

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	20 JUNE 2023
Report Title:	UNITED KINGDOM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND GRANT FUNDS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	IEUAN SHERWOOD, GROUP MANAGER ECONOMY, NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Council's policy framework or procedure rules as a result of this report.
Executive Summary:	<p>The purpose of this report is to seek approval to establish and deliver a series of grant funds as part of the delivery programme for Bridgend's Local Investment Plan through the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>The funds are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridgend Valley Placemaking Property Improvement Grant • Empty Property Survey Grants • Community Feasibility Fund • The Business Development Grant • Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme • Bridgend County Tourism Events Support

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to establish and deliver a series of grant funds as part of the delivery programme for Bridgend's Local Investment Plan through the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund and to make amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation of Functions to facilitate the award of grant funding.

2. Background

2.1 The United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a key part of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda, forming part of complementary funding, including the Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund.

2.2 The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Priorities: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.

- The **Communities and Place** investment priority will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.
- The **Supporting Local Business** investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.
- The **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.

As part of the People and Skills priority there is a dedicated and ringfenced element of the UKSPF called Multiply which seeks to improve adult numeracy skills.

2.3 In July 2022 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Cabinet delegated authority to the Corporate Director Communities to submit the Bridgend County Local Investment Plan to Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) for inclusion in the overall submission of the South East Wales Local Investment Plan to the UK Government. As part of the funding process there was, and remains, a need to appoint one local authority to assume the role of the 'Lead Local Authority' for the region for the UKSPF. It was agreed by BCBC Cabinet that RCTCBC performs this role.

2.4 An overview of the Bridgend County Borough Local Investment Plan proposals presented to Cabinet in July 2022 is set out below under a series of regional theme descriptions, which were developed by RCTCBC:

Communities and Place

Regional Theme Description*	Proposed Bridgend County delivery
Development and resilience of communities by improving facilities and access to services and supporting community-based organisations	Bridgend County Local Resilience Planning
Action to support individuals and community-based organisations to deal with the challenges of the current economic environment and cost of living crisis	
Supporting the improvement and redevelopment of town centres and community places to revitalise them.	Bridgend County Thriving Communities
Improving access to and facilities for local people and communities in sport, culture, arts and heritage.	
Supporting action to improve services and facilities for young people.	

Action to support decarbonisation, energy efficiency and green initiatives in communities and places.	Bridgend County Green Spaces Enhancement Scheme
Other activity such as feasibility studies	Bridgend County Community Future Scoping Programme

*Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework may offer an opportunity to deliver across all.

Supporting Local Business

Regional Theme Description*	Proposed Bridgend County delivery
Business premises development and improvement.	Bridgend County Centres of Enterprise
Small business support and development including finance for growth and resilience.	-Bridgend County Business Prosperity Programme -Bridgend County Local Enterprise Support Programme
Small business support for key growth sectors, research and development and innovation.	
Action to support decarbonisation, energy efficiency and green economy initiatives for businesses and social enterprises.	
Support for the growth and development of the visitor economy including businesses, facilities, and events.	- Bridgend County Tourism Events Support - Bridgend County Local Destination Management and Marketing
Other activity such as feasibility studies	Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme

*Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework may offer an opportunity to deliver across all.

People and Skills

Regional Theme Description*	Proposed Bridgend County delivery
Regional Employability and Skills Framework Package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in employment and key sectors • Unemployed and economically inactive people • Young people to enter employment 	-CELT**+ <i>Bridgend Inspire 2 Work / Achieve</i> -CELT + <i>Employability - Bridgend County</i> -CELT+ <i>Regional Joint Commissioning</i>
Regional joint commissioning Jointly commission FE/HE/ training providers / specific organisations to provide the following type of support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap-around support for those at risk of disengaging from FE • Upskilling at work • Upskilling to meet skill gaps in sectors i.e., green jobs, manufacturing, creative and digital. 	

*Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework may offer an opportunity to deliver across all.

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3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 In March 2023 the Corporate Director Communities exercised the authority delegated by BCBC Cabinet in July 2022 to authorise entering into a regional funding agreement regarding the UKSPF with RCTCBC, under decision reference CMM-ED-23-046.

- 3.2 The UKSPF allows Local Authorities to deliver activity via a range of mechanisms, namely:
- In-House Delivery
 - Commissioning
 - Procurement
 - Grant Funds
- 3.3 In July 2022 Cabinet were presented with an overview of a suite of projects to be delivered in line with the delivery mechanism.
- 3.4 The following projects are to be delivered, either in part or wholly, via grant funds:
- Bridgend County Thriving Communities
 - Bridgend County Community Future Scoping Programme
 - Bridgend County Business Prosperity Programme
 - Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme
 - Bridgend County Tourism Events Support
- 3.5 It is proposed that the grant funds outlined below, which form part of Bridgend County's delivery of the UKSPF, are now set up and delivered:

