

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

meeting date: TUESDAY, 9 APRIL 2024
 title: UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND
 submitted by: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
 principal author: NICOLA HOPKINS – DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update Members in respect of the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and to seek approval for some of the use of the Council's UKSPF allocation.

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 To date the Council's UKSPF has been used to/ is earmarked to support the following schemes:

Year 1 (2022/23)- allocation £238,805

- Rail Feasibility study- complete
- Additional CCTV Provision (pilot project) in Whalley- ongoing
- Refurbishment of Mardale Playing Field Changing Rooms, Longridge- complete
- Resurfacing Mardale Playing Field car park- complete
- Mardale Drainage Work- complete
- Clitheroe Market Feasibility Study- complete
- Business support for net zero transition & decarbonisation- ongoing
- EV charging points in villages feasibility study- complete.

Year 2 (2023/24)- allocation £477,610

- Castle Street Improvements- ongoing (£300,000 allocation)
- Creation of an enhanced website and marketing opportunities- ongoing (£40,000 allocation):
 - Cycle Routes- Five circular self-guided cycle routes-£2,000
 - Walks with Taste- Six new circular self-guided walks- £6,000.
 - Website- New interactive tourism and heritage website- £32,000
- Improvements to Clitheroe Market- ongoing (£100,000 allocation)
- Roefield Spinning Room- complete (£80,000 allocation)

Year 3 (2024/25)- allocation £1,251,339

- Townley Garden Event Space- ongoing (£100,000 allocation)
- Barrow Community Space- ongoing (£199,150 allocation)
- Barrow Car Park- ongoing (£25,000 allocation)

- Whalley Education Foundation- ongoing (£100,000 allocation)
- Pump Track, Longridge- ongoing (£60,000 allocation)

2.2 Committee have previously been advised that DHLUC have established five bands of spend performance which shows the percentage spend required to receive each band of funding for initial payments in 2024.

% Total spend 2022/23 & 2023/24 (combined)	Initial Year 3 payment to local authority	Amount local authority can claim (in arrears)
1. less than 20%	0%	100%
2. 20% -39%	20%	80%
3. 40% - 59%	50%	50%
4. 60% - 79%	70%	30%
5. 80% and higher	100%	0%

2.3 At the time of writing this report (prior to the end of April) £685,664 of the Council's UKSPF allocation had been spent. This equates to approximately 96% of the Council's 2022/23 and 2023/24 allocation combined. As such, as above, 100% of the Council's 2024/25 UKSPF funding will be paid upfront, DHLUC have confirmed this will be as soon as possible after the close of the upcoming reporting window (1st May 2024).

2.4 None of the Council's 2023/24 Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) had been utilised which is £75,000. On 18th March DHLUC confirmed that the same approach to managing underspends applies to REPF as it does for UKSPF allocations. However, DHLUC also confirmed on 18th March that these allocations will be treated separately, and local authorities should treat the five threshold bands in the guidance separately for their UKSPF and REPF spend. None of the Council's 2023/24 REPF allocation has been spent to date as whilst the contract for the rural charging points has been let they have not yet been installed. As such all of the REPF funding will need to be claimed in arrears. DHLUC have confirmed that where spend at the end of 2024-25 requires a payment to local authorities, this will be made after March 2025, once final reports have been submitted and considered.

3 COMMITTED/ ACTUAL SPEND

3.1 When the UKSPF funding was announced this Committee allocated the majority of the funding to the three main service centres. To date the following UKSPF funding has either been spent or allocated as follows.

Area	Allocation	Spent/ Committed	Remaining
Clitheroe	800,000	495,150	304,850
Longridge	400,000	362,097	37,903
Whalley/ Barrow	400,000	324,725	75,275
Borough	289,044	106,783	182,261
Administration	78,710	28,656	50,054
TOTAL	1,967,754	1,317,411	650,343

3.2 Based on actual spend and commitments to date and considering the administration costs associated with both UKPSF and REPF £600,289 of the Council's UKSPF allocation has yet to be allocated to projects (this has the administration costs deducted). Allocation of this funding will be discussed with the Working Group with recommendations brought back to Committee.

4 WORKING GROUP UPDATE

4.1 On 22nd February 2024 the Working Group met and were provided with an update on UKSPF schemes (minutes elsewhere on this agenda).

Clitheroe Market Improvements

4.2 Two tenders were received from companies that had tendered for the work on the market. In summary, the tender included completely removing the surface of the bullring, laying a base and suitable surface to support vehicle access, and the erection of semi-permanent stalls. The quotations varied and both were substantially over the allocated budget.

