



INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER AND OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS

TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2024

Please find enclosed Decision Notices in connection with the following:

ICMD31 Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant Award: Communities, Well-Being and Partnerships (Pages 2 - 9)

ICMD32 Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant Award: Climate Action (Pages 10 - 17)

ICMD33 Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant Award: Visitor Economy, Community Wealth Building and Culture (Pages 18 - 25)

Please note that these are subject to call-in.

Queries regarding these documents

Please contact Liz Bateson, Democratic Support - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk.

Democratic Support,
Town Hall,
Dalton Square,
Lancaster,
LA1 1PJ

Published on TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2024



Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

**EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER OR DELEGATED OFFICER
NOTICE OF DECISION**

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND CONTACT OFFICER

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TITLE OF DECISION: Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant Award: Communities, Well-Being and Partnerships 			
NAME OF DECISION TAKER:		COUNCILLOR PETER JACKSON	
POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITY HELD:		CABINET MEMBER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COMMUNITIES, WELL-BEING AND PARTNERSHIPS	
CONTACT OFFICER:		MARK DAVIES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
TELEPHONE:		01524 582501	
E-MAIL:		UKSPF@lancaster.gov.uk	
Details of Decision:			
<p>To delegate the Chief Executive to finalise and agree an award of Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) funds in respect of Intervention SRC2 and SRC3 as set out in the council's REPF addendum and within the parameters of the UKSPF change control process, to deliver the projects Tunstall Village Hall, Whittington Village Hall, Melling St. Wilfred's Church Roof, Halton Castle Hill and Lune Valley Swimming Pool.</p>			
Reasons for the decision:			
<p>The Lancaster district has been allocated £500,075 by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The REPF complements the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in rural areas from April 2023-March 2025.</p> <p>Implementing the REPF requires the council to allocate funds to a range of projects which will deliver on the outcomes and outputs set out in the REPF addendum. This allocation in respect of Interventions SRC2 and SRC3 will enable the projects to commence delivery and begin creating positive local impact.</p>			
IS THE DECISION URGENT			
NO			
<p>I confirm that I have taken account of the options proposed by officers, the various implications set out in the report and the comments of the Monitoring and Section 151 Officers and am authorising the decision as set out above.</p>			
SIGNATURE OF DECISION TAKER:		Cllr Peter Jackson	
DATE:		11.4.24	
<i>THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</i>			REF NO.
			ICMD31
DATE DECISION TAKEN:	11.4.24	DATE RECEIVED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES:	12.4.24
DATE DECISION PUBLISHED:	16.4.24	IMPLEMENTATION DATE (publication day + 5 working days):	24.4.24

CABINET

**Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), Grant Award:
Communities, Well-Being and Partnerships
Individual Cabinet Member Decision: Councillor Peter
Jackson**

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To delegate to the Chief Executive the authority to finalise and agree Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) awards in respect of Intervention SRC2 and SRC3, in line with the council's UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF addendum.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	n/a			
This report is public; Appendix A is exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(1) That the Chief Executive be delegated to finalise and agree Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) awards in respect of the following Interventions:

- **SRC2:** Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.
- **SRC3:** Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces.

Funds will be awarded as set out in the council's UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF addendum, to deliver the following projects:

- Tunstall Village Hall
- Whittington Village Hall
- Melling St. Wilfrid's Church Roof
- Lune Valley Swimming Pool
- Halton Castle Hill

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In April 2022 the government announced the [prospectus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\)](#), to be delivered by local authorities from 2022-2025.

1.2 In September 2022 the government published the Rural England Prosperity Fund Prospectus to be delivered by local authorities from 2023-2025.

- 1.3 The Lancaster district has been allocated £500,075 by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The REPF complements the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in rural areas from April 2023-March 2025. The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) provides complementary funding to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), targeted specifically at supporting rural businesses and communities in line with the government's overall goals of Levelling Up. The funding is entirely designated as 'capital' funding, which means it can only be spent on 'lasting assets such as buildings or equipment'.

2.0 Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum to UKSPF Investment Plan

- 2.1 Following a consultative development process with rural stakeholders, the council's REPF addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan was finalised and submitted to meet the government's deadline of 30th November 2022.
- 2.2 The council received approval of the REPF addendum in April 2023 followed by release of the initial tranche of funding for 2023-2024 in July 2023.

3.0 REPF applications

- 3.1 The second grant application window for REPF took place between 15th January and 5th February 2024.
- 3.2 The second grant application window was specifically for the second year of REPF and financial year April 2024-March 2025.
- 3.3 The full list of applications can be seen in the exempt appendix to this report.

