

Report to: Scrutiny Committee



Date of Meeting 7 December 2023

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Exemption applied: None

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UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Year 1 (2022/23) Evaluation

Report summary:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a significant source of devolved funding for investing in local communities and supporting local businesses, with EDDC using its £2.6m allocation to fund 13 projects. This report gives an overview of the UKSPF funded activity for 2022/23 and the key findings of the evaluation work undertaken to date.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

1. That Scrutiny Committee note the UKSPF evaluation undertaken, along with the challenges identified and proposed recommendations.
2. That Scrutiny Committee agree to officers providing written feedback to DLUHC on the need for qualitative metrics to be made available to measure the success of projects where quantitative metrics alone are not appropriate.

Reason for recommendation:

This report is intended to be provided on an annual basis to keep the Committee up to date on how our UKSPF funded activity is performing relative to our UKSPF Evaluation Strategy.

Officer: Tom Winters, 01395 571528, twinters@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; Risk relates to our ability to ensure effective and impactful spend of devolved funding and our ability to secure future funding from Government or the proposed Combined Authority.

Links to background information [Cabinet Report](#) (13.07.22), [UKSPF Prospectus](#), [East Devon UKSPF Investment Plan](#) and [East Devon UKSPF Evaluation Strategy](#).

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
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Executive Summary

- East Devon District Council has been allocated over £2.6m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to deliver 13 projects, with 5 of those projects coming online in 2022/23, 4 in 2023/24 and a final 4 in 2024/25.
- We are the only district council in Devon undertaking an evaluation process, the results of which will be key when potentially seeking further funding from a Devon Combined Authority should a 'County Deal' devolution settlement be reached.
- The purpose of the evaluation is to refine and adapt the programme as and when any issues are identified, ensuring all 13 projects are providing the most positive impact and offering good value for money.
- Evaluation of the initial 5 projects (2022/23) shows they were delivered effectively and efficiently, but there are a number of improvements which can be made to improve the process for future projects and funding bids.
- The types of metrics used to measure the success of UKSPF provided by Government should focus more on quality rather than just quantity.

Background and Context

1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment. East Devon has been allocated £1,796,363 through the UKSPF over a three-year period. East Devon has also been allocated £854,298 through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), a 'rural top-up' to the UKSPF, over a two-year period.

1.2 To release the UKSPF allocation, East Devon District Council had to submit an 'Investment Plan' to central government for approval. The Investment Plan described East Devon's key challenges and opportunities to be addressed through the UKSPF. It also outlined the planned projects we would deliver with the funding and the outputs and outcomes against which we would measure progress.

1.3 The Investment Plan was developed with support from our Local Partnership Group (LPG). The LPG consisted of local businesses, community organisations, and political representatives, who helped to identify the needs and challenges the funding should address. The Investment Plan was then signed off by a Programme Management Panel of councillors and the local MPs for East Devon. The Investment Plan was also signed off by Cabinet on 13 July 2022. The 'UKSPF Panel' continues to provide oversight of UKSPF funds, including the approval of grants and any permitted alterations to the programme which deviate from the Investment Plan.

1.4 Our Investment Plan was approved by central government in December 2022, with our Year 1 (2022/23) allocation paid shortly after. A total of 13 projects were identified in the Investment Plan which EDDC would lead on over the three-year period to March 2025. The majority of UKSPF-

funded activity was planned for Year 2 (2023/24) and Year 3 (2024/25). A full list of East Devon's 13 UKSPF projects can be found [online](#).

Evaluation Strategy

2.1 We are required, through our signed MOU, to submit detailed reports to the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) every six months to monitor progress. This includes how much we have spent and what outputs and outcomes we have achieved to date.

2.2 Although EDDC is not required by DLUHC to undertake thorough evaluations of UKSPF-funded activity, EDDC's UKSPF Panel determined that an internal evaluation process should be undertaken to help ensure best practise and continuous improvement in the efficacy and impact of the projects we're delivering. An Economy Projects Assistant was subsequently recruited in May 2023, funded through our UKSPF administration budget, to lead on the evaluation process.

2.3 Following endorsement of our UKSPF Panel members, our one-page UKSPF Evaluation Strategy was published (available [online](#)) in July 2023 to detail the purpose and process of this work. This Strategy sets out the Council's aim to critically evaluate the process and impact of our UKSPF programme and each of its 13 projects. This work centred around five key questions:

1. Was the project effective?
2. Was the process of implementation efficient?
3. Did the project provide good value for money?
4. Did the project provide additionality?
5. Did the project align with the strategic ambitions set out in the UKSPF Investment Plan?

2.4 Each project is managed by a 'Project Lead' who is invited to engage with the evaluation process and to critically reflect upon the delivery of their respective projects in terms of the five key questions outlined above. Project Leads and contracted suppliers are encouraged to be open and honest about the successes and challenges encountered and be willing to adapt delivery based on this critical review and lessons learnt. As delivery of the UKSPF programme is spread across multiple years, the process of conducting annual 'mid-delivery' evaluations ensures that we can refine projects as we go, to maximise their effectiveness.

