

Open

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

6pm
Thursday, 7 July 2022
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members of Committee:

Chairman: Councillor M J Hart
Vice-Chairman: Councillor S E N Rook

Councillor V Caulfield
Councillor P Dyke
Councillor S Miah
Councillor C Rogers
Councillor D R Sheppard

Councillor N J Desmond
Councillor C Edginton-White
Councillor T L Onslow
Councillor D Ross

Would Members please note that, to ensure continuity in scrutiny, substitutes should only be appointed for the Scrutiny Committee in exceptional circumstances.

Information for Members of the Public:

Part I of the Agenda includes items for discussion in public. You have the right to inspect copies of Minutes and reports on this Agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Part II of the Agenda (if applicable) deals with items of “Exempt Information” for which it is anticipated that the public may be excluded from the meeting and neither reports nor background papers are open to public inspection.

Declaration of Interests by Members – interests of members in contracts and other matters

Declarations of Interest are a standard item on every Council and Committee agenda and each Member must provide a full record of their interests in the Public Register.

In addition, alongside the Register of Interest, the Members Code of Conduct (“the Code”) requires the Declaration of Interests at meetings. Members have to decide first whether or not they have a disclosable interest in the matter under discussion.

Please see the Members’ Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council’s constitution for full details.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) / Other Disclosable Interest (ODI)

DPI’s and ODI’s are interests defined in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the District.

If you have a DPI (as defined in the Code) in a matter being considered at a meeting of the Council (as defined in the Code), the Council’s Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held, for the duration of any discussion or voting on that matter.

If you have an ODI (as defined in the Code) you will need to consider whether you need to leave the room during the consideration of the matter.

Co-opted Members

Scrutiny Committees may wish to appoint Co-Opted Members to sit on their committee in order to add value to the scrutiny process. To appoint a Co-Opted Member, a Committee must first agree to appoint either a specific person or to approach a relevant organisation to request that they put forward a suitable representative (e.g. the local Police Authority). Co-Optees are non voting by default but Committees can decide to appoint voting rights to a Co-Optee. The Co-Option of the Member will last no longer than the remainder of the municipal year.

Scrutiny Committees can at any meeting agree to terminate the Co-Option of a Co-Opted Member with immediate effect. Where an organisation is appointed to put forward a Co-Opted Member, they are able to send a substitute in exceptional circumstances, provided that they notify Democratic Services in advance. Co-Opted Members must sign up to the Members Code of Conduct before attending their first meeting, failure to sign will mean that they are unable to participate. This also applies to substitute Co-Opted Members, who will need to allow sufficient time before a meeting in order to sign the Code of Conduct.

The following will apply:

- i) The total number of voting co-opted members on any Scrutiny Committee will not exceed 25% at any one time.
- ii) The total number of voting Co-opted Members on any Review Panel will not be limited.
- iii) Those Co-opted Members with voting rights will exercise their rights in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in the constitution.

For Further information:

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information, you should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Wyre Forest District Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 7 July 2022

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

| Agenda item | Subject | Page Number |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| 1. | Apologies for Absence | |
| 2. | Appointment of Substitute Members To receive the name of any Councillor who is to act as a substitute, together with the name of the Councillor for whom he/she is acting. | |
| 3. | Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details. | |
| 4. | Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12 May 2022. | 6 |
| 5. | Treasury Management Review Panel To request nominations for membership of the Treasury Management Review Panel for the current municipal year, and to appoint a Chairman for the Panel. Meeting dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Monday 19 September 2022 – 4pm Training for all Members*, 6pm meetingMonday 31 October 2022 – 6pm meetingMonday 30 January 2023 – 4pm Training for all Members*, 6pm meeting * The training is mandatory for those Members that sit on the Audit Committee and the Treasury Management Review Panel | |

| | | |
|------------|---|---|
| 6. | Work Programme To review the work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Corporate Plan Priority, Annual Priorities and the Forward Plan. | 8 |
| 7. | Press Involvement To consider any future items for scrutiny that might require publicity. | |
| 8. | UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Investment Plan 2022-25 To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of NWEDR to approve the investment plan prior to its submission to Government. | 9 |
| 9. | To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor of the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting. | |
| 10. | Exclusion of the Press and Public To consider passing the following resolution: “That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”. | |

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| 11. | Agenda Item 8: UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Investment Plan 2022-25 Appendix 2 – List of submitted projects | |
| 12. | To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor of the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting. | |

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 12TH MAY 2022 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), S E N Rook (Vice-Chairman), N J Desmond, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, L J Jones, S Miah, T L Onslow, C Rogers and D R Sheppard.

Observers

Councillor: G W Ballinger.

Observed remotely: Councillor: M Rayner.

OS.01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Ross.

OS.02 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor L J Jones was a substitute for Councillor D Ross.

OS.03 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

Councillor T Onslow joined the meeting at 6.04pm.

OS.04 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.05 How Are We Doing? Performance Update

The Committee considered a report from the HR & Organisational Development Manager on the performance of the Council for quarter 4 from 1 January to 31 March 2022.

The HR & Organisational Development Manager presented the report and appendices which included a report that detailed the progress against the Wyre Forest Forward (WFF) actions that are not directly associated with a Corporate Plan Priority; progress reports against the Corporate Plan Priorities of a 'safe, clean and green living environment' and 'supporting a successful local economy'; a capital projects report; and an exception report for all WFF and risk actions. The report

Agenda Item No. 4

also contained Environmental Protection Data that had been requested at a previous meeting.

The Committee considered and fully scrutinised each page of the report and appendices in turn. The HR & Organisational Development Manager and Head of Community & Environment Services were able to provide members with verbal responses to their questions. A written response to any points where further clarification was sought would be circulated to members after the meeting.

A member thanked the HR & Organisational Development Manager for providing the additional Environmental Protection Data, which she found very informative.

Agreed: The progress in performance for quarter 4 be noted.

OS.06 Work Programme

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. The Chairman advised that if there were no items to consider in June, the meeting would be cancelled.

OS.07 Press Involvement

There were no further items for scrutiny that might require publicity.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.51pm.

