



<b>Report To:</b>	Executive Board
<b>Date:</b>	16 December 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	East Lindsey Investment Fund: £1m allocation to the GRASSroots grant scheme.
<b>Purpose:</b>	East Lindsey Investment Fund budget allocation of £1m to support community development across the East Lindsey district through the GRASSroots scheme, in partnership with the Lincolnshire Community Foundation.
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Steve Kirk, Portfolio Holder for the Coastal Economy and Cllr Adam Grist, Portfolio Holder for the Rural Economy
<b>Report Of:</b>	Pranali Parikh, Director of Economic Development
<b>Report Author:</b>	Lydia Rusling, Assistant Director Economic Growth
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Exempt Report:</b>	No

### **Summary**

The £10m East Lindsey Investment Fund has been established to support the priorities of making our places welcoming, supporting events and attracting visitors, community development, and supporting business growth. The programme is focussed on delivery and is committed to an inclusive and collaborative approach to benefit the whole District and work in partnership with communities, town and parish councils and local businesses.

To support the priority theme of community development, a budget allocation of £1m will bolster the grant funds available to communities across the East Lindsey district by extending the current GRASSroots programme. Lincolnshire Community Foundation has administered the successful GRASSroots scheme since its inception through UK Shared Prosperity Funding and a further allocation of funds will provide continued investment into rural communities.

## **Recommendations**

- 1) To allocate £1m from the East Lindsey Investment Fund to support the expansion of (and administration of) the successful LCF GRASSroots scheme.
- 2) To delegate authority to the s151 in conjunction with the AD Strategic Growth and Development to agree the final split of resources required as an addition to the budget in respect of revenue and capital.
- 3) Note the administration of this will be undertaken by the team currently delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund Programmes.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

Considerations and conclusions for this investment are made within the text of this report, including the options appraisal below.

## **Other Options Considered**

Option 1 - Proceed as per the recommendation of this Report.

Under this option there will be an expansion of the successful LCF GRASSroots grant funding scheme, leading to an increased number of projects delivered locally, resulting in greater investment in rural communities and longer term, sustainable support to communities.

Option 2 – Do nothing.

Under this option, the recommendations are not taken forward, with the opportunity to expand the level of support offered not realised and the wider benefits of the report detailed below will also not be realised.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership was awarded a significant allocation of UK Shared Prosperity and Rural Prosperity Funding (£12.3m, less administration). In East Lindsey Council, this allocation totals £6.14m. Launching in January 2023, the Programme delivers an Investment Plan agreed with HM Government, itself based on an extensive consultation with local communities and elected Members.
- 1.2 Members and the wider community, upon extensive consultation, have highlighted investment in parishes, villages and towns as a strategic priority. This priority is embodied within the SELCP (South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership) Growth and Prosperity Plan and the East Lindsey Investment Fund priorities. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Programmes have invested a substantial (£645,750, inc. administration), ringfenced fund for small grants (up to £24,999) to parish councils, village halls and community projects – LCF GRASSroots.

- 1.3 A further allocation was agreed at Executive Board on 8 May 2024, which enabled the GRASSroots fund to be ‘topped up’. With the match funding that grant awards have attracted through the scheme, this has resulted in a total investment in Parish Councils, Village Halls and Community projects through the scheme of £1.625m in only 18 months. This investment has been extremely well received by communities and an interim external evaluation of the UKSPF Programme, published in May 2024, praised the scheme and wider Communities and Place theme as a ‘clear strength’ of the Council’s Programme.
- 1.4 The Fund is administered by the Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF), whose contract is managed ‘in house’ by the UKSPF/RPF Programme Team. The administration of the Fund has been, to date, funded through the allocation of a proportion of grant funds of between 8% and 11% of value of each phase of allocation (dependent upon the phase of agreement). Currently, the average value of the administrative overhead is 8.5%. This is significantly below the cost that the Council would incur through delivering this volume of grant contracts ‘in house’.
- 1.5 The scheme has, to date, been highly impactful in East Lindsey. While we are awaiting the quarter’s impact data, as of the last quarter, 63 grants had been awarded, resulting in 16 community facilities being either being created or renovated, with a further 25 in progress. 209 volunteering opportunities have been created through the Scheme, with the Scheme expected to exceed the 300 volunteer opportunities created mark by the end of the UKSPF Programme in March 2025. Across East Lindsey, 11,072 additional uses of community facilities have been recorded throughout the life of the Scheme. Examples of projects delivered include renovations to Stixwold Village Hall, support for a new play area in Spilsby, funding for the North Thorseby Community Orchard and funding for Stickney Bowls Club. A full map of interventions can be found on the Council’s website: <https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/article/23065/UK-Shared-Prosperity-Fund> and a list of recipients at Appendix A.
- 1.6 The success of this scheme has meant that demand far outstrips the supply of funding available, with current funds reaching commitment.
- 1.7 The comprehensive ‘single point of contact’ for funding parishes, communities and towns facilitates and maximises available grant available from the Council.

## **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1. The proposal is to build on the successes of the GRASSroots scheme, supported through UK Shared Prosperity Funding and East Lindsey District Council funding, through an additional allocation of funds through the East Lindsey Investment Fund.
- 2.2. An immediate additional investment of £1m would enable the expansion of the GRASSroots scheme and resource allocated to extend the contract management arrangements for the LCF Contract. This would generate certainty for the contract delivery team and supporting a greater number of projects across a wider range of geographies within East Lindsey District.

