

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee on 1st August 2023

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Monitoring Update

Report of the Director of Economic Development, Dragonfly Development Limited

Classification	This report is Public
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Contact Officer	As Above

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To provide members with an update on the projects being delivered by the Economic Development Team with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 The UK Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund on 13 April 2022, and it has provided £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment through to March 2025.
- 1.2 Bolsover District Council received an allocation of £1,963,993 over a two- and half-year period covering October 2022 - March 2025 of which £789,212 was allocated to five projects which are being delivered by the Economic Development Team.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 Below is a breakdown of the allocation of funding for each project followed by an update of activity and expenditure which has taken place so far. A breakdown of costs for planned activities within each of the five projects is detailed in Appendix One.

Allocation of budget for each project being delivered by the Economic Development Team with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	TOTAL
Tourism and Culture	£18,000	£25,000	£35,000	£78,000
Business Growth Grants Scheme	£0	£100,036	£128,176	£228,212
Net Zero Hyper Local Innovation programme	£60,000	£80,000	£160,000	£300,000
Small Business Support Scheme	£0	£45,000	£50,000	£95,000
Visitor Economy Business Support	£18,000	£35,000	£35,000	£88,000
TOTAL				£789,212

- 2.2 **Tourism and Culture** - A tourism place audit will allow us to better understand accessibility and accessible tourism (including accessible tourism for people with physical and learning difficulties), signage and place identity, movement of people in and around the district and its attractions, the accommodation offer and provision, and the opportunity to increase visits through either enhancing current events or by introducing new strategic events (including arts and culture).

The audit findings will then be used to create a new and cohesive tourism and culture proposition and delivery plan that takes advantage of place strengths whilst addressing the product gaps. Visit Bolsover includes a dedicated website which will become the district's window for all up to date events, tourism assets and other relevant information for locals and visitors.

Following Requests for Quote, Tomorrow's Tourism Limited have undertaken a Tourism Audit of the four towns in Bolsover District costing £14,775 and AccessibleUK have undertaken accessibility audits at a cost of £18,100.

- 2.3 **Business Growth Grants Scheme** - This project offers two grants. Firstly, grant funding available to existing businesses to encourage business improvement and growth opportunities resulting in job creation and retention.

Businesses are able to access specialist consultancy and/or training, help to adopt digital solutions, carbon reduction solutions and product development. In addition, there will be an opportunity for the grant to contribute towards the purchase of capital equipment including plant and machinery. The growth grant is up to a maximum of £10,000 and has an 80% grant intervention rate.

The second grant is a small start-up grant of £500 at a 100% intervention rate. Applicants can be pre-start or a new business (up to 18 months old) and will work with a business adviser on a 1:1 basis to assist with completion of the application and business plan but also to offer on-going support and access to workshops, networking events and courses.

The project has been advertised in the Economic Development In-Business magazine, Bolsover TV, Bolsover District Council website, at monthly networking events and via partner organisations.

The project was launched in February 2023 and a total of 64 enquiries have been received, 40 for the growth grant and 24 for the start-up grant. 26 Expressions of Interest have been requested and 17 businesses/individuals have been invited to complete a full application. One grant of £10,000 has been awarded with a further two start-up and six growth grant applications having been submitted and awaiting appraisal.

- 2.4 **Net Zero Hyper Local Innovation Programme** – As part of the authority's commitment to contribute to the Net Zero target, Bolsover District businesses will be supported to access training and funding to develop their understanding and skills relating to Net Zero. Delivered by engaging with micro-businesses, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations to overcome barriers. This intervention will include the completion of a feasibility study for a future green skills centre in the District based on the needs of business and informed by this programme of business engagement. In addition, this programme will create networking opportunities with in-person events scheduled across each year alongside providing the infrastructure for a business to business network across social media channels and web-based resources.

A series of hyper local Net Zero workshops to deliver a programme of interventions that will assist Bolsover-based businesses and VCSE organisations to take on green skills, provide green jobs and transition to Net Zero over the longer term to increase their competitiveness, productivity and profitability and to enable them to provide and create better paid jobs. This programme will include Net Zero boot camps to improve the carbon literacy of businesses that have not yet started their transition to Net Zero and provide access to consultancy support to take the necessary steps to identifying their carbon footprint and implement a Carbon Reduction Plan. This programme will also include a series of seminars led by local Universities to help businesses cut through the complexity of multiple offers and facilitate better access to additional support and funding. This intervention is designed to accelerate the progress of those businesses that have started their transition to Net Zero but need some support and direction for their next steps.

