



## WMCA Local UK Shared Prosperity Fund Group Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023, 1pm-2:30pm, MS Teams

### In attendance

Chair: Ian Darch, Clare Hatton, Paul Edwards, Lisa Hamilton, Lisa Hughes, Claire Fitzgerald, Alex Cole, Simon Down, Rob Johnston, Sue Brueton, Delia Garratt, Lloyd Broad, Rachel Egan, David Hope, Heather Clark, Paula Deas, Amy Tonks, Zoe Gmaj, Clive Hickman, Kelly Harris,

### Substitutes

Zoe Gmaj attending on behalf of Paul Mountford

Amy Tonks on behalf of Richard Smith

Jo Grocott on behalf of John Denly

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies received: Councillor Ian Brookfield, Sarah Middleton, Mike Hopkins, Andrew Smith, Martin Sutherland, Philippa Venables

The Chaired welcomed the group to the third meeting of the WMCA UKSPF Local Partnership Group.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Resolved: No Declarations of Interest raised.

### 3. Draft notes of WMCA UKSPF Local Partnership Group 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Resolved: the group approved the draft notes of the 4th October 2023 meeting.

### 4. UKSPF Year 1 Position and Year 2 Proposals

Clare Hatton shared a presentation (circulated after the meeting) on the UKSPF year 1 position and the year 2 Proposals. The group were informed that the WMCA had received confirmation from HM Government that the People and Skills Pillar interventions, which were originally ring fenced for Year 3 (2024/25), could now be applied in year 2 (2023/24), noting that no additional funding had been made available for this activity and these would need to be delivered through existing year 2 funding.

The presentation summarised that year 1 positions were largely RAG rated as "Green" with the exception of Coventry and Solihull who had RAG ratings of "Red" and "Amber" respectively. Agreement had been given for Coventry City Council to develop a 'credible plan' for their current year 1 SPF underspends for submission to government. The group noted Solihull MBC were rated as "Amber" due to movement of some outputs and outcomes for year 1 projects into year 2, though this was not seen as a programme level risk.

The group inquired whether the WMCA were required to update the SPF Investment Plan, given the People and Skills changes. Clare Hatton advised that this change would likely fall within the discretion of the WMCA and therefore we wouldn't need to submit additional documents to HM Government.

Members asked whether private businesses would be allowed to bid into UKSPF funding, as they had done with ERDF. Paul Edwards advised that in relation to business support, this would be open to bidding from the private sector on a commissioning basis, which should give more scope for private businesses to secure funding compared with ERDF.

**5. Year 2 Business Support Programmes**

Paul Edwards presented a summary of the year 2 business support programmes (slides shared after the meeting). Paul advised the group that UKSPF was just one element of funding supporting businesses across the region. Paul referenced delivering against the Plan for Growth, securing additional powers and funding from the Government via the Deeper Devolution Deal and programmes such as the Innovation Accelerator.

Paul outlined two key business support programmes that were being commissioned by the WMCA as part of the UKSPF programme: investor readiness and decarbonisation. Paul noted UKSPF funding represented an opportunity to create a more strategic and streamlined approach for business support across the West Midlands.

**6. Q&A**

Simon Down, Head of Policy at the WMPCC, noted on year 2 local authority activity that it was positive to see LA's direct some funding towards public safety. Likewise, the WMPCC were open to working with local authorities on the co-commissioning of services with family and community hubs.

Sue Brueton, National Lottery Community Fund, advised that the West Midlands had seen an influx around employment and skills projects, especially with the closure of BBO. Sue also advised that the National Lottery Community Fund didn't want to work in silos, and wanted to compliment the offer in the region in order to maximise outcomes.

**7. AOB**

Rob Johnson noted that Matt Pointon, TUC/WMCA Skills Partnership Lead, may be a useful addition to this group. Clare Hatton advised that they would engage with Matt on this.

**8. Summary and Next Steps**

Ian Darch advised that the next meeting would be arranged for September 2023, and the main item would be reviewing against year 2 activities. Slides would be circulated with the minutes.

Meeting Ends.