

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 3rd September 2024

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Monitoring Update

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Growth

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Natalie Etches Head of Business Growth
Contact Officer	Natalie Etches Head of Business Growth

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 (UKSPF).

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 The UK Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund on 13th 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-a-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 in the 15-month delivery period up to 30th June 2024.

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** – thinkingplace were commissioned to consult with key stakeholders and develop a new positive place narrative for the area; providing a consistent positive place narrative for all stakeholders to use to promote the area as a great place to live, work, visit and be educated. The new narrative will kick start the development of a new Bolsover Place Programme led by the Tourism and Place Manager. £27,120 was spent in 2023-24.

The priorities of the programme identified through the consultation are:

Bolsover; confidently embracing its wider experience:

- *we've made it our business to reach out*
- *experience our great value, living location*
- *your visitor experience, all packaged up.*

A new private sector led Bolsover Place Board has also been established to provide direction, insight and guidance as we deliver a new place programme based on the above priorities.

Following the place narrative commission thinkingplace will be supporting the place programme in 2024-25 with a new brand visual language, photography, marketing masterclass, story book and launch event.

Outputs for this period relate to 65 businesses supported through providing a new positive place narrative to be consistently used by all stakeholders. 5 events or workshops have been held and 149 people have been reached having had some involvement in the consultation stage.

2.3 **Business Growth Grants Scheme** – This project offers two grants: The first is available to existing businesses to encourage business improvement and growth opportunities resulting in job creation and retention – The Growth Grant.

Businesses are able to access specialist consultancy and/or training, help to adopt digital solutions, carbon reduction solutions and product development. In addition, the grant can 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 – The Start-Up Grant – is a small start-up grant of £500 at a 100% intervention rate. Applicants can either 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, as well as on-going support and access to workshops, networking events and courses to support business growth and sustainability longer-term.

The Scheme is still being widely promoted. Details are included on the Bolsover District Council website, they are being promoted at the monthly Business In Bolsover Business Detox Breakfast meetings, the InBusiness Magazine which is sent out to all businesses in the District that are included on the business rates list, and the InTouch magazine which is sent out to all residential properties in the district on a quarterly basis. The Scheme is also being promoted by Partner organisations and is complemented with the work undertaken by Clowne Enterprise who support pre-start, start-up and existing businesses to help them access the grants. UKSPF also funds the Hyper Local Business Support Programme, delivered by Clowne Enterprise. Partners at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) who are working with the Economic Development Team to deliver the UKSPF funded Net Zero Programme promote the Growth Grants when visiting business premises to undertake energy audits.

Demand for both the Growth and Start-up Grant Schemes has remained high moving into the second year of the project also due to on-going promotion and word-of-mouth from beneficiaries.

The project was launched in February 2023 and up to the end of June 2024 there has been:

- 46 Grants awarded (31 Start-up and 15 Growth)
- A total of £159,430 awarded with £111,327 spent (of the £228,212 allocated to the project)
- 228 enquiries
- 136 expressions of interest requested
- 100 businesses invited to full application

Performance against outputs and outcomes for the Growth Grants Scheme is mainly on track or ahead of target. Specifically, the percentage performance of the Scheme after 15 months, against the targets for the full two years is:

OUTPUTS

- Number of businesses receiving grants 69%

OUTCOMES

- Increased amount of investment 111%
- Businesses introducing a new product to the firm 50%
- Businesses engaged in knowledge transfer 29%
- Premises with improved digital connectivity 33%
- Businesses adopting new technologies or processes 47%
- Businesses adopting new or improved products or services 53%

Additional outcomes will be achieved as a result of the grant funded projects developing over time.

Due to the demand for the grants from the business community, the Economic Development Team have secured additional funding of £75,000 from the UKSPF Rural Fund. This funding became available for businesses to apply for from April 2024. The Rural Fund element is only available to businesses who are located in eligible rural areas of the district (i.e. district wide apart from Bolsover or Shirebrook Towns). Up to the end of June 2024 there has been:

- 3 Grants awarded
- £29,596 awarded with £5,443 spent

It should be noted that the figures above are up to the end of June 2024 and since then we have seen more interest through July and the beginning of August. Currently waiting for appraisal are:

- Six Growth Grants totalling £54,500
- Two Rural Grants totalling £20,000
- Two Start-Up Grants totalling £1,000

2.4 **Net Zero Hyper Local Innovation Programme**

NTU have focused on continuing to build visibility within the region and have started to build on last quarter's activity in terms of engagement with SME's, resulting in outputs being claimed within this quarter.

Workshop and carbon audit visit activity has increased greatly, and the team are building good relationships with SME's in the district.

The project's Business Development Officer (BDO) has increased their days on project from 3 to 4, which brings additional resource in terms of engagement and marketing activity. Budget remains unchanged.

