

**Open**

## **Cabinet**

## **Agenda**

**6pm**  
**Wednesday, 13 July 2022**  
**Council Chamber**  
**Wyre Forest House**  
**Finepoint Way**  
**Kidderminster**



## **Cabinet**

### **The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-**

<b>Councillor H Dyke</b>	<b>Leader of the Council &amp; Economic Regeneration, Planning &amp; Localism</b>
<b>Councillor G Ballinger</b>	<b>Deputy Leader &amp; Culture, Leisure &amp; Community Safety</b>
<b>Councillor N Martin</b>	<b>Housing, Health, Well-being &amp; Democratic Services</b>
<b>Councillor M Rayner</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Capital Portfolio</b>
<b>Councillor J Thomas</b>	<b>Operational Services</b>

### **Scrutiny of Decisions of the Cabinet**

The Council has one Scrutiny Committee that has power to investigate policy issues and question members of the Cabinet who have special responsibility for a particular area of the Council's activities. The Cabinet also considers recommendations from this Committee.

In accordance with Section 10 of the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, and Standing Order 2.4 of Section 7, any item on this agenda may be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee if it is "called in" by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and any other three non-Cabinet members.

*The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is 5pm on Monday 25 July 2022.*

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email [louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

### **Urgent Key Decisions**

If the Cabinet needs to take an urgent key decision, the consent of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman must be obtained. If the Scrutiny Committee Chairman is unable to act the Chairman of the Council or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council, must give consent. Such decisions will not be the subject to the call in procedure.

### **Declaration of Interests by Members – interests of members in contracts and other matters**

Declarations of Interest are a standard item on every Council and Committee agenda and each Member must provide a full record of their interests in the Public Register.

In addition, alongside the Register of Interest, the Members Code of Conduct ("the Code") requires the Declaration of Interests at meetings. Members have to decide first whether or not they have a disclosable interest in the matter under discussion.

Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's constitution for full details.

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) / Other Disclosable Interest (ODI)**

DPI's and ODI's are interests defined in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the District.

If you have a DPI (as defined in the Code) in a matter being considered at a meeting of the Council (as defined in the Code), the Council's Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held, for the duration of any discussion or voting on that matter.

If you have an ODI (as defined in the Code) you will need to consider whether you need to leave the room during the consideration of the matter.

**For further information**

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email [louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

Documents referred to in this agenda may be viewed on the Council's website - [www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm)

Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interests by Members</b>  In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered.  Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
3.	<b>Minutes</b>  To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the special meeting held on the 26 April 2022 and the Minutes of the additional meeting held on 30 June 2022.	6
4.	<b>CALL INS</b> a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
5.	<b>Items Requiring Urgent Attention</b>  To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
6.	<b>Public Participation</b>  In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council/Cabinet, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 4 July 2022. (See front cover for contact details).	

<b>7.</b>		
<b>7.1</b>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Councillor G Ballinger</b></p> <p><b>Localism: Stourport Sports Club</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive to agree support for a proposal that the Severn Academies Educational Trust should assume responsibility for the Stourport Sports Club, a registered company in which the Council is involved, and, as part of that process, to agree disposal of the land specified in the report to the Trust.</p>	11

<b>8.</b>		
<b>8.1</b>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Councillor H Dyke</b></p> <p><b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Investment Plan 2022-25</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of NWEDR to approve the investment plan prior to its submission to Government.</p> <p>To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 7 July 2022.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>to follow</p>

<b>9.</b>	<b>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</b>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Exclusion of the Press and Public</b></p> <p>To consider passing the following resolution:</p> <p>“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.</p>	

## Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

<b>11.</b>		
<b>11.1</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 8.1: UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Investment Plan 2022-25</b></p> <p>Appendix 2 – List of submitted projects</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</b>	

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER**

**26TH APRIL 2022 (5PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), G W Ballinger (Vice-Chairman), N Martin, M Rayner and J W R Thomas.

**Observers:**

Councillors: A Coleman, R H Coleman, N Gale, I Hardiman, M J Hart, S Miah and F M Oborski MBE.

**CAB.74 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CAB.75 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.76 Adoption of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036**

A report was considered from the Head of Strategic Growth following the Inspector's Report and to consider making a recommendation to Council about adoption of the plan.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the Planning Inspector's report following the conclusion of the Local Plan review process that began in 2015. She said the Inspector's conclusion was that the plan was sound and legally compliant.

Councillor S Miah joined the meeting at 5.04pm.

The Leader advised that as a planning authority the Council must prepare a Local Plan that sets out the local planning policies for the area. She said Government Guidance required that Local Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and be consistent with national policy. She added the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that every local planning authority in England should seek to have a clear, up to date Local Plan in place.

She further explained that the Local Plan covered a range of matters including the number of new homes that are needed, where they should be located and the proposed location of new employment land.

The Leader drew members attention to a number of sections in the report that set out key milestones in the production of the Local Plan; the Examination in Public undertaken by the Independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of

the State; the need to make several main modifications; and the housing requirement figure that formed the basis for calculating housing land supply for the next 5 years.

The Leader outlined the public consultation approach taken by the Council for community engagement. She advised that the Planning Inspector was satisfied that the Council had exceeded the legal requirements to involve the community in the preparation of the plan.

In conclusion, she said that the Cabinet appreciated the passion of the people that had registered to speak at the Council meeting this evening, and that of the campaign groups around the district. However, she stressed that it was impossible for the Council to amend the plan by making changes to specific sites at this time. She explained that the Council was at a stage where the only choice the Council had was to adopt or not to adopt the plan.

She added that a decision not to adopt the plan would have serious implications for the district which included the Council becoming a Designated Authority which meant all major applications would need to be submitted directly to the Planning Inspectorate, bypassing local democratic decision-making process by the Council's Planning Committee. She added that this could lead to planning decisions being made for Wyre Forest by those who have no local knowledge or connection to the area.

The Leader formally moved the recommendations as set out in the report. The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety seconded the proposals.

**Decision: Cabinet:**

**1.1.1 Noted the Inspector's Report of 11th March 2022 at Appendix A;**

**1.1.2 Accepted the Schedule of Recommended Main Modifications in its entirety as set out in Appendix B for incorporation into the Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036);**

**1.1.3 Recommend to Council that:**

- (a) it adopts the Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036) as set out in Appendix C;**
- (b) it approves the adoption statement set out in Appendix D, which will be published and made available in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004;**
- (c) it delegates to the Head of Strategic Growth in consultation with the Leader of the Council any minor amendments, typographical and grammar corrections to the documents prior to publication.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5.06pm.

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER**

**30TH JUNE 2022 (6PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), G W Ballinger (Vice-Chairman), N Martin, M Rayner and J W R Thomas.

**Observers:**

Councillors: N J Desmond, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, I Hardiman, M J Hart and F M Oborski MBE.

**CAB.01     Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CAB.02     Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.03     Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**CAB.04     Revised Development Proposals for Lionfields, Parcel One**

A report was considered from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR) to agree the approach for a future development of the Lionfields Parcel One site.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and gave a summary of the background and key issues. She explained there was a long history to the Council's attempts to secure development of this site after the demolition of the Glades leisure centre. She added that in July 2016, the Cabinet at the time approved a new vision and preferred development for the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway as part of an overall development framework. The framework was intended to guide and inform the regeneration of the Eastern Gateway which was branded for marketing purposes as Lionfields.

She further explained that in 2019 following lengthy negotiations with the preferred developer and Worcestershire County Council, who own some of the proposed site, a conditional agreement was signed to deliver a cinema led development.

She added that due to the pandemic the developer's negotiations with the



cinema operator did not restart until 2022. She said that market conditions had changed, and construction costs have increased considerably. She added that the latest financial proposals put forward by the developer were not financially viable, and the developer had not submitted a planning application by the deadline in late April, which had been extended.

She expressed her disappointment that the project had not come to fruition, and formally moved the recommendations as set out in the report for approval.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety seconded the proposal.

**Decision: Cabinet;**

- 1.1 APPROVED the preparation of a preferred development option to RIBA Stage 2 for Lionfields Parcel One;**
- 1.2 DELEGATED to the Head of NWEDR (acting jointly with the Solicitor to the Council and Head of Resources), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism, authority to procure a professional multi-disciplinary team to prepare the following documents: feasibility study; site options appraisal; financial viability appraisal; delivery mechanisms options; route to market/procurement strategy; funding strategy and undertake soft market testing to enable the design of a preferred development scheme to RIBA Stage 2 for Lionfields Parcel One;**
- 1.3 DELEGATED to the Head of NWEDR, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism, Solicitor to the Council and Head of Resources authority to settle the terms of any agreement between the Council and Worcestershire County Council in respect of developing Parcel One. This delegation includes, but is not limited to, such matters as sharing of costs between both parties to bring Parcel One to the market for development.**

**CAB.05 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Decision: "Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.**

**CAB.06 Acquisition of Property in Kidderminster**

A confidential report was received from the Head of NWedR to consider a proposal to proceed with a purchase of property in Kidderminster.

Councillor P Dyke left the meeting at 6.22pm and returned at 6.34pm.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and gave a summary of the proposal.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-committee, Councillor M Hart, presented the recommendations from the committee meeting and outlined the reasons why the majority of members were unable to support the proposal.

In response to the concerns raised by the Sub-committee, the Leader invited the Head of NWedR, Head of Resources and the Programme Delivery Manager NWedR, to give further clarification on the proposal, the financial implications and the mitigating measures being put in place to address issues identified in the risk analysis.

With the addition of *subject to completion of due diligence and signing of the Heads of Terms* to the first and second recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio formally moved the recommendations for approval. The Leader seconded the proposal.

Councillor M Hart left the meeting at 6.51pm

The Leader said this was an exciting opportunity for Kidderminster and asked Cabinet members to support the recommendations.

