

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET EXECUTIVE 25 March 2025

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor David Selby
Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys

REPORT TITLE: Locality Fund – Shared Prosperity Funding

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1. To request the support of cabinet in the establishment of a local councillors' anti-poverty fund titled the "Anti Poverty Locality Fund", henceforth "the fund", utilising Shared Prosperity Funding for 2025/26.

2. Background

2.1. Among the strategic objectives laid out in the council Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan (CSEP), making Powys Fairer, reducing inequality and combatting poverty is a key objective. The fund is directly aimed at combatting poverty within Powys, at a locality level.

2.2. The CSEP establishes the overall aim of delivering better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage. This scheme looks to target that disadvantage directly in all our communities. Some of the schemes will support other parts of the CSEP including improving awareness and access to services offered by the council.

2.3. The fund is a direct contribution to this aim across the thirteen localities outlined in Sustainable Powys. The fund will support projects to increase the sustainability and resilience of the communities in Powys. Several of the proposed projects below aim to support the longer-term capacity of the third sector and of communities in undertaking anti-poverty action.

2.4. The Well Being of Future Generations Act stipulates goals of a More Equal Wales and a Resilient Wales, the fund will aid in moving Powys towards both of these ambitions.

2.5. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has identified a number of interventions that are most effective in reducing poverty, the fund in particular will support the promotion of local economic growth, improvement of skills, support for families and children and community engagement. The projects identified below may contribute directly to these aims or build capacity for communities to do so more sustainably, through increased volunteer numbers of additional support.

2.6. £5,000 is to be allocated from the fund to each County Councillor. Each councillor will be allowed to pursue at least one Anti-Poverty project within their locality.

2.7. There will be a clear 6-month timeline for the grant, which will be communicated to councillors.

2.8. Councillors may work with councillors in adjoining wards to aggregate their funding to a one-off project.

2.9. Councillors shall be encouraged to work through their local Town and Community Councils.

2.10. The fund is intended to be available to councillors to support a suitable anti-poverty project such as

- Advice surgeries (in conjunction with Citizens Advice and other organisations)
- Community support for the elderly
- School uniform swap shop
- Meal provision
- Support for mother and baby groups
- After school clubs
- Community trips & exercise clubs
- Awareness campaigns
- Volunteer recruitment and development
- Community garden schemes to provide local food supply
- Existing local schemes and projects to provide resilience and self-sufficiency for the future.

2.11. These projects align to a number of UKSPF output indicators for 2025/26, including but not limited to:

- Number of volunteering opportunities supported
- Number of organisations receiving grants
- Number of organisations receiving non-financial support
- Number of households receiving support
- Number of people reached
- Number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services
- Number of local events and activities supported

2.12. They further contribute to substantial UKSPF outcomes including but not limited to:

- Increased users of facilities/amenities
- Number of organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support
- Number of people with basic skills following support

- Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills funded by UKSPF
- Decrease in the number of neighbourhood crimes
- Number of volunteering opportunities created as a result of support

2.13. Where there are existing schemes in place, there is the potential for duplication, which may result in inefficient usage of limited council resource. Where this is the case, funds should be used to amplify existing programmes.

2.14. Poverty and the cost-of-living crisis are identified in the Mid Wales Regional Investment Plan as a key challenge faced by the region. The fund has the potential to play a part in reducing poverty in the county, across a range of small-scale projects.

2.15. Powys Association of Volunteer Organisations (PAVO) may be able to offer support for the administration of small-scale funds, based on their experience in the first two years of the SPF programme.

2.16. The administration and monitoring process to be followed will be finalised in the coming months to ensure a minimal administrative burden and sufficient oversight. Councillors will be required to complete a form setting out how they will use the fund.

2.16.1. A question-and-answer document offering full guidance to councillors is to follow.

3. Advice

3.1. To allocate £5,000 to each councillor entails roughly equal spending on a per capita basis across all wards, this may not result in optimal or equitable allocation Powys-wide, albeit whilst reducing inequality in all localities. It does, however, maintain a commitment to challenging poverty across all the localities in Powys.

3.2. The scheme will be administered in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding body.

3.3. The scheme aligns closely with the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan aims and objectives including in improving access and awareness to services and to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage.

3.4. The proposals take advantage of the unique links and understanding that councillors have with their communities, across Powys to identify the most effective local interventions to be made with the fund.

3.5. This fund has been established to empower local communities and provide targeted support where it is most needed. By leveraging the

Shared Prosperity Funding, the fund will aim to foster a collaborative effort that will enhance the quality of life for our residents.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1. The "Anti Poverty Locality Fund" for 2025/26 will be established with a total of £340,000, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). Each County Councillor will be awarded £5,000 to support anti-poverty projects within their locality. The initiatives will align with the intended outcomes and outputs set out by the Shared Prosperity Prospectus, ensuring the funding is eligible to be claimed and will not impact service budgets. This funding is non recurrent.
- 4.2. Access to the funding and the administration of the fund will be carefully devised to optimize resources and ensure transparency and ease of participation for all stakeholders. Officer resources will be funded through the SPF scheme management fee.
- 4.3. The scheme will need to comply with current SPF requirements, including approval process, clarity of benefits and funding in arrears. The process needs to remain simple so both administration and finance arrangements are proportionate.
- 4.4. The Head of Finance notes the information provided within the resources section and confirms that this grant funding is for 2025-26 only and must be used within the current funding criteria and that the approach to oversee this regime must remain simple and not create an additional burden. Based on this understanding the recommendation can be supported.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. Legal: provided that the terms of the LUF funding are satisfied, the recommendations can be supported from a legal point of view.
- 5.2. The Head of Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer has commented as follows: "I note their legal comment and support the recommendations."

6. Climate Change & Nature Implications

- 6.1. The identified aims of the fund are not directly related to the council's climate and nature ambitions, but may have relevant positive externalities including
 - 6.1.1. Reduced waste and consumption, associated with greater reuse and self-sustainability schemes.
 - 6.1.2. Positive climate and nature impacts related to awareness campaigns.

7. Data Protection

7.1. N/A

8. Comment from local member(s)

8.1. N/A

9. Impact Assessment

9.1. Given the nature of the fund, and the small allocation per councillor, an impact assessment is not required.

10. Recommendation

10.1. That cabinet approve the establishment of the "Anti Poverty Locality Fund", utilising Shared Prosperity Funding for 2025/26, with each County Councillor being allocated £5,000 from the fund to each County Councillor to be used to pursue at least one Anti-Poverty project within their locality.

10.2. That detailed guidance and process be established as soon as possible to govern the approval of funding, the administration and reporting of the expenditure to ensure that the funds are utilised in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant funding.

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