated:</b> Herefordshire Council officers will hold regular meeting with the training supplier to ensure that budget, targets and outputs and outcomes are delivered as planned.</p> <p><b>Not meeting the required outputs:</b> The council has committed to providing this grant as part of the Investment Plan and is required to meet outputs and outcomes as a result of this support. This will be written into the grant contracts. Should the successful applicants not satisfy the output requirements or other contractual requirements, the grant funding agreement will contain a claw-back clause which can be activated to enable funding to be repaid and then reallocated to ensure outputs can be achieved by another organisation.</p> <p><b>External Factors:</b> Economic downturn/ resurgence of pandemic lockdown conditions. This would impact on the council's ability to deliver the grant scheme contractual requirements. We would seek to mitigate this by seeking to extend the delivery timescale with DLUHC.</p>
<p><b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p>	<p>The council does not have to deliver this activity and does not have to receive the allocation given to Herefordshire. However, the development of the project has considered the most appropriate routes to engaging with local residents and businesses, informed by previous experience and best practice. Also taking in to account the timescale for implementation.</p>

<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	None

I am an officer delegated to make the decision



Signed:

Print Name: Ross Cook

Job Title: Corporate Director Economy and Environment