**Decision: Having had regard to the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-committee from its meeting on 30 June 2022, Cabinet;**

- 1.1 APPROVED the acquisition of the property, as set out in the confidential report and subject to completion of due diligence and signing of the Heads of Terms.**
- 1.2 APPROVED a contribution of up to £1.6m from the Capital Portfolio Fund, as additional contingency to address increases in construction costs, subject to completion of due diligence and signing of the Heads of Terms.**
- 1.3 RECOMMEND to Council that it amends the Capital Programme to reflect the third-party contribution towards conversion costs of the building, as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the confidential report.**

The meeting closed at 7.01pm.

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**  
**13 JULY 2022**

**LOCALISM: STOURPORT SPORTS CLUB**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Graham Ballinger, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Kathryn Underhill, Community Services Manager Ext <b>2956</b>
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1 – background note on Stourport Sports Club Appendix 2 - land owned by WFDC at Stourport Sports Club Appendix 3 – land owned by WFDC under the highway

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To agree support for a proposal that the Severn Academies Educational Trust should assume responsibility for the Stourport Sports Club, a registered company in which the Council is involved, and, as part of that process, to agree disposal of the land specified in the report to the Trust.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Cabinet is asked to agree in respect of Wyre Forest District Council that the management agreement for Stourport Sports Club should be terminated and the rights and liabilities of the Club should be transferred to the Severn Academies Educational Trust.
- 2.2 The Cabinet is asked to agree the transfer of the freehold of the land set out in the maps in Appendices 2 and 3, which comprises a total of five registered titles as set out in paragraph 3.5, to Severn Academies Educational Trust, for £1 consideration each. This recommendation is subject to:
- a) the parties involved in the management agreement agreeing that it should be terminated and that the lease of WFDC land should be surrendered;
  - b) the Stourport Hockey Club agreeing to transfer its interest in land registered as WR46725 to the Severn Academies Educational Trust;
  - c) the consent of the British Cycling Federation being obtained in respect of the land comprising the cycle track.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The current arrangements for the Stourport Sports Club are complex and were set out in a management agreement involving the District Council and a number of other parties, the latest version of which dates from 2011. Background information is in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 In recent years, the arrangements for day-to-day and long-term management of this important multi-use facility have not operated successfully. In particular there has been concern about whether adequate investment in repairs and refurbishment of facilities has been made under the existing management agreement which provides for a sinking fund; and the Club has struggled with its small team of staff to discharge the full range of functions that are necessary, including asset maintenance. For its part, the Council's medium term financial strategy for 2022-2025 which was approved by full Council in February 2022 contained the following "Approval to end discretionary support of sport and leisure facilities from April 2023 namely, phasing out involvement in Stourport Sports Club". The preceding report approved by Cabinet in December 2021 explained: "Sport and leisure facilities. The administration intends to focus future WFDC provision and funding on the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre and therefore phase out.... the Council's involvement in the Stourport Sports Club Ltd which costs £14k a year".
- 3.3 The Council's localism strategy has generally focussed on transfer of assets and services to town and parish councils but other community groups and organisations can play their role too.
- 3.4 The Severn Academies Educational Trust has developed a proposal and presented it to the Board of Directors of the Club in March 2022, under which the Trust would take over the running of the Club. New arrangements are proposed for working with the various sports clubs that use the facilities in addition to the schools. In summary:
- SAET would be willing to take on the strategic, financial, and operational management of SSC.
  - this would then allow the trust to provide investment to support the regular maintenance of facilities, as well as potential capital development in the future. The trust would also manage exploration of additional funding streams from third parties to further enhance facilities as it does across its estate;
  - the trust will take on all marketing and promotional aspects, and support clubs with community engagement activities. The trust will utilise its relationships with the Wyre Forest Schools Sports Partnership, to promote SSC with families across the Wyre Forest, as well as in its own schools. The trust views the site as potential for further investment in provision and facilities;
  - the trust will bring SSC into its current management and support structures and put in place an appropriate staffing model to ensure the effective development / operation of the club. This would include SSC benefitting from professional support in all the key areas of finance, estates management, marketing and hospitality.
  - the trust will guarantee the retention of clubs' current usage. All existing partners would become 'preferred partners' maintaining current access and terms for the contributions made.

The Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee (registered number 07633402) and is an exempt charity. It is responsible for two secondary schools and six primary schools in Wyre Forest and immediately adjacent areas.

- 3.5 The steps proposed by the Trust would require all the parties involved in the management agreement deciding that it should be terminated and that the lease of WFDC land described below should be surrendered. This report seeks the Cabinet's agreement to that process so far as it involves the Council. In order to enable and cement the Trust's role, it is proposed that the Council's land holdings should be transferred to the Trust for consideration of £1 each. The relevant land is comprised in a lease dated 25 March 2011 and comprises four registered titles of land:

WR104494

WR104495

WR46725 (jointly as Tenants in Common with the Stourport Hockey Club – WFDC 92% and Hockey Club 8%)

WR104463 (a small part only). These are shown on the map in Appendix 2.

In addition, and while not part of the land leased in 2011, the Council owns a small area of land in title WR104495. This is shown on the plan in Appendix 3 and is the strip of pink land immediately to the south of the area shown in green. This is all believed to be adopted highway, in which case the Council's residual interest is only in the subsoil. So that the Council is not left with a piece of "orphan" land which is of no practical benefit to the Council, it should be included in the transfer. The vast bulk of WR104463 comprises Burlish Meadows, which have been developed from the former golf course, and is not affected by the transfer proposed in this report. The freehold title number WR46725 must first be offered to Stourport Hockey Club for purchase, which then has a two month window in which to decide whether or not it wants to purchase the 92% share of title WR46725. There is reference to the price to be agreed as being not more than the open market value.

- 3.6 Any section 106 contributions arising from planning applications approved by the Council and negotiated by the Council for the benefit of Stourport Sports Club will continue to be available for investment in facilities at the club. They would not therefore be available to be spent on the school estate within the Severn Academies Educational Trust.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Council has a funding gap estimated to be £1.68 million by 2024-2025. Work to preserve and protect assets by working with partners to share costs and/or take over responsibility for services is a priority. Without bold and ambitious plans to deliver on this strategy, services most valued by people could be lost e.g. parks, play areas, public conveniences, community development and events.
- 4.2 The medium-term financial strategy identified the intention for WFDC to withdraw from its role in the Stourport Sports Club and to cease providing funding to the club. The Council provides no funding for sporting facilities elsewhere in the district (other than in respect of its contract with Places for People to maintain and operate the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre) The MTFS also identified the intention to withdraw

from a role in respect of Bewdley Leisure Centre and this will be progressed once arrangements for Stourport Sports Club have been confirmed.

- 4.3 The Council receives free usage of the site for certain activities but the cost of hiring for that usage would be lower than the grant WFDC pays (estimate £3k) – in other words, the direct benefits to WFDC for its own activities are lower than the value of the contribution. This is anomalous when WFDC provides a direct financial subsidy to no other sports clubs or sports associations in the district. It is the result of the history of the facility and the requirement for the WFDC contribution arises from the Management Agreement. The contribution provides district residents with accessible sports facilities, many of which are not available elsewhere (e.g., Athletics track, cycle track, netball dome, high quality hockey astro turf surface).
- 4.4 The Council is successfully implementing a multi-phase “Wyre Forest Wild” project to develop the land on the old golf course site (which sits adjacent to SSC), now known as Burlish Meadows, and has extended the existing Burlish Top Nature Reserve. Part of this project includes a proposal to work with British Cycling and Stourport Sports Club to provide safe off-road cycling routes for all abilities. These and other potential linkages between the two facilities depend on SSC being on a sustainable footing. The Council would continue to work with the Trust to exploit mutually beneficial joint working opportunities with the Wyre Forest Wild project.
- 4.5 The section on legal implications below deals with the detailed legal background. In simple terms, the Council has the power under Section 123(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to dispose of land at less than best consideration (in this case for £1 consideration). The Stourport Sports Club land is let to a third party for the uses set out in the lease – it is managed as a sports facility and therefore is not public open space, the disposal of which has to be advertised and any comments considered before a decision on disposal is taken.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 WFDC’s revenue contribution to Stourport Sports Club is £14k a year and the proposed approach would allow this to be brought to an end by the end of 2022-23, in line with the adopted MTFS. The assets are being transferred on the basis that WFDC will not be making a financial contribution towards them after the current financial year.
- 5.2 The cost of implementing the decisions primarily relate to staff time and will therefore be absorbed within existing budgets.
- 5.3 For completeness, Stourport Sports Club purchases grass-cutting and waste collection services from the Council, with total annual income being £11k . Just as the Club could make alternative arrangements for these services at any time, the Trust will not be bound to use the Council’s services. Any change in these arrangements is not an implication of this report.

## **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Under section 123 of Local Government Act 1972, the approval of the Secretary of State is required for disposal of land at an undervalue unless the disposal falls

within the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 (“the Consent”). In order to fall within the Consent, the disposal must assist in the promotion of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area and the difference between the unrestricted value and the consideration accepted must be £2 million or less. The Consent provides that the Authorities should “not divest themselves of valuable public assets unless they are satisfied that the circumstances warrant such action”. The £2m figure in the consent bites on each separate property. The land holdings that are the subject of this report are each below the *de minimis* value of £10k which means that they do not feature in the balance sheet in the Council’s accounts. The valuations recognise the long lease and limited purpose for which the land might be used.