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2022-2023**

May 2022

“How are we doing?” Q4 update

June 2022 - Overview & Scrutiny Committee Sub Committee

Acquisition of Property in Kidderminster

July 2022

Nominations for Treasury Management Review Panel (Chair to be appointed)

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Investment Plan 2022-25

September 2022

“How are we doing?” Q1 update

Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2025

Climate Change Action Plan and update from Green Advisory Panel

November 2022

“How are we doing?” Q2 update

Worcestershire Housing Strategy

February 2023

“How are we doing?” Q3 update

March 2023

Annual review of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership 2022-2023

May 2023

“How are we doing?” Q4 update



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Report of: Ostap Paparega, Head of NWEDR

Date

07/07/2022

Open with an Exempt Appendix

Appendix 2 to the draft Cabinet report is exempt from disclosure because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND: INVESTMENT PLAN 2022-25

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report on this subject, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 13 July 2022.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Ostap Paparega

Title: Head of NWEDR

Contact number Ext 2192

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET****13TH JULY 2022****UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND: INVESTMENT PLAN 2022-25**

| OPEN with an EXEMPT APPENDIX | |
|--|--|
| Appendix 2 to this report is exempt from disclosure because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). | |
| CABINET MEMBER: | Councillor Helen Dyke, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism |
| CLT MEMBER: | Ostap Paparega, Head of NWEDR |
| CONTACT OFFICER: | Georgina Harris, Business Growth Manager, NWEDR Extension 2174 |
| APPENDICES: | Appendix 1 – UKSPF investment plan for Wyre Forest Appendix 2 – list of submitted projects (exempt from disclosure) |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the investment plan prior to its submission to Government.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve submission of the investment plan to Government.
- 2.2 The Cabinet is asked to delegate finalisation of the investment plan including the projects included within it to the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism and in light of advice from the ReWyre Board.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The concept of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund first emerged in the Industrial Strategy in November 2017 although the total financial allocations for its first three years were unveiled only in the spending review in October 2021 – and it was then apparent that the “promise” that the fund would match the EU funding streams that it replaces was not going to be delivered until 2024-25. It was also revealed that the Government had allocated over £0.5bn to Multiply, a programme to improve numeracy among adults. A pre-launch document was issued on 2 February at the same time as the Levelling Up White Paper. The full prospectus and financial allocations were announced on 13 April.

- 3.2 Wyre Forest District Council is the lead local authority for the “core” UKSPF for the district, and the allocation for 2022-25 is £3.155m. Every district in Worcestershire has an allocation, ranging from £2.5m (Redditch) to £4m (Wychavon) – Wyre Forest’s is the second largest allocation. In addition Worcestershire County Council has been allocated £2.693m for Multiply across the same period. The investment plan must be submitted by 1 August 2022.
- 3.3 The terms of reference and membership of the ReWyre Board have been amended so that it acts as the local partnership group for the UKSPF, in accordance with section 5 of the prospectus. This is an advisory role. It met in May and June to consider the approach to and content of the investment plan and will meet again in late July to provide final advice on which projects should be included within the plan, having regard to their deliverability and “fit” with the objectives of the UKSPF.
- 3.4 The UKSPF prospectus highlights three investment priorities for the fund:
 Community and place: building pride in place
 Supporting local business: supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances
 People and skills: supporting high quality skills training,
- 3.5 The prospectus gives a rather mixed message about what an investment plan will comprise. The general message is that “Lead local authorities for each area will have flexibility over how they deliver the Fund”. This is explained to mean: “They may wish to use a mix of competitions for grant funding (which is the default approach set out in [Cabinet Office Grants Standards](#)), procurement, commissioning or deliver some activity through in-house teams. For example, some community level interventions may require a commissioning or in-house approach, recognising that competitions for grant may create barriers to participation in left behind communities.” Competitive processes were the norm under EU funds but are also the most resource-intensive for bodies seeking funding (with no guarantee that any bid will be successful) and in particular for the body administering the funding. Where possible, and in order to minimise the administrative effort of managing bidding rounds for what represents a relevant low amount across the three years, the preference is to allocate funding for specified projects or activities as part of the investment plan. Interested organisations, including town and parish councils, were invited to submit proposals for inclusion in the plan and all proposals received are being assessed for potential match with the UKSPF objectives. The list of proposals received is set out in the confidential Appendix 2, since it is inappropriate to share publicly information about proposals that might not be included in the final version of the plan
- 3.6 The total allocation for Wyre Forest is £3.155m. The Government provided a detailed annual breakdown in May which also allows the Council to work out the minimum amounts that must be allocated to capital projects. There is flexibility for the investment plan to allocate more to capital projects than the minimum but a plan that focussed solely on capital projects is unlikely to deliver activity that contributes to all the priorities of the UKSPF. For example, business support and skills projects will almost certainly feature and will be funded from revenue.

Annual allocations

| 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | Total |
|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| £0.383m | £0.766m | £2.006m | £3.155m |
| <i>Of which minimum capital allocation (10%/13%/20%)</i> | | | |
| £0.038m | £0.100m | £0.401m | £0.523m |

3.7 No match funding is required in order to unlock funding although, in order to make the WFDC allocation go further, it would be desirable to seek match funding wherever possible – but to adopt a flexible approach rather than specific a common minimum percentage. It is a requirement that “all interventions should end by March 2025 or have a break clause allowing for closure by March 2025 if required (for example, yearly renewable funding)”.

