

Meeting of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Board



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Monday, 11 December 2023, 2.00
pm

Committee Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Philip Knowles (Chairman)
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Sarah Trotter

Other Members present

Councillor Rhea Rayside

Officers

Director of Growth and Culture, Nicola McCoy-Brown
Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer, Alison Hall-Wright
UKSPF Programme Manager, Hannah Heath
National Management Trainee, Mieke Alcock
Democratic Officer, Lucy Bonshor

20. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing, Councillor Patsy Ellis and Councillor Lee Steptoe.

21. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

22. Minutes from the meeting held on 16 October 2023

The minutes from the meeting held on 16 October 2023, were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** subject to the following amendment;

That the date for the March meeting in 2024 should read Monday 11 March 2024 not 15.

23. Expenditure Profile and Heat Map

A copy of the Expenditure Profile and Heat Map had been circulated to the Board. Some Members expressed dismay at the funding spread across the district, but acknowledged that even though the fund had been widely advertised organisations had not applied for the funding. It was requested that an additional column was added to include how much funding had gone to each area as well as the spend per head.

➤ **Action – An additional column showing total spend for the area to be added to the Heat Map.**

24. Summary of Main Programme Applications

The Chairman informed the Board that the outcome of the main programme applications would be decided upon in the New Year after being considered by the relevant Local Economic Forum sub-group.

25. Budget overview for the three SPF priorities for year 3 funding

The funding overview was discussed as part of agenda item 4.

26. Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no press and public in attendance. Each presentation was made by the relevant organisation who then left the meeting once they had concluded their presentation.

27. Main Programme Presentations Applications

The Board were notified that three organisations would be making presentations, with one now unable to attend SKMP04 – Harlaxton Manor College, the Social Economy Accelerator – Supporting Local Business Priority.

SKMP03 – East Mercia Rivers Trust – Communities and Place Priority

The Board received a presentation in respect of the East Mercia Rivers Trust which through the River Academy was looking at how rivers could be brought back to life. Their aim was to educate people of all ages about water courses such as checking the health of a water course, looking at the plant species and pollution. The River Academy would be based at Belton House, near Grantham in the Old School House. The river Witham ran through the Belton site which offered an ideal environment for river studies. The location also had good connectivity links with both the A1 and the rail network. Age specific courses would be offered to all age groups from primary and secondary school children, to those in adult education and Post graduate studies.

Funding was being sought in respect of transport costs and also funding for equipment such as water quality kits and also coats and wellington boots to enable all sessions to be inclusive.

Members discussed the request for funding and were supportive of the overall project. The request would be discussed by the Local Economic Forum sub-group and would come back before the Board in the new year.

Funding requested: £35,000

Board minded to support the funding application

(As Nicola McCoy-Brown was a governor of Grantham College she left the meeting during the Grantham College presentation)

SKMP05a – Employment Engagement Officer - £61,816 (year 3)

SKMP05b – Employability Skills for employment/employers' project - £97,000 (year 3)

SKMP05c – Bespoke Skills for Business Provision - £67,000

The Board received a presentation from a representative from Grantham College on three funding applications which supported the people and skills and local businesses priorities. The first and third funding applications complimented each other.

The first funding application centred around the recruitment of a full-time employer engagement officer based at Grantham College, who would work with local businesses with a particular emphasis on those operating in key sectors where there was a skills gap as identified in the LSIP and by the GLLEP, e.g., digital, engineering, care, leadership and management and construction and visitor economy. It was proposed that the Employer Engagement Officer would engage with businesses to find out their training needs and what they needed to enable their businesses to grow and to help demystify the various qualifications available.

The second proposal was to continue the work supporting those individuals living in South Kesteven who are furthest from the labour market, often with significant barriers, to achieve their full potential and move them closer towards sustainable employment and/or into training, learning or volunteering opportunities.

The third proposal was centred around funding for a Business Skills Trainer to develop and deliver bespoke skills training for local businesses. The project would enable us to create, develop and deliver workshops and tailored programmes to businesses largely based on the collaborative, employer engagement work undertaken by the Employer Engagement Office.

Members asked questions about the proposed posts and whether the proposals could be looked at individually and also whether there was funding already in place.

Following the presentation, the Board were not minded to support the funding proposals but acknowledged that the applications would be looked at in more detail by the relevant Local Economic Forum sub-groups before they came back to the Board in the new year for a decision.

(Nicola McCoy-Brown returned to the meeting)

SKMP08 - South Kesteven Care Worker Micro-Enterprise Pipeline - £61,000 (year3)

The Board received a presentation on a project to support the establishment of up to 15 care worker micro-enterprises in South Kesteven by March 2025. It would provide an opportunity for unemployed and underemployed local people in South Kesteven to become self-employed in a supportive environment and to work in a network which ensures they are able to offer as a group 24/7 care to the individuals they support.

Background information was given to the board on how, for some people, the rurality of the district and the lack of transport infrastructure were detrimental to some sections of the work force. Detail was given on how the proposed funding would be used to provide support to enable people to set up businesses closer to their homes. Support packages would be in place for these micro enterprises but it was stated that they would not be CPC regulated.

Members acknowledged the programme currently being carried out on the east coast but were concerned about the proposed lack of CPC regulations or safeguards that would be in place for the proposed micro enterprises proposed for this area and also how the level of support would be managed and also issues such as the carrying out of DBS checks.

Members were not minded to support the funding proposal.

28. SKPF applications considered at 16 October 2023 Meeting with additional information provided

(16:00 – 16:10 an adjournment took place)

The following applications to the South Kesteven Prosperity Fund were reconsidered:

Afghanistan & Central Asian Association (SK2071)

The application was for funding to create an Arts and Cultural hub to empower 80 newly-arrived Afghan refugee families in Grantham. Following the last meeting of the Board further information was requested which although requested hadn't been provided. Consensus of Board Members was to reject the application.

Application funding: £15,190 – REFUSED

Swinstead Village Hall (SK2110)

The application was for the total refurbishment of the aged village hall toilets.

The Board had been asked to reconsider their decision as no contribution would be given by the landowners. It was stated that similar proposals for different areas had

been supported by the Board. Following further discussion, it was agreed to support the funding application subject to finding out the length of the Village Hall lease.

Application funding: £19,400 – APPROVED subject to lease length

Holy Trinity Church, Allington (SK2105)

The application was for help with the installation of a DDA compliant toilet facility in the church. This was an integral part of a larger whole project that included the building of a hard surface path from the gates to the church (already completed), a servery area, releveling of uneven flag stones and building a ramp inside the church. Members discussed the request to reconsider the funding application. It was noted that requests had been made to other organisations for funding and that the lack of community use was due to the necessity for work to be done on the church. As similar funding had been agreed and each case was looked at individually it was agreed to support the funding request.

Application funding: £20,000 - APPROVED

29. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances decides is urgent

A request was made that perhaps in respect of the larger funding applications the organisations could return to future meetings of the Board and give a presentation on how they had spent the funding allocation.

Members of the Board agreed with the request.

30. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 16:25.