

This document is to support in the drafting of your Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum to UKSPF Investment Plan. Please do not submit information using this document. Information can be submitted at <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/rural-england-prosperity-fund/ad6e2088/>

## Rural England Prosperity Fund: Addendum to UKSPF Investment Plan

| <b>Select your area</b>                    |   |
|--|---|
| Your area                                  | Stratford-on-Avon District Council                |
| Name of person submitting REPF information | Timothy Oruye - Timothy.Oruye@stratford-dc.gov.uk |
| Alternative contact name and email         | Tony Perks – Tony.Perks@stratford-dc.gov.uk       |
| SRO contact details                        | Tony Perks  |
| UKSPF Investment Plan reference number     | ID ANON-QPA8-9PSB-R                               |

### **Local Context**

You have already submitted your UKSPF investment plan. Here, we would like you to provide any additional information about specific rural challenges, market failures, and opportunities for rural businesses or rural communities in your area that you would like us to consider.

The UKSPF Investment plan does identify some Rural challenges and opportunities found within the district, but perhaps not explicitly. To ensure clarity on strategic intent; Stratford District is a predominantly rural district so the majority of community and place & supporting Local Business strategic drivers relate directly to support rural needs. The challenges and opportunities which align from the UKSPF Investment Plan have been summarised below. One additional challenge and opportunity has been included for Rural Communities and Local Business relating to, Farm Diversification & Digital Infrastructure, see below:

#### **Challenges**

##### Rural Communities

1. **Rural Isolation & Community Support** - Due to the rural nature of the district, unique challenges are presented especially for the more venerable members of the community.
2. **Assets & Infrastructure** - New, rural and lower economic communities in the district have indicated challenges with their community assets and infrastructure.
3. **Responding to the climate emergency** - This challenge is shared by all districts and is prioritised across all strategic literature.
4. **Digital infrastructure** – As a rural district, digital capability varies throughout the district, in particular for rurally isolated communities which have not benefited from modernisation experienced in the more densely populated rural areas and towns.

##### Supporting Local Business

5. **Employment rates** – Stratford upon Avon saw the sharpest decline in employment rates pre-pandemic in Q3 2021 at 10.2% and the sharpest increase in unemployment at 1.5%, over the same period.
6. **Local - Barriers to business Start-up & Growth** – It is widely recognised that businesses face a number of barriers to starting a business as well as growth.
7. **Rural based Businesses / Farm Diversification** – SDC have engaged with its Rural / Agriculture based stakeholders, which are represented by around 1400 members, where farm diversification has been indicated as a key strategic driver.

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| <b>Opportunities</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <u>Rural Communities</u>   |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Stimulating the economy</b> especially in key sectors for the district such as:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Agriculture</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. <b>Improving perception of pride and place</b> in areas of the district most in need</li> <li>3. <b>Increasing the community offering</b> and diversifying its capabilities to respond to existing and future needs</li> <li>4. <b>Decreasing rural isolation</b> by improving public transport and providing community initiatives</li> <li>5. <b>Improving the wellbeing</b> of the population in the district especially those which require it i.e., elderly, vulnerable groups etc.</li> <li>6. <b>Preventing assets falling into disrepair</b> preventing loss of offering and increasing the opportunity for economic growth</li> <li>7. <b>Digital infrastructure</b> – As a rural district, digital capability varies throughout the district. As a result, SDC would like to explore projects which could improve the robustness and resilience of its digital offering.</li> </ol> |  |
| <u>Supporting Local Business</u>   |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. <b>Stimulating the economy</b> in key sectors for the district such as:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Agriculture</li> </ol> </li> <li>9. <b>Overcoming barriers to growth</b> across differing stages, providing further resilience to businesses providing a positive impact to the economy of the district.</li> <li>10. <b>Support local business</b> through the ‘perfect storm’. Challenges faced by businesses in the current and emerging economy</li> <li>11. <b>Increased job opportunities</b></li> <li>12. <b>Farm Diversification</b> – Helping the farming industry create new or additional revenue streams and support transition to new industries.</li> </ol>  |  |

| <b><u>Interventions – rural business</u></b>   |   |
|--|---|
| Please choose the interventions you wish to use under the rural business investment priority. Select as many options as you wish from the menu. The list of interventions can be viewed <a href="#">here</a> . |   |
| 2023-2024 interventions:   | <b>Intervention 1.1:</b> capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas |
| 2024-2025 interventions:   | <b>Intervention 1.1:</b> capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas |
| Please explain how the interventions selected will address local rural business challenges, market failures, and opportunities (max 300 words)   |   |
| The interventions selected are considered to align the following challenges and opportunities indicated ‘Local Contact’. (Challenges are represented as ‘C’ and Opportunities ‘O’ i.e., C1 or O1 respectively. |   |

