

Warrington UKSPF Local Partnership

4th Apr 2024

In Attendance:

Eleanor Blackburn (EB)	(Chair) Warrington Borough Council (Officer)
Lucy Gardner (LG)	Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Paul Chapman (PC)	Cheshire and Warrington Business Growth Hub
Susan Savage (SS)	Department for Work and Pensions
Kerry Hall (KH)	Warrington Borough Council
Tim Smith (TS)	Warrington Borough Council
Gail Thomas (GT)	Warrington Borough Council
Leah Biddle (LB)	Culture Warrington
Nichola Newton (NN)	Warrington and Vale Royal College
Naz Ghodrati (NG)	Warrington Voluntary Action
Aimee Ruddy (AR)	Warrington Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Stephen Fitzsimons (SF)	Warrington Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Elliot Grimshaw (EG)	Department of Business and Trade
Georgia Millership (GM)	Department of Business and Trade
Dave Thompson (DT)	Warrington Disability Partnership

Apologies

Rebecca Anderson-Moss (RAM)	Warrington and Vale Royal College
Andrea Morley (AM)	Warrington Business Improvement District (BID)
Colin Billingsley (CB)	Department for Work and Pensions
Pat Jackson (PJ)	Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
Martin Wood (MW)	Department of Business and Trade

1 Welcome and Introductions

EB welcomed everybody to the meeting and members introduced themselves.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

DT had given apologies for the previous meeting, held on 7th March 2024. TS would amend the records. Apart from that, the minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record.

TS had not had chance to prepare a revised proposal for the Communities and Place Grants Project and would work on it for the next meeting.

3 UKSPF Financial Position (Mar 2024)

TS presented the spreadsheet in a slightly new style. It now shows actual/expected spend rather than funding allocated, so it is more accurate and up to date.

2023/24 actual spend had been c. £820k (35%) against an allocation of £2.3m. Government has confirmed that LAs can carry forward all of their 2023/24 underspend and still have their full 2024/25 allocation.

The lifetime forecast figure is now £5.8m (89%) expected spend against an allocation of £6.5m.

4 UKSPF Monitoring Update (Mar 2024)

TS presented a spreadsheet showing expected outputs/outcomes as well as spend. It compared the lifetime programme targets, totals profiled on approved projects so far, actual achievement to March 2024, and expected achievement at March 2025. Most projects are still forecasting full achievement and have been providing details of items purchased, tender processes completed, new staff recruited etc as reassurance.

LG pointed out that time-limited funding leads to risks in terms of only being able to recruit on a fixed term basis.

NG wondered if we need a mitigating strategy for impact on community groups if there is no future funding? What happens if we don't get it, how would we support communities, who else would pick up the pieces?

GM updated that there is no news yet on a UKSPF phase 2, although all areas have similar concerns. The timing of the general election also makes it difficult to get a prompt and clear answer.

EB highlighted the "sq m of land made wheelchair accessible" target which currently has no activity against it. We need to develop a project, and Orford Lane could be an example of an area which is difficult for anybody with mobility issues.

DT also suggested the stretch from the town centre to the rugby stadium and Tesco.

5 Revised Project Proposal (Supported by WBC Steering Group)

Improving Digital Inclusion

A revised proposal had been submitted, taking on board comments from the Steering Group and the Local Partnership, e.g. which venues and why; links with partners, including NHS; making venues available for other deliverers; not buying new laptops etc. The WBC steering group had now supported the proposal.

Partners were pleased that the project will go ahead.

DT has got some funding from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for digital inclusion for disabled people, and also has 50 Easology accessible tablets.

LG pointed out the need for tutors and volunteers to support people to use the technology that will be in the venues.

NN highlighted the need for joined up thinking; there is a lot going on in digital skills and it is a big strand in adult learning.

TS offered to broker a meeting between WBC Neighbourhoods and NHS, WVA, WDP, W&VR College.

6 New Project Proposals (Supported by WBC Steering Group)

Community Catalyst

The national Community Catalyst network has a focus on recruiting local people who have the right value base and skills to become community micro enterprises, supporting local people in their community with a diverse range of service offer. Once recruited, the new community micro enterprises would work with Community Catalysts to undertake a quality assurance process to enable them meet “Doing it right” standards.

A network of community micro enterprises would be located across Warrington and would offer an alternative approach to domiciliary care agencies, and would contribute to reducing the pressure on statutory services where experienced professionals may have to be utilised due to lack of alternative services. Some other councils, including CWAC, are already using UKSPF to fund this delivery.

The group supported the principle of the proposal but were also keen to maximise local involvement. DT and NG have been involved in the development of this work and will discuss it at the Community Led Support Board. This work will need a lot of local knowledge and support to sustain people as self-employed.

Support for Sports Facilities and Events

This proposal is to allocate a budget to support sports clubs to improve their facilities and/or to provide funding for the organising, promoting and staging of sports events. The ultimate aim is to raise the profile, increase participation, and build capacity. The proposal will address the current underachievement of our programme target for “Number of tournaments/leagues/teams supported”, as well as “Number of local events or activities supported”, which includes sports in the Government definition.

There will be a number of opportunities coming up in 2024/25 which will not only help to achieve these particular output indicators, but will also have knock-on benefits in other areas of the programme as well, e.g. volunteering opportunities and numbers engaged. Examples at the time of writing (March 2024) include:

- Women’s Tour of Britain cycling, June 2024 (*note: not publicly announced yet*)
- Lancashire v Cheshire anniversary cricket match, Town Hall, June 2024
- reconfiguring tennis courts so they can also be used for netball
- other examples to come from LiveWire

Funding will be made available to cover various costs, including: regeneration, creation or maintenance of sport facilities; event planning and management; marketing and promotion; security and stewarding; road closures; signage; licensing; hospitality and catering.

EB will get LiveWire involved re improvements to facilities, likely to be minority sports, e.g. padel tennis. It is more likely to be WBC upgrading facilities rather than giving a grant directly to any particular external organisation. EB is also joint lead on the Physical Activity Strategy 2024-27 so we will be able to align with those recommendations.

DT requested that inclusion and accessibility should be taken into consideration in the proposed activities. Could there also be possibilities to extend the cultural activities around Disability Awareness Day? EB suggested we look at that as part of the Cultural Programme 2024/25 which already has funding.

7 Next Steps

TS has received an EOI from NHS for a feasibility study to look at co-location in the town centre that has not been considered by the WBC steering group yet.

8 Any Other Business

None

9 Date of Next Meeting

Thurs 6th June, 9.30 am, then recurring on the first Thursday of every month.