4. **KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 There has been a relatively short time to develop the investment plan since the prospectus and financial allocations were announced on 13 April. The current draft of the plan at Appendix 1 identifies the background and rationale underpinning the plan for Wyre Forest.
- 4.2 Almost 30 proposals have been submitted and the total grant sought approaches £7m, over twice the amount of the funds available over the three years (£3.0m) after allowing for administrative costs. Therefore it will not be possible to include all the projects within the submitted plan. The ReWyre Board’s advice will unavoidably need to prioritise the proposals that best meet the objectives of the fund and have a reasonably high degree of certainty about deliverability, including deliverability within specific financial years given the inflexible annual nature of the Government funding. The ReWyre Board considered the draft plan and its meeting on 29 June and has begun to appraise the individual projects, a process that will be completed at its meeting later in July. <add advice, if any, from its meeting on 29 June...> The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be considering the plan at its meeting on 7 July and any recommendations will be reported separately.
- 4.3 In addition to the oversubscription, there is also a significant mismatch between the amount sought for capital expenditure, approaching £4m, and the minimum capital allocation of just over £0.5m which DLUHC has notified. While flexibility exists in respect of the capital/revenue split, it is likely that many proposals for capital grant will have to be dramatically scaled back or omitted.
- 4.4 Despite the efforts being made locally to devise a plan that meets local needs and priorities as well as the UKSPF’s objectives, regrettably the process is still one where the dead hand of centralism is felt. The investment plan is subject to sign off by Government and this is not promised until October. This does not prevent projects where expenditure has been or will be incurred between April 2022 and approval of the plan from being funded. However, such expenditure by project promoters is at their risk as funding will be provided retrospectively only if the plan is approved.
- 4.5 The deadline for submission of the plan is 1 August. The report therefore includes an appropriate delegation for officers - in consultation with the Cabinet member and in light of advice from the ReWyre Board about which projects should be included - to finalise and submit the plan.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council will receive £20k, primarily to develop the investment plan, and up to 4% of the fund allocation i.e. up to £126.2k can be used for administrative costs in running the fund, monitoring etc. The direct financial implications for the Council of preparing the plan and administering the fund will be met through the specific allocation and flexibilities within the funding. This will include recruiting an administration post to deal with the monitoring of projects, payments to project promoters and liaison with Government.
- 5.2 Funding will be paid by Government in advance at the start of the financial year (in 2022-23, once the local investment plan has been signed off). However, the Government is adopting an inflexible approach to the annuality of expenditure: “Fund investment and outputs [will] be achieved in line with each place’s investment plan, on time and in-year”. The impact of this is that, as the accountable body for the grant, there is no guarantee that any underspend against a project or activity in a year can be reallocated to a different project that has capacity to spend in that year; and more importantly there is no guarantee that there can be any transfer of resources between years for the same project. This creates a risk for the Council in terms of managing the overall plan, although it would not be expected to step in to “bail out” a project that was unable to keep to its spend profile. The Council will have to operate strong programme management and monitoring arrangements to reflect the Government’s approach.
- 5.3 In respect of projects or activities that WFDC itself would undertake within the plan, the Council would have to bear the full cost of implementation, even if not all the cost was covered by UKSPF grant. The Council will apply project management arrangements to ensure that project funding is in place and that any potential overspends are identified and counteracted either by adjusting the project or by obtaining additional funding (which could be from the Council itself). This is no different from the position that other project promoters will be in.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The UKSPF is being funded by the Government under section 50 of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 and the Council will be acting as the Government’s agent in respect of the relationship with other project promoters. In respect of projects or activities being delivered directly by WFDC, the Council has a wide range of powers on which it can rely.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report relates to an overarching investment plan for Government grant. It is not considered that an equality impact assessment is required. Any projects funded by UKSPF will have to consider equality issues and undertake an assessment as appropriate.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 As explained in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3, the Council will need to implement

appropriate programme and project management arrangements for the UKSPF allocation for Wyre Forest, in order to manage risks relating to the funding programme and to any projects for which it is directly responsible.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Cabinet is invited to approve submission of the investment plan for 2022-25 as set out in this report.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 Cabinet

10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 UKSPF prospectus, April 2022

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/105442/UKSPF_prospectus_April_2022.pdf)

11.2 UKSPF financial allocations

[UKSPF allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/105442/UKSPF_financial_allocations.pdf)



UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Investment Plan Questions

Offline version – for information only

Version 1
April 2022

Please note – the questions below are form information only. All investment plans must be submitted by lead local authorities via the online platform

Your location

Wyre Forest District

Your details

Name

Email address

Phone number

Organisation name

Local challenges and opportunities

In this section, we will ask you:

- If you've identified any challenges or opportunities, you intend to support
- Which of the UKSPF investment priorities these fall under

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

Wyre Forest is a predominantly rural district centred around the 3 towns of Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley. Each town has its own character and community identity. Kidderminster was the world leading centre for carpet production but this sector has been in decline since the 1970s. Stourport and Bewdley are Georgian riverside towns that are popular destinations for day visitors.

The district faces a number of key challenges:

- Pockets of Deprivation
- Lower than average pay
- High levels of economic inactivity
- Maintenance of the environment

Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 shows that Wyre Forest experiences significant levels of deprivation with:

- 4 areas in the 10% most deprived in England.
- 13 areas in the 20% most deprived in England.
- 20 areas in the 30% most deprived in England.

Levels of Pay

Wyre Forest residents' gross weekly pay is significantly less than the Great Britain average, although it is slightly higher than the West Midlands average. People employed in Wyre Forest earn significantly less than their counterparts in the West Midlands and Great Britain.

| | Earnings by place of residence | Earnings by place of work |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wyre Forest | £583.70 | £529.8 |
| West Midlands | £581.80 | £585.00 |
| Great Britain | £613.10 | £612.80 |

Average Gross Weekly Pay FTE (NOMIS, 2021)

Economic Inactivity

The district has slightly higher levels of economic inactivity in the working age population (16 -64 years old) compared to both the West Midlands and Great Britain. This equates to 13,900 residents. However, the proportion of economically inactive people who are retired is significantly higher than the West Midlands and Great Britain. This reflects a wider national trend of a steady increase in the ageing population.

| | Proportion of Working Age Population Economically Inactive | Proportion of Economically Inactive Population that are Retired |
|---------------|--|---|
| Wyre Forest | 24% | 30% |
| West Midlands | 22.4% | 12.2% |
| Great Britain | 21.6% | 13.8% |

(NOMIS, Jan 2021 -Dec 2021)

Housing completions (2021)

Wyre Forest has the third lowest completion rate in Worcestershire in 2021 – 270 units (by contrast, Wychavon had 620, Malvern Hills 510 and Worcester 480).

Maintenance of the Environment

As a predominantly rural district, residents have access to extensive green spaces; however, in order to maintain the environmental character of the district, support is needed by landowners to improve the biodiversity of their land and the quality of green and blue infrastructure.

The need to improve the biodiversity of land and the quality of green and blue infrastructure is evidenced through the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Worcestershire and its accompanying evidence bases, which have identified the environmental character areas for Wyre Forest District and the potential opportunities for enhancements of the blue and green infrastructure. (Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined as ‘a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.)

The Green Infrastructure Strategy for Wyre Forest District shows how the district’s existing green infrastructure assets can be better linked in order to provide greater connectivity for both people and nature. There is a need for green infrastructure corridors to connect urban environments with the wider countryside.

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership’s Plan for Growth also recognises the economic value of the district’s natural landscape and the need to champion environmental sustainability.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

The following local opportunities have been identified for support under this priority:

- Improving town centres and high streets
- Unlocking land for commercial, residential and leisure developments in town centres
- Strategic alignment with place making interventions planned under the Kidderminster Future High Streets Fund and Leveling Up Fund
- Improvements to existing green infrastructure assets making green spaces more accessible and improving the health & wellbeing of our communities.