4.3 A substantial portion of the costs were attributed to resurfacing in a way that was both fit for purpose and visually appealing. Following consideration of a way forward the Working Group recommended exploration of a refurbishment model using matching flags to replace tarmac, with a gradual repairing scheme to replace rotten wood and clean/jetwash areas, which would cause minimal disruption.

4.4 Following the recommendation from the Working Group Officers have sought quotes for the following works:

- Replacing the areas of patched tarmac with paving stones
- Refurbishing the existing casual stalls
- Replacing the existing casual stalls like for like.

4.5 Committee members are aware that certain parts of the surfacing at the market, within the bullring area, have been damaged and repaired with tarmac, example below. When this area of the market was constructed, it was not designed to accommodate vehicles and has a sand base which results in the paving slabs being more susceptible to damage when overran by vehicles. Although attempts have been made to reduce vehicles movements on the pedestrian areas of the market historically, including the erection of bollards, vehicles continue to access the market.



4.6 Quotes have been sought to remove the tarmac and lay new paving slabs across all the areas of the bullring which have been patched. Committee are also advised that given the usage of this area it is recommended that a stockpile of the paving material is purchased and retained by the Council to enable future necessary replacements, a maintenance budget for the surfacing may also need to be considered as part of the future budget setting.

4.7 In respect of refurbishing the existing casual stalls, which would involve new roofs, new gutters, new replacement tabletops and new backings. Other items include lighting and electrics.

4.8 Officers also contacted a local company who specialise in the design and construction of bespoke structures and have experience in market structures. This contact was to establish the cost of replacing the stalls as opposed to refurbishing the existing stalls. As an initial estimate replacing the existing casual stalls with a similar open style stall would cost in the region of £150,000.

4.9 This Committee has previously allocated £100,000 of UKSPF funding to improvements to the market. It is recommended that the market UKSPF allocation is increased to £150,000 to enable the following improvements works to be delivered:

- Improvements to the surfacing including new paving stones to replace tarmac.
- LED Lighting to stalls
- Replace / repair lighting to open stalls.
- Replace existing roof panels, gutters, and back panels.
- Replace the existing tabletops with solid grade laminate panels.
- Paint existing lighting.
- Chemical steam cleaning of Market toilet / office building

4.10 This allocation will enable the £72,600 within the Council's capital budget to be retained for future works necessary to maintain the surfacing going forward. Members will be aware that the works to Castle Street are due to commence on 15th April with Castle Street closed until 31st July. This will be followed by the food festival on 10th August. Given ongoing works in the town it is suggested that the improvement works are undertaken following the food festival.

Longridge Pump Track

4.11 Four specialist companies were approached with the draft specification for the pump track, of which two had provided quotations. Both quotations were within the assigned budget with the preferred company identified following a scoring exercise by officers. The draft layout plan is appended at Appendix 2.

4.12 In accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules for a scheme of this value at least three written quotations should be obtained. In this case Committee approval is sought for an exemption to the Council rules on the basis that despite seeking the relevant number of quotations, insufficient quotations have been obtained. The provision of pump tracks is quite specialised and 4 suitable companies were approached for a quote however only 2 choose to quote for the project. Both quotes were scored in accordance with the specification for the scheme and a preferred contractor identified.

4.13 The first step in delivering the pump track is a public engagement event which was undertaken virtually on Tuesday 26th March. Feedback from this session will be used to direct the final design which will then be subject to a planning application. Subject to planning approval the pump track will be delivered later this year.

Longridge Event Space

4.14 On 2nd February six companies were approached requesting quotes for the event space at Towneley Gardens. One company declined to quote immediately as they only specialise in design and another company confirmed that they did not have the capacity to undertake this work given their current workload and as a design practice they would not have the capability to take this project to build completion. As of 1st March, the deadline for quotes, none of the companies approached had provided a quote.

4.15 On 5th March four more companies were approached for a quote. Whilst a design and build contract is preferred the companies have been advised that if the project needs to

be split down in design and letting the construction separately this can also be considered. The deadline for quotes is 28th March.

Clitheroe Castle

4.16 The Working Group discussed the vacant atrium café at the Castle and what this could be used for given unsuccessful attempts to lease this space. One possible use of part of the UKSPF funding would be a soft market study exercise to establish the uses that the commercial market could offer for the vacant and underused parts of Clitheroe Castle. The Working Group recommend that Policy and Finance Committee agree to using part of the UKSPF fund to support a soft market exercise with the suggestions reported back to a later Committee. Whilst the cost of this exercise is unknown it is suggested that £2,500 of UKSPF funding should be sufficient to engage a commercial agent to undertake this work.

