

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

meeting date: 28th MARCH 2023
 title: UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND
 submitted by: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek a decision from Members in respect of the use of our UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocations for 23/24 and 24/25.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Ambitions-
 - To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
 - To help make people's lives safer and healthier.
- Corporate Objectives –
 - To work with our partners to ensure that the infrastructure in the Ribble Valley is improved.
 - To promote stronger, more confident, and more active communities throughout the borough.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 On 13th April 2022 the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was launched by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. Ribble Valley's conditional allocation is £1,967,754 over the three-year funding period.

2.2 On 5th December 2022 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) confirmed that our Investment Plan had been accepted. The Secretary of State has allocated funding for 2022/23 with indicative allocations for the further two financial years up to and including 2024/25. The annual breakdown is shown in the table below.

Allocation 2022/2023 (£)			Indicative allocation 2023/2024 (£)	Indicative allocation 2024/2025 (£)
Capital	Revenue	Capacity	477610	1251339
189000	49805	20000		

2.3 The Council's Investment Plan including several projects to deliver this financial year and Members of Policy and Finance Committee (24th January 2023) agreed to move these forward along with some further suggestions from the Working Group. Work is ongoing in respect of:

- Rail Feasibility study
- Additional CCTV Provision (pilot project)

- Refurbishment of Mardale Playing Field Changing Rooms, Longridge including resurfacing the car park
- Clitheroe Market Feasibility Study
- Business support for net zero transition & decarbonisation
- EV charging points in villages feasibility study.

3 FUTURE FINANCIAL YEARS

3.1 Whilst the release of payments for the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-2025 is dependent on the submission of a Statement of Grant Usage for 2022-23 and 2023-2024 spend and corresponding reporting and monitoring returns Members intentions for our allocations is sought now so that the preparatory work can begin.

3.2 Members may recall that the fund identified three priorities, People and Skills, Communities and Place and Supporting Local Business with specific interventions identified to help meet the three priorities. Members of the Emergency Committee on 2nd August 2022 agreed to target the following priorities and interventions with our UKSPF (the investment plan was required to be supported by an indicative expenditure profile which included the figures beside each intervention below):

COMMUNITY AND PLACE PRIORITY

- E1: Improvements to town centres & high streets- £1,140,000
- E2: Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects- £111,000 (£50,000 allocated to Mardale car park improvements). **Remaining = £61,000**
- E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces- £335,000 (£126,000 allocated to Mardale changing room improvements). **Remaining= £209,000**
- E4: Enhancing existing cultural, historic & heritage institutions offer- £50,754
- E5: Built & landscaped environment to 'design out' crime- £50,000
- E8: Campaigns to encourage visits and exploring of local area- £10,339
- E15: Digital connectivity for local community facilities- £70,856

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES PRIORITY

- E16: Open markets & town centre retail & service sector- £100,000
- E17: Development & promotion of visitor economy-£10,000
- E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems- £35,000 **(all committed to Business support for net zero transition & decarbonisation)**
- E29: Supporting decarbonisation & improving natural environment -£35,000 (ties into E23 above) **(all committed to Business support for net zero transition & decarbonisation)**
- E31: Support relevant feasibility studies- £21,805 (£6,000 allocated to the Clitheroe market feasibility work, £6,450 allocated to rail study and £2,000 allocated to the car park electric charging points study). **Remaining= £5,355**

3.3 In total £1,709,304 of our conditional allocation is not yet allocated to a scheme. The split of spend (including likely roll over from this year's allocation is- approximately £13,000 capital and £25,355 revenue and deducting £30,000 per year from revenue for the Business support for net zero transition & decarbonisation project) is:

2023/24		2024/25	
Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue

£374,000	£111,965	£1,161,000	£60,339
TOTAL= £485,965		TOTAL= £1,221,339	

3.4 Members should note that the underspend reported to DHLUC on 17th March was £100,000 capital and £31,805 revenue to reflect the fact the some of the 2022/23 projects are ongoing and some of the work to be paid from the first year's allocation has yet to be paid for. The above figures reflect unallocated funding.

3.5 Members will note that some of the interventions identified within our investment plan do not have projects listed against them currently. It is possible to make changes to our Investment Plan as we move forward and approval from DHLUC will only need to be sought when "material changes" are made to UKSPF investment plans.