Kidderminster has been successful in securing future high street funding and levelling up funding with ambitions to increase the visitor economy and develop a creative hub to encourage people into the town. These opportunities are explored in the Supporting Local Business section.

Improvements to Green Infrastructure

Wyre Forest District has a distinctive environment comprising diverse landscape character areas including urban areas. There are many green corridors within the District which are currently fragmented but have the potential to provide a comprehensive network of green infrastructure (GI). The District's watercourses in particular offer the opportunity to link the urban areas with the open countryside beyond.

There are opportunities to:

- increase the resilience to climate change, improve habitat connectivity, and support ecosystem services, particularly pollination, water quality, water supply and consistency. Also to create greater awareness within local organisations of the role green and blue infrastructure can play in delivering ecosystem services and an awareness that small actions can make a big difference to our natural environment.
- deliver a series of eco-system service benefits which are of importance to promoting health and well-being. For Wyre Forest these are informed by the Green Infrastructure strategy which outlines both physical and mental health and well-being benefits. Physically, the provision of quality and well-kept and well used open spaces, walking and cycling routes etc. for informal recreation, facilitates the opportunity and frequency for active recreation which includes walking and cycling. Research by Natural England has highlighted the importance of high quality natural green spaces in close proximity to homes or places of work to facilitate regular physical activity and promote general wellbeing.
- Deliver mental health benefits which are derived from frequent informal recreation opportunity including social interaction, which are enhanced when they take place in a natural outdoor setting. The strategy also outlines research which indicates that views of green space may reduce recovery times from illness, reduce staff sickness and enhance productivity.
- Make a positive contribution to the physical and mental health of residents and employees through interventions, that will encourage spaces to have public access, thus ensuring that the benefits are available to the whole community.
- help to green key employment sites by providing advice to businesses on how they can implement green infrastructure measures either in new build situations or retrofit solutions.

Worcestershire's GI Strategy and supporting evidence base seeks to enhance opportunities to link biodiversity with drainage, historic landscape character and improved accessibility.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

Mission 1 of the Levelling Up White Paper states that by 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK. These are all areas of challenge for Wyre Forest. It lags behind the West Midlands and England in 3 key areas:

- Productivity
- Low workplace earnings
- Innovation

Productivity

The latest official figures from 2019 show productivity (GVA per hour worked) in Wyre Forest was £23.30, one of the lowest in the UK. Productivity in Wyre Forest is significantly lower than the UK average of £35.20 and the West Midlands average of £32.80.

Workplace Earnings

In 2021 the average workplace earnings in Wyre Forest were £529.80. This is 86% of national workplace pay. This rate of pay is significantly lower than neighbouring districts, the West Midlands and England.

| Area | Earnings by Place of Work |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Bromsgrove | £553.10 |
| Malvern Hills | £559.70 |
| Redditch | £661.60 |
| Worcester | £568.70 |
| Wychavon | £568.00 |
| Wyre Forest | £529.80 |
| Worcestershire | £574.90 |
| West Midlands | £585.00 |
| England | £613.30 |

Average Gross Weekly Pay, FTE (NOMIS 2021)

Innovation

The value of grants awarded to Worcestershire companies from Innovate UK varies significantly from year to year. Over the last 5 years 0.3% of funding has been awarded to Worcestershire companies, less than the 1.1% share of the business base. In this period over £95 million of grants have been awarded by Innovate UK. Of this only 4 grants, totalling £322,447 have been awarded to businesses in Wyre Forest.

Over the last 5 years the highest number of Innovation UK grants have been awarded to Responsive projects followed by projects in the Manufacturing, Materials and Mobility sector.

Relative to comparator areas, Worcestershire has a high number of claims made for R&D tax credits, but a low amount of qualifying expenditure meaning that the average amount of R&D claimed in respect of is relatively low. Despite an increase in 2021, the proportion of those in employment who are science, research, engineering and technology professionals remains lower in Worcestershire than all other comparator areas. However, there are other positive indications of innovation in Worcestershire which had a higher proportion of firms undertaking product or process innovation or performing internal R&D than all other comparator areas.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

There are significant opportunities to:

- Meet demand for business support
- Develop and promote the visitor economy

Demand for Business Support:

Recent surveys with Worcestershire businesses have revealed that:

- 40% of respondents (322 businesses) defined their business' current situation as "growing"; this positive view of the future was a significant change from 13% in March 2021 survey.

- Of the above businesses, 73% said that they had plans for investment and growth over the next 12 months. The largest proportion of these business were in the 2-50 employee size band.
- Over half of all survey respondents (56%) said that they have plans for investment and growth over the next 12 months.

The top areas of support that businesses said they would like to see offered over the next 12 months were consistent with previous surveys in 2020 and 2021 and were:

- Digital Marketing
- Business Planning for Raising Finance
- Sales & Business Development
- Bespoke one to one business advice/consultancy
- Advice and support on the introduction of new technology to the business

The current challenges that businesses are facing include:

- Rising energy costs
- Customer demand/competitiveness
- Supply chain problems
- New technology - upfront costs barrier for many SMEs
- Impartial advice - best options in relation to net zero

(Source: Worcestershire Business Survey (801 businesses) - November 2021 to January 2022)

The Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Economic Report (Q4 2021) highlights a strong desire by companies to reduce environmental impact. The top 3 areas of assistance identified by businesses to help them take further action to reduce environmental impact or cut carbon emissions were funding; impartial, technical advice, and networking with like-minded businesses.

In 2021/22 the local Growth Hub engaged and delivered to over 2000 businesses. The top areas of advice and support sought during that engagement were:

- Finance/loans/grants
- Business growth advice and support
- General advice
- Skills and training
- Innovation and R&D processes
- Energy and resource efficiency
- International trade and exporting

There is clearly a demand amongst local business to access support to enable them to grow, particularly in areas that are key drivers for economic growth such as innovation and digitization. Current business engagement through Worcestershire's EU funded programmes managed by the County Council and part funded by district councils will end shortly yet continues to experience a high demand across all areas - Growth, Innovation, Technology, Net Zero. Over the past 4 years over 180 businesses have received direct bespoke support, 181 businesses have received grants totaling over £1.8m, creating over 75 jobs (with more to come) and saving almost 600 tonnes of carbon.

Supporting businesses to innovate and grow will help to address Wyre Forest's low wage economy and drive up productivity.

