

# **UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND ADVISORY PANEL**

**FRIDAY, 2 AUGUST 2024**

Present: Councillor M Radulovic , Chair  
Councillor G Marshall  
Councillor G Bunn

Officers: R Hyde, Chief Executive  
Z Darr, Deputy Chief Executive  
J Little  
M Ward  
C Gault  
V McCourt  
A Strongman  
R Sharp  
P Ward

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Owen and S Carr

16 **Declarations of Interest**

The Chair asked for Declarations of Interest relating to any grant applicants or Items on the Agenda. Cllr Marshall advised that he represented the Beeston Town Centre Board and had signposted a couple of applicants to the grants process.

17 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18 **To Finalise Broxtowe's Year 3 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Funding Between Themes and Priorities for The 2024/25 Financial Year**

19

The Chair officially welcomed Cllr Gabrielle Bunn to the meeting.

Members were advised that the Papers had already been circulated to Cabinet in February 2024 about the overall programme and had been agreed. Officers confirmed that the Item had already been approved giving clear indication who could and could not apply within the policy and framework.

A brief update of the Communities & Place project was provided to the panel. There were 16 grant applications which had been approved and are currently making good progress. Regular meetings have been set up to discuss project milestones and appropriate funding released. The panel were advised that any underspend could be used for projects on a reserve list. There were two further projects approved with further underspend being kept under close review. A press release was issued in May outlining the allocation of community grants. The three Communities & Place Revenue projects were currently underway.

Members asked for a brief list of all works being carried out through UKSPF. Concerns were raised with the Mayoral Combined Authority creating another tier of bidding rounds.

Discussions ensued surrounding small amounts of grant funding. This should be given to small businesses and community groups as they are unlikely to get any funding under the new arrangements. There will be more strategic projects important to districts. The Council need to present to the East Midlands Combined Authority Mayor what we can do collectively.

Members noted that if money did not exist for regional purposes there was nothing to fill the gap and this needed to be made really clear at the September meeting with the Mayor.

Queries were raised regarding the cost of town centre events and further detail was requested. It was explained that the cost would be recirculated funds from traders and stall letting.

The Food Bank Co-ordinator post (£10k) was not viable as a post and funding was redirected to emergency food grants, subsequently a Credit Union proposal had been deleted and a new co-ordination project had come forward, so the £14,000 funding would combine these activities. Concern regarding the Festival of Science (FOSAC) grant was explained: The Council had entered into a three-year programme totalling £15k equating to £5k per year and the £8k accounts for this year and next year's funding.

#### 19 UKSPF Year 3 - Major Proposals and Business Grant Approvals

The list of business grant applications received by 19 July were illustrated in Appendix 1 of the report for Panel approval. Each application was assessed using the RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rating. Any Amber applications should be approved pending further information. The applications highlighted in Red did not meet the criteria of the grant although they would be referred to Business Support Advisers.

It was announced that there would be another round of grant applications to be presented to Panel for approval. The closing date for applications had been extended to 9 September 2024.

Members considered all the grant applications submitted for approval through the online portal and supported all the applications received. A discussion ensued relating to match funding being relevant to turnover and affordability to support smaller businesses. The RAG status was recommended once the additional information had been received for the S151 Officer approval.

An explanation was provided to the Panel that under the guidance of UKSPF that match funding was not a requirement. Energy Grants under £2,000 did not require any match funding and that grants were not based on business income. Applicants must submit quotations and financial accounts.

A query was raised relating to the eligibility of previous grant funding being awarded capping at £5,000. This related to some businesses receiving previous grant awards.

Members were provided with a detailed explanation to understand how the funding could be split and reallocated between the three streams. Funding allocations were based on need. No grant offer letters would be issued until quotations and accounts had been received. Grant payments would normally only be made upon paid invoices and grant funding is not usually paid up front. Confirmation was provided that Economic Development would continue to advertise and promote the business grant schemes through their fortnightly Business Newsletter and officers have recently visited local companies whilst in Stapleford, Eastwood, Kimberley, Beeston, and Chilwell.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1. The applications from the firms listed in Appendix 1 and those firms which scored well enough to receive Panel endorsement be recommended to the Section 151 Officer to receive funding.**
- 2. The extra detail on the 10 major project proposals individually and where appropriate recommend that the Section 151 Officer release all the allocated funding for these projects.**
- 3. A report to Cabinet to NOTE the decisions made by the Section 151 Officer on the recommendations of the Panel.**

The Major Projects under Appendix 2 of the report were discussed and reported as follows:

Local Enterprise Agency

Officers reported that the formation of a Local Enterprise Agency was ongoing as a Community Interest Company. This would allow us to ensure that we could spend or ring fence any underspend to support local businesses beyond March 2025.