- 6.2 The Consent states that councils “are strongly advised in all cases to ensure that they obtain a realistic valuation of that interest, following the advice provided in the Technical Appendix”. That Appendix relates to the valuation principles to be followed when an application needs to be submitted to the Secretary of State, which is not relevant to this proposed disposal. In any case the Consent does not require that a valuation is obtained on a particular basis.
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposed disposal to the Severn Academies Educational Trust is the only proposal that will protect the assets for the benefit of the sports clubs and wider public, and therefore promote the social and environmental well-being of the area by maintaining access to a range of sporting facilities, many of which are not available elsewhere in Wyre Forest. Notwithstanding the charitable nature of the Trust, the transfer would contain the normal provisions to protect the financial interest of the District Council by an overage agreement in the event of redevelopment of the site in the first 20 years. While no such redevelopment is envisaged or proposed, it is also relevant that redevelopment other than for sporting facilities would be highly unlikely to comply with the policies in the recently adopted local plan for 2016-2036. The area lies in the green belt and is described as Minster Road Outdoor Sports Area: it is subject among other things to policy SA.S17 which provides that “proposals for the development of outdoor sports facilities will be encouraged within this area subject to compatibility with Green Belt and landscape and nature conservation policies” and “proposals .... will be informed by the Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Sports Facilities Strategy”. The Council therefore has clear powers to control the future use of the site through the local plan.
- 6.4 The land is not being transferred to another local authority or public body, and therefore the Council needs to satisfy itself that Subsidy Control measures are not relevant to the “undervalue” aspect of this transaction. It is not considered that, even if the disposal at an undervalue represents a subsidy, it would result in any negative effects on competition or investment within the United Kingdom.
- 6.5 Part of the property (the area of the cycle track) cannot be transferred without the written consent of The British Cycling Federation.
- 6.6 The Council will enter into appropriate discussions with the other parties to the management agreement and in particular any other bodies that have rights in respect of the land proposed for transfer.

**7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 This report relates to disposal of land: it is not considered that an equality impact assessment is required, as no change is envisaged to the use of the land at the point of transfer.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 Appropriate provision will be included in the terms of disposal to protect the District Council's fiduciary interest, although the local plan provides a strong policy context that makes redevelopment for alternative uses unlikely.
- 8.2 The principal risk relates to whether the other parties in the management agreement will all agree to its termination and whether Stourport Hockey Club will agree to transfer its land interest in one parcel of land which is held with the Council as tenants in common. In addition the Council needs to comply with legislation of disposal of land at less than best value. The Council's officers will work closely with the range of bodies involved in the current arrangements (including funding bodies that have provided grants in the past), as set out above.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The proposed transfer supports the Council's policy on asset transfers and localism. The Cabinet is asked to decide to support, on behalf of the Council, the proposal that the Severn Academies Educational Trust assumes responsibility for the Stourport Sports Club and to agree the principle of the transfer of the land specified in this report to the Trust.

**10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1 Cabinet  
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Circular 06/03 Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent 2003  
11.2 Management agreement for Stourport Sports Club, 25 March 2011  
11.3 Lease to Stourport Sports Club Ltd, 25 March 2011



## **Appendix 1 – background information about Stourport Sports Club**

### **Land ownership**

The Club is situated in the green belt between Stourport and Kidderminster and therefore subject to rigorous control through the planning system.

12.5 acres split across two sites, divided by the Kingsway. The facilities include 3 floodlit astro turf pitches, 2 covered and 3 outdoor netball courts (all also used for tennis), an 8-lane floodlit 400m athletics track with jumping and throws areas, a 1.5km floodlit closed road cycle circuit, a clubhouse and associated car park plus 2 storage buildings.

Land on the Kidderminster side of the Kingsway is leased by WFDC and Stourport Hockey Club Ltd to SSC on a 125-year lease with just over 100 years remaining, expiring on 30 March 2123. The Council is the owner of the freehold estate of the land described as Sports Field. The Council and the Hockey Club are the owners of the freehold estate of the land described as the clubhouse. The annual rent is £5 per annum. There is also a standalone training facility on this part of the site owned by Stourport High School with a separate sub lease from SSC.

Land on the High School side of the Kingsway is owned by Stourport High School and is leased to SSC on a 125-year lease with about 100 years remaining. The annual rent is £5 per annum.

There are no legal charges registered against the freehold of the titles to the WFDC property. There are restrictions – one in favour of The British Cycling Federation as referred to in paragraph 6.5 of the report and another one for the benefit of the English Sports Council – but that on behalf of the ESC expired on 15 January 2022.

### **Constitution arrangements & partners**

Stourport Sports Club Ltd (3092063) is a Company limited by guarantee governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. The four Members of the Limited Company are Stourport High School, Stourport Hockey Club, Kidderminster and Stourport Athletic Club and Wyre Forest District Council. Each Member can appoint 2 Directors to sit on the Board.

In addition, there is a Management Agreement in place which includes additional partners' sport's governing bodies. This is a legal document which sets out the financial contribution of partners and their priority use of the facilities as well as how the Sports Club will be operated and managed. The organisations that are part of the Management Agreement are Wyre Forest District Council, Stourport Hockey Club Ltd, Stourport High School, Kidderminster and Stourport Athletic Club, England Netball, Kidderminster and District Netball League, Wyre Forest Cycle Racing Club, Stourport Sports Club Ltd and Sport England. The latest version of the Management Agreement was dated 25/03/11 and is for 114 years.

The Board of Directors delegate the day-to-day operation and management of the facilities to employees.

### **Sporting outcomes**

SSC is a unique sporting hub and has been recognised nationally as an example of a voluntary sector multi sports venue delivering good practice. Governing bodies have

invested considerable grant funding into the club to develop the facilities over the years based on its track record and success.

During curriculum/extra-curricular time all of the sports facilities are used by Stourport High School and their feeder schools.

Participation at the Club is considerable, and it is extensively used for sport by the partner organisations during their priority hours. Outside of these hours the facility is used by local, regional and national groups/organisations for training, competition, and sports courses. These activities cater for all ages, genders and abilities. The facility is near capacity in terms of use.

There is a wide range of sports on offer at SSC and this is continually evolving. For example a triathlon club has become established as well as different cycling disciplines and range of disability opportunities. Regular football bookings are taken through the season for training and 5-a-side leagues.

The local community has incredible access to the sports facilities and clubs at SSC. All the sports sections welcome new members from beginners to elite performers. Junior sections are thriving.

All of the sports sections have current elite performers and have a long track record of member athletes representing their county, region and country. This excellence also extends to coaching where a number of our coaches have received awards and recognition at all levels.

Other outcomes of SSC include improved health and wellbeing activities; hirers such as Slimming World, Diabetes classes, meeting & conference facilities, wakes, parties, mother & baby group: Moo Music. SSC has developed a natural environment for birds and a wildflower meadow to link habitats with local nature reserves.

### **Role of Directors**

Each Director has an area of responsibility and may be required to offer support to the Management team at the Club. Each Member is required to act as Chair of the Board of Directors once every 4 years as this responsibility rotates around Members.

Directors have a fiduciary duty to the Company. This is set down in legislation:

- A Director must only act within the powers as granted by the Company's constitution.
- A Director has a prime duty to promote the Company's success (unless insolvent).
- A Director must exercise independent judgment.
- A Director must exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence in his/her role.
- A Director must avoid conflicts between his/her role and his/her personal interests.
- A Director cannot accept benefits from third parties which arise from his/her role.
- A Director must always declare to other director his/her personal interest in any transaction or arrangement which the Company proposes to enter into.

### **Annual Financial Contribution**

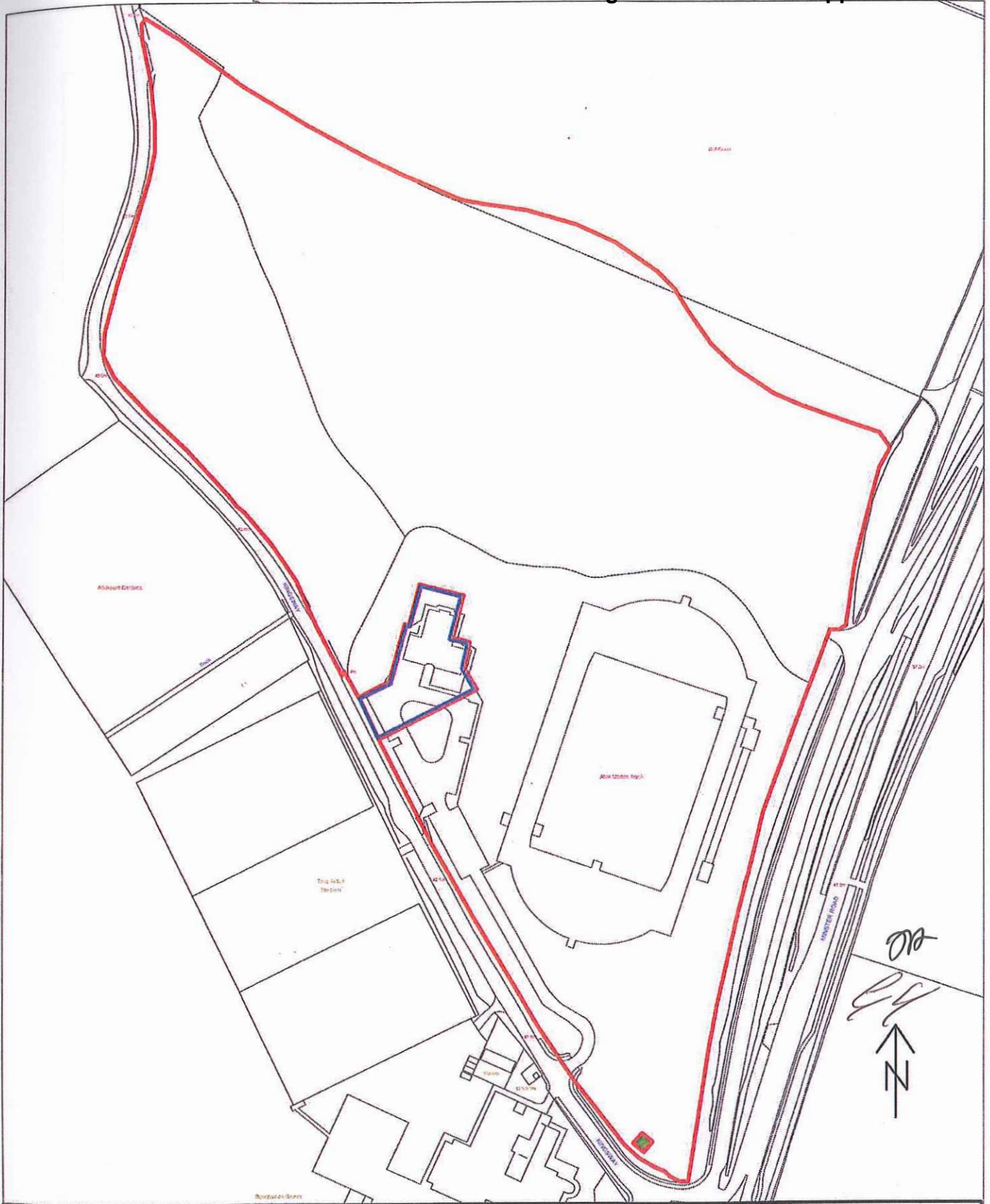
The Management Agreement sets out the provision for an annual financial contribution for each partner organisation. This is set and agreed by the Board of Directors and is in reference to the previous year's contribution and taking account of the costs incurred by

the Company in complying with the provisions of the Management Agreement. The annual financial contribution of WFDC in 2021-22 will be £14,080.