4.0 Evaluation

- 4.1 Applications have been evaluated in line with HM Treasury's 'five cases' best practice approach to business case development (considering the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management case for each project) as well as the Critical Success Factors agreed by Cabinet at its meeting of 12 July 2022:

- Climate Emergency
- Affordable
- Deliverable
- Impact
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Proven Track Record
- Scalable

- 4.2 Following initial evaluations in February 2024, informal discussions with Cabinet in March 2024 considered the proposed strategic approach and provisional recommendations for the first round of funding awards.
- 4.3 Technical evaluation has been conducted to ensure projects are strongly aligned to REPF criteria as well as meeting all relevant obligations of the funding.

5.0 Proposal Details

- 5.1 It is proposed that applications be considered for a decision based on the following two outcomes:
- 1) *Award funding and begin implementation:* projects which clearly meet the criteria and can deliver positive impact against the programme's strategic

outcomes and outputs

2) *Do not consider awarding funding:* projects which are less well aligned to the criteria or strategic fit

5.2 The recommended decision for each application is contained in the exempt appendix to this report.

5.3 Specific to the relevant portfolio area of Communities, Well-Being and Partnerships the following projects are proposed for a Year 2 funding award in respect of Intervention SRC2 and SRC3;

- Tunstall Village Hall
- Whittington Village Hall
- Melling St. Wilfrid’s Church Roof
- Lune Valley Swimming Pool
- Halton Castle Hill

5.4 Should the recommendation in this report be approved, officers will initiate the process of finalising all relevant details and agree grant agreements for the projects to be delivered in accordance with the REPF programme’s guidance and requirements, and within the funding envelope defined by the council’s Investment Plan and addendum.

5.5 Delivering the complex and wide-ranging REPF programme will require a degree of flexibility in managing the specific funding allocated to each of the two Priorities and six Interventions contained in the addendum. All allocations will be determined within the parameters of the UKSPF programme’s change control process.

6.0 Details of Consultation

6.1 Delivering a successful REPF programme from 2023-2025 will be fundamentally dependent on a consultative, collaborative, and inclusive approach. The council’s REPF programme so far has been characterised by this principle, with wide-ranging consultation including:

- The formation of a Local Rural Partnership Group, in line with the REPF Prospectus, to advise and support the addendum development process and subsequent activity in delivering the programme.

6.2 The technical nature of project evaluation along with its ‘competitive’ element means that limited consultation is possible in considering funding awards for specific projects at this stage.

6.3 However, a consultative process has been taken with Cabinet members to ensure recommendations are in line with the desired strategic direction.

7.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Award REPF funding in respect of the specified project(s)	Option 2: Do not award REPF funding for the specified project(s)
Advantages	Commence delivery of the REPF programme with its associated benefits to the district.	Opportunity to consider other projects by not committing funding at this time.

Disadvantages	No specific disadvantages beyond demands on the organisation of delivering the programme.	Failure to deliver on the REPF programme.
Risks	Projects may require further development in finalising and agreeing details.	Failure of the council to fulfil its duty of delivering the REPF programme.

8.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

8.1 The officer preferred option is option 1, to commence delivery of the REPF programme.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 A robust process has been conducted in the development of an approved REPF Addendum, followed by the evaluation of project proposals.

9.2 This report sets out the proposed approach to the next phase of delivering the programme, and as such it is recommended that officers be delegated to finalise and agree funding awards for the first round of REPF projects.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The REPF demonstrates significant overlap with the Council Plan 2024-2027. As such, REPF projects and funding awards provide additional opportunity to advance the council's strategic priorities. This is reflected in the strategic design of the programme to meet the Council's goals.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

All REPF projects are required to be delivered in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, with the relevant contractual obligations placed on those delivering projects as part of the conditions for receiving funding.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted throughout this process and will advise on any necessary legal agreements in relation to grant funding arrangements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. All awards to projects are funded by REPF money via central government. All funding awards for financial year 2024-2025 at this stage, are subject to receipt of funds from central government. Regarding the resources used to administer the fund, the award includes a 4% allowance from the core revenue budget from the UKSPF programme. A team has been established to address this whilst working within the financial boundaries set and any additional requirements are being managed from within existing budgets.