Eastwood Visitor Economy

Highlighted examples and proposals to improve visitor activity to Eastwood town Centre that had not received the same grant funding as the other three towns in the Borough was discussed. A total of approx. £180,000 had been allocated to support projects proposed by the Culture and Communities teams that included: integrating a (virtual) Blue Line Trail encouraging schools/younger people to visit the area and the use of QR Codes on Smart phones could help to interact with the visitors with 'moving walls and animals' using AR which could be changed on a monthly rotational basis. "The only limitation to these bright ideas is the lack of imagination". Members welcomed these suggestions to create a buzz about the town.

Members felt that fixed equipment should be avoided and that the Council needed to target the younger audience with free activities during the school holidays. An option considered at the Museum courtyard and similar locations for virtual murals and light projections was subject to agreement of owners of the walls.

Brown Visitor Signs

The large brown visitor signs were recognised to help promote local attractions for increased tourism to Eastwood and nearby Bennerley Viaduct to be sited along the A610 and traffic islands.

### Beeston Water Sculpture

Members were advised that the water feature currently located within the Beeston Square would be relocated to another location within Beeston. The water sculpture had ceased to function for years and caused hazardous conditions during the winter months for pedestrians and traders. The suggestion to relocate the statue has been given support from the Beeston & District Civic Society.

Suggestions to repave that area of Beeston Square once the statue had been removed and, subject to funding, to possibly provide a pergola or covered band stand in Beeston Square were made. Members enquired about a D.H. Lawrence statue in Eastwood. This had not been budgeted for but if there was money left over it could be considered otherwise ideas could be submitted for any possible future bids.

### Brinsley Headstocks

Officers advised that preliminary works will be carried out this year including a planning application for the Brinsley Headstocks.

A query was raised relating to a proposed car park and if it could be considered for this area, subject to funding.

### Food Bank

An explanation was given that the total of £14,000 for this project was to provide workshops across the Borough for better co-ordination and allocation of emergency food being the outcome. This project is one of the cost of living support projects managed by The Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services, and the Cost of Living Steering Group aimed at supporting families on low incomes.

### Beeston Bike Storage

Members were advised that Nottingham City Council owned the land where the Bike Storage project was due to be located. This project is experiencing difficulty but Lime Bikes, who deliver the e-bikes rental scheme in Nottingham City, want to extend their service to Beeston and Kimberley if funding was available to repurpose. A suggestion to extend to the Beeston tram interchange (from the University's west entrance) was put to the Panel. If this did not materialise then it was suggested to report back in early September for the money to be reallocated to one of the other projects.

### Inward Investment and Innovation

This innovation was aimed at the food sector and producers of the supply chain.

### Events

There were three initiatives:

- (i) Totally Locally and (ii) Small Business Saturday and car parking vouchers

Initiatives for the four towns would be researched and proposed to small businesses prior to the Christmas trade period to promote their services and discuss local discounts. Alternatively, it was suggested to postpone the Small

Business Saturday and utilise the funding for parking vouchers instead as funding would probably only support two out of the three initiatives.

(iii) Business Events

It was proposed that initially two breakfast meetings would be held with one in the north and the other in the south of the Borough. There will be a small working group for each area. If possible this will be made into four events – one per town.

Skills Quest

An update was provided on the content of the Skills Quest report.

The total of £107,000 would provide support to VCSE and BAME sectors with B-Global who have been commissioned to target these areas. Job Fairs will continue to be provided in the local area. We have promoted the Stapleford Job Fair with publicity to invite more companies to attend.

The UKSPF Journey

This initiative will be to promote what we have achieved with the funding to support projects and businesses. Yellow Bird Communications have been commissioned to produce the document by September.

Members wished to express their appreciation to the Economic Development team for their involvement and work they have undertaken.

MEETING CLOSED AT 3.28 PM