2.5 The evaluation should also be viewed in the context of devolution and the emerging County Deal for Devon, where future UKSPF funding could be 'devolved upwards' to a new combined authority. Ensuring we can effectively measure the success of our existing projects will be crucial if we intend to fund this activity going post March 2025, especially if there is a future requirement for us to bid into a localised pot of UKSPF funding.

Year 1 Evaluations

3.1 It should be noted that Year 1 activity could not commence until December 2022, once our Investment Plan had been signed off by DLUHC. As DLUHC originally intended for the sign-off to occur in October 2022, this delay meant that a significant portion of our Year 1 allocation had to be rolled over into Year 2. This requirement to roll-over funding into Year 2 was not unique to East Devon. Our understanding is that 95% of the local authorities that received UKSPF funding in 2022/23 were unable to fully spend their allocation by the end of March 2023¹.

3.2 Of our 13 projects to be delivered over the three-year period, 5 of these commenced in Year 1 (2022/23). The evaluation process for each project began in August 2023 with finalised Evaluation Reports drafted and shared with Project Leads between September and November 2023.

3.3 The full Evaluation Reports for Year 1 can be found appended to this report as follows:

- Appendix 1: Council for Voluntary Service
- Appendix 2: East Devon Culture Programme
- Appendix 3: East Devon Leisure Programme

¹ See 'Almost all UK councils have not spent total share of levelling-up fund', *Guardian* (5th November 2023). Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/nov/05/almost-all-uk-councils-have-not-spent-total-share-of-levelling-up-fund?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

- Appendix 4: Sustainable Tourism Programme
- Appendix 5: East Devon Towns Feasibility Work

3.4 Each of the Evaluation Reports confirm that all five projects were delivered effectively and in line with our original Investment Plan. Officers should be commended for achieving this in light of the constrained timeframes provided by DLUHC.

3.5 The Evaluation Reports have highlighted a number of key challenges identified across the five Year 1 projects. Although these challenges have not had a significantly detrimental effect on the projects, they should nonetheless be addressed to optimise the impact of the programme. These challenges are as follows:

- The constrained timeframe in Year 1 imposed by DLUHC was a significant challenge in implementing delivering projects in line with best practice. This made it difficult to conclude at this stage whether certain projects were impactful or achieved good value for money.
- There was a lack of consistency in staff resource between different projects. In some cases, this meant projects had to be delivered by officers with minimal project management experience, thereby requiring significantly more support from the Programme Management team than had been anticipated.
- The outputs and outcomes used to measure the success of each project were not relevant or appropriate for certain types of activity, such as the Cultural Programme for example, where qualitative rather than quantitative feedback is more suitable.
- Due to the quick turnaround required to submit our UKSPF Investment Plan, outputs and outcomes selected for each project were in some cases selected with little consideration of how they could be achieved or measured.
- The delay from DLUHC in publishing key additional guidance and the delay in issuing our Year 1 and Year 2 allocations has been the most challenging aspect of this programme.

3.6 In addition to the challenges outlined above, a number of recommendations for each project have been identified. Project Leads have been invited to reflect upon these and amend their project delivery accordingly. Many of these recommendations are applicable to more than one particular project or require change to how the programme as a whole should be refined. These recommendations are as follows:

- The preparation of Year 3 activity should factor in the possibility of additional delays from DLUHC as a risk to be considered and mitigated against where possible.
- A more structured approach to project management training should be sought at an organisational level, where officers new to project management can be offered training opportunities to coincide with future project management responsibilities.
- Feedback to DLUHC should be provided to recommend that future funds include alternative methods of reporting feedback where quantitative metrics are not appropriate or require further context, such as poor weather affecting participation rates for example.
- A wishlist or pipeline of (capital and revenue) projects should be prepared prior to the announcement of funds where a quick application is required to unlock funding. Projects on the wishlist should include outline costs, specified staff resource and realistic output/outcome targets.
- Where appropriate outputs and outcomes can be identified, projects proposed in future bids should properly consider and procure the appropriate measuring/surveying equipment and systems to ensure those outputs and outcomes can be effectively tracked and recorded.
- A 'Project Guarantor' should be identified for each project who will take over project management duties should the Project Lead not be able to action these duties for either a temporary or indefinite period of time.

3.7 Lastly, a number of recommendations to improve the evaluation process itself have been identified and will inform future mid-delivery and post-delivery evaluations for UKSPF. These include:

- Stagger evaluations across the financial year to align with project-specific timescales, deadlines and reporting periods.
- Alteration in the method of completing evaluation templates with the Project Leads, with more interview-styled sessions and face-to-face meetings.
- Provide firmer deadlines to ensure evaluations are completed on time.

Conclusion

4.1 The evaluation process for Year 1 has shown that despite the very short timescales to achieve total spend of our allocation, we were able to do so effectively and in line with the Investment Plan. The evaluation has identified a number of challenges which have impacted the delivery of Year 1 projects to varying degrees. We are confident that these issues can be addressed and mitigated against to ensure that Year 2 and Year 3 activity can be optimised in terms of impact and value for money.

Financial implications:

The financial details are covered fully in the report and evidence EDDC compliance with the scheme conditions and has been approved by the Council's S151 Officer in accordance with the set conditions.

Legal implications:

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this evaluation report.

