

Meeting date: 9 March 2023

Report to: Full Cabinet

Report title: UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Report from: Director of Public Health

Report author/lead contact officer: Rachel Egan, Head of Inclusive Growth

Wards affected:

X All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarises the Council's approach to deploying the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) between 2022 and 2025. This new funding stream is administered by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) on behalf of the region with funding devolved to local authorities to support Community and Place and People and Skills priorities. A UKSPF Delivery Plan has been developed that encompasses a range of projects responding to local need and delivering Council Priorities. Linked to this is the Multiply programme that will help local employed residents to improve their numeracy skills.

2. Decision(s) Recommended

- 2.1 To agree the Solihull UKSPF Delivery Plan as outlined in Appendix 1
- 2.2 To accept the funding allocations and conditions of the funding agreements for UKSPF and Multiply for the years 2022/23 to 2024/25.
- 2.3 To agree the partnership approach with Solihull College to the Multiply programme in Solihull.

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3. Matters for Consideration

Background

- 3.1 UKSPF is a central pillar of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda. Its primary goal is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, with 3 key investment priorities:
- a) Community and Place
 - b) Supporting Local Business
 - c) People and Skills
- 3.2 Government has stressed that overall investment in UKSPF is comparable with what was previously available through European Structural Funds. This includes direct investment in the £2.6bn for the UKSPF, as well as £1.6bn for the British Business Bank to invest in regional growth (with £400m earmarked for the Midlands), however, initial indications are that directly available funding appears reduced overall. WMCA has been allocated £88.4m to be spent between April 2022 and March 2025 of which £5.3m has been allocated to Solihull.
- 3.3 WMCA's role as the lead authority will include overall accountability for the fund, including managing the allocation process, assessing and approving delivery plans and processing payments.
- 3.4 The Council will be required to submit monthly returns to WMCA to demonstrate progress and activity including updates on expenditure and assurance that projects are on track to deliver contracted outputs and outcomes.
- 3.5 Multiply is a national government funded programme that sits alongside UKSPF and aims to reach adults across the UK and improve their functional numeracy skills. The expected outcomes are that more people will achieve maths qualifications, there will be fewer numeracy gaps identified by employers, and more people will feel confident using numeracy in their everyday lives. The focus will be on supporting people in employment.

Solihull Allocation

- 3.6 WMCA as the lead accountable body for UKSPF submitted a high-level investment plan to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which has now been approved. For Solihull, this means:
- a) A total of £5.3 million over three years
 - b) 50% of this to be ring-fenced to Business Support activity, delivered over year 2 and year 3
 - c) 50% to be decided locally, spent on Community and Place activity (years 1, 2 and 3) and People and Skills activity (year 3), with increasing allocations year on year as outlined

below.

Table 1: Solihull allocation by Year

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Community and Place and People and Skills projects	£309,346	£618,691	£1,620,971	£2,549,008.00

- 3.7 In February 2023, Solihull MBC received a grant agreement for UKSPF funds confirming this allocation of funding.
- 3.8 There is ongoing work with WMCA and other Local authority colleagues to develop a Business Support programme which will meet local and regional need. Funding for this aspect of activity has not been locally devolved and is therefore out of scope for this report.
- 3.9 This paper sets out the broad areas of focus for UKSPF funding that support the delivery of Solihull's Council Plan and our vision that everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and more prosperous through growth that creates opportunities for all.