Developing and Promoting the Visitor Economy

Wyre Forest district is located at the centre of an area with tremendous tourism appeal. The value of tourism to the Wyre Forest economy pre-pandemic was £136m per year. In 2021, this dropped to £65m per year. Research commissioned by the district council showed that there were nearly 2.5 million day trips to the district in 2019 and over half a million over-night stays.

To further enhance the area's appeal, there is a strategic opportunity to use Kidderminster's location as a catalyst for building and promoting a new brand centred on the River Severn valley. Working in collaboration with nearby areas, the new brand concept will be centred around Industrial and Cultural Heritage; Visitor attractions and the Great Outdoors. The brand will be anchored in strong core attractors, outlined below:

The Iron Gorge

- World heritage site
- 10 award-winning attractions
- The birthplace of the industrial revolution

Stourport-on-Severn

- Pioneer town of the canal age
- Award-winning basins

Sir Rowland Hill (birthplace: Kidderminster)

- Originator of the penny postage system and developer of the modern postal service

Museum of Carpet (Kidderminster)

- Over 300 years of Kidderminster's industrial heritage and 3,000 carpet designs

Bewdley

- 'the most perfect Georgian town in Worcestershire'
- Award-winning Bewdley Museum

Wenlock Priory

- Remains of the 13th century Cluniac Priory founded by the Normans on the site of an Anglo-Saxon monastery founded in about 680 by King Merewalh of Mercia, whose abbess daughter Milburge was hailed a saint

Buildwas Abbey

- Impressive ruins of a Cistercian abbey, including its unusually unaltered 12th century church, beautiful vaulted and tile-floored chapter house and recently re-opened crypt chapel.

Hagley Hall

- Grade I, 18th Century house on 250 acres of landscaped parkland.

West Midlands Safari Park

- Award-winning attraction with over 165 species of exotic animals
- Four-mile safari drive-through
- Immersive visitor experience in 15 luxury lodges (opened 2020) situated with animal enclosures (tiger, rhino, red panda, elephant, cheetah and giraffe lodges). The only place in the UK to offer such experience.
- 750,00 visitors p.a. (pre-pandemic and pre-investment in the luxury lodges)

Severn Valley Railways

- Line completed in 1862
- 250,000 visitors p.a. pre-pandemic

Arley Arboretum

- Designated 'the best place in Britain to see the autumn colours' (BBC Countryfile 2017)
- Longest Laburnum arch (measuring 65 metres)
- 300 species dating back over 350 years
- One of the finest collections of Magnolias and Acers in the UK

Bodenham Arboretum

- Over 3,000 species of trees and shrubs from all over the world spread over 134 acres
- Its peace and tranquility was described by the Tourist Board as the 'Bodenham Experience'

Attingham Park

- 18th century mansion and estate

Astley Vineyard

- Multi-award winning single estate boutique wine maker. One of the oldest and smallest in the country.
- Their 'Old vine Kerner' was named 'one of the most iconic and romantic of all English dry white wines' (Matthew Jukes, multi-award winning author and journalist).

Wyre Forest National Reserve

- Wyre Forest is part of one of the largest ancient lowland coppice oak woodlands in England. The 549ha reserve is a mosaic of woodland, grassland meadows, old orchards and areas of scrub. Home to England's largest colony of pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies. In recent years, 33 type of butterfly and over 1,150 types of moth have been recorded.
- Three-way marked waling trails, cycling trail, horse riding, orienteering, Norfic walking etc.

Wyre Forest – Go Ape

- Adventure activity with Go-Ape, UK's No 1 forest adventure. High ropes courses, high-rise zip wires for adults (Treetop Challenge) and activities designed with the younger family in mind (Treetop Adventure).

River Severn water sports

- Canoeing and kayaking on River Severn
- Bridgnorth – Arley
- Bridgnorth – Bewdley
- Coalport – Bewdley
- Two day River Severn camping trips

Attingham Park (parkland)

- 200 acres of parkland and woods
- 500,000 visitors per year

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

The key challenges that Wyre Forest faces regarding People & Skills are:

- Educational Attainment
- Youth Unemployment
- Economic Inactivity
- Mismatch of skills
- Loss of ESF funded programmes

Educational Attainment

The proportion of Wyre Forest residents with qualification is higher than the West Midlands and Great Britain at all levels except NVQ Level 4 and above.

| Qualification | Wyre Forest | West Midlands | Great Britain |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| NVQ4 and above | 36.2% | 38.8% | 43.5% |
| NVQ3 and above | 61.1% | 57.2% | 61.5% |
| NVQ2 and above | 85.7% | 75.2% | 78.2% |
| NVQ1 and above | 97.1% | 84.9% | 87.6% |

Source: NOMIS (Jan 2021 – Dec 2021)

Whilst there are relatively high levels of NVQ1 and above in the Wyre Forest area there are no statistics on the numbers with no qualifications available. Anecdotal evidence from employment support projects suggest the number of economically inactive people who lack basic skills is 36%. Experience also suggests that those that lack basic skills are not in a position to engage in formal educational or vocational training. There are a number of factors for this such as previously poor or lack of experience of formal education, literacy or numeracy levels too low to engage in accredited qualifications, lack of digital skills, and social isolation.

In 2021, the proportion of Year 11 students, in mainstream education, attaining 5 GCSEs Level 5 or above, including English and Maths, was 37%. This compares to an average for the whole of England of 43%. (Source: Department for Education)

Unemployment

In May 2022 the unemployment rate for Wyre Forest was 3.3%. This compares favourably with both the West Midlands (5%) and England (3.9%). Youth unemployment (18 to 24 year olds) is a little higher at 4% but is still lower than the youth unemployment rate for the West Midlands (5.8%) and England (4.5%).

Whilst unemployment has been dropping since the high of 6.1% during the pandemic, there are still pockets of employment deprivation. The district sees particular challenges in the wards of Broadwaters and Foley Park.

Economic Inactivity

As previously stated, levels of Economic Inactivity are relatively high in Wyre Forest (24% of working age population). Whilst a significant proportion of this figure is due to people leaving the workforce early and retiring, 84% describe themselves as not wanting a job. This may be due to long-term illness, disability, caring responsibilities or they are simply discouraged.

In May 2022, 91 young people in Wyre Forest are NEET (not in employment, education or training) and unknown within years 12 and 13, representing 3.2 % of school year population. Nationally, the issues that affect young people who become NEET cost over £65,000 each in direct lifetime costs to public finances and £120,000 in wider lifetime costs to the economy and wider community. Current NEET figures would estimate this to cost £10.9M for the current year 12/13 population to the public finances.