Appendix 1: Council for Voluntary Service Year 1 Evaluation

Project Lead	Joanne Avery
Intervention	Intervention: E11 Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups
Total Allocation	£180,000
Year 1 Allocation	£60,000
Year 1 Spend	£60,000

Background

Output	Target (across 3 years)	Achieved (in Year 1)
Number of amenities/facilities created or improved	5	0
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support	100	0
Number of Tourism, Culture or Heritage assets created or improved	5	0
Number of people attending training sessions	50	0
Outcome	Target (across 3 years)	Achieved (in Year 1)
Improved engagement numbers	50	0

The development of a Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) is a long-held ambition of EDDC. Since funding for the previous provision ended in 2018, East Devon has been the only district in Devon without a CVS to co-ordinate and support the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. The absence of a CVS has become a more significant issue in the face of recent crises – such as the pandemic and war in Ukraine – where community organisations have needed to join forces to provide a wider programme of support.

VCSE organisations are also facing increasing demands on their time and resources to tackle poverty, mental ill-health and loneliness, and the impacts of an ageing population. EDDC do not have the internal resources to provide overarching support and co-ordination to the sector, and the vacancy of the Community Engagement Officer post has further reduced capacity to assist VCSEs.

UKSPF provided a crucial opportunity to fund the proposal for a new CVS, with the ambition of maintaining the provision after the three years.

Year 1 Procurement

The case for the development of a CVS had already been outlined by the former Community Engagement Officer and the Director for Housing, Health and Environment, with research conducted into anticipated costs, the aims of the project, and the functions of the new service. This proposal was used to form the specification for the procurement of the CVS.

In the absence of a Community Engagement Officer, the role of Project Lead for the CVS was delegated to an officer without prior experience in either community organisations or procurement of large contracts. Despite this, she was able to use knowledge of prior work conducted and council processes to oversee the procurement and ensure the project was able to proceed.

Due to the delays in receiving Year 1 (2022/23) funding, award of the contract within the timeframe prevented open procurement. The Project Lead was able to use DCC's Business Support Framework to directly award the CVS contract to a suitable provider, should one exist on the

framework. Devon Communities Together (DCT) were the only appropriate provider on the framework and had the capacity and desire to carry out the delivery of the CVS.

Devon Communities Together were invited to submit a proposal for the work based on the specification and the budget allocated from the UKSPF. They submitted a delivery statement outlining all of their aims and actions for the three-year programme and a breakdown of costs that fit within the budget. DCT were subsequently awarded the contract to deliver the 'East Devon VCSE Support Service'. There was a month delay in getting the contracts signed, but this has had no significant impact on the time frame for delivery.

The procurement process for the CVS was carried out efficiently and effectively, as a provider was able to be appointed within the time frame who could fulfil the requirements of the specification for the costs outlined. Although an open procurement would've enabled competitiveness on price and a clear display of value for money, this would have required significant officer time and prevented the award of the contract within the permitted timescales. As the budget assigned to the CVS was determined via thorough research into the expected costs and what neighbouring authorities pay for similar services, this suggests that reasonable value for money was obtained in the procurement process.

Year 1 Activity

As the contract with DCT was signed in early Year 2 (in line with the permitted rollover into 2023/24), all delivery of the new CVS will occur between May 2023 and May 2026. Evaluation of actual delivery will therefore take place within the Year 2 and Year 3 evaluations of this service.

The CVS provides significant additionality to the core services offered by EDDC. Without a CVS in place, coordination of the VCSE sector would have been reliant on EDDC officer time, a resource that has been missing for over a year. Since the proposal was first put forward, additional challenges – particularly the cost-of-living crisis – have emerged which have increased the strain on community organisations. Provision of support to community organisations to help them fundraise, work together more efficiently, and ensure they are able to continue operation is not currently offered by either EDDC or any other umbrella group operating in the district.

Outputs, Outcomes, and Impacts

No outputs or outcomes were realised in Year 1 for the Council for Voluntary Service, nor were there any wider benefits. Once in place, the CVS is expected to deliver a wider portfolio of assistance to the VCSE sector than set out in the outcomes and outputs, including support for accessing grant funding, helping to combat poverty, reduction of social isolation, and increase EDDC's access to and understanding of the sector.

Evaluation Summary

Key Question	Response
1. Was the project effective?	The procurement process carried out for the CVS was effective as it sourced a provider who could complete the work required in line with the specification, budget, and timescale. Effectiveness of the CVS itself cannot be considered at this stage as core activity commenced in 2022/23.
2. Was the process of implementation efficient?	The use of an existing framework was efficient as it took considerably less time than an open procurement, whilst still ensuring the provider has been through the necessary checks.
3. Did the project provide good value for money?	Without an open procurement or multiple quotes sought for costs, good value for money cannot be demonstrated. However, as the budget for CVS was calculated based on the standard costs for this provision, reasonable value for money is indicated.

4. Did the project provide additionality?	The project provides additionality as the development of a CVS provides a set of functions not covered currently in the Council or by another other organisation operating in the area.
5. Did the project align with the strategic ambitions set out in the UKSPF Investment Plan?	The project aligns with the challenge of 'disjointed VCSE coordination' identified in the UKSPF Investment Plan through the creation of a CVS. It also addresses the issue of poverty and the wage gap by supporting community organisation who assist residents facing these issues. It also addresses the second strategic objective in the Poverty Strategy to support community and voluntary groups working to combat poverty.

