

UPDATE ON UKSPF COMMUNITIES AND PLACE FUNDING

Report of the Director of Development & Regeneration

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee considered information about the Communities and Place strand of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), and the proposed approach for the use of Stockport's allocation of these funds, at the March Committee meeting.
- 1.2 At the March meeting it was agreed that updates on UKSPF in Stockport would be brought back to the Committee.
- 1.3 This paper provides information on the progress made with the UKSPF Communities and Place funding allocation for Stockport and the awarding of grant funding to a range of projects, and the next steps with the scheme.

2. STOCKPORT'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

- 2.1 The Council was successful in bidding to GMCA for Communities and Place funding for two programme work streams to deliver projects that align to their approved investment proposition with DLUHC:
 - Healthy and Happy Stockport
 - Climate Friendly Stockport.
- 2.2 Stockport's Communities and Place funding is set out below. Currently, DLUHC have only approved UKSPF funding for the financial year ending March 2024.

Financial Year	Stockport's UKSPF Communities and Place Funding
2022/23	£673,000
2023/24	£907,500
2024/25	£874,000

- 2.3 As funds for this strand of UKSPF were delayed, Stockport's allocation to use in the 22/23 financial year was rolled into this financial year providing total available funding of £1,580,500 to be used by 31/03/2024.
- 2.4 In March, the Committee endorsed the Council's proposed arrangements for calling for project bids for using the funding, and the proposed methodology for assessing and awarding funding to successful bids, plus associated governance arrangements for the funding, summarised in the diagram below:

Project bids are received by the Economy, Work and Skills team through a series of bid windows, and scored against an outcome and evaluation framework to be given a final overall aggregate score from 3 officers

The UKSPF C&P Project Bid Reference Group consider the project bids and EWS scores, and moderate the scores to give a final view to the Director of Development and Regeneration

The Director of Development and Regeneration has due regard for the views from the UKSPF Bid Reference Group and makes final allocation decisions under delegated authority to approve in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy & Regeneration.

Project funding allocations report is produced quarterly and reported to the Cabinet Member for Economy & Regeneration

2.5 The Council has now completed this process for a round of bids for the available funding.

3. PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

3.1 Following the announcement that the Council is the GM Town of Culture, £200,000 from the UKSPF funding was allocated to support this activity as it is exactly aligned to the purposes of UKSPF Communities and Place. This means that the remaining available funds for awarding to bids is £1,380,873.

3.2 A call for bids for this funding, for qualifying projects, from external and internal partners was made by the Council during July 2023, with a bid submission deadline of 31/07/23. 37 bids were received by the deadline.

3.3 The total call on funding from the 37 bids came to £1,607,510 which exceeded the available funds by £226,637.

3.4 All of the bids were evaluated and scored separately by officers in the Economy, Work and Skills team, and the scores awarded were then moderated by an independent bid scoring moderation panel. The moderation panel reviewed a random sample of the scores and agreed the scores at a confidence level of 93%.

For the 2 scores that the moderation panel differed on to the officer scores, there was a variation of between 0.3 and 0.7. The moderation panel agreed that there was a high level of confidence that the officer scoring of the bids was fair and consistent.

- 3.5 The scores given to bids reflected whether the proposed projects demonstrated the requirements to deliver the specific outputs/outcomes required by the UKSPF Communities and Place programme. The scores were used as a reference guide in conjunction with additional context from the bids regarding the suitability, alignment to core purpose of the funding and value for the level of funding requested, to determine which bids should be supported.
- 3.6 Of the 37 bids, 27 were proposed to be funded with a total funding value of £972,760. 10 bids were not proposed for funding as they were either a second bid from an organisation that had another bid proposed for funding, or they did not match to the required UKSPF criteria for alignment and/or quality reasons.
- 3.7 The bids were reviewed under the previously agreed and established governance arrangements, and then the Director for Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing agreed which bids were successful and the funding to be awarded.
- 3.8 The 27 successful bids were awarded the full amount of funding that they had requested in their project bids and notified accordingly.
- 3.9 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the successful bids and the funding amounts awarded. The bids cover a range of activities, beneficiaries, and areas in Stockport.
- 3.10 To assist with continuing the successful Action Plan approach for creating strong and healthy District Centres a further £40,000 has been allocated via the Communities and Place strand of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), to be split equally between the eight District Centres.
- 3.11 The Council is considering how to make best use of the remaining funding available of £367,513 to further deliver the outcomes and outputs required for the UKSPF Communities and Place programme in Stockport, and a further update on this will be brought to the Committee.
- 3.12 The first project funded by Stockport's UKSPF was delivered on 24/09/23. GRIT Studios delivered a project called 'The Stockport Spray'. This was Stockport's inaugural Street Art Festival. It was a one-day event with 30 of the UK's top street artists coming to Stockport, providing a rare opportunity to see the creation of world class street art. The project aimed to attract 1,000 people to the area for the event but actually attracted 1,400 people, including some who had travelled from across the north of England to attend.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Stockport has created a rigorous and successful approach to making the best use of the UKSPF Communities and Place funding. This funding has provided extra support for the delivery of our ambitions for a great year as Town of Culture, as well

as supporting further development of the good work being done in our district centres.

- 4.2 The first round of projects bidding for funding has been delivered and there are an exciting and diverse range of project ideas and activities that will be delivered for Stockport's benefit as a result. The first street art project that has been delivered demonstrates how the funding can be a catalyst for bringing additional footfall into the area to attend exciting creative events in Stockport. This enriches the cultural and creative life of the borough but also brings a much-needed boost to our local economy.
- 4.3 The remaining funding will be used carefully to continue benefitting Stockport with this established approach and, subject to confirmation of further funding from government, will continue into the next financial year to April 2025.
- 4.4 Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Richard Mortimer on Tel: 0161 474 3864 or by email on richard.mortimer@stockport.gov.uk