

Report of the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Asset Management and Resources and Personnel Policy.

ALLOCATION OF UKSPF COMMUNITIES GRANT FUNDS 2024/5

1. Purpose of Report

To recommend to Cabinet the allocation of UKSPF-funded Communities Grants for delivery of sixteen individually nominated projects from April 2024 to March 2025, to a total value of £279,815. The report further recommends an addendum to the UKSPF Year 3 funding programme agreed by Cabinet in February 2024 to raise the total size of the fund to £279,815 and insert a further action to ensure Beeston Film Festival is supported through a separate part of the plan.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:

1. **The Cabinet increase the size of the Community Grants Fund from £240,000 to £279,815;**
2. **UKSPF-funded Communities Grants for 2024/5 are awarded to the fifteen organisations listed in section 3.**
3. **In the case that any of these organisations is unable to take forward their proposed project, funds to be reallocated to a project(s) from the UKSPF Communities Grants reserve list.**
3. **That an addendum be made to the Year 3 Programme to incorporate £9,000 for Beeston Film Festival in 2024/2025**

3. Detail

Broxtowe Borough Council's UKSPF Cabinet Panel approved an allocation of £240,000 to Communities Grants for 2024/5 in November 2023. The grant programme was launched on 23 November 2023, closing to applications on 22 January 2024. A total of 45 applications were received and all were assessed, though four were not eligible.

Each application was assessed independently by two Officers, scoring against seven questions. Scores were averaged and weighted to emphasise strong project proposals, community need, added value and a clear, reliable delivery plan including identification and mitigation of risks. Moderation was undertaken by the five assessing officers and queries noted, which were taken up with applicants. Discussions were undertaken with inter-departmental colleagues with expertise and a strategic overview of Business Support, People & Skills, Planning, Estates, Events, Communities, Culture and Sport. This process and responses to queries by applicants has valuably informed the selection of shortlisted projects and enhanced the decision making beyond the process of allocating purely on the basis of their prior scoring.

2024/5 is Year 3 of three years of Broxtowe's UKSPF funding. Any funds not spent by the end of that year must be returned to UK Government. Grant assessment and shortlisting has therefore emphasised reliability, in terms of project delivery and an expectation of timely and successful achievement and reporting of project outputs and outcomes.

UKSPF funding may be spent across the whole Borough and, reflecting the availability of other capital funds for economic growth in Stapleford and Kimberley, grant guidance indicated that capital applications from those locations would be looked upon less favourably, while revenue applications were welcome from anywhere in the Borough. An over-arching consideration informing the selection of shortlisted projects has been UKSPF's role in sharing prosperity as part of the Levelling Up programme, so in supporting community applications that identify and meet particular local need.

Applications were invited of between £5,000 and £40,000 with exceptional projects of up to £100,000 being considered. Three applications greater than £40,000 were received, but none demonstrated exceptional qualities. All three were for building adaptation or restoration projects which were not well enough developed for officers to be confident that their aims could be achieved in the time available. When considered in the context of allocating to alternative smaller applications, neither did they address as many pressing community needs, or offer similarly reliable achievement of outputs and outcomes within the 2024/5 year.

Some organisations have made applications which overlap with elements of Broxtowe's internal Year 3 programme; for example, Rural Community Action Network's (RCAN), community hall support services project has elements which duplicate with internal activities tackling poverty and green energy. Economies of scale and rational organisation of delivery can be achieved by combining the two strands of work under one offer. It is proposed to offer RCAN £10k grant funding + £6k from the internal programme making an award of 16k. With small adjustments like these more funding can be delivered to more projects. A further £38,000 has been identified, mainly from underspends in Broxtowe's UKSPF Year 2 programme, bringing the total funds available for Year 3 Communities Grants to £278,000. A further project is under review which means that £279,815 can be reliably awarded.

Beeston Film Festival have made two applications (2024 & 2025) for distinct activities with a Cultural Strategy theme for a total £18k. Neither applications are strong enough on their own merits and their outputs are economic rather than community led. Rather than reject the festival outright officers are proposing that an addendum be made to add the Beeston Film Festival into the internal project list in year three and to allocate £9,000. This could be combined with other activities in Town Centre Management or potentially be additional funding worked into Broxtowe Borough Council successful award of £30,000 from the

Arts Council. The £9,000 UKSPF funding would be ring-fenced for the film festival directly through this new internal project.

All shortlisted and reserve-listed projects have undergone financial due diligence checks by Broxtowe's Audit team and confirmed as showing no cause for financial concern. The projects are capable of generating the required outputs to level up some of the Borough's more deprived geographies and communities of interest, who are not in receipt of other levelling up funding. The projects provide a robust approach to equality and diversity.

It is recommended that Cabinet approve applications for UKSPF Communities Grants 2024/5 from:

- Attenborough Cricket Club
- Volunteer It Yourself (supporting Nottingham Casuals RFC)
- Beeston Unity Centre
- Nottingham Forest Community Trust (at Eastwood Town FC)
- Eastwood Athletic FC
- Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire
- Mind Nottinghamshire
- Parky Players
- Forever Stars
- Broxtowe Women's Project
- Men in Sheds (Eastwood)
- Beeston Civic Society
- Stapleford Town Council
- Stapleford Yarn Bombers
- Middle Street Resource Centre

4. Key Decision

This report is a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and is a decision made or to be made in connection with the discharge of an Executive function which is likely to:

1. result in the Council incurring revenue or capital expenditure or savings of £250,000 or more; and
2. be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Council's area.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not Applicable

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The Council is anticipating to receive an overall allocation of £2.605m in revenue, capital and capacity funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the three financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25. The final year UKSPF funding of £1,643,527 is anticipated in 2024/25. This funding includes a 4% maximum allocation for administrative purposes (circa £65,750) with a 20% minimum spend as capital (circa £328,750).

The General Fund revenue budget for 2024/25 includes the revenue element of the anticipated UKSPF at £1,443,500 (being £1.643m grant less £200,000 originally included in the Capital Programme – see below). The Capital Programme for 2024/25 includes £200,000 for the UKSPF capital schemes with the actual budget to be determined (this will be necessary given the 20% minimum capital spend). Any underspending from 2023/24 will be considered for carry forward by Cabinet in July 2024 and, if approved, these will be added to the 2024/25 budget. The planned spend is fully grant funded so the net impact on the Council's budget is nil.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The proposed projects are consistent with the requirements of the UKSPF programme, and it will be necessary for the Council to comply with the funding agreements in respect of the programme. Where necessary the funding to be provided to the projects referred to in the report will need comply with the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Additionally, the power to award grants to organisations comes from Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which is the general power of competence and the Council must comply with its public law duties.

8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not Applicable

9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not Applicable

10. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

The **APPENDIX** to this report contains OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information. There are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken for BrBC's Year 3 UKSPF Programme as a whole and was provided to February Cabinet.

13. Background Papers

Nil.