Lessons Learnt

- Project proposals should ensure appropriate staff resource is in place to deliver the intervention. This should include support staff to assist the Project Lead and take responsibility should the Project Lead become unable to fulfil this role.
- Training and formal peer to peer support should be provided to staff members who assume Project Lead responsibilities to ensure they receive the necessary assistance and feel empowered to carry out this role.
- The efficiency and effectiveness of Year 1 activity on the CVS demonstrates the value of having clearly designed and costed proposals for UKSPF projects in the programme design stage.

Appendix 2: East Devon Culture Programme Year 1 Evaluation

Project Lead	Sarah Elghady
Intervention	E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities
Total Allocation	£95,000 revised to £94,980 to reflect Y1 underspend
Year 1 Allocation	£20,000
Year 1 Spend	£19,980

Output	Target (across 3 years)	Achieved (in Year 1)
Number of local events or activities supported	17	1
Number of organisations receiving grants	17	0
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support	17	25
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	50	8
Outcome		
Improved engagement numbers	150	0
Improved perception of facilities/amenities	100	0
Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support	1	1
Increased visitor numbers	100	0

Background

In 2022, EDDC published a 10 year [Cultural Strategy](#) that created a vision for a vibrant cultural ecosystem in the district. The strategy identified the need to strengthen and promote the local cultural offer through a set of short, medium, and long-term actions, dividing activity into eight themes. The wider benefits of enhanced creative and cultural offerings identified were supported by public consultations indicating that 98% of East Devon residents saw culture as a key driver in attracting tourists, promoting health and wellbeing, and building stronger communities.

UKSPF funding enabled the delivery on the Cultural Strategy through the creation of a Cultural Programme, designed to specifically address Theme 1; 'strengthen and support the people that do'. There was strong alignment between the themes and opportunities laid out in the UKSPF Investment Plan and the Cultural Strategy, with the programme's aspiration 'to support the unique, community-led cultural organisations whose efforts enhance the high quality of life and wellbeing in East Devon's towns and villages' fitting well under the UKSPF Community and Place theme.

Year 1 Activity

The Cultural Programme has employed a unique delivery model to achieve its strategic ambitions, with the programme comprised of several smaller projects. Intervention in the cultural landscape is less established as an operation of the council when compared to other UKSPF activities, so requires a higher degree of flexibility and responsiveness in determining how funding is used. Projects within the programme are overseen by the Cultural Producer, with outside bodies contracted as necessary to delivery aspects of the programme.

Activities funded through the Cultural Programme do not fall neatly into the yearly timetables of UKSPF funding so clear lines cannot be drawn between Year 1 (2022/23) and Year 2 (2023/24) activity. Funding issued in Year 1 will continue to support activity throughout Year 2, so the impact of Year 1 spend cannot be fully assessed at this stage. However, two core activities have been identified for Year 1 of the Cultural Programme, the development of the Arts and Culture East Devon (ACED) network and the Creative Cabin project.

During the pandemic, the team at Thelma Hulbert Gallery established a new network for artists and creative practitioners called Arts and Culture East Devon (ACED), helping local people stay in touch, access funding opportunities, and connect with creatives across the district. These online ACED meetings identified shared opportunities and challenges and the need for a joined-up approach to strengthen the cultural offer in East Devon.

UKSPF funding provided an opportunity to enhance and expand the network and create additional benefits for members. The network meetings have continued to bring in guest speakers, transitioning offline to enable greater engagement with other members. Furthermore, UKSPF has funded the development of an ACED website showcasing members to enable better collaboration and connection, sharing resources on inclusivity, sustainability, and fundraising in the arts in a central location. It also promotes opportunities including the provision of free training sessions on topics such as fundraising and marketing. Whilst training was carried out in Year 1, the website launch was planned for Year 2, so its impact is out of scope for this evaluation.

The Creative Cabin was originally set up in 2020 by Thelma Hulbert Gallery and Wild East Devon as a fun and creative space to explore art and nature. The Cabin hosts a broad range of activities, projects, talks, films, performances, and workshops which creatively explore human relationships to nature and the climate emergency. It was mostly funded by the Art Fund, Arts Council England, and Heritage Lottery Community Fund, but the arrangement with Wild East Devon to provide the vehicle to transport it fell through. In February of Year 1, Thelma Hulbert put forth a proposal to EDDC to contribute £5,670 of match funding to cover the cost of the vehicle and enable the project to go forward. The Creative Cabin proposal was deemed to be suitable for UKSPF funding as it met the objectives to promote wider engagement, particularly amongst children and young people, and to use culture as a driver to tackle the climate crisis.

Although funding was issued in Year 1, most of the events supported will occur within the Year 2 timetable. The Creative Cabin is set to travel to 11 new locations across the district and target the specific areas and groups highlighted by the Cultural Strategy as needing support. This includes those from disadvantages backgrounds, caregivers, and rurally isolated communities.

Year 1 Procurement

The development of the ACED website had to be delivered externally due to insufficient capacity within Strata. Five quotes from website developers were requested, with Cosmic selected as they provided the lowest cost option, are based in East Devon, and have been used previously by the Council to deliver satisfactory work.

