

Item No	Referred from:	CABINET
8A	Date:	19 MARCH 2024
	Title of item:	SHARED PROSPERITY FUND PROCESS
To be considered alongside agenda item:		Referral only

The report considered by Cabinet at the meeting held on 19 March 2024 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 19th March, 2024, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/agenda-for-cabinet-on-tuesday-19th-march-2024-7-30-pm-north-herts-council-north-herts.gov.uk)

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: The approval of up to £518,000 capital investment for the Solar for Business Programme, in addition to the £51,285 capital funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) The Council will be provided with funding in April 2024 to allocate to schemes which were originally outlined in the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) Investment Plan that was submitted in July 2021. This plan was approved by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in January 2022.
- (2) The Funds regulations allow considerable flexibility in how the Council allocates funding and under which approved UK SPF Activities. Officers presented a report to the Leadership Team on 5th February 2024, which outlined how we are proposing to spend the remainder of the Fund in line with the UK SPF criteria set. The Leadership Team agreed with the proposal in principle, and therefore it has been brought to Cabinet for further consideration.
- (3) Once final approval has been obtained, the individual projects will be managed by the relevant North Herts Council (NHC) service areas. We are seeking approval to delegate approval of spend decisions, payments or grants made under the scheme to the relevant Executive Members and Service Directors, as identified under table 8.1 of this report.

Audio recording – 23 minutes 58 seconds

Councillor Keith Hoskins, Executive Member for Enterprise and Arts, presented the report entitled 'Shared Prosperity Fund Process' and advised that:

- This report highlighted the recommendations for the allocation of the remainder of the funds in the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- He was pleased to report the Parish and Community Projects had been allocated £210,000 as detailed in paragraph 8.1 item (b).

The following Members took part in a debate:

- Councillor Alistair Willoughby
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis

Points raised in the debate included:

- It was important for the wellbeing of residents to improve the town centres and local environments where people lived.
- All these projects would support local communities.
- There was a need to publicise the improvements of town centres and local environments across the district.
- The Parish and Community Projects should be considered by the Panel before being approved by relevant Executive Members and Service Directors.
- The solar business pilot was an excellent project and would generate income for the Council and would save on carbon emissions.

In response to a question by Councillor Ian Albert, the Managing Director advised that it was only the Parish and Community Projects that would need to be considered by the Panel.

Councillor Keith Hoskins proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Considered and approved the proposed outline distribution of funding allocated (£510,000) to the Council by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities for 2024/5 under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- (2) Delegated approvals of individual grants and payments under the Fund to the relevant Executive Members and Service Directors, as identified with reference to Directorates in table 8.1, and confirmed that the Parishes and Community Projects Fund decisions would be taken following consideration and recommendation by the Panel.
- (3) Approved the updated Cabinet Capital and Revenue Grants Panel's Terms of Reference, Appendix C.

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