



Funded by
UK Government

UKSPF 2022-25

Final Report

June 2025

Prepared by Ben Hale



Wyre Forest
District Council



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What is UKSPF?

In April 2022, the government announced the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Primarily a replacement to previous European funding, the fund's aim was to improve regional prosperity and to overcome geographical inequalities across the country.

Wyre Forest District Council put together an investment plan in 2022 to make the case to government for funding. This plan included a wide range of community projects and support programmes alongside an expansion of our skills support for local residents.

What did Wyre Forest get?

Following our application to government, Wyre Forest DC received just over £3 million in funding from the Department for Housing, Levelling up and Communities now known as Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to support projects between 2022-23 and 2024-25 financial years.

The council was tasked with supporting interventions over three priorities. These are:

- Communities and Place
- Supporting Local Business
- People and Skills

This funding allowed the council to continue funding support for many key services, and to allow further collaboration with community groups to improve facilities across the district.

Below are some of the projects the council have been able to support.



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District Council



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List of projects supported by Wyre Forest District Council

Communities and Place

- Improvements to **Stourport Community Centre** – security measures and kitchen upgrade
- Demolition of the **changing rooms at Spennells** - handing over to local Scouts group
- Kidderminster BID's '**Town Hall on Tour**' events and promotions
- Wheelchair access and performing plinth at **Kidderminster Town Hall**
- **The Weaving Sheds** – repair of roof and repurposing of the former indoor market site in Kidderminster
- **The Old Court** – kitting out the recently renovated former Magistrates court with new desks, furniture and conferencing facilities
- '**Natural Networks**' – a grant for communities to improve green spaces across the district
- **St Anne's, Bewdley** – funding to support creation of a community hub and to improve the townscape and public realm in this prominent location

Supporting Local Business

- **Worcestershire Growth Hub** – continued our support of the free business advice service for the district
- **Start-up business support** – a series of events to encourage and advise entrepreneurs
- **Workshops and webinars** – upskilling workshops on a range of topics including AI, digitalisation, intellectual property and many more
- **Innovate Worcestershire** – grants, advice and guidance for business innovation
- **Enterprise Worcestershire** – business coaching and mentoring
- **Net Zero Worcestershire** – grants and guidance for investing in carbon reduction and reduced energy costs
- **BetaDen** – business incubator and accelerator
- **Visit Severn Valley** – new website and marketing campaign to encourage tourism to the Severn Valley area

People and skills

- **Building Brighter Futures** – a programme of support and mentoring to address the economically inactive residents of the district
- **Careers Worcestershire** - a programme to provide careers advice to young people across the district
- **Skills Boost Worcestershire** - grant for employers to upskill their workforce in non-mandatory subjects
- **Professional Skills for the Workforce** – a project that works with employers to upskill existing staffs' digital and life skills
- **Digital Skills Pathway** - addresses digital skills in the community

What has been delivered for Wyre Forest?

Wyre Forest District Council successfully spent the full allocation of £3,155,009 across the projects listed above.

Project delivery partners were set targets around various outputs and outcomes linked to the activity in question. We now look deeper into where the money has been spent and what benefits this has provided for the district.

Project – Building Brighter Futures

Delivery partner - UNITY (part of Community Housing).

Objective - to work with residents who have been long term economically inactive to improve their ability to find work or support for their needs.



Results



34 individuals
with increased employability through development of inter personal skills.



24 individuals
gaining a qualification or completing a course following support

Conclusion – Building Brighter Futures used their extensive network of referral partners to reach residents within the district who are economically inactive. By addressing long term issues, the project has successfully supported these individuals to work with key support workers, apply for volunteering opportunities and where possible, enter the workforce.

Project – Skills Boost Worcestershire



Delivery partner – Worcestershire County Council.

Objective – grant funding to address skills needs of residents within the district.

Results



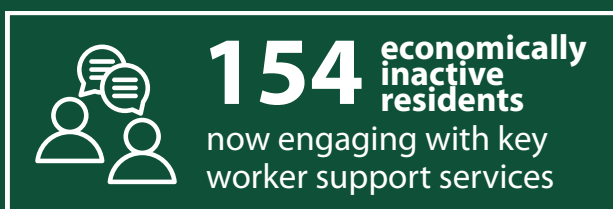
Project – Careers Worcestershire



Delivery partner – Worcestershire County Council.

Objective – To provide free, impartial advice and support to residents of Wyre Forest who are 16 to 24 years of age. Based at The Point at Kidderminster College, the service provides information, advice and guidance on a range of skills and employment opportunities. Championing apprenticeships and skills support available across the district.