For the appointment of the training providers, a procurement exemption form was completed with the justification that each award was under £5,000 and that the limited timeframe to spend the money prevented open procurement. The two training providers appointed were Cause4 and Flying Geese. They were selected based on their reputation, recommendations by previous users, and positive customer feedback.

The delivery of the training was conducted in a mixture of in-person and online sessions. For the in-person sessions delivered by Cause4, half a day of training was delivered at a cost of £609 with an additional £157 for room hire. 16 cultural organisations attended with a cost per trainee working out at £47. Similar programmes delivered by Cause4 cost between £80-£100 per attendee, indicating value for money on costs was achieved.

For the Flying Geese training, the standard enrolment cost would be £500 exc VAT per individual attending. The cost of the six marketing sessions delivered under UKSPF was £3,200 exc VAT, which, for nine attendees, means a cost of £355 per participant. This displays good value for

money on costs as the training was delivered at 71% of market value. As up to 25 participants were able to enrol in these courses, the outputs, outcomes, and impacts achieved from the training sessions didn't achieve full value for money.

Additional assistance in the development and promotion of the ACED network was provided by an employee from the Thelma Hulbert Gallery operating on a freelance basis outside of their normal responsibilities. This arrangement was put in place prior to the recruitment of the Cultural Producer, with the hours of support provided by the freelancer reduced once the post was filled. A competitive process to onboard a consultant was not required as the cost was under £5,000, and the freelancer's existing employment at the Gallery and familiarity with the project provided the rationale for their appointment. As staff costs were not eligible UKSPF expenditure, it was necessary to structure the appointment as a freelance role rather than additional hours paid to an employee.

Ongoing freelance support continues to be provided to develop and promote the ACED network, an agreement which will end in September 2023. With the programme still being designed during Year 1, with both the ACED network and Creative Cabin projects initiated by the Thelma Hulbert Gallery team, the facilitation support was valuable in the initiation stage. However, this spend was authorised on a temporary basis, with a monthly review process to ensure value was being gained from the support. Extension of this support should be assessed during Year 2 to ensure value for money is being gained, additionality is being displayed, and the spend does not exceed procurement thresholds.

The Creative Cabin project was mostly funded via the Arts Council, with EDDC's contribution only representing 13% of the whole project. The exemption to standing orders obtained for the Cultural Programme enabled the Project Lead to fund emerging opportunities that satisfied the outputs, outcomes, and strategic aims of the project, and this mechanism was used to fund the Creative Cabin. The vehicle was procured at below market rate using EDDC's discount with the hire company, however good value for money in terms of cost cannot be ascertained in the absence of quotes and a procurement process. It is not possible at this stage to determine if the Creative Cabin demonstrated good value for money in terms of outputs, outcomes, and impacts as only one event was delivered during Year 1.

Outputs and Outcomes

The metrics provided by DLUHC to measure the success of projects across UKSPF are inadequate to capture the positive impacts and wider benefits of the Cultural Programme. The outputs and outcomes resulting in project activity are often not covered by the lists from which project leads could choose, and those that are relevant are challenging to measure.

Whilst delivery is likely to result in outcomes such as increased footfall, attendance at events and perception of events, measurement of these outcomes make them difficult to report accurately. The output and outcomes definitions were not provided by DLUHC until after the submission of the Investment Plan. This also created challenges, as DLUHC often require baseline measurements for activities to be existing rather than new, and for increases to be attributable to UKSPF activities. Cultural venues and events in East Devon often do not track, nor have the ability to track these metrics, and increased visitor numbers to a large event or key institution cannot be cleanly traced back to UKSPF activity.

Additionally, when the outputs and outcomes were selected, the Cultural Producer was not in post and the exact activities to be funded were unknown. The subsequent design of the Programme focused on aligning with the core strategic aims of the Cultural Strategy, the Council Plan and the UKSPF Investment Plan, rather than meeting and demonstrating each output and outcome.

A pragmatic decision was taken later in Year 2 to reduce the number of outputs and outcomes reported back to DLUHC and to adjust the targets where necessary. The number of outputs and outcomes attributed to each UKSPF project varies considerably, and those initially assigned to the Cultural Programme were higher than the average. These adjustments enabled the production of a set of quantitative targets (outputs and outcomes) that could be reasonably measured, achieved,

and attributed to the Cultural Programme. However, the real/qualitative impact, which is far more difficult to measure, is likely to be far greater.

The outputs achieved in Year 1 were local events or activities supported and number of organisations receiving non-financial support. The organisations receiving non-financial support were counted through the attendees of the ACED network training and the event was the Creative Cabin event held during Year 1. Counting events and activities rather than people disguised the real impact of Year 1 activity, as it obscured how many people benefitted and from which demographics. Of the three activities funded in Year 1 of the Cultural Programme, both the Creative Cabin and the ACED website will only realise most of their outputs in later years of the programme. The Creative Cabin has a further 11 events lined up for Year 2, whilst the ACED website did not go live until June.

No outcomes were recorded in Year 1 due to the short time frame and need to use Year 1 activity as a baseline to determine increases in participation and perception. Where Year 1 activities continues into and is built upon in Year 2, links have been drawn between planned activity and outcomes achieved.