3.6 At the Special meeting of this Committee on 14th February the numerous projects which have been suggested to date for usage of this fund were presented to Members. Members agreed to:

That the UKSPF Working Group is arranged for further consideration of the projects, and they be advised that provisional allocations of funds be as follows:

- Clitheroe £800,000, Longridge £400,000 and Whalley £400,000

3.7 The Working Group met on 2nd March and their recommendations are set out below.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Castle Street Improvements

4.1 At the Special Committee meeting Members were advised the LCC's Conservation Area Enhancement Scheme had been capped for each Authority at £50,000. However further discussions with LCC have identified that in principle up to £300,000 is available, subject to application process including a minimum 50/50 match by Ribble Valley, for a Clitheroe town centre public realm project. Subject to detailed designs, considering the potential highway implications, it is intended that the project would be delivered by LCC's highways.

4.2 Following this confirmation Officers have met with LCC Officers to discuss the options including timescales for both delivery and actually undertaking the works (acknowledging there will be highway disruption to the town centre during this time).

4.3 Based on the funding available it is proposed to resurface both the carriageway and footpaths of Castle Street (Appendix 1). Discussions in respect of materials are ongoing with granite kerbing suggested, the proposals including widening the narrow sections of the pavements and rationalising the parking arrangements. It has also been suggested that a gateway treatment is created at the top of Castle Street with a gate installed to enable the road to be closed for events such as the food festival. The original estimate is that the works will take 14 weeks (although this is subject to the final design) and it is suggested that this is programmed in for early 2024 to enable both the summer months and Christmas to proceed as normal within the town.

4.4 LCC are working closely with the Head of Engineering to develop a plan for Castle Street which will be provided to Members, with an understanding of cost, in advance of Committee.

4.5 The Working Group recommend that £300,000 of the 2023/24 UKSPF allocation is given to LCC to undertake improvements to Castle Street.

Sports Centre/ Community Park, Whalley

4.6 The Working Group queried whether this significant scheme was deliverable within the UKSPF timescales. They recommended that the Director of Economic Development and Planning contact the group with a deadline of October 2023 to confirm whether if part of the UKSPF fund was given to the club the scheme would be delivered by March 2025.

Enhanced website and marketing opportunities

4.7 The Working Group support the production of more interactive pages on our visit Ribble Valley website to create opportunities to experience historic and cultural features (also linked to mobile app, printed guide and enhanced on site interpretation of key features and attractions).

4.8 This will include ‘Visit Whalley’, ‘Visit Clitheroe’ and ‘Visit Longridge’ content and a targeted marketing campaign is also proposed.

Clitheroe Market Improvements

4.9 Following the completion of the Consultants feasibility report suggestions on what improvements should be implemented at Clitheroe Market have been considered. The Working Group support utilising part of the UKSPF to fund improvements at the Market. Any UKSPF would be added to the existing capital budget for market improvements.

4.10 The suggestions for the market set out in the report and discussed with the existing traders were considered by Health and Housing Committee on 23rd March. The recommendations were as follows and an update from Health and Housing Committee will be reported verbally:

- Remove all metal stall units from the site (after the food festival)
- Resurface the bull ring area to make the area more visually attractive and usable for pop up events.
- Introduce additional central fixed trading units- modified shipping containers are an option subject to Members consideration (this would include an extension of the power and water supplies to these units)
- Introduce power supplies throughout remaining Bull Ring Area to support casual trading and events.
- Introduce a modern canopy structure to define a new covered central space.
- Instruct officers to consider options for wind mitigation measures (which will be linked to the above canopy structure to ensure such a structure would not exacerbate any issues at this site).

4.11Members will note that it is calculated that our 2023/24 allocation (including roll over from this year) will be £485,965 (the £30,00 of revenue allocated to the Low Carbon project has already been deducted from this) based on the above Working Group recommendations it is proposed that, subject to securing next years allocation, the following projects are progressed:

Project	Capital	Revenue	Total
Castle Street Improvements	300,000		300,000
Enhanced website and marketing opportunities		40,000	40,000
Clitheroe Market Improvements	100,000		100,000
Management and administration		19,520	19,520
TOTAL	400,000	59,520	459,520

5 FURTHER SUGGESTED SCHEMES

5.1 The following requests for use of our UKSPF have been received recently:

Development of social enterprises among newly arrived refugee women

5.2 The Afghanistan & Central Asian Association have contacted the Authority to query whether they can apply for some of the funding to support the development of social enterprises among newly arrived refugee women, in particular from Afghanistan and Ukraine. Their core services include:

- Education, training and development opportunities – ESOL for Integration, Supplementary Schools, British citizenship test preparation, business and employment advice and support
- Women’s outreach and women-only projects – empowerment, development, advice and support
- Legal and advice clinics to Advice Quality Standard and OISC accreditation, using volunteers and pro bono solicitors, focusing mainly on immigration, housing, business and employment issues
- Social and cultural activities and events promoting community cohesion, music and fitness, volunteering
- Football sessions for disadvantaged and socially excluded Muslim girls in Hounslow for the past two years funded by Comic Relief.