Council, at its meeting of 28th February 2024 (minute 120 refers) approved the reprofiling of the £500K REPF funding to include £375K within 2024/25. Should the recommendation in this report be approved officers will update the Capital Programme to reflect the individual sub-projects within the over-arching REPF funding envelope.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

N/A externally delivered project

Information Services:

N/A externally delivered project

Property:

N/A externally delivered project

Open Spaces:

N/A

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer would request that both Members and Officers consider that the Council currently has a significant structural budget deficit and so funding initiatives will need to be (at a minimum) cost neutral to the Council or be subject to the usual arrangements surrounding for on-going support of items not included within the budget framework.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix (Exempt):

Summary of REPF Round 2 Applications

Contact Officer: Mark Davies, Chief Executive

Telephone: 01524 582501

E-mail: UKSPF@lancaster.gov.uk

Document is Restricted



Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

**EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER OR DELEGATED OFFICER
NOTICE OF DECISION**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TITLE OF DECISION: Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant Award: Climate Action 			
NAME OF DECISION TAKER:		COUNCILLOR GINA DOWDING	
POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITY HELD:		CABINET MEMBER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER: CLIMATE ACTION	
CONTACT OFFICER:		MARK DAVIES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
TELEPHONE:		01524 582501	
E-MAIL:		UKSPF@lancaster.gov.uk	
Details of Decision:			
<p>To delegate the Chief Executive to finalise and agree an award of Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) funds in respect of Intervention SRC6 as set out in the council's REPF addendum and within the parameters of the UKSPF change control process, to deliver the project Canal Access Improvements.</p>			
Reasons for the decision:			
<p>The Lancaster district has been allocated £500,075 by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The REPF complements the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in rural areas from April 2023-March 2025.</p> <p>Implementing the REPF requires the council to allocate funds to a range of projects which will deliver on the outcomes and outputs set out in the REPF addendum. This allocation in respect of Intervention SRC6 will enable the projects to commence delivery and begin creating positive local impact.</p>			
IS THE DECISION URGENT			
NO			
<p>I confirm that I have taken account of the options proposed by officers, the various implications set out in the report and the comments of the Monitoring and Section 151 Officers and am authorising the decision as set out above.</p>			
SIGNATURE OF DECISION TAKER:		Cllr Gina Dowding	
DATE:		15/4/24	
<i>THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</i>			REF NO.
			ICMD32
DATE DECISION TAKEN:	15/4/24	DATE RECEIVED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES:	15/4/24
DATE DECISION PUBLISHED:	16/4/24	IMPLEMENTATION DATE (publication day + 5 working days):	24/4/24

CABINET

**Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), Grant Award:
Climate Action
Individual Cabinet Member Decision: Councillor Gina
Dowding**

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To delegate to the Chief Executive the authority to finalise and agree Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) awards in respect of Intervention SRC6, in line with the council's UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF addendum.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	n/a			
This report is public; Appendix A is exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- (1) That the Chief Executive be delegated to finalise and agree Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) awards in respect of the following Interventions:

- SRC6 Active Travel: Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area.

Funds will be awarded as set out in the council's UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF addendum, to deliver the following projects:

- Canal Access Improvements

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In April 2022 the government announced the [prospectus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\)](#), to be delivered by local authorities from 2022-2025.
- 1.2 In September 2022 the government published the Rural England Prosperity Fund Prospectus to be delivered by local authorities from 2023-2025.
- 1.3 The Lancaster district has been allocated £500,075 by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The REPF complements the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in rural areas from April 2023-March 2025. The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) provides complementary funding to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), targeted specifically at supporting rural businesses and communities in line with the government's overall goals of Levelling Up. The funding is entirely designated as 'capital' funding, which means it can

only be spent on 'lasting assets such as buildings or equipment'.

2.0 Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum to UKSPF Investment Plan

- 2.1 Following a consultative development process with rural stakeholders, the council's REPF addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan was finalised and submitted to meet the government's deadline of 30th November 2022.
- 2.2 The council received approval of the REPF addendum in April 2023 followed by release of the initial tranche of funding for 2023-2024 in July 2023.

3.0 REPF applications

- 3.1 The second grant application window for REPF took place between 15th January and 5th February 2024.
- 3.2 The second grant application window was specifically for the second year of REPF and financial year April 2024-March 2025.
- 3.3 The full list of applications can be seen in the exempt appendix to this report.