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| <p><b>Intervention 1.1a</b> – Capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.<br/>(Number of businesses supported &amp; Number of farm diversification projects supported)</p> <p>C7 - Employment rates<br/>C8 - Local - Barriers to business Start-up &amp; Growth<br/>C9 - Rural based Businesses / Farm Diversification<br/>O10 - Stimulating the economy<br/>O11 - Overcoming barriers to growth<br/>O12 - Support local business through the ‘perfect storm’ challenges<br/>O13 - Increased job opportunities<br/>O14 – Farm diversification</p> <p>Projects will be selected that best demonstrate, alignment with the intervention’s outcomes and outputs. The selected interventions are considered to succinctly align with the challenges and opportunities (alignment demonstrated above), thus ensuring, through the challenge fund selection process, the strategic need is optimally impacted.</p> |
| <p>Please rank the interventions selected in order of expected value added</p>   |
| <p><b>Intervention 1.1</b> - This is intervention selected for Rural Business challenges based on rationale as identified in the delivery section.</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><u>Interventions – rural communities</u></b></p>   |   |
| <p>Please choose the interventions you wish to use under the rural communities investment priority. Select as many options as you wish from the menu.</p>  |   |
| <p>2023-2024 interventions:</p>  | <p><b>Intervention 2.1:</b> capital grant funding for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities<br/><b>Intervention 2.7:</b> capital grant funding for rural circular economy projects</p> |
| <p>2024-2025 interventions:</p>  | <p><b>Intervention 2.1:</b> capital grant funding for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities<br/><b>Intervention 2.7:</b> capital grant funding for rural circular economy projects</p> |
| <p>Please explain how the interventions selected will address local rural business challenges, market failures, and opportunities (max 300 words)</p>  |   |
| <p>The interventions selected are considered to align with the following challenges and opportunities indicated within the ‘Local Contact’. (Challenges are represented as ‘C’ and Opportunities ‘O’ i.e., C1 or O1 respectively with the number correlating those in the Local context section)</p> |   |
| <p><b>Intervention 2.1</b> – capital grant funding for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities<br/>(Number of facilities supported, created, or installed)</p> <p>C4 - Digital infrastructure<br/>O7 - Employment rates</p>                                 |   |

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|---|
| <p><b>Intervention 2.7 – capital grant funding for rural circular economy projects</b><br/>(Number of people reached)</p> <p>C1 - Rural Isolation &amp; Community<br/> C2 - Assets &amp; Infrastructure<br/> C3 - Responding to the climate emergency<br/> O2 Stimulating the economy especially<br/> O3 - Improving perception of pride and place<br/> O4 - Increasing the community offering<br/> O5 - Decreasing rural isolation<br/> O6 - Improving the wellbeing of the population</p> <p>Projects will be selected that best demonstrate alignment, with the intervention’s outcomes and outputs. The selected interventions are considered to succinctly align with the Challenges and opportunities (alignment demonstrated in brackets above) thus ensuring, through the challenge fund selection process, the strategic need is optimally impacted.</p> |
| <p>Please rank the interventions selected in order of expected value added</p>  |
| <p><b>Intervention 2.7 – 1<sup>st</sup></b><br/> <b>Intervention 2.1– 2<sup>nd</sup></b></p>  |

|  |
|--|
| <p><b><u>Interventions outcomes</u></b></p>  |
| <p>Please select what outcomes the interventions selected in the rural business investment priority are expected to achieve</p>  |
| <p>Jobs created<br/> Number of new businesses created<br/> Number of businesses with improved productivity</p>   |
| <p>Please select what outcomes the interventions selected in the rural communities investment priority are expected to achieve</p>   |
| <p>Increased users of facilities or amenities<br/> Improved perception of facility or infrastructure project<br/> Improved engagement numbers<br/> Improved perception of local facilities or amenities<br/> Number of community-led programmes as a result of support</p> |

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### **Delivery**

Please set out the indicative spend profile of your REPF allocation, additional to that of your UKSPF investment plan. Please detail the indicative budgets at investment priority level and at intervention level, for the 2 years of the fund, including if REPF money will be used to complement UKSPF funded projects. (300 words max)

The interventions selected are those which are not considered to directly link to the UKSPF interventions as per the prospectus, these being interventions 1.1 & 2.7. As stated in the previous section, intervention 2.7 which links back to the UKSPF intervention, has also been included due to its undersubscription at the previous stakeholder engagement, however due to its strategic importance, this has been selected for the REPF application. The REPF money is not considered to directly compliment the UKSPF allocations, however the diversity gained from the additional interventions enables the council to support projects which align with its strategic need, which may not have been accommodated by previous interventions. It should be noted that a number of potential projects have been submitted against these new interventions, which were submitted in the UKSPF stakeholder engagement.

