

## MINUTES OF THE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND TASK & FINISH GROUP

MONDAY 15 MAY 2023

1. **Attending:** Kevin Dicks – Chair (RBC), Gary Woodman (Worcestershire LEP), Muj Rahman (Redditch BID), Julia Breakwell (HoW College), Pete Sugg (Young Solutions)
2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were recorded:

- Kevin Dicks in relation to the following projects:
  - I. The canopies event space
  - II. Town centre improvements – lighting
  - III. Designing out crime housing improvement programme
  - IV. Room for risk
  - V. Digital heritage trail
  - VI. What will you do when you're in charge?
- Pete Sugg in relation to the following projects:
  - I. Room for risk
  - II. What will you do when you're in charge?

3. **Emerging challenges and opportunities**

The group was informed that every year Historic England asks local authorities to appraise whether listed buildings and conservation areas can be assessed as being “at risk” using their assessment criteria. In 2022, Church Green Conservation Area was subject to an appraisal and assessed as meeting the criteria for being at risk. This has been formally recognised by Historic England and the conservation area is now on the Heritage at Risk register. It was hoped that this formal recognition would result in funding being made available to reinstate some of the heritage features but Historic England’s funding is allocated to Heritage Action Zones for the next 5 years. The group agreed that it would accept new bids for conservation activities under intervention E1: Improvements to town centres and high streets.

Levels of youth unemployment is identified as a key challenge in the investment plan. Redditch has the second highest rate in the County and the rate is rising. In response to this the borough council has been approached by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) regarding a potential youth hub in the town. The youth hub would be a dedicated facility where young people could access support to address barriers to employment, receive 1-1 advice, employability workshops and training. The proposal is to replicate the model that is successfully delivering support to young people in Worcester city. If the borough council is supportive, WCC will submit a funding bid to DWP but this funding will need to be supplemented with UKSPF monies. WCC submitted a proposal to deliver employment support to young people during the first call for projects. The ambition now is to adapt this

proposal to include a wider range of activities. The funding required from the UKSPF may be reduced if the bid to DWP is successful.

The group were advised that the Worcestershire LEP has commissioned a skills strategy for the borough. The strategy will complement the Local Skills Improvement Plan for Worcestershire which is currently being developed by HW Chamber of Commerce. It is anticipated that the skills strategy will be available in early summer 2023.

The group were advised that, in light of new opportunities, conversations have taken place with other districts who are yet to allocate their People & Skills funding. These have identified opportunities to collaborate with other districts to develop countywide programmes that would benefit from economies of scale, whilst maintaining local delivery. The group were supportive of delaying decisions regarding People & Skills projects until county-wide proposals have been developed and can be considered, alongside existing proposals, with reference to the skills strategy and potential additional funding through DWP.

#### **4. Deferred projects**

The group assessed the projects that had been deferred from the previous meeting. The results of the assessments are included in the recommendations.

#### **5. Communities & Place Year 3 funding**

Funding has been approved for Communities & Place projects in years 1 and 2 only. The group assessed those projects that have been approved to make recommendations regarding continued funding in year 3. The results of the assessments are included in the recommendations.

#### **6. Assessment of People & Skills projects**

Following the discussion regarding emerging challenges and opportunities, the group decided to defer decisions until the Redditch Skills Strategy is available. Officers were requested to continue conversations with other districts and to develop proposals for countywide programmes. It was agreed that another meeting of the group would take place in July to assess the People & Skills projects with reference to the UKSPF Investment Plan, the Redditch Skills Strategy and the Local Skills Improvement Plans.

#### **7. Recommendations**

Below is a list of projects that are recommended for funding:

Project	Delivered	Project Description
Support to Local Business	Worcestershire County Council	Energy efficiency assessments and grants to community

		groups. This is a continuation of a year 2 project.
Act on Energy Caseworker	Act on Energy	Intensive community support to people who are experiencing fuel poverty. This is a continuation of a year 2 project.
The Canopies Event Space	Redditch Borough Council	Further development of the town centre event space. This is a continuation of a year 2 project.
Town Centre Improvements – Lighting	Redditch Borough Council	Improvements to the lighting in the Church Green conservation area. This is a continuation of a year 2 project
Designing Out Crime Housing Improvements Programme	Redditch Borough Council	Improvements to the physical layout of residential areas, designing out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. This is a continuation of a year 2 project.
Moons Moat Volunteer Programme	Moons Moat Conservation Group	The restoration and management of a scheduled ancient monument through a volunteering programme. This is the continuation of a year 2 project.
Volunteer It Yourself	Volunteer It Yourself	The delivery of community infrastructure projects whilst creating volunteering, work experience and training opportunities. This is the continuation of a year 2 project.
The Volunteer Centre	Bromsgrove & Redditch Network	The Volunteer Centre provides a match-making service between those people wishing to volunteer and those organisations with volunteering opportunities. This is the continuation of a year 2 project.
Room for Risk	Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire	Provision of grants to community groups for the delivery of creative activities in unusual, redundant spaces. Funding is recommended for years 2 and 3

Get Redditch Creating	Reimagine Redditch	A cultural engagement project that will create a platform for the existing cultural offer in the town centre; develop cultural activity that the community would like to see in the town centre; and develop new audiences for Reimagine Redditch, Creative People and Places. Funding is recommended for year 3 only due to available funds.
Digital Heritage Trail	Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire	The project will bring to life through digital arts technology the iconic heritage Royal Enfield Motorcycles and the Paolozzi Mosaic Murals in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.

The following projects are recommended for refusal:

Project	Reason for Refusal
“What will you do when you’re in charge?”	The project was assessed as lacking clear outcomes. The project provides a poor response to challenges and opportunities identified in the investment plan. The alignment to the intervention was weak.