

Record of Officer Decision

Decision title:	Decision to approve and deliver 1-2-1 business support to Herefordshire cultural organisations up to 31 March 2025 as part of the UKSPF Investment Plan.
Date of decision:	27 October 2023
Decision maker:	Corporate Director of Economy and Environment
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>The cabinet took a decision on the 15 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:	Consultation with the Service Director for Communities and Director for Economy and Growth have taken place on the implementation arrangements for the 1-2-1 support, in addition to external member organisations of the Herefordshire Cultural Partnership (HCP).
Decision made:	To approve a total fund allocation of £67,200 towards the delivery of tailored business support to Herefordshire cultural institutions up to 31 March 2025 in order to improve business performance and support the growth of the cultural sector as part of the UKSPF Investment Plan.
Reasons for decision:	<p>In April 2022, the 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. The government announced approval of the Investment Plan on the 5 December 2022, and Cabinet took the decision to accept and spend these funds on 15 December, 2022</p> <p>https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9216</p> <p>This commission relates to a package of business support to be delivered up to end of March 2025. Under the Community and Places Investment Priority, this business support will deliver measure E4, which supports enhancing existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions and results in an improved perception of facilities and amenities in Herefordshire, increased footfall, and more events and participatory programmes.</p> <p>The tailored business support will help Herefordshire cultural institutions to improve their business performance or operation, and include business operation advice, marketing and branding expertise, innovation and the</p>

	<p>adoption of digital technology, help to reach new customers and markets, staff training and support in applying for arts funding to improve future sustainability.</p> <p>Any organisation or business with a legal status will be eligible for support. This may include local authorities, public sector organisations, higher and further education institutions, private sector companies, voluntary organisations, registered charities or local cultural businesses. The advice will not be open to individuals, unconstituted organisations or those registered outside Herefordshire.</p> <p>A third party consultant will be contracted according to council procedure rules to deliver the project. The consultant will manage the relationship with local cultural organisations and deliver advice and training on behalf of Herefordshire Council to meet agreed outcomes and outputs. The project will be overseen and administered by the Culture and Leisure Lead for Herefordshire Council.</p>
<p>Highlight any associated risks / finance / legal / equality considerations:</p>	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>The contract is for £67,200 and is fully funded from the UKSPF allocation. This is divided into £28,800 in 2023/24 and £38,400 in 2024/25.</p> <p>We expect at least 69 cultural organisations in Herefordshire to benefit from an improvement in performance as a result of this support over the course of the project.</p> <p><u>Legal</u></p> <p>UKSPF grant terms (including output/outcome definitions) will be written into the supplier contract, and collection and recording of the outputs will form part of these. The supplier will be given six months after delivering the business support to collect the evidence relating to an improvement in performance. The supplier will have the necessary insurances and professional indemnities in place as standard.</p> <p><u>Procurement</u></p> <p>The consultant will be selected through a procurement process which is issued via the ProContract Portal (Supplying the South West) and in accordance with the council's contract procedure rules.</p> <p><u>Risks</u></p> <p>Reputational Risk: There is a reputational risk if the council chooses not to deliver this activity. It is recommended that the council delivers the programme of business support, to meet the aims and objectives of the UKSPF Investment Plan and support delivery of the outcomes and outputs.</p> <p>No take up: Due to the late decision by Government there is a limited window to deliver the first tranche of support before the end of March 2024. The Herefordshire Cultural Partnership and local museum networks can assist in disseminating information about the support county-wide to speed up delivery.</p> <p>Not meeting the required outputs: The council has committed to delivering business support for local arts, culture, heritage and creative industries 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 consultant contract and they will be required to collect the relevant evidence following the business advice given.</p>

Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	The council does not have to deliver this activity and does not have to receive the allocation given to Herefordshire. Currently, there is no other funding to commission a similar contract and the opportunity would be lost to Herefordshire cultural organisations. If this project does not go ahead Herefordshire cultural organisations would miss out on much needed tailored business support. Businesses are currently facing difficult economic conditions with inflationary costs associated with high energy prices. Not supporting local organisations may result in the lack of cultural growth potential, lack of further investment, and a lack of business resilience to cost increases and loss of jobs to the local economy.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None.