5.3 These services appear to fall within the People and Skills Priority Area which we have not identified for our allocation.

Barrow Community Space

5.4 Cllr Birtwhistle has contacted the Chief Executive to identify possible funding for a scheme the Parish Council are considering for creating a community space in Barrow. They are considered converting the scrubland at the back of the car park, leased by the Parish Council, into a micro park /horticultural club. They have identified some sectional buildings that would be suitable.



5.5 They have £10,000 of funding already, £15,000 of being sought from lottery and other funding sources however they are seeking £25,000 of additional funding. This would fit into intervention E2 if Members were minded to support this.

Whalley Educational Foundation

5.6 Whalley Educational Foundation have contacted the Authority to establish whether any of the UKSPF can be secured to further develop Whalley Old Grammar School Community Centre. Their project comprises of four elements:

- An integrated outdoor play area for the Pre-school children. Now completed, using local contractors, following successful national grant applications.
- Refurbishment of the ladies and children's toilets. Funding secured and work to commence on 30th March 2023 using a local contractor.
- The creation of a new room within the building to provide a significant increase in community space, which is in demand, for health activities and larger gatherings. There is a firm quotation to do this work, from a local contractor, with a total project cost of £35,000. Work can be commissioned as soon as funding is secured.
- A new extension, following demolition of a smaller existing structure that is not fit for purpose, to provide an extra room and improved provision for much demanded craft activities, such as woodworking. We have been given a provisional estimate that this new extension will cost in the region of £100,000.

5.7 The request of the foundation is for the third and fourth elements of the project equating to £135,000 from the Shared Prosperity Fund will enable us to complete both final elements within the financial year 2023/24.

5.8 The foundation estimate that the overall project, by improving and expanding their provision, will lead to an estimated 5,000 extra visits to the Centre per annum and will fostering local pride in the area. This would fit into intervention E2 if Members were minded to support this.

International trade show support

5.9 The Export Relationships Manager at the Department for Business and Trade has contacted the Authority following an enquiry regarding international trade show support for a company based in our district. The Internationalisation Fund has now ended, and the Manager has queried whether this is something we would consider under the UKSPF Business Support Priority. Our investment plan does not identify an intervention into which this scheme could fit.

'SAFE' (Safer Access for Everyone)- Salesbury Memorial Hall Charity

5.10 The campaign is to raise funds to construct a new, two-lane access road with separate pedestrian access to replace the existing, unmade single track to and from Ribchester Road.

5.11 The SAFE project is fully costed at a total of £75,000.00. The trustees have allocated £10,000 from the Trust's own reserves and an ambitious fund-raising programme is now under way to seek help from local businesses, parish councils, residents and hirers. The trustees anticipate raising £20,000 from these sources and would request that the shortfall of £45,000 be considered as the amount which could be eligible for grant funding.

5.12 The project already has planning permission from RVBC. The detailed plans and project management timescales have been agreed by trustees with the approval and help of local professionals who have provided their services gratis. As such the project is 'oven ready' and scheduled for completion within the financial year 2023/2024 should funding be secured. This would fit into intervention E2 if Members were minded to support this.

5.13 It is suggested that these proposals are referred back to the Working Group for further consideration.

6 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Members will note that our first year's allocation includes £20,000 of capacity funding. When the UKSPF was announced it was confirmed that £20,000 would be available per

lead local authority to undertake initial preparatory work for the Fund, including developing the local investment plan for submission. This funding is in addition to each place's allocation. Part of this capacity funding has been utilised to commission BE Group who were appointed to assist with our Partnership Group work and our investment plan.

6.2 We will be required to report how the capacity money was spent as part of 6 monthly returns and any unspent preparatory funding may be used to support the administration of the fund.

6.3 Up to 4% of our allocation can be used to undertake necessary Fund administration, such as project assessment, contracting, monitoring and evaluation and ongoing stakeholder engagement. This equates to £78,710.16.