Communities and Place Priorities

- 3.10 We will use the Communities and Place strand to improve green and urban spaces and build capacity within our communities. UKPSF funding will deliver the following projects:
- a) **Transforming Community Buildings and Family Hubs:** refurbishing existing community buildings to make them more accessible and investing in new modular structures where existing buildings don't exist. There will be investment in helping to increase community capacity and supporting voluntary organisations to help to run these new facilities.
 - b) **Arts and Culture:** to deliver a programme to support the growth of the arts and culture and creative industries across the borough. The programme will help to strengthen the social and physical links amongst the cultural and creative communities and support adults to develop their work and business ideas.
 - c) **Solihull's Green Ways:** This will extend the principles of the Wildlife Ways project and improve green corridors across the Borough with a series of bulb, tree and shrub planting which will increase biodiversity, enhance public spaces and help to mitigate against climate change
 - d) **High Streets and local centres:** interventions will help develop and promote events and attractions with new campaigns to increase footfall and encourage visitors. A New open-air market will be developed and there will be support for local arts and cultural events, linking into the new Cultural Hub.
 - e) **Kingshurst Village Centre:** there will be investment in essential demolition and clearing works to make the site safe and ready for development. Funding will also be used to develop capacity within the community and VCS sector where we are particularly looking

at opportunities that build on our current engagement with the voluntary and community sector and the potential for social enterprises to be involved in the new Community, Health and Wellness Hub.

- f) **Digital Hub**; building on the funds from Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership to create a new Digital Hub for young people, UKSPF investment will expand the programme to residents of all ages and ensure they have access to laptops to look for work or training, and improve their digital employability skills

People and Skills Priorities (Restricted to year 3)

- 3.11 This pillar of funding will be used to support our residents who are furthest from the labour market to find work, education and training, and offer more intensive support for those who are most vulnerable.
- 3.12 **Employment Support Programme: (Year 3 only)**. In line with the grant conditions, employment support activity will focus on supporting residents who are economically inactive to find work or training. There will also be intensive support for people with learning disabilities, and preventative work for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training). Plans for this area of work are still under development, however it is likely that an element of this delivery will be commissioned to VCS partners to deliver more specialist interventions.
- 3.13 **Support for VCS organisations delivering People and Skills activity**. This will be used to bridge the gap between the end of funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the beginning of People and Skills UKSPF funding (Jan – March 2024) for VCS organisations that currently deliver to local residents through ESF and will continue to deliver support through UKSPF.
- 3.14 Proposed funding for each area of work is detailed below:

Table 2: Proposed annual allocations for each project area

Priority	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	
Solihull allocation for local priorities	£309,346 (to start c. October 22)		£618,691.00		£1,620,971.00		£2,549,008.00
High streets and local centres, markets		£28,000		£39,500		£83,500	£ 151,000.00
Transforming Community Buildings and Family Hubs		£ 55,000	£ 260,000	£ 65,000	£ 450,000	£ 75,000	£ 905,000.00
Kingshurst - Community Capacity Building	£100,000	£ 45,000		£ 30,000		£ 30,000	£ 205,000.00
Arts and Culture	£ 15,000	£ 10,000		£ 50,000		£ 50,000	£ 125,000.00
VCS orgs at risk				£ 71,991			£ 71,991.00
Employment support				£ -		£ 925,071	£ 925,071.00
Growing Places digital Hub	£ 56,346						£ 56,346.00
Solihull's Green Ways			£ 90,700	£ 11,500		£ 7,400	£ 109,600.00
Total		£ 309,346		£ 618,691		£ 1,620,971	£ 2,549,008

4. Multiply

- 4.1 Multiply is a government funded programme which aims to reach adults across the UK

and improve their functional numeracy skills.

- 4.2 Like UKSPF, this funding stream is administered through WMCA. WMCA have created four strands for Multiply delivery, with one strand focusing on a local approach to engaging people who are in work in line with local priorities. The target group is residents in employment who don't yet have a GCSE grade C in Maths. We will work with local employers and VCS partners to achieve this.
- 4.3 Solihull will be working closely with Solihull College throughout the three-year programme to identify where the greatest impact can be made. In year 1, delivery is small scale to test the market and pilot delivery models but will increase in Year 2 and Year 3. We expect to work with local VCS partners in year 2 and 3 to increase engagement in the Multiply programme with local communities, using their existing customer base and local delivery mechanisms.
- 4.4 In Year 1 we expect to spend around £32,000 on local Multiply delivery, engaging with around 50 people. In Year 2 and Year 3, each annual allocation is around £150,000 with outputs to be agreed so the total funding will be £332,000.

5. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 5.1 Officers have worked through proposals to ensure that all potential UKSPF delivery aligns with Council Priorities.
- 5.2 Multiply delivery has been worked up in consultation with Solihull College focusing on local intelligence where there is a need to upskill the existing workforce
- 5.3 In bringing together a set of proposed activity, we have also considered the following factors in ensuring we obtain maximum value from our interventions:
 - a) Services most at risk from the end of European Strategic Investment Funds
 - b) Council Plan priorities
 - c) Priorities from the Economic Strategy
 - d) Ability to mobilise delivery quickly in terms of Year 1
 - e) Ability to use UKSPF as leverage for other funds / start-up funding to begin delivery
 - f) Ability to scale delivery up or down if other funding becomes available

6. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 6.1 The projects that will be delivered all meet UKSPF grant conditions and are in line with the

criteria outlined above.

7. Implications and Considerations

7.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive. 	<p>The deployment of UKSPF contributes to the delivery of all Council Plan priorities</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable. 	
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions. 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Promote employee wellbeing 	<p>Enter text.</p>

7.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

7.2.1 The UKSPF Delivery Plan was developed in consultation with senior officers and Cabinet Members.

7.3 Financial implications:

7.3.1 Spend will be monitored at officer level through the Inclusive Growth Board. UKSPF should be viewed as three annual allocations of funding, with no flexibility to carry forward

unspent funds into the new financial year.

7.4 Legal implications:

7.4.1 Funding to be spent in line with grant conditions as set out in the legal agreement between WMCA and the Council.

7.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

7.5.1 The main risk associated with UKSPF is the inability to spend all the allocation within the financial year and that there is no flexibility with to carry funds forward into a new financial year. A new Risk register will be set up for UKSPF and governance via Inclusive Growth Board will address any issues with underspend or underperformance, reviewing the position every two months.

7.6 Equality implications:

7.6.1 This will be managed locally; project teams will be expected to apply their own equality considerations to their projects as appropriate

7.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

7.7.1 We work closely with the WMCA as the Lead Accountable body to plan and deliver UKSPF activity compliantly. We are also working with the ICS to ensure that UKSPF and the Fairer Futures Fund complement each other as appropriate.

8. List of appendices referred to

8.1 Appendix 1 – Solihull UKSPF Delivery Plan

9. Background papers used to compile this report

9.1 N/A

10. List of Other Relevant Documents

10.1 N/A

Appendix 1 – Solihull UKSPF Delivery Plan

Communities and Place

Transforming Community Buildings, Family Hubs and Community Capacity Building Programme:

Solihull currently faces two significant challenges relating to community infrastructure, the first of these being a general lack of openly accessible community assets such as children's centres, youth centres and community centres. The second being that the distribution of those community assets isn't equal within the borough, with several areas experiencing a significant sparsity in these important and publicly accessible meeting points and community facilities. We need to invest in new and existing community assets to ensure they are realising a community benefit particularly where that vital community infrastructure might be missing. UKSPF will provide capital and revenue funding to be able to increase and improve community access to land and property assets. This is part of an overall aim to improve and level up community infrastructure across the borough.

The capital funding will be used to refurbish and renovate existing buildings to make them more accessible and relevant to their local community. It will also be used to invest in new modular buildings in areas with a lack of physical meeting places for communities.

The revenue funding will be used to invest in two things. The first is the Council's capacity to be able to deliver a community buildings programme, developing and appraising options and moving some assets through to community asset transfers (where this is deemed appropriate). The second is investing in the capacity and capability of community organisations and groups to be able to either partly or fully take on the management of Council buildings for community benefit.

Embedded within this ambitious programme is the development of our Family Hubs. Solihull has been named as one of 12 areas (out of 84 applicants) to be awarded £1 million to create a network of Family Hubs by March 2024. This funding will contribute to genuine transformation for Solihull families from pre-conception to 19 years (and 25 years for young people with additional needs) with a seamless, single-branded family support offer throughout childhood.