5 NEW SCHEMES

5.1 Since the Working Group met in February Whalley Educational Foundation has contacted the Council requesting the application for funding from any balance remaining from the Council's UKSPF allocation.

5.2 Their request is for a package of improvements that the Foundation consider will meet the needs of existing and future users, set out below in their priority order (a copy of the full request is appended at Appendix 3):

5.2.1 Improved Car Park- The existing car park is potholed and uneven which prevents wheelchair users and those with mobility problems from using it. £27,600.

5.2.2 Reinstatement of Building Frontage- reinstating the window to the front elevation, as per the original 1725 build. Planning permission and listed building consent (reference 3/2021/0350 & 3/2021/0351 respectively) was obtained in 2021. Requested funding= £9,500.

5.2.3 Suitable Storage in a dedicated room that will enable our regular users to store items such as pottery, equipment etc. Requested funding= £4,560.

5.2.4 Toilets Refurbishment of the gentlemen's and disabled toilets. Requested funding= £16,560.

5.2.5 Refurbished Craft Room. Requested funding= £6,000 including the cost of providing and installing a kiln.

5.2.6 General enhancements to common areas. Requested funding= £11,000

5.3 This request has not yet been considered by the Working Group and as such will be considered by the Group in due course with their recommendations brought back to Committee.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

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

- Resources – Next year's allocation is £1,251,339 and confirmation has been received that the Council's 2023/24 allocation can be rolled over into the third year. The level of next year's funding which will be received early in the new financial year is dependant on the level of spend achieved this year however it is currently expected that all of the Council's allocation will be provided based on the spend to date.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – There will need to be legal input into providing any of our funding to third parties. There will also be associated procurement requirements depending on the projects Members choose to proceed with.
- Political - N/A
- Reputation-

- Equality and Diversity – Committee has 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.

7 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 7.1 Agree to increasing the UKSPF allocation to the market to £150,000 to undertake the improvement works to Clitheroe market set out at paragraph 4.9.
- 7.2 Direct the Director of Economic Development and Planning to procure the improvement works to the market to be undertaken following the food festival.
- 7.3 Approve an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect to the number of quotes obtained for the Pump Track.
- 7.4 Authorise the Director of Economic Development and Planning to request quotes from major commercial letting agents to undertake a soft marketing exercise for the vacant and underused parts of the Castle, upto £2,500.

NICOLA HOPKINS
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Appendix 1- Projects considered by intervention

INTERVENTION	SCHEMES	AMOUNT REQUESTED	AREA	FUNDING YEAR			TOTAL	UPDATE
				2022/23	2023/24	2024/25		
E1: Improvements to town centres & high streets (original allocation: £1,140,000)	Castle Street Improvements		Clitheroe	0	302,700	0	302,700	PROCEED 28.03.23
E2: Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects (original allocation: £111,000)	Mardale Car Park Improvements		Longridge	0	49,828	0	49,828	COMPLETE
	Townley Garden Event Space, Longridge		Longridge	0	0	100,000 (estimate)	100,000	PROCEED 07.11.23
	Mardale drainage improvements		Longridge	0	18,500	0	18,500	COMPLETE
	Barrow Community Space		Whalley	0	0	25,000	25,000	PROCEED 07.11.23- replaced with car park 23.01.24
	Barrow Village Hall		Whalley	0	0	199,150	199,150	PROCEED 23.01.24
	Barrow Car Park		Whalley	0	0	25,000	25,000	PROCEED 23.01.24
	Whalley Educational Foundation		Whalley	0	0	100,000	100,000	PROCEED 07.11.23

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	Roefield	80,000	Clitheroe	0	80,000	0	80,000	PROCEED 23.01.24
	Longridge Girl Guide Association Hut	50,000	Longridge	0	0	-		DEFER (E-mail sent 8.11)
	Clitheroe Cricket Club Purchase of a new modular changing facility that generates electric	50,000	Clitheroe	0	0	-		DEFER (E-mail sent 8.11)
E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces (original allocation: £335,000)	Mardale changing room improvements		Longridge	61,185	72,584	0	133,769	COMPLETE
	Pump Track, Longridge		Longridge	0	550	59,450	60,000	PROCEED 07.11.23
	Primrose Community Nature Trust	£200,000/ £992,000	Clitheroe	0	0	0		DECLINE
	Sports Centre/Community Park, Whalley	400,000	Whalley	0	0	-		DEFER (e-mail sent 01.11)
	Ribblesdale Wanderers Cricket and Bowling Club	29,834	Clitheroe	0	0	-		DEFER (e-mail sent 08.11)
	Clitheroe Cricket Club (solar etc)	50,000	Clitheroe	0	0	-		DEFER (e-mail sent 8.11)