4.0 Evaluation

- 4.1 Applications have been evaluated in line with HM Treasury's 'five cases' best practice approach to business case development (considering the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management case for each project) as well as the Critical Success Factors agreed by Cabinet at its meeting of 12 July 2022:
 - Climate Emergency
 - Affordable
 - Deliverable
 - Impact
 - Inclusive
 - Collaborative
 - Proven Track Record
 - Scalable
- 4.2 Following initial evaluations in February 2024, informal discussions with Cabinet in March 2024 considered the proposed strategic approach and provisional recommendations for the first round of funding awards.
- 4.3 Technical evaluation has been conducted to ensure projects are strongly aligned to REPF criteria as well as meeting all relevant obligations of the funding.

5.0 Proposal Details

- 5.1 It is proposed that applications be considered for a decision based on the following two outcomes:
 - 1) *Award funding and begin implementation*: projects which clearly meet the criteria and can deliver positive impact against the programme's strategic outcomes and outputs
 - 2) *Do not consider awarding funding*: projects which are less well aligned to the criteria or strategic fit
- 5.2 The recommended decision for each application is contained in the exempt appendix to this report.
- 5.3 Specific to the relevant portfolio area of Climate Action the following project is proposed for a Year 2 funding award in respect of Intervention SRC6 Active Travel;

- Canal Access Improvements

- 5.4 Should the recommendation in this report be approved, officers will initiate the process of finalising all relevant details and agree grant agreements for the projects to be delivered in accordance with the REPF programme’s guidance and requirements, and within the funding envelope defined by the council’s Investment Plan and addendum.
- 5.5 Delivering the complex and wide-ranging REPF programme will require a degree of flexibility in managing the specific funding allocated to each of the two Priorities and six Interventions contained in the addendum. All allocations will be determined within the parameters of the UKSPF programme’s change control process.

6.0 Details of Consultation

- 6.1 Delivering a successful REPF programme from 2023-2025 will be fundamentally dependent on a consultative, collaborative, and inclusive approach. The council’s REPF programme so far has been characterised by this principle, with wide-ranging consultation including:
- The formation of a Local Rural Partnership Group, in line with the REPF Prospectus, to advise and support the addendum development process and subsequent activity in delivering the programme.
- 6.2 The technical nature of project evaluation along with its ‘competitive’ element means that limited consultation is possible in considering funding awards for specific projects at this stage.
- 6.3 However, a consultative process has been taken with Cabinet members to ensure recommendations are in line with the desired strategic direction.

7.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Award REPF funding in respect of the specified project(s)	Option 2: Do not award REPF funding for the specified project(s)
Advantages	Commence delivery of the REPF programme with its associated benefits to the district.	Opportunity to consider other projects by not committing funding at this time.
Disadvantages	No specific disadvantages beyond demands on the organisation of delivering the programme.	Failure to deliver on the REPF programme.
Risks	Projects may require further development in finalising and agreeing details.	Failure of the council to fulfil its duty of delivering the REPF programme.

8.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 8.1 The officer preferred option is option 1, to commence delivery of the REPF programme.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 A robust process has been conducted in the development of an approved REPF Addendum, followed by the evaluation of project proposals.

- 9.2 This report sets out the proposed approach to the next phase of delivering the programme, and as such it is recommended that officers be delegated to finalise and agree funding awards for the first round of REPF projects.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The REPF demonstrates significant overlap with the Council Plan 2024-2027. As such, REPF projects and funding awards provide additional opportunity to advance the council's strategic priorities. This is reflected in the strategic design of the programme to meet the Council's goals.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

All REPF projects are required to be delivered in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, with the relevant contractual obligations placed on those delivering projects as part of the conditions for receiving funding.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted throughout this process and will advise on any necessary legal agreements in relation to grant funding arrangements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. All awards to projects are funded by REPF money via central government. All funding awards for financial year 2024-2025 at this stage, are subject to receipt of funds from central government. Regarding the resources used to administer the fund, the award includes a 4% allowance from the core revenue budget from the UKSPF programme. A team has been established to address this whilst working within the financial boundaries set and any additional requirements are being managed from within existing budgets.