Wider Impact

There is clear evidence to show the positive impact and wider benefit of the Cultural Programme, as well as strong alignment with strategic goals. Year 1 activity is closely linked to the realisation of the aims and goals laid out in Theme 1 of the Cultural Strategy and meets the wider strategic ambitions from the UKSPF Investment Plan. Firstly, the Cultural Strategy aimed to provide children and young adults across the district with ample opportunities to participate in cultural and creative activities. This was addressed through the Creative Cabin project, which is targeted at children and young people who made up 85% of attendees at their first event.

The ambition to attract and retain young professionals in the district is a key strategic aim of the Investment Plan, which identifies a shrinking working age population as a core challenge for East Devon. Year 1 activity was less focussed on this demographic specifically but should feature more prominently in Years 2 and 3.

Additionally, the training delivered meets the objectives set out to bolster the resilience and ambition of cultural and creative organisations by equipping them with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in the sector. This also enables employment opportunities in creative and cultural industries as individuals have the required training to take up these roles. Fundraising training specifically meets the goal to increase investment into the arts, museums, and heritage by providing individuals with the abilities needed to raise money and apply for grants more effectively.

The continuation of ACED network meetings and increased opportunities for members to network and promote their work also meets the aim of improving the connectedness of cultural organisations, artists, and creative businesses and ensuring East Devon's cultural offer is well promoted.

The qualitative benefits of the Cultural Programme can be demonstrated by feedback from participants. One participant commented that:

"The ACED Essentials in Fundraising workshop was fantastically put together and delivered. I had some previous experience in fund-raising but came away with new skills and ideas that enabled me to secure funds in the following weeks from sources that I had previously not known about. David from Cause4 was so knowledgeable and engaging, fund-raising can sometimes feel like a daunting prospect but I came away with a renewed sense of purpose. Thank you ACED for creating this great day!"

Furthermore, all participants who attended the fundraising training agreed with the statement 'the training will improve my working practices' and all but one was satisfied with the quality and the relevance of the training. A follow up survey conducted six months later showed two respondents had successfully secured funding following the training.

Although not required or facilitated by the UKSPF reporting process, qualitative data and participant feedback will continue to be gathered for the Cultural Programme and included in the

evaluation and feedback to stakeholders to ensure the demonstration of the full value of funded activity.

Evaluation Summary

Key Question	Response
1. Was the project effective?	The ACED network development was effective in supporting the cultural organisations and artists to feel connected and become resilient and creatively ambitious. The Creative Cabin was effective at engaging young people and using art to address the climate emergency. Whilst the activities were effective at achieving the goals of the strategic documents, they were less effective at realising the specific UKSPF outputs and outcomes. It is too early to assess the full effectiveness as much funded activity will only take place in Year 2 and impacts will take time to become visible.
2. Was the process of implementation efficient?	The programme design is ongoing, with funded projects developed as a result of local opportunities and needs arising. Splitting funding across multiple items and delivery partners reduces the efficiency of distributing funding but is more appropriate for using it impactfully.
3. Did the project provide good value for money?	Assessing full value for money is difficult for a Cultural Programme where the benefits are more qualitative. However, good value for money was shown for the website, where five quotations were sought and the cheapest was selected, and the training courses, where each participant cost less than an individual ticket. Value for money regarding the Creative Cabin will be determined in the Year 2 evaluation.
4. Did the project provide additionality?	All activities delivered through the Cultural Programme are outside of the core operations of the council and are either new or significantly enhance or expand existing activity in East Devon.
5. Did the project align with the strategic ambitions set out in the UKSPF Investment Plan?	The project as delivered in Year 1 aligns with the ambition to enhance the cultural offer for young people and expanded opportunities to work in the creative sector. It seizes the opportunity set out in the Investment Plan to implement the recommendations of the Culture Strategy.

Lessons Learnt

- The outputs and outcomes provided by DLUHC are better suited to measuring quantitative rather than qualitative impacts. Outcomes, such as those regarding improved perceptions, which aim to provide a qualitative measure of impact, are a challenge to gauge accurately and restricted by the definitions and guidance provided.
- Feedback to DLUHC on the reporting process should include requesting opportunities to provide qualitative performance indicators and testimonials as a metric of success.
- Only outputs and outcomes that are realistic, achievable, measurable, and attributable to UKSPF activity should be targeted for each project. Selecting appropriate outputs and outcomes should be prioritised over selecting a higher number.
- Once outputs and outcomes that align with the aims and activities of the programme have been selected, project activities should be designed with their achievement in mind to ensure the appropriate measuring/surveying mechanisms are in place.
- Reporting requirements outside of the UKSPF programme that relate to activity delivered under the scheme should be discussed by programme management and

project leads to streamline reporting where possible. The UKSPF monitoring and evaluation requirements, timelines, and time commitments should be made clear to project leads.

- Further consideration is required for when projects are evaluated. Project activity and spend do not always align neatly with the financial years, with activity taking place across the three-year programme for spend defrayed in Year 1. The evaluation of programmes via projects rather than years should be considered for future evaluations.