A proposal for delivery of the future green skills centre feasibility report came forward through early market engagement from Rider Levell Bucknell (RLB). The proposed delivery team have experience in developing sustainability strategies and action plans, green economy development, and a range of community and organisational net zero strategies.

Procurement options for this scheme are currently being considered.

Monthly networking events are being delivered across the district, which include Net Zero themes and speakers. The Business in Bolsover social media accounts are being updated regularly to increase engagement with businesses and attendance at events. Business attendance is being tracked so that those businesses with an interest in Net Zero themes can be followed up and progressed onto the more intensive NZIP programme once ready.

There has been £3,700 spent on networking events from January – April 2023 (initial contract with Rate Social Ltd). From May 2023 following a Request for

Quote a contract for £23,100 was awarded to Filter Free Business to schedule, host and deliver the business events up to March 2025. A total of £2,278 has been paid on this contract so far.

- 2.5 **Hyper Local Business Support** - This project through hyper local on the ground business support advisers will assist local residents and SME businesses within Bolsover District to access business support. This support covers pre-start, newly established and existing businesses. Bolsover district residents can take advantage of assistance to access mentoring and financial support to help launch a new business. Pre-start, start-up and existing businesses can receive assistance to develop a new product, become investor ready, or improve productivity of their business through innovation and technology implementation.

Clowne Enterprise, an established local business support organisation has been commissioned to deliver this project.

To 30 June 2023 15 people have received 1:1 coaching, 13 businesses have received 1:1 coaching.

The programme of workshops and other events did not start until early July, hence no attendees at these. Also in the first two months of the project (May and June) only minimal outcomes have been achieved as Clowne Enterprise have not been working with participants for long enough.

To date £7,520 has been spent on delivery and £1,400 on marketing materials.

- 2.6 **Visitor Economy Business Support** - A business support programme for businesses within the Visitor Economy to grow key areas including; Digital, Zero Carbon and sector specific business skills. It will also contribute to accessibility, international tourism and sector specific support for the cultural, historic and heritage sector. Businesses are being offered a programme of support, embracing innovative ways of working and business adaptations. Industry experts have been procured to deliver sector specific support including Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), social media, online booking channels, working with travel trade, accessibility, green and sustainable tourism and working with international tourism operators, and events development. Wider environmental considerations will include the development of 'shoulder' season experiences and encouraging day visitors to stay longer and 'stay with us'. This will also assist with increasing productivity through the offer of year-round job opportunities and build further resilience across businesses.

A programme of workshops has been running from March both on-line and in person with subjects based on those listed above at a cost of £15,000.

In addition, following a Request for Quote a contract for £15,500 was awarded Filter Free Business to schedule, host and deliver the business events up to March 2025. A total of £1,525 has been paid on this contract so far.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Local Growth Scrutiny has been provided with this report which sets out details of the schemes funded by UK Shared Prosperity which have been identified to be delivered by the Economic Development Team. The intention of the report is to update Local Growth Scrutiny of progress on delivery to date, for Members to review the content of the update to ensure appropriate progress is being made to deliver the projects successfully within the timescale provided.

4. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The alternative is not to provide detailed updates of the progress on delivery of the projects but this may risk loss of focus on achieving the outputs and outcomes required.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That Members review the content of the progress report and make recommendations to Executive, where required, on additional action that may be needed for successful delivery.

Approved by Councillor John Ritchie Portfolio Holder for Growth

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

There are no additional finance implications arising from this report, all expenditure will be funded from the grant award

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

Where relevant the Council will need to comply with the Contract Procurement Regulations 2015

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details:

Three of the five projects have specific aims and objectives around access to carbon reduction solutions for businesses, which in turn will enhance the environment. Grants are available to enable businesses to become more carbon efficient, there are plans to assist businesses with the development of sustainable and Net Zero

strategies and also advice to tourism businesses on how to become more green and sustainable.

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

There is no staffing implication, delivery is contained within existing structures

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies</p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No

<p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p>	All wards
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Details:

<p>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.</p>
<p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Partners to support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills Promoting the District and working with Partners to increase tourism <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting businesses to reduce their carbon footprint

<p>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</p>	
<p>Appendix No</p>	<p>Title</p>
<p>One</p>	<p>A breakdown of costs for planned activities within each of the five projects</p>

Background Papers

(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).

Various papers have been used to prepare this report, namely commissioning briefs which were written for each project.