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E4: Enhancing existing cultural, historic & heritage institutions offer (original allocation: £50,754)				0	0			
E5: Built & landscaped environment to 'design out' crime (original allocation: £50,000)	Standalone CCTV cameras- Whalley		Whalley	0	575	0	575	COMPLETE
	new CCTV provision at 3Cs café in the castle grounds.	1,340	Clitheroe	0	0	0	0	DECLINE 24.01.24
E8: Campaigns to encourage visits and exploring of local area (original allocation: £10,339)	New web-site project		BOROUGH	0	28,065	0	28,065	PROCEED 28.03.2023
E15: Digital connectivity for local community facilities (original allocation £70,856)				0	0	-		
E16: Open markets & town centre retail &	Clitheroe Market Improvements		Clitheroe	0	2,401	97,599	100,000	PROCEED 28.03.2023

Appendix 1- Projects considered by intervention

service sector (original allocation: £100,000)	Whalley Chamber of Trade	60,000	Whalley	0	0	0		DECLINE (e-mail sent 8.11)
E17: Development & promotion of visitor economy (original allocation: £10,000)	Cycle Routes -Five circular self-guided cycle routes		BOROUGH	0	1,843	0	1,843	PROCEED 28.03.2023
	Walks with Taste- Six new circular self-guided walks		BOROUGH	0	6,000	0	6,000	PROCEED 28.03.2023
	Clitheroe Sculpture	1,000	Clitheroe	0	0	0	0	DECLINE 24.01.2024
E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems (original allocation: £35,000)	Merge into E29			-	-	-		
E29: Supporting decarbonisation & improving natural environment (original allocation: £35,000)	Business support for net zero transition & decarbonisation		BOROUGH	10,000	30,000	30,000	70,000	ONGOING
E31: Support relevant feasibility studies	Clitheroe Market Feasibility Study		Clitheroe	6,000	0	0	6,000	COMPLETE

Appendix 1- Projects considered by intervention

(original allocation: £21,805)	Rail Feasibility Study		Clitheroe	6,450	0	0	6,450	COMPLETE
	EV Charging Points Feasibility		BOROUGH	0	875	0	875	COMPLETE
ADMINISTRATION				9,552	19,104	50,054	78,710	
TOTAL				93,187	613,025	661,253	1,367,465	
UKSPF ALLOCATION				238,805	477,610	1,251,339	1,967,754	

Appendix 2- draft pump track design





Whalley Educational
Foundation
The Old Grammar School
Station Road
Whalley
RR7 0RH

18th March 2024

Ms N. Hopkins
Director of Economic Development & Planning
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
BB7 2RA

Dear Ms Hopkins,

Shared Prosperity Fund - Application

Further to our previous application, we should be grateful if you would accept this letter as Whalley Educational Foundation's application for funding from any balance remaining from the 2023/24 Shared Prosperity Fund or from the 2024/25 allocation.

Whalley Educational Foundation owns and is responsible for the running of Whalley Old Grammar School Community Centre and has ambitious plans to develop the Centre for the benefit of the area. The Community Centre provides a vibrant community hub hosting a wide variety of educational, social and recreational activities for young and old. We also support and provide a home for Whalley Pre School, also a registered charity, that employs ten staff. Our mission is to provide our growing community with the space and facilities it needs to flourish, investing in the future by promoting a cohesive community with strong mental and physical health.

Whalley Old Grammar School, a listed building, that will be 300 years old next year, is a significant landmark in the area. It is crucial that this historic building is kept alive by continuing to be a thriving Community Centre and only by investment in the building can this be assured.

Our charity benefits from exceptionally strong governance with representatives from the Duchy of Lancaster, Lancashire County Council, RVBC and Barrow, Whalley and Wiswell Parish Councils together with dedicated local co-opted governors. Many projects have been successfully delivered in the last ten years by the Foundation. Thanks to this strong governance and determined and sustained effort, the Centre is thriving, but there is demand for improved facilities.

Much has been achieved, but we now wish to continue to build on these achievements so that, by its 300th anniversary, Whalley and the local area can have a Community Centre that provides the best facilities suited to a growing population.

