

<p><b>Council – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation from Cabinet</b></p> <p><b>14<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b></p>
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**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 14th February 2023**

Present:

Members:

Councillor G Duggins (Chair)  
Councillor AS Khan (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor R Brown  
Councillor K Caan  
Councillor P Hetherton  
Councillor M Mutton  
Councillor J O'Boyle  
Councillor K Sandhu  
Councillor P Seaman  
Councillor D Welsh

Non-Voting Deputy  
Cabinet Members:

Councillor P Akhtar  
Councillor G Hayre  
Councillor G Lloyd

Non-Voting Opposition  
Members:

Councillor G Ridley  
Councillor P Male

Other Non-Voting  
Members:

Councillor N Akhtar  
Councillor J Clifford  
Councillor R Lakha

Employees (by Service):

Interim Chief Executives      B Hastie (Interim Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)),  
K Nelson (Interim Chief Executive (Chief Operation Officer))

Business, Investment  
and Culture                      D Hope; K Mawby

Finance                              P Jennings

Law and Governance	J Newman (Chief Legal Officer), M Salmon
Transportation and Highways	S Evans, J Seddon
Apologies:	Councillor B Gittins Councillor R Singh

## **Public Business**

### **87. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **92. Coventry UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2023-2025**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Business, Investment and Culture, which would also be considered at the meeting of Council on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023, that sought approval to accept West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) allocation to Coventry of up to £11.3m of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

In April 2022, the UK Government launched its new UKSPF. A total of £2.6bn in funding was available until March 2025, and the allocation for the West Midlands was £88.4m. UKSPF would fund vital activities across three themes:

- People & Skills
- Communities & Place
- Local Business

UKSPF was intended to be the successor to the European Structural Funds which were currently used to fund Coventry's business support, employment, and skills activities. These EU funded schemes would come to a close during the second half of 2023, and it was therefore crucial for the city to get the right deal from UKSPF. The WMCA was the accountable body for UKSPF and had agreed high level priorities for the way in which the money would be used in the region, which the Council had been consulted on. Coventry's indicative allocation for funding was £11.3m, and the report sought authority to accept WMCA's UKSPF allocation for Coventry.

Using funding from the first two themes, Coventry was requesting UKSPF funding to establish a hub and spoke model to provide employment support across the city, with a particular focus on key areas of deprivation with target groups including those who are 50+ and unemployed, economically inactive and low paid women, ethnic minorities, those with disabilities and health conditions, those with multiple complex needs and young people who were NEET (not in employment, education or training). Support would be delivered through the Job Shop and in partnership with voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

Under the Local Business theme, funding would be requested for a network of business advisors who would work with small and medium enterprises (SMEs), people starting new businesses and with social enterprises. These advisors would help business start, expand, take on new staff, develop new products or expand into new premises etc. This work would link to a pot of SME competitiveness grants which would provide funding for new building and equipment or for specialist advice to support growth and innovation. Funding would also be requested to build on the success of the Coventry and Warwickshire Green Business Programme by providing specialist decarbonisation advice to businesses including energy audits, again supported by a pot of grant funding. For businesses seeking private funding in the form of debt or equity, Investor Readiness training would be provided, likely as part of a West Midlands-wide programme.

The report requested authority to accept WMCA's allocation to Coventry of up to £11.3m of UKSPF money for these activities, and for delegated authority to enter into funding agreements. Delegated authority was also sought to contract with delivery partners where necessary in order to complete this work.

The Cabinet agreed to:

- 1) Approve the acceptance of WMCA's UK Shared Prosperity Funding allocation to Coventry up to £2.5m
- 2) Grant delegated authority to the Director for Business, Investment and Culture, following consultation with the Interim Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer), the Chief Legal Officer, and the relevant Cabinet Member(s), to undertake all necessary due diligence in relation to the funding allocation including the authority to enter into funding agreements with the WMCA.
- 3) Grant delegated authority to the Director for Business, Investment and Culture, following consultation with the Interim Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer), the Chief Legal Officer, and the relevant Cabinet Member(s), to enter into back-to-back contracts with delivery partners as deemed necessary.
- 4) Recommend that Council:
  - a) Approve the acceptance of WMCA's Shared Prosperity Funding allocation to Coventry up to a further £8.8m, bringing the total to £11.3m
  - b) Grant delegated authority to the Director for Business, Investment and Culture, following consultation with the Interim Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer), the Chief Legal Officer, and the relevant Cabinet Member(s), to undertake all necessary due diligence in relation to the funding allocation including the authority to enter into funding agreements with the WMCA.
  - c) Grant delegated authority to the Director for Business, Investment and Culture, following consultation with the Interim Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer), the Chief Legal Officer, and the relevant Cabinet Member(s), to enter into back-to-back contracts with delivery partners as deemed necessary.

- d) Authorise use of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding 4% administration allocation to support the productive delivery and administration of the fund.

**RESOLVED that Council is recommended to:**

- 1) Approve the acceptance of WMCA's UK Shared Prosperity Funding allocation to Coventry up to a further £8.8m, bringing the total to £11.3m**
- 2) Grant delegated authority to the Director for Business, Investment and Culture, following consultation with the Interim Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer), the Chief Legal Officer and the relevant Cabinet Member(s), to undertake all necessary due diligence in relation to the funding allocation including the authority to enter into funding agreements with the WMCA.**
- 3) Grant delegated authority to the Director for Business, Investment and Culture, following consultation with the Interim Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer), the Chief Legal Officer and the relevant Cabinet Member(s) to enter into back-to-back contracts with delivery partners as deemed necessary.**
- 4) Authorise use of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding 4% administration allocation to support the productive delivery and administration of the fund.**