The most recent accounts filed with Companies House, for the period to August 2021, show reserves of £92k (£69k, 2020) but give no information about turnover and sources of income.

This fulfils the statutory requirement for abbreviated accounts. Full accounts are submitted to HMRC along with a corporation tax return and full management accounts are available to Directors through the year setting out the performance of the Company. Total turnover in recent years has been £300k, ignoring depreciation.

All prices/charges and annual financial contributions are increased annually in order for the Company to remain viable and pricing is currently at a comparable market rate with regular benchmarking of facilities taking place. There are some pricing restrictions imposed by governing bodies (in relation to grants received) to ensure that the facilities remain accessible to all. The Company is governed by a Management Agreement and has entered into many grant agreements which state that community access must be maintained, and that the facility is accessible to all. Affordable pricing is also part of this accessibility. To secure grant funding for the various facilities, grant agreements committing to use the land for the purpose of the grant were entered into. If the club is unable to continue in a sustainable position, the leases would be forfeit, but there would be no freedom to use the land without financial penalty.



Legal and Democratic Services  
Wyre Forest District Council  
Civic Centre  
Stourport on Severn  
Worcestershire, DY13 8UJ

**Stourport Sports Centre**  
**Kingsway**  
**Stourport**  
**Worcestershire**

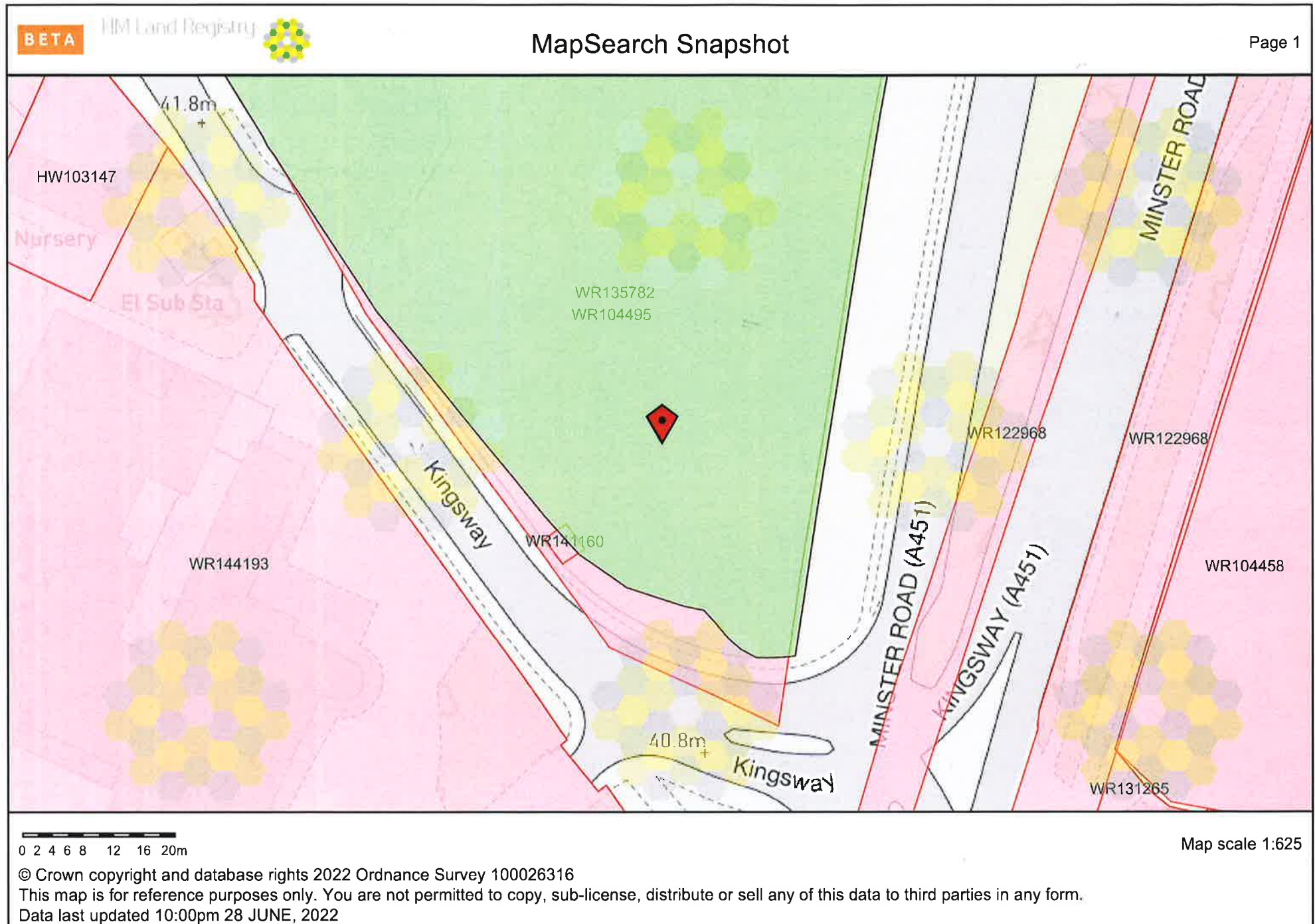


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"This document is for identification purposes only"

Scale:- 1:2500





BETA

HM Land Registry



## MapSearch Snapshot

Page 2

Title number	Estate information	Address
WR135782	Leasehold	STOURPORT SPORTS CLUB KINGSWAY, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN DY13 8BQ LAND ON THE EAST SIDE OF KINGSWAY, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN
WR104495	Freehold	STOURPORT SPORTS CLUB KINGSWAY, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN DY13 8BQ

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL****CABINET****13<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022****UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND: INVESTMENT PLAN 2022-25**

<b>OPEN with an EXEMPT APPENDIX</b>	
Appendix 2 to this report is exempt from disclosure because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Helen Dyke, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism
<b>CLT MEMBER:</b>	Ostap Paparega, Head of NWEDR
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Georgina Harris, Business Growth Manager, NWEDR Extension 2174
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1 – UKSPF investment plan for Wyre Forest Appendix 2 – list of submitted projects (exempt from disclosure)

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To approve the investment plan prior to its submission to Government.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve submission of the investment plan to Government.
- 2.2 The Cabinet is asked to delegate finalisation of the investment plan including the projects included within it to the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism and in light of advice from the ReWyre Board.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The concept of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund first emerged in the Industrial Strategy in November 2017 although the total financial allocations for its first three years were unveiled only in the spending review in October 2021 – and it was then apparent that the “promise” that the fund would match the EU funding streams that it replaces was not going to be delivered until 2024-25. It was also revealed that the Government had allocated over £0.5bn to Multiply, a programme to improve numeracy among adults. A pre-launch document was issued on 2 February at the same time as the Levelling Up White Paper. The full prospectus and financial allocations were announced on 13 April.

- 3.2 Wyre Forest District Council is the lead local authority for the “core” UKSPF for the district, and the allocation for 2022-25 is £3.155m. Every district in Worcestershire has an allocation, ranging from £2.5m (Redditch) to £4m (Wychavon) – Wyre Forest’s is the second largest allocation. In addition Worcestershire County Council has been allocated £2.693m for Multiply across the same period. The investment plan must be submitted by 1 August 2022.
- 3.3 The terms of reference and membership of the ReWyre Board have been amended so that it acts as the local partnership group for the UKSPF, in accordance with section 5 of the prospectus. This is an advisory role. It met in May and June to consider the approach to and content of the investment plan and will meet again in late July to provide final advice on which projects should be included within the plan, having regard to their deliverability and “fit” with the objectives of the UKSPF.
- 3.4 The UKSPF prospectus highlights three investment priorities for the fund:  
 Community and place: building pride in place  
 Supporting local business: supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances  
 People and skills: supporting high quality skills training,
- 3.5 The prospectus gives a rather mixed message about what an investment plan will comprise. The general message is that “Lead local authorities for each area will have flexibility over how they deliver the Fund”. This is explained to mean: “They may wish to use a mix of competitions for grant funding (which is the default approach set out in [Cabinet Office Grants Standards](#)), procurement, commissioning or deliver some activity through in-house teams. For example, some community level interventions may require a commissioning or in-house approach, recognising that competitions for grant may create barriers to participation in left behind communities.” Competitive processes were the norm under EU funds but are also the most resource-intensive for bodies seeking funding (with no guarantee that any bid will be successful) and in particular for the body administering the funding. Where possible, and in order to minimise the administrative effort of managing bidding rounds for what represents a relevant low amount across the three years, the preference is to allocate funding for specified projects or activities as part of the investment plan. Interested organisations, including town and parish councils, were invited to submit proposals for inclusion in the plan and all proposals received are being assessed for potential match with the UKSPF objectives. The list of proposals received is set out in the confidential Appendix 2, since it is inappropriate to share publicly information about proposals that might not be included in the final version of the plan
- 3.6 The total allocation for Wyre Forest is £3.155m. The Government provided a detailed annual breakdown in May which also allows the Council to work out the minimum amounts that must be allocated to capital projects. There is flexibility for the investment plan to allocate more to capital projects than the minimum but a plan that focussed solely on capital projects is unlikely to deliver activity that contributes to all the priorities of the UKSPF. For example, business support and skills projects will almost certainly feature and will be funded from revenue.

