

Appendix B: UKSPF Proposed 25/26 Projects and Monitoring Process *with reference to UKSPF Allocation 25/26, 21st February 2025*

Proposed Projects

A select number of internally led projects are proposed alongside the recommendation to run an open call, as follows, based on providing a continual service as new financial year starts. These, at the upper limit, would total circa £126,000, however £40,000 of this would still remain available under a targeted open call for applications as two continued grant programmes (Extend the Season Events Grants and Widening Participation Sports Grants).

Continuation of the Council's Town Centre Manager Role - £19,506

The Town Centre Manager is an already established member/contributor to the Clacton Town Centre Board and the High Street Accelerator Partnership, and retention of this post will not only ensure consistency in the project delivery, it will also provide an invaluable link between the Council, the partnerships and the town centre businesses. It will maintain a much-needed resource to help drive these projects to completion.

Previously fully funded through UKSPF allocation, it is proposed to split this fulltime role's salary to reflect time spent on the towns; therefore three days per week would be funded via the Long Term Plan for Towns and focused on Clacton and Jaywick accordingly, and the remaining two days per week funded through UKSPF would work solely on other towns Districtwide.

No specific budget will be allocated to the role over and above the salary and on costs outlined, but the open call for projects will be available for the Town Centre Manager either to bid into or support local businesses or groups who wish to apply.

Relevant outputs and outcomes include; number of enterprises receiving non-financial support, number of people reached, number of local events or activities supported, increased footfall, number of vacant units filled.

Continuation of the Council's Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) Officer Role - £26,500

The Tendring Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) is a well-established group consisting of representatives from across Tendring's Creative, Cultural and Education sectors. The Tendring Cultural Education Partnership is a key delivery mechanism for the Council's Creative and Cultural Strategy. In addition, the LCEP Officer leads on young people and freelancer creative and cultural projects, supporting delivery of the Community Regeneration Partnership (formerly Levelling Up Partnership) projects including: Clacton Town Centre premises, seafront assets regeneration, Martello Tower E and projects allocated to the Heritage strategy including Dovercourt Leading Lighthouse and Causeway.

The Tendring LCEP is a product of Arts Council England 'Lets Create' Strategy and there is a shared commitment to supporting LCEPs across the Country and in particular in priority place locations including Tendring. The Tendring LCEP aligns with Tendring District Council's 'Corporate Plan 2024-28 (Our Vision) and supports the 'raising of aspirations and creation of opportunities' with a focus on young people'.

The role was previously funded through year 3 of the UKSPF, with an allocated budget to deliver LCEP projects. No specific budget is proposed to be allocated to the role over and above the salary and on costs outlined for 25/26 but the open call for projects will be available for the LCEP Officer either to bid into or support local businesses/groups who wish to apply.

Relevant outputs and outcomes include; number of organisations receiving grants, number of projects successfully completed, number of events/participatory programmes/activities supported, increased affordability of events entry, improved engagement numbers, number of community led arts cultural heritage and creative programmes.

Tendring-wide Business Support Service – Up to £40,000

UKSPF has previously funded a bespoke support service for Tendring businesses to access tailored expert advice; allocated via procurement process to Colbea. It is proposed to re-tender and continue this service which provides valuable guidance to our local business community on a range of topics including (not limited to) business planning and forecasting, employing staff/apprentices, access to funding, business growth, and sector-specific advice. It is recommended to continue this service as, from experience of the current 3-year programme, very few projects come forward under this intervention which deliver beyond their own local area, certainly not Districtwide, and without UKSPF covering the cost for 2025/26 this would represent a new cost pressure.

It has also been considered how this service overlaps with the service joint-commissioned via North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) which procures skills and business support services along similar lines. In terms of outputs and outcomes (accessed via monthly KPIs) for local businesses specifically, it is recommended that the bespoke service would be of more value to our local businesses as uptake has been higher across all indicators including funded hours of support and engagement at networking/support events on various topics. It is therefore recommended not to continue with the contribution to NEEB for 2025/26; as this would be 10 percent of total UKSPF allocation per NEEB's agreed request per Council, which would amount to approximately £57,000 for the same output, representing better value for money.

This service has been included at this stage to ensure time for that re-tender, and to ensure no break in provision of the service for businesses which rely on the support available.

Relevant outputs and outcomes include; number of enterprises receiving non financial support, number of people attending training sessions, number of enterprises engaged in new markets or with increased productivity, increased business sustainability,

number of enterprises adopting new or improved products or services, number of new enterprises created as a result of support.

Extend the Season Events Grants Scheme – up to £15,000

The Extend the Season Events Grants have allocated funding to businesses/community groups to encourage footfall in town and village centres during traditionally quieter times of the year, and have been enthusiastically taken up across the District. It is proposed to allocate up to £15,000 for 2025/26, chosen to reflect the speed at which the money has been applied for and awarded in the most recent year the grant has been active, 2024/25, and tweak the criteria to exclude only December, as opposed to also excluding school holidays, which has been the case so far with the scheme.

Relevant outputs and outcomes include; number of local markets created or supported, number of enterprises receiving grants, number of people reached, number of local events or activities supported, number of events/participatory programmes, increased footfall, increased visitor numbers, improved perception of markets.

Widening Participation Sports Grants Scheme – Up to £25,000

Similarly, the Widening Participation Sports Grants scheme, which has allocated grants to community groups/local sports teams to encourage increased participation, has also been enthusiastically taken up across the District since it was launched in the first year of UKSPF. It is proposed to allocate up to £25,000, to reflect the speed with which the amount was applied for and awarded in 2024/25. If the full amount is not allocated for either scheme, any underspend will be reallocated to the wider open call to support projects there.

Relevant outputs and outcomes include; number of organisations receiving grants, number of tournaments supported, number of events/participatory programmes, number of local events or activities supported, number of people reached, increased users of facilities/amenities, increased affordability of events entry, improved engagement numbers.

Monitoring Processes

After a grant has been awarded, a standard Grant Offer Letter is tailored to the specific project and must be signed and returned before any amount is released.

A process is then in place to monitor each grant awarded in line with the six-monthly reporting requirements from MHCLG; reporting is also required by the Council at the completion of each project to monitor spend and delivery of the outputs and outcomes. This has been established via previous UKSPF open calls and also other grants the Council has been responsible for.

Officers contact the grant recipient regularly and, on a case-by-case basis:

- examine receipts for eligible spend;

- make site visits to check applied-for work is completed/progressing on time and to cost;
- attend events paid for via the Fund to ensure they take place as agreed, to witness visitor numbers, etc;
- require written reports to include number of attendees/new members, testimony from beneficiaries, other written evidence relevant to the project e.g. anecdotal/human interest benefits of a project;
- see photographs of new equipment/facilities in situ;
- see evidence of spend recorded formally such as entries onto payroll/invoices for freelancer time; and
- any other reasonable evidence as dictated by the specific project.

Reporting to MHCLG is, as aforementioned, six-monthly and based around reporting specifically the outputs and outcomes delivered at each point by the entirety of the UKSPF spent thus far. Reporting is completed via MHCLG's bespoke Power App, and signed off by the Council's s151 Officer before submission.

Some of the Power App's standard questions from 2022-2025, for reference, are as follows:

- Spend to date against the three UKSPF investment priorities and forecast
- Spend to date and forecast for Management and Administration
- Summary of progress with an overall Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating of the progress and trend; plus a short narrative progress summary update
- Forecast underspend at the end of the financial year, (capital and revenues totals)