


Delegated authority officer decision notice

Decision made by	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord in consultation with Cabinet member for Economic Development and Regeneration for South Oxfordshire District Council (Cllr Robin Bennett).
Lead officer contact details	Nick King, Economic Development Manager Nick.king@southandvale.gov.uk T: 07801 203545
Decision (Keep this succinct)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To award Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF) grants for 2023/2024 as detailed in appendix one, totalling £181,000. 2. To approve key decisions of grant awards of over £25,000 as stated below. 3. To award these grants subject to the conditions laid out in appendices.
Key decision? (see notes below)	Yes (includes capital grant awards of over £25,000)
If key decision, has call-in been waived by the Scrutiny Committee chair(s)?	No
Confidential decision, and if so under which exempt category?	No
Delegated authority reference from the constitution	ICMD delegating authority for implementation of the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds respectively to Head of Development and Corporate Landlord in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration.
Risks	<p>Timeframe for defrayal of funds: The council has two annual allocations under the Rural England Prosperity Fund, the first of these (2023/24) must be defrayed by 31 March 2024. Failure to defray the current year's allocation by the deadline may lead to a reduction of 2024/25 allocations.</p> <p>Reputational risk: Related to the above risks, the fund is high profile within rural communities and representative groups, there is a risk to our reputation if funds are not paid out to support rural projects.</p> <p>Project viability and delivery: Projects funded via REPF must be complete by 31 March 2025. This is self-certified through the</p>

	<p>application process, and completion dates will be reiterated as a condition the award offer letter, this may mean that in the event of non-completion, clawback of funds is required.</p> <p>Fraud and assurance: Funding for external organisations carries a risk of fraud. Assurance processes, including proof of identity checks, and wider due diligence credit checks (via the FAME database), have been undertaken at the application assessment stage. Appropriate assurance conditions will also be built into award offer letters.</p> <p>Challenge and appeals: Funding is offered on a competitive basis. Applicants may disagree with officer's recommendations / grant panel decisions however decisions will be made in compliance of the adopted REPF grants policy. As additional mitigation detailed feedback will be provided to applicants who will be invited to re-apply for a second round of funding to take place later this year.</p>
<p>Reasons for decision</p>	<p>The recommended awards are summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomley – Eco woodland Outdoor Adventure and Learning centre recommended £45,000. • Aston Rowant Cricket Club – new pavilion recommended £45,000. • Stanley and Pickford – Farm shop upgrades recommended £30,000. • Thomley – Eco-friendly interactive water feature, recommended £61,000. <p>Recommended awards comply with the conditions outlined in the South REPF grants policy, (previously agreed via delegated authority).</p> <p>The grant scheme opened for applications on 25 October 2023 and closed on 24 November 2023. Of the 22 submitted applications, 13 moved forward to the scoring stage and nine did not meet the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>At the REPF Grant Panel Meeting (31 January 2024), Officers and REPF Grant Panel members used the agreed criteria in the policy to score the eligible applications to identify the highest scoring projects for funding.</p> <p>The REPF Grants Panel subsequently recommend that the three applications ranked as highest scoring within their theme receive the full amount of funding requested, and where budget allowed within a specific funding category, a fourth application receive the remaining budget (equating to 81 per cent of the amount requested within the application).</p> <p>In line with the policy, applications that passed eligibility checks but did not score more than six points were considered by the panel but were not subsequently recommended for funding.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended Awards are detailed in appendix one (REPF Grant Panel Scoring) • Grant policy and conditions of awards can be found in appendices two and three. • Detailed board papers providing more project details can be found in appendix four.
Alternative options rejected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make recommended awards. Rejected on the basis that all awards can be demonstrated as compliant with appropriate policy and terms, and are supported by Officer and Grant Panel reviews.
Legal implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The REPF scheme is governed by an MOU (previously agreed via ICMD), funding can only be used in line with this MOU, the scheme prospectus, and our REPF investment plan, (previously also signed off via ICMD in November 2022). • The grant policy and terms and conditions were previously agreed via delegated authority by the Head of Development and Corporate Landlord. • To accept the grant offer, applicants will need to sign an official offer letter, that lays out the terms and conditions of the grant, including monitoring conditions, subsidy control and potential clawback.
Financial implications	Funding is drawn from the council's REPF allocation, suggested awards are in line with South Oxfordshire's total allocation for 2023/24, and less than the total allocation for 2023/24, with any remaining funding to carry over into 2024/25 and be delivered in a second round of funding.
Climate implications	A member of the climate team joined the grant panel and applications were assessed against criteria to support climate action. Many projects supported make positive steps against the councils' climate objectives, including adoption of energy efficiency solutions and premises adaptations.
Equalities implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants were advised that they could speak with the economic development team for support in applying if required. • The scheme was advertised in a variety of formats and locations.
Other implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some funding applications have been rejected on grounds of being ineligible, or through not scoring highly enough against the council's agreed criterion detailed within the respective policies. • These applicants will receive direct feedback on their applications from the Economic Development team, and in most cases, will be extended an invite to reapply when we open a second round of funding, later in 2024.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications are also not recommended for funding where insufficient budget exists to fund all applications within a specific category. In this case, the highest scoring applications have been recommended for funding, complying with the policy. Lower ranked applications will be invited to reapply to the second round of funding later in 2024. 			
Background papers considered	<p>Appendices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended Awards are detailed in appendix one (REPF Grant Panel Scoring) Grant policies (appendix two) Terms and conditions of awards (appendix three) Detailed board papers (appendix four). <p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> REPF adopted grants policy Standard Terms and Conditions ICMD for delegated authority on UKSPF / REPF Actions ICMD to submit REPF Addendum REPF Fund Acceptance ICMD 			
Declarations/ conflict of interest?				
Consultees		Name	Outcome	Date
	Legal legal@southandvale.gov.uk	Pat Connell	Agreed (comments incorporated)	21/02/24
	Finance Finance@southandvale.gov.uk	Kathy Merritt	Agreed	13/02/24
	Climate and biodiversity climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk	Kim Hall	Approved	12/02/24
	Equality and diversity equalities@southandvale.gov.uk	Abi Witting	Approved- would have been nice to see more information on the potential social value related to EDI included in the reports	21/02/24
	Procurement Procurement@southandvale.gov.uk	Ben Watson	No procurement implications	12/02/24

	HR hadminandpayroll@southandvale.gov.uk	Abi Witting	Approved- would have been nice to see more information on the potential social value related to EDI included in the reports	21/02/24
	Risk and insurance risk@southandvale.gov.uk	Yvonne Cutler-Greaves	Support	20/02/24
	Strategic property property@southandvale.gov.uk	Karen Lister	No comments	16/02/24
	Communications communications@southandvale.gov.uk	No comments	No comments	N/A
	South Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Cllr Robin Bennett	Approved – the projects have been through a thorough scoring process and consideration by the panel	04/03/24
Decision maker's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	Signature:  Date: 04.03.2024			