Appendix 3: East Devon Leisure Programme Year 1 Evaluation

Project Lead	Charlie Plowden
Intervention	E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues to bring people together
Total Allocation	£114,000
Year 1 Allocation	£38,000
Year 1 Spend	£38,000

Output	Target (across 3 years)	Achieved (in Year 1)
Number of events/participatory programmes	7	2
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	8	0
Outcome	Target (across 3 years)	Achieved (in Year 1)
Improved perception of facilities/amenities	750	0
Increased users of facilities/amenities	450	0

Background

East Devon's Leisure Strategy identified an opportunity to expand community leisure activities and wellbeing programmes beyond the walls of our leisure centres to improve access throughout our population. Engaging a wider pool of residents in our leisure offerings was identified as a key driver to reduce health inequalities, improve quality of life, and make East Devon a more appealing place for working age residents.

The outreach programme proposed demonstrated strong alignment with the opportunities and challenges identified within the Investment Plan. It both sought to tackle and respond to our demographic shift by both ensuring East Devon's older residents remain healthy and active for longer, enabling them to remain in the workforce whilst mitigating healthcare costs, and to present a compelling leisure offer to our younger population. Additionally, providing free or cheap opportunities to partake in leisure activities supports those living in poverty and improves the accessibility of physical exercise.

EDDC contracts out the management and delivery of our leisure facilities to LED for which it receives core capital and revenue funding. Remaining expenses are covered by LED through income. However, for residents, access to the leisure centres is dependent on both disposable income and proximity to a town centre, which excludes those living on low incomes or in rural areas. These residents are reliant on other organisations delivering outreach – defined as programmes and opportunities for physical activity outside of leisure centres – wellbeing and leisure programmes that are more accessible.

The Leisure Programme sought to focus specifically on outreach activity, including aligning it with community outreach and building upon the existing LED programme. As the current programme is funded via generated revenue and not EDDC funding, this project also presented an opportunity to better co-ordinate the outreach approach, set key KPIs, and clarify the commitments required by LED.

Year 1 Activity

The UKSPF-funded Leisure Programme is being delivered by LED via a service level agreement (SLA). The initial proposal involved hiring a dedicated officer within EDDC to lead the outreach

programme, but this was not in line with the parameters of UKSPF funding. LED has an existing outreach team consisting of part-time staff members who were willing to take on additional hours to expand delivery of the programme. This was determined to be an efficient and cost-effective method of delivery as it reduced the time and costs associated with recruitment.

The first step in commissioning the work was to agree the SLA with LED and define the parameters and cost of the programme. This process was complicated by the lack of time available by the Project Lead to dedicate to this work given his other commitments as a senior officer and an absence of any other officers with a leisure focus in his team or the wider authority. Although the Project Lead was only required to develop the SLA and ensure effective contract management thereafter, sustained intervention by the UKSPF Programme Manager was required to get the SLA signed by the deadline. Future UKSPF projects should ensure that the assigned Project Lead has sufficient capacity to take on the additional work and there is the requisite officer support to deliver within the dedicated Team.

Outreach Activities

Four outreach activities were delivered through Year 1 funding. These were the purchase of two Inbody machines, a Born to Move schools programme, Pickleball sessions, and a Nutri pilot scheme.

[Inbody machines](#) provide users with an information sheet detailing their body composition, including factors such as muscle mass and visceral fat, and an explanation of how to interpret these statistics. Whilst LED already has several Inbody machines within their centres that can be used by members, the two additional machines funded via UKSPF are portable and are taken out to communities and workplaces to enable non-members to have an assessment produced. LED have set up a series of 'Inbody days' where the machines are situated somewhere publicly accessible and anyone can get a free assessment, accompanied by a talk on what the results indicate and how the health concerns identified could be addressed. This serves as a driver to the leisure centres by enabling greater awareness of how the activities offered can improve health indicators.

[Nutri](#) provides a service promoting food and body ease to encourage intuitive eating and physical activity. It differs from traditional programmes as it seeks to reduce health inequalities through the development of a weight neutral community and measures success on the reported happiness of participants rather than weight loss. The Axminster pilot programme now scheduled for Year 2 includes access to their learning platform, hypnotherapy or meditative sessions, body image sessions, and a guide to finding enjoyable movement. This service is free to Axminster residents and offered alongside 3 months of free membership, compared to a usual cost of £317 per person.

[The Born to Move](#) programme is a series of fun and engaging exercise classes delivered in schools across East Devon. Developed by Les Mills, a company which creates workout classes delivered by instructors across the country, Born to Move is a programme targeted specifically to under 16s. The UKSPF funding was used to increase the number of schools where Born to Move was delivered as part of the existing schools' outreach programme.

Pickleball is a racket sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. It has a short learning curve, can be played by a wide range of ages and fitness levels, and involves low startup costs. This meets the aims of the outreach programme as it is accessible for older residents and appeals to those with a low level of fitness. UKSPF funding was used to purchase the equipment and the coaching to offer Pickleball in Honiton and Ottery St Mary. As Pickleball takes place inside the centres, it does not meet the strict definition of an outreach activity and has been included as a 'driver' activity that increases usage of the facilities and could motivate uptake of other leisure activities. It is too early to assess if it has performed this function and justified its inclusion in the outreach programme.

Engagement with the outreach programme varied across activities. Born to Move engaged 888 school children in just two months, 524 people played Pickleball, whilst only 30 people received an Inbody assessment and the Nutri pilot was deferred to January 2024 due to lack of take up. Cost per participant worked out as £7.53 for Born to Move, £3.37 for Pickleball, and £390 for Inbody.