Mismatched Skills

The Worcestershire LEP Local Skills Report 2022 has identified the following issues:

- Businesses have identified a shortage of skilled staff as a barrier to innovation and growth and is one of the major worries for local employers. Recent analysis of the online vacancies shows a 92% increase in demand for new recruits since December 2020.
- Ongoing Surveys show a growing number of employers reporting challenges in recruiting, with the last quarter of 2021, showing that 74% of employers experienced difficulty recruiting
- The most frequently cited skills deficits are at higher levels in IT, job-specific, and technical skills.

- We have a higher proportion than England of hard-to-fill vacancies: these are highest amongst middle-skill roles, particularly Skilled Trades.
- Worcestershire's employers report a need for understanding of their sectors in education and embedding a greater level of careers support to move successfully into industry post school, further or higher education. Many Employers understand the need to have a role in supporting the long term supply of talent into Worcestershire's employers.
- The impact of automation will be significant, with 10% of low-skilled jobs likely to be affected. Wyre Forest faces significant risk due to the presence of routine/ lower-skilled jobs and industry processes, such as Process Manufacturing. However, some higher skilled roles (such as those within Finance and Business Services) are also susceptible to automation.

Loss of ESF Funded Support Programmes

There are currently a number of ESF funded programmes delivering skills and employment support to residents of Wyre Forest. These include:

- Skills Support for the Unemployed – supported 33 Wyre Forest residents from July 2019 to date.
- Skills Support for the Workforce – supported 268 employees since April 2019.
- Community Grants – 97 grants awarded to community organisations to help Wyre Forest residents furthest from the labour market.
- NEET support – supported 84 young people not in employment, education or training or at risk of become so.

Collectively, these programmes have supported 530 people in Wyre Forest.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

The following opportunities have been identified for support under this priority:

- Tailored support for the economically inactive and those furthest away from the labour market including enrichment activities and volunteering
- Increasing the basic skills levels of residents and upskilling the workforce including interventions to increase levels of digital skills

Programmes of support can be developed to address youth unemployment at a district level. Experience of previous and current programmes show that interventions can:

- Increase the levels of social mobility of young people
- Increase the basic skills levels of residents
- Upskills residents in training and education

Specialist interventions can be developed to move young people through a co-ordinated journey, covering the key stages designed to inspire them, explore opportunities, prepare for the move into education or employment, support to apply for apprenticeship or FE/HE courses and follow ups to ensure that momentum is sustained. Programmes will be designed to meet individual needs and provide bespoke journeys that ensure improved outcomes for the individual.

Programmes of support for the economically inactive and those furthest from the labour market provide tailored support to help people into employment, particularly those who are not supported by mainstream provision. Enrichment activities and volunteering also helps to reduce the barrier to economic activity. Addressing issue of digital exclusion will support individuals into employment.

The Worcestershire LEP Skills Report 2022 identifies the local sector strengths as construction, healthcare, and business administration. It anticipates that the greatest employment growth will be within advanced manufacturing, cyber security, IT & defence, and agri-tech.

The current acceleration of demand around sustainable business practice and the drive to net zero will be a significant driver for growth. The sector is predicted to grow at a rapid rate, increasing staff levels by around 200%.

Worcestershire has a lower level of employment in the digital sector than the England average; however digital skills remain in the highest demand from employers. This applies equally to those new to the job market, replacement labour or when reskilling existing staff. Digital marketing and cloud-based computing have the greatest current and predicted use locally and salaries within digital skilled roles have increased by 35% over the last year.

Worcestershire has a high proportion of vacancies where management and leadership skills have been identified as essential. Manufacturing continues to have the highest number of vacancies in the county.

With significant growth predicted in areas where there is already a skills deficit, access to high quality, relevant training is essential if residents are to benefit from the growth in business. Focusing on those sectors where high growth is predicted and where more skilled, higher paid roles will be created, will ensure that local residents will be able to access the best opportunities. Support to upskill the existing workforce and new employees will ensure that businesses are able to realise their growth ambitions and local residents will benefit from increased opportunities.

Interventions

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Interventions you've chosen for each year of funding
- Outcomes you want to deliver
- Any interventions that are not listed here
- How these interventions fall under the UKSPF investment priorities, and your rationale for them
- Interventions not included in our list will be assessed before being approved, where you will need to show a clear rationale, how the intervention is value for money, what outcomes it will deliver and how you will monitor and evaluate the intervention. This may include a theory of change or logic chain.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

| Outcome | Tick if applicable |
|---|---------------------------|
| Jobs created | |
| Jobs safeguarded | √ |
| Increased footfall | √ |
| Increased visitor numbers | √ |
| Reduced vacancy rates | √ |
| Greenhouse gas reductions | |
| Improved perceived/experienced accessibility | |
| Improved perception of facilities/amenities | √ |
| Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion | |
| Increased users of facilities / amenities | √ |
| Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project | √ |

| | |
|---|---|
| Increased use of cycleways or paths | |
| Increase in Biodiversity | √ |
| Increased affordability of events/entry | √ |
| Improved perception of safety | |
| Reduction in neighbourhood crime | |
| Improved engagement numbers | |
| Improved perception of events | √ |
| Increased number of web searches for a place | √ |
| Volunteering numbers as a result of support | |
| Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support | √ |
| Increased take up of energy efficiency measures | |
| Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies | √ |
| Number of premises with improved digital connectivity | |
| None of the above | |

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs

E2: Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding

E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces

E4: Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer

E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities

E7: Support for active travel enhancements

E8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area

E10: Local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues

E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups

E12: Investment in community engagement schemes to support community involvement in decision making in local regeneration

E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

| | |
|--|----|
| NO | |
| Explain how each intervention meets the Communities and Place investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver. | |
| | |
| Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance . | |
| Yes | No |
| Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted. | |
| | |

| HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY? | |
|---|----|
| Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Communities and Place investment priority and the location of the proposed project. | |
| | |
| Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance . | |
| Yes | No |
| Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted. | |
| | |

| WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. | |
|---|--------------------|
| Outcome | Tick if applicable |
| Jobs created | |
| Jobs safeguarded | |
| Increased footfall | |
| Increased visitor numbers | |
| Reduced vacancy rates | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Greenhouse gas reductions | |
| Number of new businesses created | |
| Improved perception of markets | |
| Increased business sustainability | |
| Increased number of businesses supported | |
| Increased amount of investment | |
| Improved perception of attractions | |
| Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm | |
| Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity | |
| Number of premises with improved digital connectivity | |
| Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes | |
| Number of new to market products | |
| Number of R&D active businesses | |
| Increased number of innovation active SMEs | |
| Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services | |
| Increased number of innovation plans developed | |
| Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support | |
| Number of businesses engaged in new markets | |
| Number of businesses engaged in new markets | |
| Number of businesses increasing their export capability | |
| Increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed | |
| Number of businesses with improved productivity | |
| Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies | |
| Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion | |
| None of the above | |

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

E17: Development & promotion of visitor economy

E19: Increasing investment in research and development at the local level. Investment to support the diffusion of innovation knowledge and activities. Support the commercialisation of ideas, encouraging collaboration and accelerating the path to market so that more ideas translate into industrial and commercial practices.