6.4 The reporting, monitoring and performance management section of the guidance was updated on 8th March 2023 and an Evaluation Strategy for the fund was also published on 8th March. The Summary Sheet for this year's activity was submitted on 17th March and this included a section on current evaluation strategy which is a new requirement.

6.5 Whilst participation in evaluation activity is not compulsory for Lead Local Authorities (LLAs) to receive funding LLAs are expected to assist DLUHC where necessary with the local level aspects of the UKSPF evaluation, drawing on the 4% or more of UKSPF allocations set aside for fund administration.

6.6 To capture local intelligence on how the UKSPF is being implemented and achieving its desired results, LLAs are encouraged, but not required, to conduct light-touch reflective "lessons learned" exercises rather than full local evaluations. These exercises will ensure LLAs are deploying proportionate capacity and capability towards building local intelligence. Proposed methods could include measuring outputs, contribution analysis, developing case studies, or conducting surveys and interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Consideration of suitable evaluation processes for our schemes will be undertaken dependent on the nature of the scheme and what methods will be suitable and proportionate.

7 RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – it is important to note that the 2023/24 allocation is conditional on production of a credible plan which is required to be provided to DHLUC by 2nd May 2023. If places can demonstrate a credible plan then they will receive their full Year 2 funding allocation. If, however, the plans to re-profile underspend are not credible, Year 2 payments will be staged. Subject to Members agreement of the projects cited within this report it is considered that a credible plan can be provided to DHLUC.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – There will need to be legal input into providing any of our funding to third parties, including LCC. There will also be associated procurement requirements depending on the projects Members choose to proceed with
- Political - N/A
- Reputation – N/A
- Equality and Diversity – Members have chosen to spend the majority of the UKSPF on the communities and place priority by enhancing community facilities and ensuring access for all. It is considered that the projects identified above meet our Public Sector Equality duties.

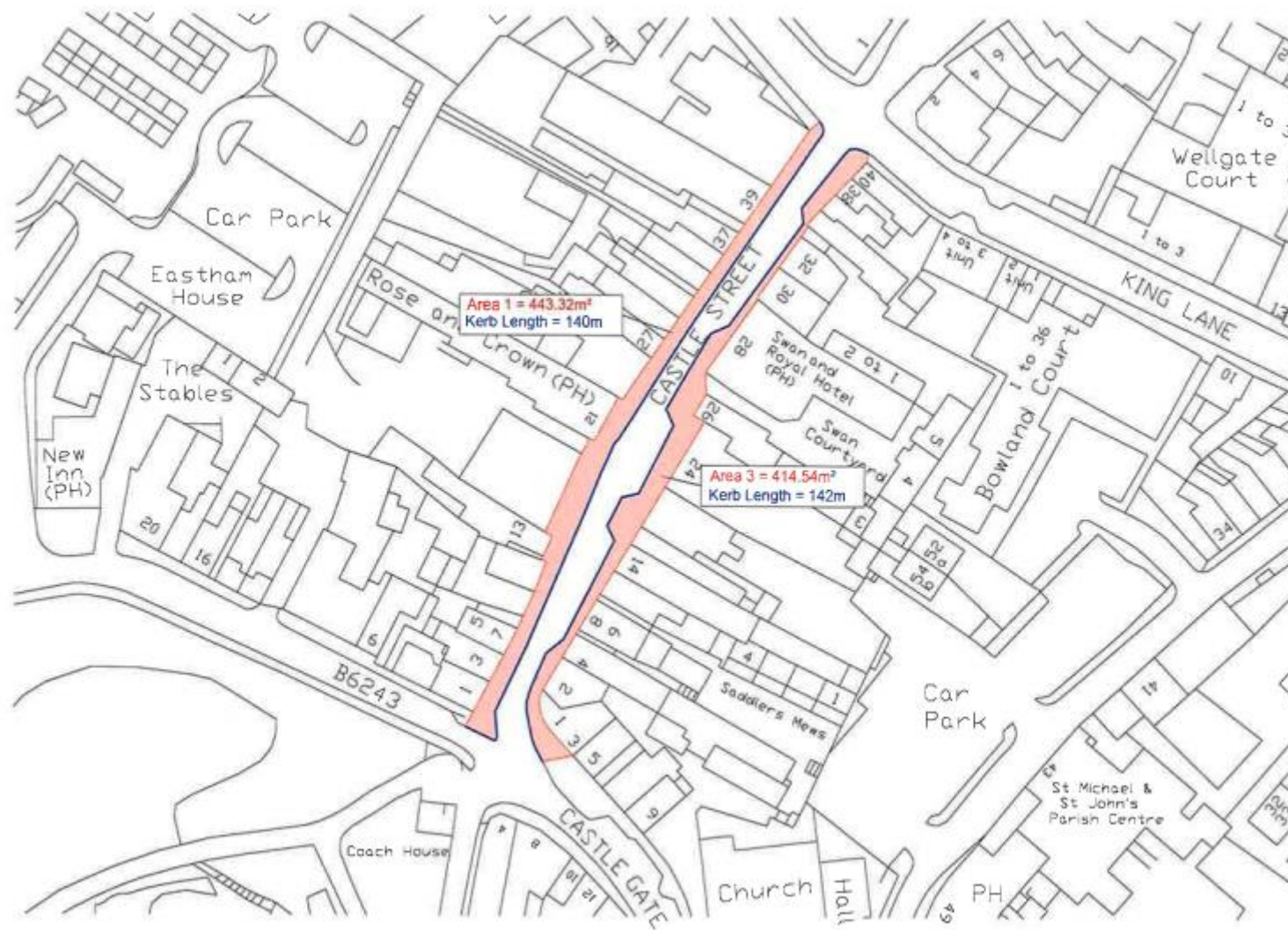
8 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 8.1 Instruct Officers to commence the projects recommended by the Working Group to utilise the majority of the 2023/24 UK Shared Prosperity Funding allocation, namely:
- 8.1.1 Castle Street Improvements
 - 8.1.2 Creation of an enhanced website and marketing opportunities
 - 8.1.3 Improvements to Clitheroe Market
- 8.2 Instruct the Director of Economic Development and Planning to contact the Parish Councillor involved in the Sports Centre/ Community Park, Whalley project to advise that definitive confirmation that the scheme could be delivered during 2024/25, that sufficient match funding has been secured (including full details of that funding) and full confirmation that all of the required consents have been secured will be required by 31st October 2023. This deadline is specified to enable the Working Group to consider whether any of the 2024/25 funding should be allocated to this project.
- 8.3 Refer the new projects listed within section 5 back to the Working Group for further consideration.