Council, at its meeting of 28th February 2024 (minute 120 refers) approved the reprofiling of the £500K REPF funding to include £375K within 2024/25. Should the recommendation in this report be approved officers will update the Capital Programme to reflect the individual sub-projects within the over-arching REPF funding envelope.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

N/A externally delivered project

Information Services:

N/A externally delivered project

Property:

N/A externally delivered project

Open Spaces:

N/A

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SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer would request that both Members and Officers consider that the Council currently has a significant structural budget deficit and so funding initiatives will need to be (at a minimum) cost neutral to the Council or be subject to the usual arrangements surrounding for on-going support of items not included within the budget framework.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix (Exempt):
Summary of REPF Round 2 Applications

Contact Officer: Mark Davies, Chief Executive

Telephone: 01524 582501

E-mail: UKSPF@lancaster.gov.uk

Document is Restricted



Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

**EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER OR DELEGATED OFFICER
NOTICE OF DECISION**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TITLE OF DECISION: Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant Award: Visitor Economy, Community Wealth Building and Culture 			
NAME OF DECISION TAKER:		COUNCILLOR CATHERINE POTTER	
POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITY HELD:		CABINET MEMBER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER: VISITOR ECONOMY, COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING AND CULTURE	
CONTACT OFFICER:		MARK DAVIES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
TELEPHONE:		01524 582501	
E-MAIL:		UKSPF@lancaster.gov.uk	
Details of Decision:			
<p>To delegate the Chief Executive to finalise and agree an award of Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) funds in respect of Intervention SRB1 and SRB2 as set out in the council's REPF addendum and within the parameters of the UKSPF change control process, to deliver the projects Patty's Barn and Halton Mill Renovation Project.</p>			
Reasons for the decision:			
<p>The Lancaster district has been allocated £500,075 by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The REPF complements the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in rural areas from April 2023-March 2025.</p> <p>Implementing the REPF requires the council to allocate funds to a range of projects which will deliver on the outcomes and outputs set out in the REPF addendum. This allocation in respect of Interventions SRB1 and SRB2 will enable the projects to commence delivery and begin creating positive local impact.</p>			
IS THE DECISION URGENT			
NO			
<p>I confirm that I have taken account of the options proposed by officers, the various implications set out in the report and the comments of the Monitoring and Section 151 Officers and am authorising the decision as set out above.</p>			
SIGNATURE OF DECISION TAKER:		Cllr Catherine Potter	
DATE:		12.4.24	
<i>THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</i>			REF NO.
			ICMD33
DATE DECISION TAKEN:	12.4.24	DATE RECEIVED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES:	12.4.24
DATE DECISION PUBLISHED:	16.4.24	IMPLEMENTATION DATE (publication day + 5 working days):	24.4.24

CABINET

**Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), Grant Award:
Visitor Economy, Community Wealth Building and
Culture**

**Individual Cabinet Member Decision: Councillor
Catherine Potter**

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To delegate to the Chief Executive the authority to finalise and agree Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) awards in respect of Intervention SRB1 and SRB2, in line with the council's UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF addendum.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	n/a			
This report is public; Appendix A is exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- (1) That the Chief Executive be delegated to finalise and agree Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) awards in respect of the following Interventions:
- **SRB1: Small Scale Investment.** Capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.
 - **SRB2: Social Economy.** Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation.

Funds will be awarded as set out in the council's UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF addendum, to deliver the following projects:

- Patty's Barn
- Halton Mill Renovation Project

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In April 2022 the government announced the [prospectus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\)](#), to be delivered by local authorities from 2022-2025.
- 1.2 In September 2022 the government published the Rural England Prosperity Fund Prospectus to be delivered by local authorities from 2023-2025.
- 1.3 The Lancaster district has been allocated £500,075 by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The REPF complements the UK Shared Prosperity

Fund (UKSPF) in rural areas from April 2023-March 2025. The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) provides complementary funding to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), targeted specifically at supporting rural businesses and communities in line with the government's overall goals of Levelling Up. The funding is entirely designated as 'capital' funding, which means it can only be spent on 'lasting assets such as buildings or equipment'.

2.0 Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum to UKSPF Investment Plan

- 2.1 Following a consultative development process with rural stakeholders, the council's REPF addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan was finalised and submitted to meet the government's deadline of 30th November 2022.
- 2.2 The council received approval of the REPF addendum in April 2023 followed by release of the initial tranche of funding for 2023-2024 in July 2023.

3.0 REPF applications

- 3.1 The second grant application window for REPF took place between 15th January and 5th February 2024.
- 3.2 The second grant application window was specifically for the second year of REPF and financial year April 2024-March 2025.
- 3.3 The full list of applications can be seen in the exempt appendix to this report.

4.0 Evaluation

- 4.1 Applications have been evaluated in line with HM Treasury's 'five cases' best practice approach to business case development (considering the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management case for each project) as well as the Critical Success Factors agreed by Cabinet at its meeting of 12 July 2022:

- Climate Emergency
- Affordable
- Deliverable
- Impact
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Proven Track Record
- Scalable

- 4.2 Following initial evaluations in February 2024, informal discussions with Cabinet in March 2024 considered the proposed strategic approach and provisional recommendations for the first round of funding awards.
- 4.3 Technical evaluation has been conducted to ensure projects are strongly aligned to REPF criteria as well as meeting all relevant obligations of the funding.