The hub offer is an important means of delivering early help at the heart of our communities, with an aim to reduce the number of families entering statutory services. Children and families will benefit from a new, single-branded, multi-agency family support offer with 'one stop shop' sites and virtual and online groups sessions.

They will offer health appointments, including midwives and health visitors, social activities, parent support, help with additional needs, playgroups and youth clubs. There will also be expert advice with debt, mental health issues, addictions, adult education and more. The support offered will be research-based and will directly address disadvantage.

The aim of the hub offer is to improve the health, wellbeing and resilience of children and young people, creating confident, productive adults, through effective, evidence-based support. This timely prevention will reduce the need for crisis intervention by social care

services.

The intention would also be to use the UKSPF to leverage other funding, particularly from independent funders and social financiers.

Arts and Culture

UKSPF will be used to help fund an SMBC Culture Team to deliver a programme to support the growth of the arts and culture and creative industries across the borough. The programme will help to strengthen the social and physical links amongst the cultural and creative communities and support adults to develop their work and business ideas.

The funding will be used to deliver the following activity

- (a) Support and inspire creators/makers/ performers of all art forms by bringing people to come together to interact, get involved, and appreciate cultural offerings through shared experiences, workshops and learning from other professionals/organisations and support agencies
- (b) Connect early career creatives with professionals in a range of sectors including support agencies and organisations to help with shaping their offer, developing a business model, marketing and defining their employment status.
- (c) Provide commissioning opportunities to stimulate a more diverse cultural identity in the borough which enables creatives to test out their business development skills alongside their creative/artistic talents
- (d) Provide an opportunity for accessible and affordable space for artists to use at The Core to promote themselves, develop their content, collaborate and showcase their work
- (e) Provide an on-tap town centre location to engage with new audiences.
- (f) Provide technology to assist them with running their basic business functions and access to high tech items to support their performances at the venue.

Solihull Green Ways

Building on the success of the Council's recent European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) projects; Solihull's award-winning Habitat Nature Improvements Project and Wildlife Ways we propose to continue to improve the wildlife value and biodiversity of Solihull's parks, green spaces, and highway verges, and connect these areas together through green corridors.

The Wildlife Ways funding will end in spring 2023 and this is an opportunity to extend the ethos of the Wildlife Ways Project principles and help support ecosystem services across the region, improve biodiversity and deliver nature recovery. Delivering national policy locally, it also aligns with, and plays a role in the Council's sustainable travel, walking and cycling aspirations, which will benefit from improved green corridors and interconnecting routes, allowing wildlife to flourish and helping people to walk and cycle across the

borough. There are multiple opportunities to enhance green corridors, link local centres and strategic corridors.

Tree, shrub, bulb and primrose planting are proposed together with species rich wildflower grassland to increase diversity, provide enhanced public amenity, mitigate climate change and adapt to the changing climate.

We hope that this investment in the natural environment of Solihull ensures the Wildlife Ways programme has a lasting positive impact and legacy for our communities, contributing to the quality of place and to people's quality of life, health and well-being. We have carefully designed the projects to collectively increase and strengthen the capacity of the natural environment to deliver ecosystem services across the region and provide resilience and mitigation against climate change such as the reduction of the heat island effect within urban centres, rainfall capture and mitigating flood risk. It has also been demonstrated that a high-quality natural environment encourages financial investment and growth.

High Streets and Local Centres

There will be a range of interventions to revitalise Solihull's High Streets and local centres which are an essential component of sustainable communities and the Borough's economy.

This will be designed and delivered in partnership with local stakeholders, including the Solihull town centre Business Improvement District, Visit Knowle, Shirley Ambassador Group and shopping centre owners and will include:

- (a) Public realm improvements e.g., street art, street furniture and other decorative improvements, disabled access improvements including parklets and planters
- (b) Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities including local event street entertainment and seasonal events
- (c) Establishment and ongoing running of new open-air markets, with wrap-around support for small businesses
- (d) Development and promotion of local visitor attractions, trails, tours, experiences and offers including campaigns promoting the local area and its culture, leisure and visitor offer to residents and visitors, including to encourage visitors from further afield to visit and stay

Activity will be focussed on increasing footfall, visitor numbers and spend, with wider benefits such as increased participation and engagement of local residents, and new and improved business opportunities.