NICOLA HOPKINS
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Appendix 1- Castle Street Improvements



Appendix 2- Consideration of Schemes to Date

Intervention E1: Improvements to town centres & high streets

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation
1.	Castle Street Improvements	300,000	The Working Group recommend that £300,000 of the 2023/24 UKSPF allocation is given to LCC to undertake improvements to Castle Street
2.	Berry Lane Enhancements A bid for improvements in Longridge was submitted as part of the Levelling Up Round 1 bids. The scheme suggested here is as per the Levelling Up submission	1,300,000	There is insufficient funding to support this

Intervention E2: Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation
1.	Mardale Car Park Improvements	50,000	Being delivered from 2022/23 funding allocation
2.	Electric Vehicle Chargers, Village car parks This is being investigated as part of the 2022/23 allocation and will be dictated by the cost of any necessary power supply.	TBD	The feasibility of this is ongoing as part of the 2022/23 funding allocation- see intervention E31
3.	Townley Garden Band Stand, Longridge	200,000	It is suggested that this is considered further for the 2024/25 financial year given the limited funding for the 2023/24 year and the fact that the majority of this financial year's allocations are being spent in Longridge

Intervention E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation
1.	Mardale changing room improvements	126,000	Being delivered from 2022/23 funding allocation

Appendix 2- Consideration of Schemes to Date

2.	Pump Track, Longridge	250,000	It is suggested that this is considered further for the 2024/25 financial year given the limited funding for the 2023/24 year and the fact that the majority of this financial year's allocations are being spent in Longridge
3.	Padel Court, Longridge	TBD	It is not proposed to progress with this scheme as it is unclear what demand there would be for such a facility in the Borough
4.	Primrose Community Nature Trust One of the Trustees of Primrose Community Nature Trust has submitted a request for the next phase of the proposed works at the site	Upto £992,000	There is insufficient funding to support this
5.	Sports Centre/ Community Park, Whalley One of the Whalley Parish Councillors has made some suggestions for use of the UKSPF in Whalley	Upto £400,000	The Working Group queried whether this scheme was deliverable within the timeframes. They suggested that the Director of Economic Development and Planning contact the Group with a deadline of October 2024 for the group to confirm whether with a contribution from the UKSPF the scheme will be delivered in the 2024/25 financial year