#### Annual allocations

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total



£0.383m	£0.766m	£2.006m	£3.155m
<i>Of which minimum capital allocation (10%/13%/20%)</i>			
£0.038m	£0.100m	£0.401m	£0.523m

3.7 No match funding is required in order to unlock funding although, in order to make the WFDC allocation go further, it would be desirable to seek match funding wherever possible – but to adopt a flexible approach rather than specify a common minimum percentage. It is a requirement that “all interventions should end by March 2025 or have a break clause allowing for closure by March 2025 if required (for example, yearly renewable funding)”.

#### 4. **KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 There has been a relatively short time to develop the investment plan since the prospectus and financial allocations were announced on 13 April. The current draft of the plan at Appendix 1 identifies the background and rationale underpinning the plan for Wyre Forest.
- 4.2 Almost 30 proposals have been submitted and the total grant sought exceeds £7m, over twice the amount of the funds available over the three years (£3.0m) after allowing for administrative costs. Therefore it will not be possible to include all the projects within the submitted plan. The ReWyre Board’s advice will unavoidably need to prioritise the proposals that best meet the objectives of the fund and have a reasonably high degree of certainty about deliverability, including deliverability within specific financial years given the inflexible annual nature of the Government funding. The ReWyre Board considered the draft plan and its meeting on 29 June and has begun to appraise the individual projects, a process that will be completed at its meeting later in July. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be considering the plan at its meeting on 7 July and any recommendations will be reported separately.
- 4.3 In addition to the oversubscription, there is also a significant mismatch between the amount sought for capital expenditure, over £4m, and the minimum capital allocation of just over £0.5m which DLUHC has notified. While flexibility exists in respect of the capital/revenue split, it is likely that many proposals for capital grant will have to be dramatically scaled back or omitted.
- 4.4 Despite the efforts being made locally to devise a plan that meets local needs and priorities as well as the UKSPF’s objectives, regrettably the process is still one where the dead hand of centralism is felt. The investment plan is subject to sign off by Government and this is not promised until October. This does not prevent projects where expenditure has been or will be incurred between April 2022 and approval of the plan from being funded. However, such expenditure by project promoters is at their risk as funding will be provided retrospectively only if the plan is approved.
- 4.5 The deadline for submission of the plan is 1 August. The report therefore includes an appropriate delegation for officers - in consultation with the Cabinet member and in light of advice from the ReWyre Board about which projects should be included - to finalise and submit the plan.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council will receive £20k, primarily to develop the investment plan, and up to 4% of the fund allocation i.e. up to £126.2k can be used for administrative costs in running the fund, monitoring etc. The direct financial implications for the Council of preparing the plan and administering the fund will be met through the specific allocation and flexibilities within the funding. This will include recruiting an administration post to deal with the monitoring of projects, payments to project promoters and liaison with Government.
- 5.2 Funding will be paid by Government in advance at the start of the financial year (in 2022-23, once the local investment plan has been signed off). However, the Government is adopting an inflexible approach to the annuality of expenditure: “Fund investment and outputs [will] be achieved in line with each place’s investment plan, on time and in-year”. The impact of this is that, as the accountable body for the grant, there is no guarantee that any underspend against a project or activity in a year can be reallocated to a different project that has capacity to spend in that year; and more importantly there is no guarantee that there can be any transfer of resources between years for the same project. This creates a risk for the Council in terms of managing the overall plan, although it would not be expected to step in to “bail out” a project that was unable to keep to its spend profile. The Council will have to operate strong programme management and monitoring arrangements to reflect the Government’s approach.
- 5.3 In respect of projects or activities that WFDC itself would undertake within the plan, the Council would have to bear the full cost of implementation, even if not all the cost was covered by UKSPF grant. The Council will apply project management arrangements to ensure that project funding is in place and that any potential overspends are identified and counteracted either by adjusting the project or by obtaining additional funding (which could be from the Council itself). This is no different from the position that other project promoters will be in.

## **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The UKSPF is being funded by the Government under section 50 of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 and the Council will be acting as the Government’s agent in respect of the relationship with other project promoters. In respect of projects or activities being delivered directly by WFDC, the Council has a wide range of powers on which it can rely.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 This report relates to an overarching investment plan for Government grant. It is not considered that an equality impact assessment is required. Any projects funded by UKSPF will have to consider equality issues and undertake an assessment as appropriate.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 As explained in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3, the Council will need to implement appropriate programme and project management arrangements for the UKSPF

allocation for Wyre Forest, in order to manage risks relating to the funding programme and to any projects for which it is directly responsible.

**9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 The Cabinet is invited to approve submission of the investment plan for 2022-25 as set out in this report.

**10. CONSULTEES**

10.1 Cabinet

10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 UKSPF prospectus, April 2022

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/108442/UKSPF_prospectus.pdf)

11.2 UKSPF financial allocations

[UKSPF allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/108442/UKSPF_financial_allocations.pdf)



# UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Investment Plan Questions

Offline version – for information only

Version 1  
April 2022

**Please note – the questions below are form information only. All investment plans must be submitted by lead local authorities via the online platform**

Your location

Wyre Forest District

Your details

Name

Email address

Phone number

Organisation name

Local challenges and opportunities

In this section, we will ask you:

- If you've identified any challenges or opportunities, you intend to support
- Which of the UKSPF investment priorities these fall under

**ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?**

**(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible**

Wyre Forest is a predominantly rural district centred around the 3 towns of Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley. Each town has its own character and community identity. Kidderminster was the world leading centre for carpet production but this sector has been in decline since the 1970s. Stourport and Bewdley are Georgian riverside towns that are popular destinations for day visitors.

The district faces a number of key challenges:

- Pockets of Deprivation
- Lower than average pay
- High levels of economic inactivity
- Maintenance of the environment

#### **Deprivation**

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 shows that Wyre Forest experiences significant levels of deprivation with:

- 4 areas in the 10% most deprived in England.
- 13 areas in the 20% most deprived in England.
- 20 areas in the 30% most deprived in England.

#### **Levels of Pay**

Wyre Forest residents' gross weekly pay is significantly less than the Great Britain average, although it is slightly higher than the West Midlands average. People employed in Wyre Forest earn significantly less than their counterparts in the West Midlands and Great Britain.

	Earnings by place of residence	Earnings by place of work
Wyre Forest	£583.70	£529.8
West Midlands	£581.80	£585.00
Great Britain	£613.10	£612.80

Average Gross Weekly Pay FTE (NOMIS, 2021)

### **Economic Inactivity**

The district has slightly higher levels of economic inactivity in the working age population (16 -64 years old) compared to both the West Midlands and Great Britain. This equates to 13,900 residents. However, the proportion of economically inactive people who are retired is significantly higher than the West Midlands and Great Britain. This reflects a wider national trend of a steady increase in the ageing population.

	Proportion of Working Age Population Economically Inactive	Proportion of Economically Inactive Population that are Retired
Wyre Forest	24%	30%
West Midlands	22.4%	12.2%
Great Britain	21.6%	13.8%

(NOMIS, Jan 2021 -Dec 2021)

### **Housing completions (2021)**

Wyre Forest has the third lowest completion rate in Worcestershire in 2021 – 270 units (by contrast, Wychavon had 620, Malvern Hills 510 and Worcester 480).

### **Maintenance of the Environment**

As a predominantly rural district, residents have access to extensive green spaces; however, in order to maintain the environmental character of the district, support is needed by landowners to improve the biodiversity of their land and the quality of green and blue infrastructure.

The need to improve the biodiversity of land and the quality of green and blue infrastructure is evidenced through the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Worcestershire and its accompanying evidence bases, which have identified the environmental character areas for Wyre Forest District and the potential opportunities for enhancements of the blue and green infrastructure. (Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined as ‘a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.)

The Green Infrastructure Strategy for Wyre Forest District shows how the district’s existing green infrastructure assets can be better linked in order to provide greater connectivity for both people and nature. There is a need for green infrastructure corridors to connect urban environments with the wider countryside.

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership’s Plan for Growth also recognises the economic value of the district’s natural landscape and the need to champion environmental sustainability.

### **ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?**

**(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible**

The following local opportunities have been identified for support under this priority:

- Improving town centres and high streets
- Unlocking land for commercial, residential and leisure developments in town centres
- Strategic alignment with place making interventions planned under the Kidderminster Future High Streets Fund and Leveling Up Fund
- Improvements to existing green infrastructure assets making green spaces more accessible and improving the health & wellbeing of our communities.

Kidderminster has been successful in securing future high street funding and levelling up funding with ambitions to increase the visitor economy and develop a creative hub to encourage people into the town. These opportunities are explored in the Supporting Local Business section.

### **Improvements to Green Infrastructure**

Wyre Forest District has a distinctive environment comprising diverse landscape character areas including urban areas. There are many green corridors within the District which are currently fragmented but have the potential to provide a comprehensive network of green infrastructure (GI). The District's watercourses in particular offer the opportunity to link the urban areas with the open countryside beyond.

There are opportunities to:

- increase the resilience to climate change, improve habitat connectivity, and support ecosystem services, particularly pollination, water quality, water supply and consistency. Also to create greater awareness within local organisations of the role green and blue infrastructure can play in delivering ecosystem services and an awareness that small actions can make a big difference to our natural environment.
- deliver a series of eco-system service benefits which are of importance to promoting health and well-being. For Wyre Forest these are informed by the Green Infrastructure strategy which outlines both physical and mental health and well-being benefits. Physically, the provision of quality and well-kept and well used open spaces, walking and cycling routes etc. for informal recreation, facilitates the opportunity and frequency for active recreation which includes walking and cycling. Research by Natural England has highlighted the importance of high quality natural green spaces in close proximity to homes or places of work to facilitate regular physical activity and promote general wellbeing.
- Deliver mental health benefits which are derived from frequent informal recreation opportunity including social interaction, which are enhanced when they take place in a natural outdoor setting. The strategy also outlines research which indicates that views of green space may reduce recovery times from illness, reduce staff sickness and enhance productivity.
- Make a positive contribution to the physical and mental health of residents and employees through interventions, that will encourage spaces to have public access, thus ensuring that the benefits are available to the whole community.
- help to green key employment sites by providing advice to businesses on how they can implement green infrastructure measures either in new build situations or retrofit solutions.