Results



Project - Worcestershire Growth Hub



Delivery partner - Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Objective – to provide free guidance and support to SME's within the district. Signposting businesses to eligible grants and support programmes to encourage growth.

Results



216 Wyre Forest
based
businesses
received non-financial
support



32 potential
entrepreneurs
assisted to be business
ready



Pictured: Dawn Tebbet from Sandfield Engineering Ltd at Worcestershire Growth Hub's Showcase Event

Project – St Anne's, Bewdley

Delivery partner – Ribbesford with Bewdley and Dowles Parochial Church Council

Objective – Repair and maintenance of the north and south sides of St Anne's Church. Support for the creation of a community hub within the church.



Before



After

Project – The Old Court

THE OLD
COURT

Delivery Partner – Wyre Forest District Council.

Objective – following the regeneration of the former Magistrates court site by Wyre Forest District Council, a space has been provided for local businesses and entrepreneurs to grow their business to the next level.

These new facilities include a podcasting suite, 3D printer and a range of meeting rooms to host business events and private meetings.

The Old Court will host BetaDen Incubate in 2025-26 providing the district with a high-tech business accelerator.



Project – Town Hall on Tour



Delivery Partner – Kidderminster Business Improvement District.

Objective – following the redevelopment of Kidderminster Town Hall and Music Hall, Kidderminster BID approached the council for support to organise a range of events within Kidderminster town to attract visitors with cultural, historic and community events through 2022-25.



250+ events and local activities supported in Kidderminster



8,400+ visitors (estimated) attended events



What did the projects achieve?

Communities and Place - outputs



Communities and Place - outcomes



What did the projects achieve?



Supporting Local Business - outputs



394 businesses
received non-financial
support



67 entrepreneurs
provided assistance
to be business ready



22 businesses
received
grants



17 decarbonisation
plans developed

Supporting Local Business - outcomes



£199,903
in grants distributed
to businesses and
community groups
within in the district



19 jobs created
as a result of
business support



4 businesses
registered
following support



23 businesses
adopting new
technologies or
processes

What did the projects achieve?



People and Skills - outputs



263 economically inactive people
engaging with key worker support services



75 socially excluded people
accessing support



112 people
supported to access basic skills



279 people
supported to engage in job searching



309 people
supported to participate in education



590 people
receiving support to gain a vocational licence



People & Skills - Outcomes



130 people
reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills



369 people
in employment or self-employment following support



320 people
in education or training

Conclusion

Wyre Forest District Council has successfully spent its full 2022-25 allocation, which has allowed us to boost our activities and support our corporate strategic plan 2023-27.

The council have supported economic growth and regeneration, investing in the former Kidderminster Indoor Market site, now known as **The Weaving Sheds**. A covered event space to attract new events and attractions to Kidderminster Town Centre has been created.

St Anne's Church in Bewdley has been supported to restore and maintain the north and south facing sides of the church's exterior. Centuries of industrial and traffic based damage has been removed.

UKSPF allowed Wyre Forest District Council to support Kidderminster Town Council's efforts to renovate the **Music Hall and Town Hall**, providing a grant to fund a plinth which provides wheelchair access to both buildings.

Wyre Forest District Council have helped secure financial stability for services that the district's local communities value, such as support for **Stourport Community Centre**. This funded a kitchen renovation and additional security measures such as CCTV and roller shutters.

The former Magistrates court in Kidderminster, now known as **The Old Court**, has received funding to furnish new offices and create event space and meeting rooms. These facilities now host local entrepreneurs and provide the business community with a podcasting suite and 3D printing services.

Demolition of the dilapidated **changing rooms at Spennells** and gifting ownership to the local community groups.

UKSPF has enabled Wyre Forest District Council to keep the district a clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit through projects such as:

Visit Severn Valley – creation of a new brand to attract visitors to the region. Focusing on the nationally recognised name of Severn Valley, the council has worked with local attractions within and neighbouring the district.

Natural Networks – a fund aimed at community groups, providing biodiversity reviews and grant funding to rewild areas and support the expansion of green sites within the district.

Net Zero Worcestershire – through Wyre Forest District Council's Supporting Local Business grant to Worcestershire County Council, one of the key programmes available to local businesses and community groups was the Net Zero grant programme. Net Zero Worcestershire funded 17 local companies to create decarbonisation plans, and provided grants to five businesses to install carbon neutral systems or to improve energy usage within the business' operations.