E20: Research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services

E21: Development of innovation infrastructure at the local level

E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks

E24: training hubs, business support offers, incubators

E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity

E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth

E31: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS LIST?

| | |
|---|----|
| State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these | |
| NO | |
| Explain how each intervention meets the Supporting Local Business investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver. | |
| N/A | |
| Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance. | |
| Yes | No |
| Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted. | |
| | |

| HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? | |
|--|----|
| Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Supporting Local Business investment priority and the location of the proposed project | |
| YES | |
| Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance. | |
| Yes | No |
| Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted. | |
| | |

| WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Outcome | Tick if applicable |
| Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Increased active or sustained participants of UKSPF beneficiaries in community groups [and/or] increased employability through development of interpersonal skills | |
| Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL) | |
| Number of people in supported employment [and] number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services | |
| Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services | |
| Number of people engaged in job-searching following support | |
| Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support | |
| Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months | |
| Increased employment, skills and/or UKSPF objectives incorporated into local area corporate governance | |
| Number of people in education/training | |
| Increased number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL) | |
| Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision | |
| Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace | |
| Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision | |
| Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support | |
| Number of people gaining qualifications, licences, and skills | |
| Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education, and training. | |
| Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions | |
| Number of people with proficiency in pre-employment and interpersonal skills (relationship, organisational and anger-management, interviewing, CV and job application writing) | |
| Multiply only - Increased number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2. | |
| Multiply only - Increased number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2. | |
| None of the above | |

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps

E34: Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), and life skills and career skills** provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications

E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering

E36: Intervention to increase levels of digital inclusion

E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses

E38: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs and high-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that is not being met through other provision

E41: Funding to support local digital skills

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS LIST?

DRAFT

| | |
|---|----|
| State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these | |
| NO | |
| Explain how each intervention meets the People and Skills investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver. | |
| | |
| Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance. | |
| Yes | No |
| Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted. | |
| | |

| | |
|---|--|
| ENGLAND ONLY: People and Skills interventions can only be used in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 if you have identified a local voluntary and community provision, previously supported by the European Social Fund, at risk of closure. If you have not identified a suitable provision, you will not be able to select interventions for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 and your investment plan will not be approved. | |
| HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS for 2024-2025 WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? | |
| Yes | |
| Describe the projects for 2024-25, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project. | |
| | |
| Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance. | |
| Yes | |
| Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted. | |

| | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| | | |
| HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A LOCAL VOLUNTARY PROVISION AT RISK AS PART OF YOUR PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES? | | |
| Yes | | No |
| (If Yes) Describe the local voluntary provision at risk and your rationale for supporting it. | | |
| | | |
| Provide the European Social Fund Project Names and Project References for this voluntary and community provision at risk. | | |
| | | |
| What year do you intend to fund these projects? Select all that apply. | | |
| 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
| Describe the projects for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project. | | |
| | | |
| Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? | | |
| All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance . | | |
| Yes | | No |
| Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted. | | |
| | | |

| | |
|---|----|
| SCOTLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY | |
| HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? | |
| Yes | No |
| Describe the projects, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project. | |
| | |

| | |
|---|----|
| <p>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.</p> | |
| Yes | No |
| <p>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</p> | |
| | |

Approach to delivery and governance

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Structures you have in place to support delivery
- Support you have from stakeholders and the local community
- How you've engaged with MPs as part of your investment plan
- Opportunities you have identified to work with other places

Places need to show how MPs that cover the lead local authority have been engaged on the investment plan and whether they support it. More detail on the role of MPs can be found [here](#).

| STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <p>Have you engaged with any of the following as part of your investment plan? Select all that apply.</p> | | |
| Public sector organisations | Private sector organisations | Civil society organisations |
| <p>Describe how you have engaged with any of these organisations. Give examples where possible.</p> | | |
| <p>Engagement took place with the following organisations: Kidderminster College, Community Housing Group, Kidderminster Town Council, Stourport Town Council, local parishes.</p> | | |
| <p>Summarise the governance structures you have in place, including how any advisory panels or associated partnership groups are made up</p> | | |
| <p>The Re-Wyre Board, which is a private sector led public-private partnerships, acts as the partnership group for the Wyre Forest Investment Plan. The Board is chaired by the MD of a local successful IT business and includes local business and voluntary sector leaders and representatives of Worcestershire LEP, Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Kidderminster College and Wyre Forest District Council.</p> <p>The delivery team will be part of the Programme Management Office (PMO) within the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) service. The team will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring programme implementation with the project deliverers.</p> <p>Other advisory groups include North Worcestershire Business Leaders, Kidderminster Business Improvement District (BID), Severn Valley Partnership, Visit Worcestershire.</p> | | |

| | |
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| Confirm all MPs covering your lead local authority have been invited to join the local partnership group. | |
| Yes - ✓ | No |
| Are there MPs who are not supportive of your investment plan? | |
| | No |
| (If Yes) Who are the MPs that are not supportive and outline their reasons why. | |

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DRAFT

| PROJECT SELECTION | |
|--|----|
| Are you intending to select projects in any way other than by competition for funding? | |
| Yes | No |
| (If Yes) Describe your approach to selecting projects, and why you intend to do it this way. | |
| | |

| DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY? | |
|---|--------------------|
| Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply. | |
| Intervention | Tick if applicable |
| A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus. | |
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| Describe any interventions not included in this list? | |
| | |
| Who are the places you intend to collaborate with? | |
| | |

[illegible][illegible]

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|--|
| Describe any interventions not included in this list? |
| |
| Who are the places you intend to collaborate with? |
| |

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| PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY |
| How have you considered your public sector equality duty in the design of your investment plan? |
| |
| How will you consider your public sector equality duty when implementing your investment plan, including in the selection of projects? |
| |

| | |
|--|----|
| RISKS | |
| Have you identified any key risks that could affect delivery, for example lack of staff or expertise? | |
| Yes | No |
| (If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them. | |
| Risk – capacity. A new UKSPF Project Officer role will be created to support the delivery of the fund. | |
| Have you identified any key fraud risks that could affect UKSPF delivery? | |
| No | |
| (If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them. | |
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Capacity and capability – further details needed from non WFDC delivery partners

In this section, we will ask you about:

- The capacity and capability of your team to manage funding
- The resources you have in place for work related to UKSPF

Your answers here will help us know how to support you with delivery. They will not affect the amount of funding you will get.

