



Cabinet

Tuesday, 13 February 2024

UKSPF Programme for 2024/25

Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor A Brennan

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report to Cabinet follows previous reports in July 2022, January 2023 (Cabinet, and Growth and Development Scrutiny), February 2023 and most recently October 2023 about the allocation of UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funding (UKSPF and REPF). This report seeks Cabinet's endorsement of proposals for the final year of funding (2024/25).
- 1.2. Rushcliffe's allocation of UKSPF is £2,571,462 for three years (2022/23 to 2024/25). It is a mix of capital and revenue funding. The Council is now approaching the final year of the funding (2024/25) and the allocation for the year is £1,635,250.
- 1.3. In addition to UKSPF in September 2022, Government launched REPF. Rushcliffe's REPF allocation is £596,193. This is capital grant funding only and the allocation for 2024/25 is £447,145. This is not covered in this report as plans for this were outlined in the report to Cabinet in October 2023, which focussed on the grant pot allocations. The grant pot closed on 19 January 2024 and the Economic Growth Team are currently assessing all applications with successful projects starting in April 2024.
- 1.4. This report sets out plans for the Council's direct delivery and commissioning of the remaining UKSPF allocation (after the amount allocated for grants has been removed) for 2024/25 as well as reflecting on what has been delivered in 2023/24.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) recognises UKSPF activity delivered in 2023/24;
- b) endorses the proposals for UKSPF in 2024/25; and
- c) delegates sign-off of refinements to proposals for 2024/25 to the Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer, with both revenue and capital

implications reported in future financial reports to Cabinet and the MTFS to Full Council.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

It is important to have a clear framework and principles for UKSPF and REPF activity to be delivered in 2024/25 and for this to be endorsed by Cabinet. However, it may be necessary to make adjustments to ensure that funds are allocated where they can have the most impact and to be able to respond to opportunities as they may arise throughout the year. In the interest of not slowing delivery and risk not spending the full allocation, it is appropriate for authority to approve final delivery plans to be delegated to the Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer.

4. Supporting Information

Delivery in year 2 (2023/24)

4.1. As outlined in the report to Cabinet in February 2023, the UKSPF and REPF funding was allocated via direct commissioning by the Council and grant pots providing grants for community groups and businesses. In year 2 the allocation of UKSPF and REPF was:

- UKSPF – £624,141
- REPF – £149,048
- Total – £773,189

4.2. In the Investment Plan submitted to Government, the Borough Council identified some outputs and outcomes it would deliver with the funding. The Council is required to report quarterly to Government on funding allocated, projects delivered, and outputs and outcomes achieved. There are a large number of interventions that projects can be delivered against and numerous outputs and outcomes. The table included at Appendix A provides an overview of the projects supported in year 2, and the outputs and outcomes achieved (where these are known). Some outcomes will take longer to be delivered and some projects are ongoing.

4.3. As Councillors will see, a range of projects have been delivered across the Borough. Collectively these have achieved a good spread of outputs and outcomes benefitting local communities and businesses.

Funding available for year 3 (2024/25) and proposals for spend

4.4. The previous report to Cabinet in October 2024 outlined the proposals for grant pots. Following Cabinet approval, these were launched in early November and the application window closed on 19 January 2024. Officers are currently assessing the applications and successful applicants will be able to start delivery of their projects in April 2024. The focus of this report, therefore, is the UKSPF funding remaining for 2024/25, which is set out in the following table:

	Total to allocate	Grant pot	Total remaining
UKSPF	£1,441,000	£230,000	£1,211,000
REPF	£446,000	£446,000	£0
	£1,887,000	£676,000	£1,211,000

4.5. As the table shows, there is £1,211,00 remaining to be allocated to support projects identified by the Borough Council. As previously reported to Cabinet in the Investment Plan submitted to Government, the Council was required to set out proposed allocations of UKSPF across the three themes. At that time, the allocation for year 3 was:

- Communities and Place - £679,000
- Business Support - £605,000
- People and Skills - £350,000.

4.6. Government have advised that funding can be moved between themes as plans develop and up to the value of 30% of the total allocation can be moved before approval from Government is required. Any movement of funding needs to take into account impact on the delivery of outputs and outcomes, which the Council specified in the Investment Plan. These were indicative at that stage but again any significant variances to the outputs and outcomes delivered would need the approval of Government.

4.7. When considering projects for inclusion in the final year of UKSPF, it is important to ensure these are deliverable as all spend needs to be complete by the end of March 2025. In addition, as the final year is a larger amount of funding than the previous two years, there is an increased pressure on Council resources to allocate the funding. To manage this, officers have identified four themes for projects to align with and a small number of larger projects under each theme. The proposed projects for 2024/25 are:

Theme	Proposed Projects	Proposed allocation
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the Cotgrave Leisure Centre refurbishment work focussed on energy saving measures. • Gamston community hall work to improve energy performance of the building. • Sir Julian Cahn enhancement of planned refurbishment work and inclusion of energy saving/sustainability measures. • Support the fleet moving to electric vehicles, for example EV charging points. 	£330,000
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing and shoring up banks of Compton Acres watercourse to better protect homes from flooding • Desilting ditch at The Hook local nature reserve to improve habitat and waterflow. 	£260,000

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of more inclusive play equipment at Bridge Field and Bridgford Park. • Vehicle access controls at Council owned parks and open spaces. 	
Town Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bridgford public realm improvements to be agreed with Nottinghamshire County Council as an outcome of the accessibility study work jointly commissioned by both organisations. • Delivery of outcomes from the recent retail studies commissioned from UKSPF, plans to be developed through the Strategic Growth Board. • Enhanced events programme. • Bingham car parking. 	£220,000
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of living support for local residents. • Contribution towards the development of Edwalton community hall. The timescale for this is unknown and therefore funding for this project may need reallocating. • People and skills projects (further detail at 4.11). 	£380,000
Total		£1,190,000

4.8. Cabinet will note that the above total leaves an underspend of £21,000. This is a contingency in case of any overspend on projects and allows the ability for additional smaller projects to be supported if required.

