

Report to: **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer: Scott Butterfield, Strategy and Climate Lead

Date of meeting: 20 March 2024

SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – CLIMATE RELATED PROJECTS

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To provide an overview of climate-related projects funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the content of the report and highlight any areas for further consideration.

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

3.1 To ensure constructive scrutiny of the delivery of climate-related SPF schemes.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- 'The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool'
- 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'

6.0 Background and key information

6.1 Blackpool Council was awarded circa £5m through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in

August 2022. This funding was allocated to 13 capital and revenue projects under the themes of Communities and Place, Local Business and People and Skills. Combined, the schemes chosen were targeted to provide a wide range of support from physical town centre regeneration, through to direct business support encouraging existing and new business development, low carbon schemes and community skills and improved learning projects for residents.

6.2 Appendix 7(a) contains an overview of the climate-related projects which have been funded through SPF. These projects are:

- Eco Hubs
- Eco Coaching
- Community Flood Resilience
- Stanley Buildings (low carbon element)
- Net Zero Academy

6.3 In addition to the above, the Town Centre Interventions SPF project has established “Greening” as one of four priorities for the project moving into the final year of delivery, alongside public realm, wayfinding and illumination. This is not included in the attached report because the council has not committed to any specific environmental outputs and outcomes. In addition, the participation of Abingdon Street and Queen Street in the High Street Accelerator pilot could result in the award of separate funding specifically available to support the greening of these areas in a way which designs out anti-social behaviour.

6.4 The total funding for these projects is £1,069,345, which amounts to 22% of the total SPF funding available. Spending for the majority of these projects is in line with the planned SPF spending profile. However, the capital projects (Eco Hubs and Stanley Buildings) have experienced some delays which means that a proportion of planned spending in the current financial year will now need to be carried over into 2024/25.

6.5 Funding for all SPF schemes will end in March 2025. It is anticipated that additional SPF funding will be made available, although this has not been confirmed by the Government at this time. In the event of the confirmation of a Devolution Deal for Lancashire, the new Combined County Authority would take responsibility for SPF planning and delivery from 2025/26 onwards. As a constituent member of the new organisation, Blackpool Council would be involved in discussions regarding the subsequent award of funding to projects in line with the funding criteria.

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of appendices

7.1 Appendix 7(a) – SPF Climate Project Overview (Mar 2024)

8.0 Financial considerations

8.1 See 6.4 and 6.5.

9.0 Legal considerations

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations

12.1 All projects will deliver outputs and outcomes relating to environment/sustainability as set out in the SPF outcomes framework.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers

14.1 None.