Name of Project	Bridgend County Thriving Communities
Name of fund	Bridgend Valley Placemaking Property Improvement Grant
Purpose of fund	<p>There are two elements to this:</p> <p>1) To enhance building frontages and bring vacant commercial floor space back into beneficial use, by supporting commercial property frontage improvements, along with other external and internal works.</p> <p>2) To convert vacant upper-floor space into new residential accommodation above commercial units, including internal and external works to bring vacant space back into use for residential purposes.</p>
Areas covered	The District Centres & Local Service centres in the valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore (excluding Maesteg Town Centre).
Grant Rate	<p>The grant will be a maximum of 80% of reasonable eligible costs, up to a maximum grant award of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ £30,000 for occupied properties ○ £50,000 for properties that have been vacant for more than 6months. <p>This will be subject to on-going review</p>
Maximum Grant	As above

Total funds available in grant	Minimum of £270,000
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Name of Project	Bridgend County Thriving Communities
Name of fund	Empty Property Survey Grants
Purpose of fund	To offer applicants the opportunity to undertake building condition surveys/architectural assessments and concept designs in order to progress the redevelopment of empty commercial properties.
Areas covered	The District Centres & Local Service centres in the valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore (excluding Maesteg Town Centre).
Grant Rate	100% of reasonable eligible costs
Maximum Grant	Up to £2,000 for Condition Surveys (depending on size of property) Up to £3,000 for Architectural Assessments and Concept Designs This will be subject to on-going review
Total funds available in grant	Minimum of £20,000

Name of Project	Bridgend County Community Future Scoping Programme
Name of fund	Community Feasibility Fund
Purpose of fund	The fund has been set up to test the feasibility of longer-term community-led ideas. It will provide communities in the Borough the opportunity to gather evidence to support locally led community project ideas. Focusing on Health, Climate and Economy they will provide the required data, knowledge and understanding with the ambition to lead to future funding bids and continue community resilience planning.
Areas covered	Whole County
Grant Rate	Up to 100%
Maximum Grant	Up to £35,316
Total funds available in grant	£282,531

Name of Project	Bridgend County Business Prosperity Programme
Name of fund	The Business Development Grant
Purpose of fund	The Business Development Grant will support Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bridgend County Borough to diversify, decarbonise and grow which will contribute to creating a vibrant and strong local economy.

Areas covered	Whole County
Grant Rate	Provides 50% of eligible capital projects costs. The minimum grant is £5,000 and the maximum grant available is £25,000 (excluding VAT).
Maximum Grant	Up to £25,000 (excluding VAT).
Total funds available in grant	£392,377

Name of Project	Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme
Name of fund	The Business Feasibility Grant
Purpose of fund	The Business Feasibility Grant is to support businesses to explore feasibility of longer-term options to diversify, decarbonise and grow including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of plans and studies, e.g. Business Plans/Feasibility Studies - Before purchasing a piece of machinery, the study could determine the market for increased production or new product is financially viable. - Explore using space in retail, hospitality to introduce new service / product e.g. new hotel spa - Cost benefit analysis to introduce Green procurement
Areas covered	Whole County
Grant Rate	Provides 100% of eligible revenue projects costs. The minimum grant is £5,000 and the maximum grant available is £25,000 (excluding VAT).
Maximum Grant	Up to £25,000 (excluding VAT).
Total funds available in grant	£255,000

Name of Project	Bridgend County Tourism Events Support
Name of fund	Bridgend County Tourism Events Support
Purpose of fund	To support tourism events which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have strong potential to attract visitors from outside the local area, whether that is from other regions or other countries. - have a positive impact on the local economy, such as by generating revenue for local businesses, creating jobs, or promoting the region as a tourist destination. - have cultural significance or highlight a unique aspect of the local area's history, culture, or identity.

	- have the potential to raise the profile of the county borough in a positive way
Areas covered	Whole County
Grant Rate	Tier 1 - Up to 50% of eligible revenue costs Tier 2 - Up to 20% of eligible revenue costs
Maximum Grant	Tier 1 - Up to £2,500 Tier 2 - Up to £10,000
Total funds available in grant	Up to £100,000

- 3.6 A grant panel will be set up to oversee and make recommendations for approval for the grants outlined in 3.5. The panel will include relevant BCBC departments, e.g. finance, regeneration and enterprise.
- 3.7 Decisions relating to award of grants will be made in line with the Scheme of Delegation.
- 3.8 Any required statutory consents (e.g. planning permission, SuDS Approving Body) remain the responsibility of any grant applicant for any of the grant funds in 3.5.
- 3.9 Each scheme will have its own assessment criteria which will be robust but proportionate, depending on the different level of financial assistance available. Assessment criteria will be agreed by the grant panel.
- 3.10 The allocations of funding available through each grant fund and their associated criteria and processes will be kept under review and should changes be required these will be considered in line with BCBC policies and procedures.
- 3.11 In order to facilitate the award of grants it is proposed that a number of administrative amendments are made to the Council's Scheme of Delegation of Functions in relation to Cabinet Functions as set out below:

Scheme A – Cabinet Functions delegated to individual Cabinet Members

New function at Paragraph 1.9 allocated to each Cabinet Member	To approve levels of grant funding where the amount of the funding exceeds £50,000 and in consultation with the Section 151 Officer Monitoring Officer enter into any funding agreements and/or any further deeds and documents which are supplemental to the funding arrangement.
Delete the following functions at Paragraphs 2.3, 3.4, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 6.1 allocated to individual Cabinet Members.	To approve levels of maximum funding to voluntary organisations where the amount of the funding exceeds £50,000. To approve levels of maximum funding to voluntary organisations which are subject to a formal service agreement where the amount of the funding exceeds £50,000. To approve applications for grants to voluntary organisations in accordance with the policy approved by the Cabinet or Council where the amount of the grant exceeds £50,000.

Scheme B1 – Functions delegated to Chief Officers subject to consultation and call-in

Amend the following function delegated to all Chief Officers at Paragraph 1.4	To approve levels of maximum grant funding to voluntary organisations which are subject to a formal service agreement where the amount of the funding exceeds £10,000 but does not exceed £50,000 and in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer enter into any funding agreements and/or any further deeds and documents which are supplemental to the funding arrangement.	Cabinet Member with the relevant function
Delete the following function delegated to individual Chief Officers at Paragraphs 1.5, 3.6, 4.2, 5.1	To approve levels of maximum funding to voluntary organisations where the amount of the funding exceeds £10,000 but does not exceed £50,000.	Cabinet Member with the relevant function

Scheme B2 – Functions delegated to Chief Officers

New function at Paragraph 1.8 delegated to each Chief Officer	To approve levels of grant funding where the amount of the funding does not exceed £10,000 and in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer enter into any funding agreements and/or any further deeds and documents which are supplemental to the funding arrangement.
Delete the following functions delegated to individual Chief Officers at Paragraphs 3.45, 4.5, 5.4, 6.12, 6.37,6.71	<p>To approve applications for grants to voluntary organisations in accordance with the policy approved by the Cabinet or the Council where the amount of the grant does not exceed £10,000.</p> <p>To approve applications by eligible businesses for financial assistance under the grant schemes operated by the Council pursuant to its economic development powers.</p> <p>To approve levels of maximum funding to voluntary organisations and to individuals where the amount of the funding does not exceed £10,000.</p>

3.12 To avoid the need for renumbering of the Scheme which may cause significant confusion, it is proposed that those paragraphs deleted be marked as “intentionally blank”. Once approval has been received and the call-in process has been

completed, the Scheme will be updated and published. Corporate Directors will be requested to update their Register of Sub Delegations accordingly to reflect these changes.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 BCBC is committed to promoting sustainable development and to discharge its duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. A summary relating to the five ways of working and how they connect to the Corporate Well-being Objectives is below:

Long-term: The grant funds outlined in 3.5 that are included within the Bridgend Local Investment Plan have been identified following discussion with key stakeholders and in relation to current understanding of the potential long-term challenges on the County Borough. Building on the process of developing and creating the Economic Strategy, the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the Wellbeing Plan for the County Borough it has been possible to set out a long-term response.

Prevention: BCBC has for many years worked closely with stakeholders and the local business community to support the local economy in a wide variety of proactive ways. As well as a continuation of BCBC's ability to react to local situations, the development of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan and the grant funds contained within it builds on strengths to plan for the future, take proactive action and support local businesses and local communities.

Integration: The work to develop the UKSPF Local Investment Plan is closely aligned with the BCBC Corporate Plan, the Local Development Plan and the Public Service Board's Well-being Plan and the Bridgend County Economic Strategy.

Collaboration: The development of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan has been steered by a BCBC officer group and will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders.

Involvement: For the UKSPF Local Investment Plan to successfully operate it will require the involvement of senior members of local public sectors organisations, community leaders, business leaders, representatives of business sectors and trade bodies and other key stakeholders.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The grant funds outlined in 3.5 will contain within the criteria detail relating to the expectations of applicants to support BCBC Climate Change and Decarbonisation

ambitions. Assessment of applications will consider the relevance of proposals to the criteria and decisions made as a result.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Bridgend County Borough's allocation of UKSPF funding is outlined below:

Individual authorities	Core UKSPF £	Multiply £	Total £
Bridgend	19,116,296	3,990,295	23,106,591

8.2 The amounts available through the grant funds outlined within 3.5 are contained within the overall programme budget which is set out in the funding agreement which is in place with RCTCBC and its ancillary documents.

8.3 Regular monitoring, reporting and claims will ensure that commitments and expenditure are in line with the funding agreement and its associated annual profiles.

9. Recommendation(s)

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- delegate authority to the Corporate Director Communities to establish, deliver and award the grant funds set out in section 3 of the report as part of the delivery of the Bridgend County Local Investment Plan, funded through the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund;
- approve the amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation of Functions as set out in paragraph 3.11.

Background documents

NONE