Intervention E4: Enhancing existing cultural, historic & heritage institutions offer

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation
1.	Interactive Map Introduce interactive Heritage content/map onto the visit Ribble Valley website to create opportunities to experience historic and cultural features. (also linked to mobile app, printed guide and	20,000	The Working Group support funding a new website to address several of our interventions

Appendix 2- Consideration of Schemes to Date

	enhanced on site interpretation of key features and attractions).		
2.	New Walks New circular walks, providing visitors and residents the opportunity to discover new places- suggested by Whalley PC	20,000	This is not supported individually as it would be tied into the new website
3.	New Welcome Signage New visitor welcome signage at key locations- suggested by Whalley PC	10,000	This is not supported.

Intervention E5: Built & landscaped environment to 'design out' crime

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation/ update
1.	Standalone CCTV cameras As part of the 2022/23 UKSPF the feasibility of erecting standalone CCTV cameras in Whalley is being considered). Such units could be provided subject to suitable locations being established with a power supply and the Parish Council agreeing to take on the management of these units. If this is successful, this could be rolled out to other suitable areas. NOTE: Funding for a similar scheme may be announced via the PCC which will also be explored.	Upto 20,000	This is subject to ongoing consideration

Intervention E8: Campaigns to encourage visits and exploring of local area

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation
1.	Undertake market segmentation, to develop a marketing campaign which targets new markets, and focusses on off peak times	10,000	This links into intervention E4- The Working Group support funding a new website to address several of our interventions
2.	Marketing Lancashire- they have recently had notification from Lancashire County Council that they are not able to provide financial support to Marketing Lancashire for FY23/24 at the same level as previously – they are currently looking at a 50% reduction in their funding offer.	TBD	Members have previously confirmed they would prefer to utilise our limited UKSPF allocation within the communities as opposed to opting into pan-Lancashire 'opt-in' schemes.

Appendix 2- Consideration of Schemes to Date

Intervention E15: Digital connectivity for local community facilities (£70,856)

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation
1.			
2.			
TOTAL			

Intervention E16: Open markets & town centre retail & service sector

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation
1.	Clitheroe Market Improvements As part of the 2022/23 UKSPF the feasibility of improvements to Clitheroe market has been undertaken by a consultant.	100,000+	That some of next year's allocation should be used to delivery improvements to Clitheroe Market

Intervention E17: Development & promotion of visitor economy

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation
1.	Visit Whalley website- suggested by Whalley PC	Upto 20,000	This is not supported as a standalone intervention
2.	Improved signage for Whalley- suggested by Whalley PC	Upto 80,000	This is not supported as the suggested website is intended to provide direction for our visitors
3.	New visit Ribble Valley interactive website This could incorporate bespoke 'Visit Whalley' (point 1 above), 'Visit Clitheroe' and 'Visit Longridge' content.	10,000	The Working Group support funding a new website to address several of our interventions

Intervention E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation/ Update
1.	Business support for net zero transition & decarbonisation	35,000	Committed for each financial year
2.	Boost- is funded through LCC and has used ERDF funds to scale up these services. As ERDF is withdrawn Boost is seeking to use	Upto 360,000	Members have previously confirmed they would prefer to utilise our limited

Appendix 2- Consideration of Schemes to Date

	the UKSPF as the replacement funding. To date the following Councils have not confirmed that they wish to continue funding Boost including us-Blackpool, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Rossendale.		UKSPF allocation within the communities as opposed to opting into pan-Lancashire 'opt-in' schemes.
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Intervention E29: Supporting decarbonisation & improving natural environment

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation/update
1.	Business support for net zero transition & decarbonisation	35,000	Committed for each financial year

Intervention E31: Support relevant feasibility studies

Schemes put forward since the announcement of the UKSPF		Estimated Cost	Working group recommendation/update
1.	Clitheroe Market Feasibility Study	6,000	Delivered as part of 2022/23 funding
2.	Rail Feasibility Study	6,450	Ongoing delivered through 2022/23 funding
3.	Consideration of whether electric vehicle charging points can be installed in our rural car parks	2,000	Ongoing delivered through 2022/23 funding
3.	Consider the implementation of a banking hub	TBD	For future consideration