Kingshurst Village Centre

Kingshurst village centre is currently being redeveloped to include new homes, a new

shopping parade and a new Community, Health and Wellness Hub. This hub will act as a catalyst for wider public service reform focussed on an integrated service offer designed to tackle health inequalities and will become a focal point for the delivery of a range of services including health services, employment support, money advice, etc., with co-location and co-production of services. The Hub will be community driven and open up opportunities for people to make a positive contribution to their community, building community confidence and pride in the hub.

In order to deliver on these aims this strand will fund community capacity building activity to support the community to develop the skills, capacity, knowledge and networks to drive and manage the offer that is delivered from the new village centre. We are particularly looking at opportunities that build on our current engagement with the voluntary and community sector and the potential for social enterprises to be involved in the new Community, Health and Wellness Hub.

UKSPF will also contribute capital funds towards essential demolition and groundworks to prepare the space for development.

Digital Hub

In Year 1 UKSPF will contribute to the Digital Hub at the Solihull Recruitment and Training Centre, building on the investment from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Growing Places Fund. This provides ICT training to residents who are looking for work and training and want to improve their digital employability skills, and has enabled the project to be opened up to people of all ages who often have very limited digital access.

Employment Support Programme

Current employment support provision is delivered through the Council's Employment and Skills teams and voluntary partners, including activity to move unemployed and inactive residents into employment, education or training including intensive help for those with disabilities or poor mental health.

UKSPF will only fund activity for economically inactive residents and we are therefore considering how we may combine various funding streams including UKSPF, DWP's flexible support fund and core SMBC funding to offer an enhanced service for jobseekers and businesses, with wraparound support to address customers' barriers.

This would build on the strong foundation of work delivered through the Chelmsley Wood Recruitment and Training Centre, using an established community facility to deliver training, events, jobs fairs, outreach and recruitment support. It will also support a tailored and responsive digital support offer delivered in house; 1-1 and small groups workshops will deliver digital skills required for many job roles, with more specialised qualifications delivered through the Adult Education Budget.

We will also build on the specialist support that we are developing in house to support

people with learning disabilities into paid employment and supported internships.

In summary, interventions are likely to include:

- (a) 1-1 support from a key worker to provide ongoing employment and support, identifying training and employment goals and action planning to progress
- (b) Employer Engagement to reverse market candidates to employers, supporting with recruitment and promoting and delivering jobs fairs and events
- (c) A community digital offer to enable people without ICT skills or equipment to job search and improve their ICT skills for the workplace
- (d) A flexible space in Chelmsley Wood to support the community to find work and training, with improved access to health and wellbeing services.
- (e) Support for young people at risk of becoming NEET

We are likely to commission specialist services from VCS organisations to work in close partnership with the Employment and Skills team, using their expertise to support residents with learning disabilities and poor mental health. This will be procured through a competitive process.

Support for VCS organisations delivering People and Skills activity

There are currently three VCS organisations delivering employment support in Solihull through European Social Fund (ESF). They are contracted delivery partners of the Council and offer more specialised support for residents with poor mental health, disabilities or those furthest from the labour market. Their contractual commitments to employment support vary from engagement through to supporting residents into employment and training outcomes. They are all funded until December 2023.

It is proposed to use UKSPF to bridge the gap between the end of ESF and the start of UKSPF employment support delivery in April 24. Activity during this three-month period will focus on volunteering as a route to work in line with grant conditions.

We will be engaging with our existing VCS partners to work through delivery options and funding requirements to bridge this gap in Year 2.

Only employment support delivery partners currently receiving ESF will receive any

UKSPF in Years 2 and 3

Budget

Priority	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total
	£309,346 (to start c. October 22)		£618,691.00		£1,620,971.00		
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	
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