Supporting Rural Business (40% allocation to this investment priority)

Intervention 1.1. capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas;

- 40% of the available funds have been allocated to this Intervention
- Total Allocation - £406,071.78
- Year1 - £101,517.95
- Year 2 - £304,553.84

Supporting Rural Communities (60% allocation to this investment Priority)

Intervention 2.1. capital grant funding for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities;

- 18% of the available funds have been allocated to this Intervention
- Total Allocation - £182,732.22
- Year1 - £45,683.06
- Year 2 - £137,049.17

Intervention 2.7. capital grant funding for rural circular economy projects;

- 42% of the available funds have been allocated here.
- Total Allocation - £426,375.00
- Year1 - £106,593.75
- Year 2 - £319,781.25

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Please set out how you intend to select projects to support, detailing including how you will ensure they deliver value for money, including additionality. Please also set out how you will determine that projects cannot be funded by private finance. (500 words max)

In line with the UKSPF delivery approach, SDC wish to proceed with the Challenge funds process, as indicated in the Grants Standards set, as the lead compliance requirement of the UKSPF prospectus. This route will require a 'call for projects' once/if the funds have been awarded to the district. The challenge funds process will set out specific qualitative questions the following (but not limited to):

- the capability of the Project owner/SRO/or organization to achieve the outcome,
- the project's ability to be delivered in the periods set by the funds parameters
- the value for money offered by the project set out in three key ways;
  - value in the spending of the fund i.e. multiple quotes, value solutions and or others
  - value derived from the outputs and outcomes to be indicated by the applicant and its relevance/alignment with the intervention itself.
  - Assessing the level of risk objectively to offset the value added along with the cost of the project, enabling larger projects to be assessed (scored) fairly alongside smaller projects providing clarity on the projects capability to deliver value.
- Added value will be sought by including a question which enables the applicant to set out additional benefits offered as a result of the project.
  - This cannot be assessed proportionately, per additional benefit, however can be qualitatively assessed in an objective way against the scoring methodology
  - These added value items will be incorporated into the performance management standards. The project will be motored and reported in line with the fund's governance requirements
- A bassline score (minimum standard) for each question will be set be set against each qualitative question to enable elimination if value is not demonstrated at a level which the fund set outs to achieve.
- This approach will add a further level of robustness to the process, ensuring projects at a minimum, are capable delivering objectives set out in the 'Grants Standards' for selection/award & performance ultimately demonstrating best value.
- A pass/fail question will be set, which indicates whether the project is intended to be supported by private finance. Where private finance is indicated, this will mean a failure and the project will not be considered for award. If not, this will be contractual, and project monitored post award if it is deemed successful.

Have you identified opportunities to work with other places on specific interventions and/or projects for the rural business interventions?

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Intervention(s) you intend to collaborate on: | 1.1  |
| Place(s) you intend to collaborate with:      | We have found opportunities with neighboring districts, boroughs, and the county council and remain open to additional opportunities for collaborative projects as the scheme develops |

Have you identified opportunities to work with other places on specific interventions and/or projects for the rural communities interventions?

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|   |  |
|---|--|
| Intervention(s) you intend to collaborate on: | 2.1 and 2.7  |
| Place(s) you intend to collaborate with:      | We have found opportunities with neighboring districts, boroughs, and the county council and remain open to additional opportunities for collaborative projects as the scheme develops |

### **Engagement**

Further to your UKSPF Investment Plan engagement, have you engaged or consulted with rural stakeholders, or expanded your UKSPF local partnership group, to inform the information you have submitted above? If yes, please give details. You should also use this section to tell us about planned future engagement with rural stakeholders.

Yes, all relevant stakeholders were engaged or re-engaged with if involved in the UKSPF application process. An introduction session was carried out to inform both old and new stakeholders of the funds capabilities. A questionnaire was developed for the stakeholders to present project ideas and inform the needs relevant in the Local Context section.

The following groups were engaged with:

- Warwickshire Association of Local Councils
- Warwickshire Rural Hub
- National Farmers Union
- Stratford Social Inclusion Partnership

The LPAG (UKSPF Partnership Group) was also engaged with - initially to inform of the UKSPF progress and process, then to inform of the REPF engagement results and to further discuss challenges and opportunities which could be addressed by the REPF fund.

Rural stakeholders will be invited to join the LPAG group to maintain engagement throughout the life of the fund to inform and discuss its progress.

Are there aspects of your plans to use your REPF allocation that are not supported by rural stakeholders and the rural community? If yes, please provide more detail.

No

Are there MPs who are not supportive of your investment plan? If yes, please list which MPs are not supportive and outline their reasons why.

No

### **Confirmation of approval**

Please provide the names of who has approved the submission of the additional information provided

|                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Chief Executive:    | David Buckland           |
| Elected leader:     | Councilor Tony Jefferson |
| Section 151 officer | Richard Burrell          |

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