



Executive Committee

Tuesday, 26th July, 2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Nyear Nazir (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Karen Ashley, Peter Fleming, Lucy Harrison, Anthony Lovell and Emma Marshall

Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Gavin Day, Kevin Dicks, Clare Flanagan, Sue Hanley and Georgina Harris

Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

32. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Joanne Beecham and Craig Warhurst.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 21st July, Members pre-scrutinised the UK Shared Prosperity Fund report. The Committee endorsed the recommendations detailed in the report and an extract from the minutes of that meeting had been included in a supplementary pack issued for the Executive Committee's consideration. The Leader urged Members to refer to the discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting when debating this item.

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 12th July 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Chair

36. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Chief Executive presented a report on the subject of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for Members' consideration.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund was part of the Government's Levelling Up programme and replaced the EU Structural Fund. There were three key pillars in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund:

- Communities and Place
- Supporting Local Business
- People and Skills

There were also up to 41 interventions that had been identified by the Government that Councils could address in spending the funds. Councils were not obliged to link all of the projects that received funding in the local area to all of the interventions available. Instead, Officers had selected those interventions considered most likely to meet the needs of local communities in the Borough.

Funding had been allocated over a three-year period, from 2022/23 to 2024/25, in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The amount of funding available over the course of these three years increased from £303,647 in 2022/23 to £1.591 million in 2024/25. In total, £2.5 million had been allocated to Redditch over the three years.

The Council had consulted with local partner organisations, to review how the funding allocated to Redditch should be spent. The funding allocated to Redditch was guaranteed to be received. However, the Council needed to submit an Investment Plan to the Government detailing how this funding would be spent. As part of the proposals detailed in the plan, the Council needed to outline how the funding would be allocated to each of the three key pillars of the programme. In Redditch, it had been decided, based on the outcomes of consultation and local knowledge, that 40 per cent of the funds should be allocated to Communities and Place and 30 per cent each to Supporting Local Business and People and Skills respectively. The Government had subsequently indicated that Councils would be able to vary the allocation of funding to each of these pillars by up to 30 per cent to ensure that there was flexibility built into the scheme.

Local authorities could allocate a proportion of the funding to administering the scheme. In a context in which there were capacity issues within local government, officers were proposing that a small amount of the funding should be allocated to the administrative process.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the interventions that had been highlighted in the report for the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme in Redditch. Questions were raised about the potential for perceptions of attractions to be added to the list of interventions selected locally, taking into account recent successful events in the town centre. Members were advised that events and attractions in the town centre would be supported by the work of the Redditch Business Improvement District (BID). Work on investing in attractions would include allocating support to cultural and artistic venues. Whilst this had not been included in the current round of interventions, there would be scope to review this at a later date if considered to be necessary.

Reference was made to the need for levelling up work to be undertaken in parts of the Borough, particularly in the district centres. Members commented that this funding would help to support communities living in these parts of the Borough.

Members welcomed the inclusion of green skills in the interventions that had been selected for Redditch. Given the significant number of trees in the Borough, Members suggested that there was the potential for skills to be developed in green industries and for knowledge to be embedded in the local economy.

During consideration of this item, the Chair commented that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21st July 2022. There had been a detailed debate of the subject at the meeting and many questions had been raised about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as part of these discussions. At the end of their debate, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the recommendations detailed in the report. The Committee was thanked for their hard work in scrutinising the proposals.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Investment Plan be approved for submission to the UK Government;**
- 2) authority to finalise the Investment plan be delegated to the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships and in light of advice from the Local Partnership Board;**
- 3) authority to develop projects to deliver the outcomes contained in the investment plan be delegated to the Head**

of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships and in light of advice from the Local Partnership Board; and

RECOMMENDED that

- 4) the Medium Term Financial Strategy is amended to include the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Allocation when next reviewed.**

37. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.

Councillor Nyear Nazir, the Council's representative on the Corporate Parenting Board, provided a verbal update on the latest work of the Board.

At a meeting of the Board held on Tuesday 12th July 2022, Members had considered the content of the Independent Reviewing Officer's (IRO's) Annual Report for 2021/22. The Board had been advised that 98 per cent of looked after children in Worcestershire had had reviews. The remaining 2 per cent of children had not received reviews because they did not wish to have reviews, although agencies continued to engage with these children.

During this meeting, the Board had been advised that 294 looked after children from Worcestershire had been placed outside the county. Concerns had been raised about this, although the Board had been informed that this was a relatively low figure. In many cases, children had been placed outside the county so that they could live with relatives or close family friends.

Members were informed that at the Board meeting, Councillor Nazir had been appointed District Champion for employment in care leavers for Worcestershire. There would be a need for Members to work together to ensure that care leavers received appropriate support, including help securing employment, education and training opportunities.