5.0 Proposal Details

- 5.1 It is proposed that applications be considered for a decision based on the following two outcomes:
 - 1) *Award funding and begin implementation:* projects which clearly meet the criteria and can deliver positive impact against the programme's strategic outcomes and outputs
 - 2) *Do not consider awarding funding:* projects which are less well aligned to the criteria or strategic fit

- 5.2 The recommended decision for each application is contained in the exempt appendix to this report.
- 5.3 Specific to the relevant portfolio area of Visitor Economy, Community Wealth Building and Culture the following projects are proposed for a Year 2 funding award in respect of Intervention SRB1 and SRB2;
- Patty’s Barn
 - Halton Mill Renovation Project
- 5.4 Should the recommendation in this report be approved, officers will initiate the process of finalising all relevant details and agree grant agreements for the projects to be delivered in accordance with the REPF programme’s guidance and requirements, and within the funding envelope defined by the council’s Investment Plan and addendum.
- 5.5 Delivering the complex and wide-ranging REPF programme will require a degree of flexibility in managing the specific funding allocated to each of the two Priorities and six Interventions contained in the addendum. All allocations will be determined within the parameters of the UKSPF programme’s change control process.

6.0 Details of Consultation

- 6.1 Delivering a successful REPF programme from 2023-2025 will be fundamentally dependent on a consultative, collaborative, and inclusive approach. The council’s REPF programme so far has been characterised by this principle, with wide-ranging consultation including:
- The formation of a Local Rural Partnership Group, in line with the REPF Prospectus, to advise and support the addendum development process and subsequent activity in delivering the programme.
- 6.2 The technical nature of project evaluation along with its ‘competitive’ element means that limited consultation is possible in considering funding awards for specific projects at this stage.
- 6.3 However, a consultative process has been taken with Cabinet members to ensure recommendations are in line with the desired strategic direction.

7.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Award REPF funding in respect of the specified project(s)	Option 2: Do not award REPF funding for the specified project(s)
Advantages	Commence delivery of the REPF programme with its associated benefits to the district.	Opportunity to consider other projects by not committing funding at this time.
Disadvantages	No specific disadvantages beyond demands on the organisation of delivering the programme.	Failure to deliver on the REPF programme.
Risks	Projects may require further development in finalising and agreeing details.	Failure of the council to fulfil its duty of delivering the REPF programme.

8.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

8.1 The officer preferred option is option 1, to commence delivery of the REPF programme.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 A robust process has been conducted in the development of an approved REPF Addendum, followed by the evaluation of project proposals.

9.2 This report sets out the proposed approach to the next phase of delivering the programme, and as such it is recommended that officers be delegated to finalise and agree funding awards for the first round of REPF projects.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The REPF demonstrates significant overlap with the Council Plan 2024-2027. As such, REPF projects and funding awards provide additional opportunity to advance the council's strategic priorities. This is reflected in the strategic design of the programme to meet the Council's goals.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

All REPF projects are required to be delivered in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, with the relevant contractual obligations placed on those delivering projects as part of the conditions for receiving funding.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted throughout this process and will advise on any necessary legal agreements in relation to grant funding arrangements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. All awards to projects are funded by REPF money via central government. All funding awards for financial year 2024-2025 at this stage, are subject to receipt of funds from central government. Regarding the resources used to administer the fund, the award includes a 4% allowance from the core revenue budget from the UKSPF programme. A team has been established to address this whilst working within the financial boundaries set and any additional requirements are being managed from within existing budgets.

Council, at its meeting of 28th February 2024 (minute 120 refers) approved the reprofiling of the £500K REPF funding to include £375K within 2024/25. Should the recommendation in this report be approved officers will update the Capital Programme to reflect the individual sub-projects within the over-arching REPF funding envelope.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

N/A externally delivered project

Information Services:

N/A externally delivered project

Property:

N/A externally delivered project

Open Spaces:

N/A

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer would request that both Members and Officers consider that the Council currently has a significant structural budget deficit and so funding initiatives will need to be (at a minimum) cost neutral to the Council or be subject to the usual arrangements surrounding for on-going support of items not included within the budget framework.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix (Exempt):

Summary of REPF Round 2 Applications

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Document is Restricted