

Appendix 1

Background to Category 1 Outlier Levelling Up Cultural Funding

- 1.1 On 6 March 2024, the Council was informed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that it has been provisionally awarded £5 million for investment in cultural projects.
- 1.2 In order to receive the funding, the Council is required to submit an Investment Plan detailing its proposed cultural projects. The deadline for submitting the investment plan is Monday 3 June 2024.
- 1.3 The investment plan will be assessed by DLUHC before approval is granted and the funding released. The main assessment criteria for the investment plan are deliverability of projects, value for money and stakeholder engagement including the MPs support.
- 1.4 The funding is for capital expenditure only. All funding expenditure must be defrayed by 31 March 2026.
- 1.5 Projects are required to deliver outputs and outcomes from the standardised list that is used across all levelling up streams. Outcomes will be achieved through revenue activity; therefore, the projects must support the delivery of activities funded through other sources.
- 1.6 No specific Governance model has been imposed by DLUHC. However, the Governance structure must ensure that key stakeholders are able to exercise strategic oversight of the project. The Town Deal Board has agreed to act as the Stakeholder Board. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Cultural Compact have been co-opted onto the Town Deal Board to represent the Arts and Culture organisations.
- 1.7 Extensive stakeholder consultation has been taking place over several years through the work of the cultural compact. As stakeholder engagement is imperative to the assessment of the investment plan, projects informed by the Redditch Borough Council Leisure and Culture Strategy 2022-2023, by the North East Worcestershire Cultural Compact and by Rubicon Leisure were compiled into a long list of potential projects.
- 1.8 A consultation on the long list of projects was undertaken with key stakeholders including the Town Deal Board, the Cultural Compact, the local visitor economy partnership (Visit Worcestershire), the Community Wellbeing Theme Group for Redditch Partnership, Redditch Youth Providers Forum, Redditch BID, the Chamber of Commerce, Rubicon Leisure, the Creative People and Places Consortium, Feckenham Parish Council and the MP.

- 1.9 The Levelling Up Places Service, made up of arms-length organisations such as the Arts Council and Historic England, has given additional support assessing projects for deliverability and value for money.
- 1.10 The consultation resulted in the long list of project proposals being reduced to the 5 projects included in the investment plan. These projects have strong stakeholder support. They have been assessed as representing good value for money and are deliverable within the funding timescales.
- 1.11 Officers will continue to refine the investment plan until the submission deadline in order to strengthen the proposals. The substance of the investment plan, ie the proposed projects and the governance, will not change.