The BDO is working with the social media project manager on updating our journey to net zero and publishing this online. We are also looking to proactively attract participants by attending local meetings and networking events but also by old fashioned leaflet drops, door knocking and calls direct to businesses.

To date, 35 businesses have been sent Enrolment Form / Baseline Carbon Reduction Survey.

- Of those 35:
 - 10 have had a site audit (6 reports received, 4 reports sent to business - 2 new businesses scheduled for next week);
 - 13 attended a Carbon Management workshop (4 attended April, 3 attended May, 6 attended June – 2 currently interested in workshop in July):
 - 5 have returned a decarbonisation plan from the workshop;

- 5 invoices have been received for the bursary and 4 have been paid the £300 bursary;
- 5 have shown interest in a Carbon Management event (4 attended 29th May, 1 to attend a future event);
- 7 companies have had more than 1 strand of support (e.g. attended a Carbon Management workshop and had a site visit).

Regular Business in Bolsover networking events continue to be delivered, attracting local businesses, which include a speaker or feature on Net Zero topics to build momentum for the Hyper-Local NZIP. Summary of business detox networking events delivered in the quarter –

- April – 5 events, with 89 registrations/attendees
- May – 3 events with 43 registrations/attendees
- June – 5 events, with 90 registrations/attendees

Several NZIP event and workshops are being planned up to March 2025 (in addition to the Business in Bolsover planned events) including specialised events hosted within local businesses and in collaboration with partners.

In the quarter NTU have had meetings with the Coal Authority Sustainability champion, the Environment Agency, the Midland Net Zero Hub and the Smart Data Manufacturing Hub, from which we delivered a joint event with the Smart Manufacturing Data Hub on 25th July. We also have a business hosted event confirmed with Penny Engineering, please see below.

[Sustainability Networking Event at Penny Engineering Tickets, Wed 4 Sep 2024 at 08:30 | Eventbrite](#)

We have also produced our first case studies, please see below:

<https://www.ntu.ac.uk/business-and-employers/case-studies/bolsover-net-zero-lauri-smith>

<https://www.ntu.ac.uk/business-and-employers/case-studies/bolsover-net-zero-michelle-slater>

We have 1 more in development and our aim is to identify more local champions for the project. This will also include video content.

The focus for the next quarter is to build momentum for the Hyper-Local NZIP through our marketing and BDO work which with the aim of filling the Carbon Management Workshops and project events over the next quarter. This will in turn lead to claiming additional Outputs and Outcomes in this next quarter. Total spend on the project so far is £144,892, with all budget committed through purchase orders/contracts.

- 2.5 **Hyper Local Business Support** - This project through hyper local on the ground business support advisers, assists local residents and SME businesses within Bolsover District to access business support. This support extends to pre-start, newly established as well as existing businesses.

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

mentoring and financial support to help launch a new business, to develop a new product, become investor ready, or improve productivity through innovation and technology implementation.

The project has been running since May 2023 and continues to be successful with the numbers of participants growing steadily. To the end of June 2024:

- 103 businesses have been supported (107% of the target for the two-year programme); and,
- 64 potential entrepreneurs have sought help from the programme (133% of the target for the two-year programme). That includes individuals and businesses who have received 1:1 coaching support, who have attended training/workshops, or participated in informal networking events.

The team are careful to ensure there is no double counting of intervention with businesses, therefore these figures do not include additional participants who have accessed the Growth Grants, the Business Detox events and other activities such as the Businesswomen's events.

Performance is either on or well ahead of target. Specifically, the percentage performance of the programme after 15 months, against the targets for the full two years is:

- Businesses supported – 103 (107%)
- Potential entrepreneurs supported – 64 (133%)
- Jobs created – 31 (258%)
- New businesses – 21 (175%)
- New products or services introduced by clients – 16 (267%)
- New markets accessed by clients – 16 (94%)

2.6 Visitor Economy Business Support – The final payments to Accessible UK were funded through this period. The accessibility of the destination and specific sites will be included in our marketing and promotions for the destination going forward and embedded in the visitor “stay” campaign that is associated with the Bolsover Place Programme.

A support programme for businesses, prioritising the Visitor Economy sector, to grow key areas including Digital, Zero Carbon and sector specific business skills. Businesses are being offered a programme of support, embracing innovative ways of working and business adaptations through Filter Free Business.

A programme of workshops part funded through the Visitor Economy Business Support project has been running both on-line and in person. A total of 84 business events have taken place with 448 businesses receiving non-financial support. The total costs of the activity equates to £40,593.

Next year's allocation will support the continuation of the support programme alongside supporting a Woman's Creative Network and town centre traders benefiting from the £15m Regeneration Fund.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Local Growth Scrutiny Committee 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 Committee of progress on delivery to date, and 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:

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

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.

Economy

- Working with Partners to support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills
- Promoting the District and working with Partners to increase tourism

Environment

- Supporting businesses to reduce their carbon footprint

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title