Worcestershire's GI Strategy and supporting evidence base seeks to enhance opportunities to link biodiversity with drainage, historic landscape character and improved accessibility.

### **ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?**

**(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible**

Mission 1 of the Levelling Up White Paper states that by 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK. These are all areas of challenge for Wyre Forest. It lags behind the West Midlands and England in 3 key areas:

- Productivity
- Low workplace earnings
- Innovation

#### **Productivity**

The latest official figures from 2019 show productivity (GVA per hour worked) in Wyre Forest was £23.30, one of the lowest in the UK. Productivity in Wyre Forest is significantly lower than the UK average of £35.20 and the West Midlands average of £32.80.

### **Workplace Earnings**

In 2021 the average workplace earnings in Wyre Forest were £529.80. This is 86% of national workplace pay. This rate of pay is significantly lower than neighbouring districts, the West Midlands and England.

Area	Earnings by Place of Work
Bromsgrove	£553.10
Malvern Hills	£559.70
Redditch	£661.60
Worcester	£568.70
Wychavon	£568.00
Wyre Forest	£529.80
Worcestershire	£574.90
West Midlands	£585.00
England	£613.30

Average Gross Weekly Pay, FTE (NOMIS 2021)

### **Innovation**

The value of grants awarded to Worcestershire companies from Innovate UK varies significantly from year to year. Over the last 5 years 0.3% of funding has been awarded to Worcestershire companies, less than the 1.1% share of the business base. In this period over £95 million of grants have been awarded by Innovate UK. Of this only 4 grants, totalling £322,447 have been awarded to businesses in Wyre Forest.

Over the last 5 years the highest number of Innovation UK grants have been awarded to Responsive projects followed by projects in the Manufacturing, Materials and Mobility sector.

Relative to comparator areas, Worcestershire has a high number of claims made for R&D tax credits, but a low amount of qualifying expenditure meaning that the average amount of R&D claimed in respect of is relatively low. Despite an increase in 2021, the proportion of those in employment who are science, research, engineering and technology professionals remains lower in Worcestershire than all other comparator areas. However, there are other positive indications of innovation in Worcestershire which had a higher proportion of firms undertaking product or process innovation or performing internal R&D than all other comparator areas.

### **ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?**

**(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible**

There are significant opportunities to:

- Meet demand for business support
- Develop and promote the visitor economy

#### **Demand for Business Support:**

Recent surveys with Worcestershire businesses have revealed that:

- 40% of respondents (322 businesses) defined their business' current situation as "growing"; this positive view of the future was a significant change from 13% in March 2021 survey.



- Of the above businesses, 73% said that they had plans for investment and growth over the next 12 months. The largest proportion of these business were in the 2-50 employee size band.
- Over half of all survey respondents (56%) said that they have plans for investment and growth over the next 12 months.

The top areas of support that businesses said they would like to see offered over the next 12 months were consistent with previous surveys in 2020 and 2021 and were:

- Digital Marketing
- Business Planning for Raising Finance
- Sales & Business Development
- Bespoke one to one business advice/consultancy
- Advice and support on the introduction of new technology to the business

The current challenges that businesses are facing include:

- Rising energy costs
- Customer demand/competitiveness
- Supply chain problems
- New technology - upfront costs barrier for many SMEs
- Impartial advice - best options in relation to net zero

(Source: Worcestershire Business Survey (801 businesses) - November 2021 to January 2022)

The Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Economic Report (Q4 2021) highlights a strong desire by companies to reduce environmental impact. The top 3 areas of assistance identified by businesses to help them take further action to reduce environmental impact or cut carbon emissions were funding; impartial, technical advice, and networking with like-minded businesses.

In 2021/22 the local Growth Hub engaged and delivered to over 2000 businesses. The top areas of advice and support sought during that engagement were:

- Finance/loans/grants
- Business growth advice and support
- General advice
- Skills and training
- Innovation and R&D processes
- Energy and resource efficiency
- International trade and exporting

There is clearly a demand amongst local business to access support to enable them to grow, particularly in areas that are key drivers for economic growth such as innovation and digitization. Current business engagement through Worcestershire's EU funded programmes managed by the County Council and part funded by district councils will end shortly yet continues to experience a high demand across all areas - Growth, Innovation, Technology, Net Zero. Over the past 4 years over 180 businesses have received direct bespoke support, 181 businesses have received grants totaling over £1.8m, creating over 75 jobs (with more to come) and saving almost 600 tonnes of carbon.

Supporting businesses to innovate and grow will help to address Wyre Forest's low wage economy and drive up productivity.

### **Developing and Promoting the Visitor Economy**

Wyre Forest district is located at the centre of an area with tremendous tourism appeal. The value of tourism to the Wyre Forest economy pre-pandemic was £136m per year. In 2021, this dropped to £65m per year. Research commissioned by the district council showed that there were nearly 2.5 million day trips to the district in 2019 and over half a million over-night stays.

To further enhance the area's appeal, there is a strategic opportunity to use Kidderminster's location as a catalyst for building and promoting a new brand centred on the River Severn valley. Working in collaboration with nearby areas, the new brand concept will be centred around Industrial and Cultural Heritage; Visitor attractions and the Great Outdoors. The brand will be anchored in strong core attractors, outlined below:

**The Iron Gorge**

- World heritage site
- 10 award-winning attractions
- The birthplace of the industrial revolution

**Stourport-on-Severn**

- Pioneer town of the canal age
- Award-winning basins

**Sir Rowland Hill (birthplace: Kidderminster)**

- Originator of the penny postage system and developer of the modern postal service

**Museum of Carpet (Kidderminster)**

- Over 300 years of Kidderminster's industrial heritage and 3,000 carpet designs

**Bewdley**

- 'the most perfect Georgian town in Worcestershire'
- Award-winning Bewdley Museum

**Wenlock Priory**

- Remains of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Cluniac Priory founded by the Normans on the site of an Anglo-Saxon monastery founded in about 680 by King Merewalh of Mercia, whose abbess daughter Milburge was hailed a saint

**Buildwas Abbey**

- Impressive ruins of a Cistercian abbey, including its unusually unaltered 12<sup>th</sup> century church, beautiful vaulted and tile-floored chapter house and recently re-opened crypt chapel.

**Hagley Hall**

- Grade I, 18<sup>th</sup> Century house on 250 acres of landscaped parkland.

**West Midlands Safari Park**

- Award-winning attraction with over 165 species of exotic animals
- Four-mile safari drive-through
- Immersive visitor experience in 15 luxury lodges (opened 2020) situated with animal enclosures (tiger, rhino, red panda, elephant, cheetah and giraffe lodges). The only place in the UK to offer such experience.
- 750,00 visitors p.a. (pre-pandemic and pre-investment in the luxury lodges)

**Severn Valley Railways**

- Line completed in 1862
- 250,000 visitors p.a. pre-pandemic

**Arley Arboretum**

- Designated 'the best place in Britain to see the autumn colours' (BBC Countryfile 2017)
- Longest Laburnum arch (measuring 65 metres)
- 300 species dating back over 350 years
- One of the finest collections of Magnolias and Acers in the UK

**Bodenham Arboretum**

- Over 3,000 species of trees and shrubs from all over the world spread over 134 acres
- Its peace and tranquility was described by the Tourist Board as the 'Bodenham Experience'

**Attingham Park**

- 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion and estate

**Astley Vineyard**

- Multi-award winning single estate boutique wine maker. One of the oldest and smallest in the country.
- Their 'Old vine Kerner' was named 'one of the most iconic and romantic of all English dry white wines' (Matthew Jukes, multi-award winning author and journalist).

**Wyre Forest National Reserve**

- Wyre Forest is part of one of the largest ancient lowland coppice oak woodlands in England. The 549ha reserve is a mosaic of woodland, grassland meadows, old orchards and areas of scrub. Home to England's largest colony of pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies. In recent years, 33 type of butterfly and over 1,150 types of moth have been recorded.
- Three-way marked waling trails, cycling trail, horse riding, orienteering, Norfic walking etc.

**Wyre Forest – Go Ape**

- Adventure activity with Go-Ape, UK's No 1 forest adventure. High ropes courses, high-rise zip wires for adults (Treetop Challenge) and activities designed with the younger family in mind (Treetop Adventure).

**River Severn water sports**

- Canoeing and kayaking on River Severn
- Bridgnorth – Arley
- Bridgnorth – Bewdley
- Coalport – Bewdley
- Two day River Severn camping trips

**Attingham Park (parkland)**

- 200 acres of parkland and woods
- 500,000 visitors per year

**ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)**

**(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible**

The key challenges that Wyre Forest faces regarding People & Skills are:

- Educational Attainment
- Youth Unemployment
- Economic Inactivity
- Mismatch of skills
- Loss of ESF funded programmes

**Educational Attainment**

The proportion of Wyre Forest residents with qualification is higher than the West Midlands and Great Britain at all levels except NVQ Level 4 and above.

Qualification	Wyre Forest	West Midlands	Great Britain
NVQ4 and above	36.2%	38.8%	43.5%
NVQ3 and above	61.1%	57.2%	61.5%
NVQ2 and above	85.7%	75.2%	78.2%
NVQ1 and above	97.1%	84.9%	87.6%

Source: NOMIS (Jan 2021 – Dec 2021)

Whilst there are relatively high levels of NVQ1 and above in the Wyre Forest area there are no statistics on the numbers with no qualifications available. Anecdotal evidence from employment support projects suggest the number of economically inactive people who lack basic skills is 36%. Experience also suggests that those that lack basic skills are not in a position to engage in formal educational or vocational training. There are a number of factors for this such as previously poor or lack of experience of formal education, literacy or numeracy levels too low to engage in accredited qualifications, lack of digital skills, and social isolation.