4.9. The above list of projects aims to achieve a balance of delivery across the Borough with a wide range of outputs and outcomes. As already referred to in the report, the above list is subject to change if it becomes apparent that these are undeliverable within the required timeframes, if alternative funding applied for is awarded, or if alternative priorities are identified. Approval for any changes will be sought from the Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer as set out in the recommendations.

4.10. In addition to the above list of projects, there are two initiatives which are being delivered in partnership with other Nottinghamshire districts following a joint commissioning exercise. These are:

- Rushcliffe accelerator – a business support programme providing one to ones and workshops for businesses on a range of topics, including sustainability and innovation. This project has already started and will continue until the end of March 2025
- Active Work – a programme of employment and skills support for local residents. Delivery of this work in Rushcliffe will commence in April 2024.

4.11. As Cabinet will be aware from previous reports, the people and skills theme of UKSPF starts in 2024/25. This is because prior to this period there were existing European Social Funded projects still delivering across the area and so Government wished to avoid duplication. Therefore, in 2024/25, people and skills activity in Rushcliffe will begin. The proposal is that this will include the following (in addition to above Active Work programme):

- Start South Notts online platform (alongside Gedling and Broxtowe) which will be free to access and offers CV builder, job search function, details of training opportunities and virtual work experience with local and national companies. This would be linked with other programmes to ensure residents are supported to access the platform.
 - Training programmes for residents and businesses focussed on digital, low carbon and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) providing an opportunity for upskilling and reskilling.
 - Paid work placements at local businesses with UKSPF covering some of the salary for identified placement covering a period of four to six weeks. There will be criteria around this and the team are working with colleagues at Nottingham Trent University and University of Nottingham to develop this project further.
 - Training fund for local residents and businesses to apply for a small amount of funding to contribute to the costs of training. Evidence will need to be provided to show that the training is not already available free of charge.
- 4.12. Indicative funding allocations have been identified for the above areas of work amounting to £150,000. This is a reduction from the original investment plan (£350,000) as other areas of work have been identified as needing to take priority. Take up on the above projects e.g. training fund and work placements will be closely monitored and funding redirected to other people and skills activity as required.

Governance

- 4.13. The Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer will be required to sign off any changes to the above proposals, including new projects or changes of allocations, as well as receiving updates on projects supported.
- 4.14. Rushcliffe's Strategic Growth Board acts as the Partnership Board, which was required to be established for the purposes of UKSPF. This Board meets quarterly, and it is proposed that at each Board meeting an update on UKSPF/REPF continues to be provided to Councillors.
- 4.15. Officers from the Economic Growth Team will meet regularly with identified project leads to ensure delivery remains on track and any issues are identified early. Monthly reports are provided to the Executive Management Team.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. An alternative option is that the Council allocates more funding into the grant pots for community groups and businesses to access. However, it is anticipated that the grant allocation will enable delivery of a range of projects across the Borough as it has done in the current financial year. Interest in the grant pot has also decreased in 2024/25 compared to the level of interest for 2023/24.
- 5.2. In addition, a wider range of smaller projects could be supported; however, this will be more resource intensive and with requirements for monitoring delivery of grant funded projects, this would become unmanageable. Alternatively, the

allocation could remain more open for projects to be identified throughout the year. As outlined, projects need to be deliverable as funding must be spent by the end of March 2025 and this would pose a bigger risk to delivery.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1. There is a risk that projects will not be able to deliver in the required timeframe. This will be closely monitored, and funding moved, if required, to alternative projects. A list of potential alternative projects is being developed to assist this.
- 6.2. There is a risk that outputs and outcomes are not achieved in line with the Investment Plan submitted to Government. Officers are reporting to Government on a regular basis as part of the requirements of the scheme and therefore any issues will be identified and addressed as early as possible.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

UKSPF and REPF are both funding awarded by Government to be allocated and spent by the Council. When deciding on projects, the Council has been mindful of not committing itself to on-going revenue and capital costs.

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

7.3. Equalities Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the UKSPF programme. In addition, all grant applicants have been asked to complete Equality Impact Assessments as part of their application.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

7.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no biodiversity net gain implications associated with this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	Interventions within UKSPF activity for 2024/25 include a focus on decarbonisation and this is an identified priority areas for the Council.
Quality of Life	The UKSPF's focus is on supporting Government's Levelling Up ambitions and particularly pride in place. The funding offers the opportunity for the Council and other organisations

	to deliver new activities to support and enhance our residents' quality of life.
Efficient Services	No contributions to this corporate priority identified.
Sustainable Growth	Objectives of the fund include supporting local businesses and people and skills, this funding will allow the Council and partners to deliver local interventions that meet the needs of our businesses and community.

9. Recommendation

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- c) delegates sign off of refinements to proposals for 2024/25 to the Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer, with both revenue and capital implications reported in future financial reports to Cabinet and the MTFS to Full Council.

For more information contact:	Catherine Evans Service Manager Economic Growth and Property 0115 914 8552 cevens@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Report to Cabinet in July 2022 Report to Cabinet in January 2023 Report to Growth and Development Scrutiny Committee in January 2025 Report to cabinet in February 2023 Report to Cabinet in October 2023
List of appendices:	Appendix A