Answer as honestly as possible.

| |
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| TEAM RESOURCE |
| How many people (FTE) will be put in place to work with UKSPF funding? |
| Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR) – 0.2FTE NWedR Business Growth Manager – 0.5FTE NWedR Communications and Engagement Officer – 0.2FTE UKSPF Project Officer – 1FTE |
| Describe what role these people will have, including any seniority and experience. |
| Head of NWedR – Senior Responsible Owner NWedR Business Growth Manager – Project Manager NWedR Communications and Engagement Officer – comms, promotion and stakeholder engagement, UKSPF Project Officer – day to day programme administration |
| Brief responsibilities per role to be added. |

- Strong capability: Has extensive experience and/or a proven track record of delivery in this area.
- Strong capacity: High degree of confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Some capability: Has previous experience of delivery in this area.
- Some capacity: Confident that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Limited capability: Does not have previous experience and/or no track record of delivery in this area.
- Limited capacity: Limited confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area. Additional resource may be needed to support delivery.

| | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------|
| CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY | | |
| How would you describe your team's current experience of delivering funding and managing growth funds? | | |
| Very experienced | Some experience | No previous experience |
| How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |
| How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |

| | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for procurement? | | |
| Strong capacity | Some capacity | Limited capacity |
| How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for subsidies? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |
| How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for subsidies? | | |
| Strong capacity | Some capacity | Limited capacity |

| COMMUNITIES AND PLACE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Communities and Place interventions you have select? | | |
| Yes | | No |
| How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |
| Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system. | | |
| <p>The interventions will be delivered by established teams in the Wyre Forest District Council and local Town and Parish Councils. Procurement, finance and legal support will be offered to the Town and Parish Councils by the WFDC central teams. WFDC has an established Programme Management Office (PMO) within the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) service with comprehensive knowledge, skills and expertise in delivering multi-million pound regeneration and place making projects.</p> | | |
| Describe what further support would help address these challenges. | | |
| <p></p> | | |
| How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |
| Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system. | | |
| <p>These interventions will be delivered by various teams within WFDC in the following service areas: NWEDR, environment. The NN programme will be delivered by a partnership between Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and Worcestershire County Council.</p> | | |
| Describe what further support would help address these challenges. | | |
| <p></p> | | |

| SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY |
|--|
| Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Supporting Local Business interventions you have select? |

| | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| Yes | No | |
| How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |
| Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system. | | |
| <p>The interventions will be delivered through the established business support teams at Worcestershire Growth Hub and Worcestershire County Council. Both organisations have an existing team of project managers and project support officers. There will be a dedicated point of contact for the project. Project managers have many years experience of managing large scale externally funded programmes, and a detailed knowledge of procurement, contract management, subsidy control and reporting requirements and publicity rules.</p> | | |
| Describe what further support would help address these challenges. | | |
| <p></p> | | |
| How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |
| Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system. | | |
| <p>The interventions will be delivered through the established business support teams at Worcestershire Growth Hub and Worcestershire County Council. Both organisations have an existing team of project managers and project support officers. There will be a dedicated point of contact for the project. Project managers have many years experience of managing large scale externally funded programmes, and a detailed knowledge of procurement, contract management, subsidy control and reporting requirements and publicity rules.</p> | | |
| Describe what further support would help address these challenges. | | |
| <p></p> | | |

| PEOPLE AND SKILLS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the People and Skills interventions you have select? | | |
| Yes | No | |
| How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for People and Skills interventions? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |
| Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system. | | |
| <p>These interventions will be delivered by a consortium led by the Skills4Partnerships, a well established multi-disciplinary team led by the Worcestershire County Council (WCC). WCC has an existing team of project managers and project support officers. There will be a dedicated point of contact for the project. Project managers have many years experience of managing large scale externally funded programmes, and a detailed knowledge of procurement, contract management, subsidy control and reporting requirements and publicity rules.</p> | | |

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| | | |
| Describe what further support would help address these challenges. | | |
| | | |
| How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for People and Skills interventions? | | |
| Strong capability | Some capability | Limited capability |
| Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system. | | |
| <p>These interventions will be delivered by a consortium led by the Skills4Partnerships, a well established multi-disciplinary team led by the Worcestershire County Council (WCC). WCC has an existing team of project managers and project support officers. There will be a dedicated point of contact for the project. Project managers have many years experience of managing large scale externally funded programmes, and a detailed knowledge of procurement, contract management, subsidy control and reporting requirements and publicity rules.</p> | | |
| Describe what further support would help address these challenges. | | |
| | | |

| SUPPORT TO DELIVERY UKSPF | |
|---|-----------|
| <p>All lead authorities can use up to 4% of their UKSPF allocation to support the delivery of their chosen interventions but by exception, lead authorities will be able to use more than 4%. Are you planning to use more than 4%?</p> | |
| Yes | No |
| (If Yes) Explain why you wish to use more than 4%. | |
| | |

Approvals

Before submitting your investment plan, you should have approval from your:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Section 151 Officer

- Leader of your lead authority

Do you have approval from your Chief Executive Officer for this investment plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you have approval from your Section 151 Officer for this investment plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you have approval from the leader of your lead authority for this investment plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you do not have approval from any of these people, please explain why this is:

Additional documents

You will have received an email giving you access to a folder where you will need to upload supporting evidence to your investment plan. All applicants must complete and upload the following spreadsheet to the folder prior to submitting their investment plan:

- UKSPF Expenditure Profile spreadsheet
- UKSPF Indicative Deliverables spreadsheet

Your investment plan submission will be considered incomplete without the required documents.

Have you completed and uploaded the two spreadsheets to the SharePoint folder as requested?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No