In 2021, the proportion of Year 11 students, in mainstream education, attaining 5 GCSEs Level 5 or above, including English and Maths, was 37%. This compares to an average for the whole of England of 43%. (Source: Department for Education)

### **Unemployment**

In May 2022 the unemployment rate for Wyre Forest was 3.3%. This compares favourably with both the West Midlands (5%) and England (3.9%). Youth unemployment (18 to 24 year olds) is a little higher at 4% but is still lower than the youth unemployment rate for the West Midlands (5.8%) and England (4.5%).

Whilst unemployment has been dropping since the high of 6.1% during the pandemic, there are still pockets of employment deprivation. The district sees particular challenges in the wards of Broadwaters and Foley Park.

### **Economic Inactivity**

As previously stated, levels of Economic Inactivity are relatively high in Wyre Forest (24% of working age population). Whilst a significant proportion of this figure is due to people leaving the workforce early and retiring, 84% describe themselves as not wanting a job. This may be due to long-term illness, disability, caring responsibilities or they are simply discouraged.

In May 2022, 91 young people in Wyre Forest are NEET (not in employment, education or training) and unknown within years 12 and 13, representing 3.2 % of school year population. Nationally, the issues that affect young people who become NEET cost over £65,000 each in direct lifetime costs to public finances and £120,000 in wider lifetime costs to the economy and wider community. Current NEET figures would estimate this to cost £10.9M for the current year 12/13 population to the public finances.

### **Mismatched Skills**

The Worcestershire LEP Local Skills Report 2022 has identified the following issues:

- Businesses have identified a shortage of skilled staff as a barrier to innovation and growth and is one of the major worries for local employers. Recent analysis of the online vacancies shows a 92% increase in demand for new recruits since December 2020.
- Ongoing Surveys show a growing number of employers reporting challenges in recruiting, with the last quarter of 2021, showing that 74% of employers experienced difficulty recruiting
- The most frequently cited skills deficits are at higher levels in IT, job-specific, and technical skills.

- We have a higher proportion than England of hard-to-fill vacancies: these are highest amongst middle-skill roles, particularly Skilled Trades.
- Worcestershire's employers report a need for understanding of their sectors in education and embedding a greater level of careers support to move successfully into industry post school, further or higher education. Many Employers understand the need to have a role in supporting the long term supply of talent into Worcestershire's employers.
- The impact of automation will be significant, with 10% of low-skilled jobs likely to be affected. Wyre Forest faces significant risk due to the presence of routine/ lower-skilled jobs and industry processes, such as Process Manufacturing. However, some higher skilled roles (such as those within Finance and Business Services) are also susceptible to automation.

#### **Loss of ESF Funded Support Programmes**

There are currently a number of ESF funded programmes delivering skills and employment support to residents of Wyre Forest. These include:

- Skills Support for the Unemployed – supported 33 Wyre Forest residents from July 2019 to date.
- Skills Support for the Workforce – supported 268 employees since April 2019.
- Community Grants – 97 grants awarded to community organisations to help Wyre Forest residents furthest from the labour market.
- NEET support – supported 84 young people not in employment, education or training or at risk of become so.

Collectively, these programmes have supported 530 people in Wyre Forest.

#### **ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)**

**(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible**

The following opportunities have been identified for support under this priority:

- Tailored support for the economically inactive and those furthest away from the labour market including enrichment activities and volunteering
- Increasing the basic skills levels of residents and upskilling the workforce including interventions to increase levels of digital skills

Programmes of support can be developed to address youth unemployment at a district level. Experience of previous and current programmes show that interventions can:

- Increase the levels of social mobility of young people
- Increase the basic skills levels of residents
- Upskills residents in training and education

Specialist interventions can be developed to move young people through a co-ordinated journey, covering the key stages designed to inspire them, explore opportunities, prepare for the move into education or employment, support to apply for apprenticeship or FE/HE courses and follow ups to ensure that momentum is sustained. Programmes will be designed to meet individual needs and provide bespoke journeys that ensure improved outcomes for the individual.

Programmes of support for the economically inactive and those furthest from the labour market provide tailored support to help people into employment, particularly those who are not supported by mainstream provision. Enrichment activities and volunteering also helps to reduce the barrier to economic activity. Addressing issue of digital exclusion will support individuals into employment.

The Worcestershire LEP Skills Report 2022 identifies the local sector strengths as construction, healthcare, and business administration. It anticipates that the greatest employment growth will be within advance manufacturing, cyber security, IT & defence, and agri-tech.

The current acceleration of demand around sustainable business practice and the drive to net zero will be a significant driver for growth. The sector is predicted to grow at a rapid rate, increasing staff levels by around 200%.

Worcestershire has a lower level of employment in the digital sector than the England average; however digital skills remain in the highest demand from employers. This applies equally to those new to the job market, replacement labour or when reskilling existing staff. Digital marketing and cloud-based computing have the greatest current and predicted use locally and salaries within digital skilled roles have increase by 35% over the last year.

Worcestershire has a high proportion of vacancies where management and leadership skills have been identified as essential. Manufacturing continues to have the highest number of vacancies in the county.

With significant growth predicted in areas where there is already a skills deficit, access to high quality, relevant training is essential if residents are to benefit from the growth in business. Focusing on those sectors where high growth is predicted and where more skilled, higher paid roles will be created, will ensure that local residents will be able to access the best opportunities. Support to upskill the existing workforce and new employees will ensure that businesses are able to realise their growth ambitions and local residents will benefit from increased opportunities.

## Interventions

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Interventions you've chosen for each year of funding
- Outcomes you want to deliver
- Any interventions that are not listed here
- How these interventions fall under the UKSPF investment priorities, and your rationale for them
- Interventions not included in our list will be assessed before being approved, where you will need to show a clear rationale, how the intervention is value for money, what outcomes it will deliver and how you will monitor and evaluate the intervention. This may include a theory of change or logic chain.

### WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	
Jobs safeguarded	√
Increased footfall	√
Increased visitor numbers	√
Reduced vacancy rates	√
Greenhouse gas reductions	
Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	
Improved perception of facilities/amenities	√
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	
Increased users of facilities / amenities	√
Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project	√

Increased use of cycleways or paths	
Increase in Biodiversity	√
Increased affordability of events/entry	√
Improved perception of safety	
Reduction in neighbourhood crime	
Improved engagement numbers	
Improved perception of events	√
Increased number of web searches for a place	√
Volunteering numbers as a result of support	
Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support	√
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	√
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	
None of the above	

**SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.**

**Intervention**

*A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.*

E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs

E2: Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding

E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces

E4: Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer

E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities

E7: Support for active travel enhancements

E8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area

E10: Local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues

E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups

E12: Investment in community engagement schemes to support community involvement in decision making in local regeneration

E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.

**DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE LIST?**

**State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these**

NO	
Explain how each intervention meets the Communities and Place investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.	
Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as <a href="#">set out in the guidance</a> .	
Yes	No
Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.	

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?	
Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Communities and Place investment priority and the location of the proposed project.	
Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as <a href="#">set out in the guidance</a> .	
Yes	No
Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.	

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.	
Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	
Jobs safeguarded	
Increased footfall	
Increased visitor numbers	
Reduced vacancy rates	



Greenhouse gas reductions	
Number of new businesses created	
Improved perception of markets	
Increased business sustainability	
Increased number of businesses supported	
Increased amount of investment	
Improved perception of attractions	
Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm	
Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity	
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	
Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	
Number of new to market products	
Number of R&D active businesses	
Increased number of innovation active SMEs	
Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services	
Increased number of innovation plans developed	
Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support	
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	
Number of businesses increasing their export capability	
Increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed	
Number of businesses with improved productivity	
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	
None of the above	

**SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE**

**Intervention**

*A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.*

E17: Development & promotion of visitor economy

E19: Increasing investment in research and development at the local level. Investment to support the diffusion of innovation knowledge and activities. Support the commercialisation of ideas, encouraging collaboration and accelerating the path to market so that more ideas translate into industrial and commercial practices.

E20: Research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services

E21: Development of innovation infrastructure at the local level

E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks

E24: training hubs, business support offers, incubators

E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity

E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth

E31: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies

**DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS LIST?**

<b>State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these</b>	
NO	
<b>Explain how each intervention meets the Supporting Local Business investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.</b>	
N/A	
<b>Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as <a href="#">set out in the guidance</a>.</b>	
Yes	No
<b>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</b>	

<b>HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?</b>	
<b>Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Supporting Local Business investment priority and the location of the proposed project</b>	
YES	
<b>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as <a href="#">set out in the guidance</a>.</b>	
Yes	No
<b>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</b>	

<b>WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.</b>	
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Tick if applicable</b>
Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support	

Increased active or sustained participants of UKSPF beneficiaries in community groups [and/or] increased employability through development of interpersonal skills	
Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	
Number of people in supported employment [and] number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services	
Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services	
Number of people engaged in job-searching following support	
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	
Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months	
Increased employment, skills and/or UKSPF objectives incorporated into local area corporate governance	
Number of people in education/training	
Increased number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	
Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace	
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	
Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences, and skills	
Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education, and training.	
Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions	
Number of people with proficiency in pre-employment and interpersonal skills (relationship, organisational and anger-management, interviewing, CV and job application writing)	
<b>Multiply only</b> - Increased number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2.	
<b>Multiply only</b> - Increased number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2.	
None of the above	

**SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.**

**Intervention**

*A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.*

E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths\* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps

E34: Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), and life skills and career skills\*\* provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications

E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering

E36: Intervention to increase levels of digital inclusion

E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses

E38: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs and high-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that is not being met through other provision

E41: Funding to support local digital skills

**DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS LIST?**

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<b>State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these</b>	
NO	
<b>Explain how each intervention meets the People and Skills investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.</b>	
<b>Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity?</b> <b>All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as <a href="#">set out in the guidance</a>.</b>	
Yes	No
<b>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</b>	