Our proposal is a package of improvements that will meet the needs of existing and future users. There are 6 elements listed below in priority order:

- 1.Improved Car Park.** A recent user survey showed that this is the number one improvement that our users wanted. The existing car park is potholed and uneven which prevents wheelchair users and those with mobility problems from using it. The car park abuts what will be the new extension that, when built, will incorporate an access for disabled and other users. Without resurfacing the car park, this access will be denied to these users. It will also complement the vastly improved new build. We have a tender price for this work at **£27,600**. The outcomes of this work will be the enhancement of and increased pride in the local environment. It will also increase visitor numbers and will provide a safe access for all that is particularly important for those with disabilities. A further outcome that a resurfaced car park will provide is a safe thoroughfare to many local pedestrians who cut through the Foundation's grounds, to avoid the busy traffic at the King Street/Mitton Road junction. Our research has indicated that it is extremely unlikely to find an alternative funder for this part of the project.
- 2.Reinstatement of Building Frontage.** To restore the pride in this historic building by reinstating the window to the front elevation, as per the original 1725 build. This window was removed in the 1950s to create a doorway which has upset the symmetry and diminished the attractiveness of the frontage of the building, a special place in Whalley as it provides the canvas to the war memorial. Planning permission and listed building consent (reference 3/2021/0350 & 3/2021/0351 respectively) was obtained in 2021. The estimated cost is **£9,500**. The outcome of this part of the project will enhance pride in place and people's satisfaction with their village centre. Our research has indicated that it is extremely unlikely to find an alternative funder for this part of the project.
- 3.Suitable Storage** in a dedicated room that will enable our regular users to store items such as pottery, equipment etc. This better enables the building to be used by many groups within the community, enhances the activities they can provide, increases the feeling of belonging in the building, and keeps communal areas tidy and free of hazards. We estimate that this improvement will cost an estimated **£4,560**.
- 4.Toilets Refurbishment** of the gentlemen's and disabled toilets at an estimated cost of £20,700, but we are applying for 20% of this cost from another funder who will only award a grant provided we have been successful in securing the first 80%. Our application to you is therefore **£16,560**. Currently the facilities are very dated and basic and require improvements which will improve the perception of our building, increase satisfaction of current users and attract new user groups. The aim to bring these facilities up to the same standard set by the provision of new ladies' toilets completed in 2023.
- 5.A Refurbished Craft Room** to improve our facilities, increase usability and maximise the use of our Craft Room so that as many local people as possible can benefit from craft activities with the subsequent benefits to health and wellbeing. This refurbishment

will also meet a long-standing request to the Foundation to provide a kiln for the use of our pottery groups. A refurbished room, designed to incorporate a kiln, will not only benefit the existing groups but will also attract others increasing engagement in local community. We are already one of the very few venues in the area to offer a dedicated craft provision and the addition of a kiln and would probably make this facility unique. The cost of the refurbishment we estimate at **£6,000** including the cost of providing and installing a kiln. An outcome of this project that will involve the full participation of our existing craft users will be to foster a sense of local pride and belonging and increased participation in these activities that generate wellbeing.

6. General enhancements to common areas to make the environment more attractive to existing and potential users. We recognise the importance of the indoor environment and that well-presented, attractive facilities benefit those who use our community facility and attract new groups. Recent improvements have meant that we have already achieved this in much of the building, but we wish to continue this process to ensure that all key community areas, including the reception area, corridors and our classrooms are improved. Planned improvements will cost an estimated **£11,000** and will enhance pride in place, increase visitor numbers and help to protect the viability of our community facility.

The above projects, taken together, will have many benefits for our local community. The improvements will complete the rehabilitation and refurbishment of our building which is both a cultural, recreational and heritage asset. By allowing us to complete this project, the Social Prosperity Fund will increase pride in place, improve accessibility, increase engagement in local culture and community by enhancing the life and wellbeing of the people of the local area.

The total estimated cost of these worthwhile improvements is **£75,220**. The Foundation has a record of delivering its projects on time and will meet any completion deadline.

We estimate that completion of the overall project, by improving our provision, will lead to extra visits to the Centre. As the Ribble Valley continues to expand its population, our facility increases in importance. By providing a strong hub that brings people together we ensure increased community cohesion, improved life chances and help combat social isolation. We believe the completion of these projects will lead to noticeable improvements that matter to this local community by fostering local pride in the building, area and will increase life chances and improve health outcomes.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Fewster

Secretary to the Whalley Educational Foundation