- 2.3. To ensure that the contract and grant management arrangements are appropriately resourced, as well as to ensure that there is a clear point of contact for parishes and community projects, the grant will be made conditional upon the appointment of a dedicated grant manager for the East Lindsey Scheme within LCF and there will continue to be long-term dedicated contract management resource within the Council (the latter has predominantly been funded through the prior arrangement approved by members under the East Lindsey Community Reserve in May).
- 2.4. Given the fact that the infrastructure for grant distribution already exists, this Scheme can be re-mobilised extremely quickly and can re-open to applications before Christmas. It is expected that the first awards would take place in early February, for delivery in Financial Years 2025-6 and 2026-7.

## **EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP**

These recommendations will meet the key political commitment of ensuring that the East Lindsey Investment Fund is distributed equitably and widely to communities within the council area, as well as a commitment to support local economic growth, pride in place, growth in visitor numbers and improvements in community assets and facilities. Principally, the focus will be on increasing the number of community projects delivered and improvements to community facilities (including sports facilities, village halls, community centres and parks).

### **Implications**

#### **South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership**

This project will be contract managed by the UK Shared Prosperity/Rural Prosperity Fund team, with additional resource to support delivery, with a dedicated contract manager for the LCF GRASSroots scheme within the Lincolnshire Community Foundation, managing the contracts for each individual community project funded.

#### **Corporate Priorities**

The recommendations align with the four priorities for the SELCP, as defined within the South East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Sub Regional Strategy. Those priorities are Growth and Prosperity, Healthy Lives, Safe and Resilient and Environment.

### **Staffing**

This recommendation will utilise existing staffing within the current UKSPF/RPF Programme Team, with a small allowance (1%) for resourcing. Through utilising this route, the East Lindsey District is able to realise substantial economies of scale realised by the cross-Partnership UKSPF/RPF Programme.

#### **Workforce Capacity Implications**

No substantial workforce capacity implications, as the additional contract management requirement is factored into the developing 2025-6 UKSPF/RPF Programme Team Service and Business Plan.

## **Constitutional and Legal Implications**

Use of Corporate Priorities Reserve, in-line with the priorities approved as part of the 2024/25 Budget Setting process, is delegated to the Executive Board.

## **Data Protection**

None arising from this report.

## **Financial**

An allocation of £1m from the East Lindsey Investment Fund to support an extension of the GRASSroots scheme, with delegation to the s151 in conjunction with the AD Strategic Growth and Development to agree the final split of resources required as an addition to the budget in respect of revenue and capital.

## **Risk Management**

Risk management shall be undertaken within the context of the contract management process. The applicant has produced a project-specific risk register, and this is being kept under review. An extension of contract and grant management capacity will assist in the provision of intensive support to community groups.

## **Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales**

Executive Board consultation through the development of the East Lindsey Investment Fund, supported at the meeting on 18 September 2024.

Stakeholder engagement through the Connected Coast Board on 28 November 2024.

Consultation at the East Lindsey UKSPF/RPF Partnership Sub-Group on 27 November 2024.

## **Reputation**

None arising from this report.

## **Contracts**

The project will be managed through a standard UKSPF/RPF Grant Funding Agreements, as with all UKSPF/RPF projects that are externally contracted. This will be managed by a dedicated contract manager within the service, with further oversight provided by senior leadership within the Growth Directorate.

## **Crime and Disorder**

The report recommendations propose an increase in investment across East Lindsey District; investments which will bring about community initiatives that will directly and indirectly support crime prevention, anti-social behaviour and community cohesion.

## **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding**

The council has considered equalities, diversity and inclusion in formulating this recommendation, including compliance with relevant legislation. This includes protected characteristics under the 2010 Equalities Act and subsequent amendments. It is the view of the author that there are no implications in this regard in respect of this report recommendation. The proposed grant funding and advisory support shall be open to all within our local community and there shall be reasonable adjustments for those facing barriers to access. This shall be monitored through the contract management process.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

The report recommendations propose an increase in investment across East Lindsey District; investments which will bring about community initiatives that will directly and indirectly support health and wellbeing.

## **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

The report recommendations propose an increase in investment across East Lindsey District; investments which will bring about community initiatives that will directly and indirectly support the environment.

## **Acronyms**

MHCLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.  
UKSPF: UK Shared Prosperity Fund.  
RPF: Rural Prosperity Fund.

## **Appendices**

None.

## **Background Papers**

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Where the document can be viewed</b>
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East Lindsey Investment Fund:

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Executive Board, 18/09/2024 18:00](#)

Investment to support villages, parishes and market towns across East Lindsey:

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Executive Board, 08/05/2024 18:00](#)

## **Chronological History of this Report**

East Lindsey Investment Fund:

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Executive Board, 18/09/2024 18:00](#)

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## **Report Approval**

Report author: Lydia Rusling, Assistant Director Economic Growth  
Signed off by: Pranali Parikh, Director Economic Development  
Approved for publication: Cllr Adam Grist, Portfolio Holder for the Rural Economy