<b>ENGLAND ONLY:</b> People and Skills interventions can only be used in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 if you have identified a local voluntary and community provision, previously supported by the European Social Fund, at risk of closure. If you have not identified a suitable provision, you will not be able to select interventions for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 and your investment plan will not be approved.	
<b>HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS for 2024-2025 WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?</b>	
Yes	
<b>Describe the projects for 2024-25, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.</b>	
<b>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?</b> <b>All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as <a href="#">set out in the guidance</a>.</b>	
Yes	
<b>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</b>	

<b>HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A LOCAL VOLUNTARY PROVISION AT RISK AS PART OF YOUR PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?</b>		
Yes		No
<b>(If Yes) Describe the local voluntary provision at risk and your rationale for supporting it.</b>		
<b>Provide the European Social Fund Project Names and Project References for this voluntary and community provision at risk.</b>		
<b>What year do you intend to fund these projects? Select all that apply.</b>		
2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Describe the projects for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.</b>		
<b>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?</b>		
All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as <a href="#">set out in the guidance</a> .		
Yes		No
<b>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</b>		

<b>SCOTLAND, WALES &amp; NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY</b>	
<b>HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?</b>	
Yes	No
<b>Describe the projects, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.</b>	

<p><b>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?</b></p> <p><b>All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as <a href="#">set out in the guidance</a>.</b></p>	
Yes	No
<p><b>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</b></p>	

## Approach to delivery and governance

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Structures you have in place to support delivery
- Support you have from stakeholders and the local community
- How you've engaged with MPs as part of your investment plan
- Opportunities you have identified to work with other places

Places need to show how MPs that cover the lead local authority have been engaged on the investment plan and whether they support it. More detail on the role of MPs can be found [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT		
Have you engaged with any of the following as part of your investment plan? Select all that apply.		
Public sector organisations	Private sector organisations	Civil society organisations
Describe how you have engaged with any of these organisations. Give examples where possible.		
<p>Engagement took place with the following organisations: Kidderminster College, Community Housing Group, Kidderminster Town Council, Stourport Town Council, local parishes.</p>		
Summarise the governance structures you have in place, including how any advisory panels or associated partnership groups are made up		
<p>The Re-Wyre Board, which is a private sector led public-private partnerships, acts as the partnership group for the Wyre Forest Investment Plan. The Board is chaired by the MD of a local successful IT business and includes local business and voluntary sector leaders and representatives of Worcestershire LEP, Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Kidderminster College and Wyre Forest District Council.</p> <p>The delivery team will be part of the Programme Management Office (PMO) within the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) service. The team will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring programme implementation with the project deliverers.</p> <p>Other advisory groups include North Worcestershire Business Leaders, Kidderminster Business Improvement District (BID), Severn Valley Partnership, Visit Worcestershire.</p>		

Confirm all MPs covering your lead local authority have been invited to join the local partnership group.	
Yes - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
Are there MPs who are not supportive of your investment plan?	
	No
(If Yes) Who are the MPs that are not supportive and outline their reasons why.	

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PROJECT SELECTION	
Are you intending to select projects in any way other than by competition for funding?	
Yes	No
(If Yes) Describe your approach to selecting projects, and why you intend to do it this way.	

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?	
Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.	
Intervention	Tick if applicable
A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.	
Describe any interventions not included in this list?	
Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?	

<b>DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?</b>	
<b>Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.</b>	
<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Tick if applicable</b>
A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.	
<b>Describe any interventions not included in this list?</b>	
<b>Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?</b>	

[illegible]

<b>Describe any interventions not included in this list?</b>
<b>Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?</b>

<b>PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY</b>
<b>How have you considered your public sector equality duty in the design of your investment plan?</b>
<b>How will you consider your public sector equality duty when implementing your investment plan, including in the selection of projects?</b>

<b>RISKS</b>	
<b>Have you identified any key risks that could affect delivery, for example lack of staff or expertise?</b>	
Yes	No
<b>(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.</b>	
Risk – capacity. A new UKSPF Project Officer role will be created to support the delivery of the fund.	
<b>Have you identified any key fraud risks that could affect UKSPF delivery?</b>	
No	
<b>(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.</b>	

Capacity and capability – further details needed from non WFDC delivery partners

In this section, we will ask you about:

- The capacity and capability of your team to manage funding
- The resources you have in place for work related to UKSPF

Your answers here will help us know how to support you with delivery. They will not affect the amount of funding you will get.

Answer as honestly as possible.

TEAM RESOURCE
<b>How many people (FTE) will be put in place to work with UKSPF funding?</b>
Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR) – 0.2FTE NWedR Business Growth Manager – 0.5FTE NWedR Communications and Engagement Officer – 0.2FTE UKSPF Project Officer – 1FTE
<b>Describe what role these people will have, including any seniority and experience.</b>
Head of NWedR – Senior Responsible Owner NWedR Business Growth Manager – Project Manager NWedR Communications and Engagement Officer – comms, promotion and stakeholder engagement, UKSPF Project Officer – day to day programme administration
<b>Brief responsibilities per role to be added.</b>

- Strong capability: Has extensive experience and/or a proven track record of delivery in this area.
- Strong capacity: High degree of confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Some capability: Has previous experience of delivery in this area.
- Some capacity: Confident that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Limited capability: Does not have previous experience and/or no track record of delivery in this area.
- Limited capacity: Limited confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area. Additional resource may be needed to support delivery.

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
<b>How would you describe your team's current experience of delivering funding and managing growth funds?</b>		
Very experienced	Some experience	No previous experience
<b>How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?</b>		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
<b>How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?</b>		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability

<b>How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for procurement?</b>		
Strong capacity	<b>Some capacity</b>	Limited capacity
<b>How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for subsidies?</b>		
<b>Strong capability</b>	Some capability	Limited capability
<b>How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for subsidies?</b>		
Strong capacity	<b>Some capacity</b>	Limited capacity

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
<b>Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Communities and Place interventions you have select?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>		No
<b>How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?</b>		
<b>Strong capability</b>	Some capability	Limited capability
<b>Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.</b>		
<p>The interventions will be delivered by established teams in the Wyre Forest District Council and local Town and Parish Councils. Procurement, finance and legal support will be offered to the Town and Parish Councils by the WFDC central teams. WFDC has an established Programme Management Office (PMO) within the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) service with comprehensive knowledge, skills and expertise in delivering multi-million pound regeneration and place making projects.</p>		
<b>Describe what further support would help address these challenges.</b>		
<b>How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?</b>		
<b>Strong capability</b>	Some capability	Limited capability
<b>Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.</b>		
<p>These interventions will be delivered by various teams within WFDC in the following service areas: NWEDR, environment. The NN programme will be delivered by a partnership between Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and Worcestershire County Council.</p>		
<b>Describe what further support would help address these challenges.</b>		

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY
<b>Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Supporting Local Business interventions you have select?</b>

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?</b>		
<b>Strong capability</b>	Some capability	Limited capability
<b>Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.</b>		
<p>The interventions will be delivered through the established business support teams at Worcestershire Growth Hub and Worcestershire County Council. Both organisations have an existing team of project managers and project support officers. There will be a dedicated point of contact for the project. Project managers have many years experience of managing large scale externally funded programmes, and a detailed knowledge of procurement, contract management, subsidy control and reporting requirements and publicity rules.</p>		
<b>Describe what further support would help address these challenges.</b>		
<p></p>		
<b>How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?</b>		
<b>Strong capability</b>	Some capability	Limited capability
<b>Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.</b>		
<p>The interventions will be delivered through the established business support teams at Worcestershire Growth Hub and Worcestershire County Council. Both organisations have an existing team of project managers and project support officers. There will be a dedicated point of contact for the project. Project managers have many years experience of managing large scale externally funded programmes, and a detailed knowledge of procurement, contract management, subsidy control and reporting requirements and publicity rules.</p>		
<b>Describe what further support would help address these challenges.</b>		
<p></p>		

<b>PEOPLE AND SKILLS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY</b>		
<b>Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the People and Skills interventions you have select?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?</b>		
<b>Strong capability</b>	Some capability	Limited capability
<b>Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.</b>		
<p>These interventions will be delivered by a consortium led by the Skills4Partnerships, a well established multi-disciplinary team led by the Worcestershire County Council (WCC). WCC has an existing team of project managers and project support officers. There will be a dedicated point of contact for the project. Project managers have many years experience of managing large scale externally funded programmes, and a detailed knowledge of procurement, contract management, subsidy control and reporting requirements and publicity rules.</p>		

<b>Describe what further support would help address these challenges.</b>		
<b>How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?</b>		
<b>Strong capability</b>	Some capability	Limited capability
<b>Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.</b>		
<p>These interventions will be delivered by a consortium led by the Skills4Partnerships, a well established multi-disciplinary team led by the Worcestershire County Council (WCC). WCC has an existing team of project managers and project support officers. There will be a dedicated point of contact for the project. Project managers have many years experience of managing large scale externally funded programmes, and a detailed knowledge of procurement, contract management, subsidy control and reporting requirements and publicity rules.</p>		
<b>Describe what further support would help address these challenges.</b>		

SUPPORT TO DELIVERY UKSPF	
<p>All lead authorities can use up to 4% of their UKSPF allocation to support the delivery of their chosen interventions but by exception, lead authorities will be able to use more than 4%. Are you planning to use more than 4%?</p>	
Yes	<b>No</b>
<b>(If Yes) Explain why you wish to use more than 4%.</b>	

### Approvals

Before submitting your investment plan, you should have approval from your:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Section 151 Officer

- Leader of your lead authority

Do you have approval from your Chief Executive Officer for this investment plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you have approval from your Section 151 Officer for this investment plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you have approval from the leader of your lead authority for this investment plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**If you do not have approval from any of these people, please explain why this is:**

<p></p>
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Additional documents

You will have received an email giving you access to a folder where you will need to upload supporting evidence to your investment plan. All applicants must complete and upload the following spreadsheet to the folder prior to submitting their investment plan:

- UKSPF Expenditure Profile spreadsheet
- UKSPF Indicative Deliverables spreadsheet

Your investment plan submission will be considered incomplete without the required documents.

Have you completed and uploaded the two spreadsheets to the SharePoint folder as requested?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No