Only Pickleball produced a return on investment in 2 months of Year 1 activity, with the cost per participant lower than the normal charge of £5.50 per person. However, as the equipment purchased will be used across all three years of the programme, it is too early to determine if this investment displays good value for money.

Outputs, Outcomes, and Impacts

Progress towards outputs in Year 1 included events such as Inbody days, and Pickleball sessions. With less time for delivery in Year 1 than subsequent years, progress so far indicates that the targets are achievable by the end of the three years.

Outcomes of the programme will only be measured in Years 2 and 3. The outreach team has designed bespoke surveys to enable the measurement of improved perception of facilities and amenities. Increased user numbers that are directly attributable to UKSPF activity can be measured by extracting those who have visited the centres to participate in newly funded activities or whose membership has resulted from participation in an outreach activity.

Whilst the outcome specifies additional users as those attending a physical structure, by definition an outreach programme requires targeting activity outside of these spaces. It is an aim of the project to use the outreach sessions to drive residents to the leisure centres and encourage take up of the facilities available to improve physical health and wellbeing. However, as identified by the Leisure Strategy, the need for an outreach programme was based partly on the inaccessibility of leisure centres to some residents, with the primary aim being to provide these communities with a high-quality leisure offer. Therefore, tracking the wider impacts of the programme and capturing additional metrics, such as the numbers of participants in Born to Move, that are not monitored for UKSPF is key to determining its success.

A report provided on the Schools Programme – of which Born to Move serves as just one element – demonstrates the importance and positive impact of this outreach work. Through targeted support, the outreach team provide a range of activities to create a positive attitude for physical activity and demonstrate its impacts on good mental health and emotional resilience. Comments from teachers shows the softer benefits of the programme, with children returning from sessions with “the biggest smiles, positive attitudes, and red faces”.

Evaluation Summary

Key Question	Response
1. Was the project effective?	The project was effective at designing an outreach programme, getting the SLA signed, and beginning outreach activities within the time frame. The success of the activities delivered has been mixed so some changes are necessary to ensure greater participation in subsequent years.
2. Was the process of implementation efficient?	Working with an established partner and an existing team within LED enabled the quick roll out of Year 1 delivery. The lack of capacity from the Project Lead to dedicate time to the SLA and the requirement to pull assistance from the Programme Manager reduced the efficiency of this process.
3. Did the project provide good value for money?	As all investments made in Year 1 will continue to support Year 2 and 3 activity, it is too early to make a judgement regarding value for money for all activities. However, as the cost per participant for Pickleball is already lower than the normal cost, that activity has already demonstrated value for money.
4. Did the project provide additionality?	The project provides additionality through the expansion of the outreach programme and clarification of the requirements on LED to deliver this. All activities are new or available to new groups of people.

5. Did the project align with the strategic ambitions set out in the UKSPF Investment Plan?	The project aligns with the Leisure Strategy ambitions to improve wellbeing, encourage physical exercise, and provide increased leisure opportunities to low income/rural demographics. It aligns with the IP ambitions to address poverty and the challenges of an ageing population. However, greater alignment could be achieved with leisure offerings focused young adults to meet the ambition to make East Devon a more attractive home for those aged 18-30.
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Lessons Learnt

- Selected Project Leads must have sufficient time, capacity, and staff support to dedicate the time necessary to managing and delivering assigned projects. Senior officers should identify suitable internal resource rather than taking on the Project Lead role themselves.
- Prior to the development of project proposals for future UKSPF rounds, all teams looking to submit projects should ensure they are clear on the conditions of UKSPF funding. This will ensure project design fits with fund requirements and reduce time taken to rework proposals to ensure compliance.
- The opportunity identified in the Investment Plan to use an enhanced leisure offering to make the district more attractive to young adults has not been fully realised within Year 1 activity. Whilst Year 2 activity contains activities which target this cohort, the programme should focus more on making a broader range of offerings appeal to this age group through measures such as aligning timetabling with the working day and using specific marketing.

Appendix 4: Sustainable Tourism Programme Year 1 Evaluation

Project Lead	Geri Panteva
Intervention	E17 – Funding for the development and promotion of the visitor economy
Total Allocation	£209,533
Year 1 Allocation	£ 24,553 (original) £18,572 (revised)
Year 1 Spend	£18,572

Output	Target (across 3 years)	Achieved (in Year 1)
Number of local events or activities supported	30	1
Number of Tourism, Culture or Heritage assets created or improved	10	0
Number of enterprises receiving grants	22	0
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	35	53
Number of people reached	10,000	200
Outcome		
Increase in visitor spending	£2,500	0
Increased amount of investment	£85,000	0
Improved perception of attractions	10	0
Increased visitor numbers	200	0
Estimated Carbon dioxide equivalent reductions as a result of support	4	0

Background

In September 2022, Cabinet approved a 5-year Tourism Strategy to build on the existing high-quality tourism offer and support inclusive and sustainable growth in the sector. The vision statement outlined in the Tourism Strategy is “for East Devon to be the leading, year-round tourism destination in Devon, whose diverse ecosystem of outstanding natural environments, distinctive, high-quality businesses, towns and villages, all thrive and grow through a commitment to Net Zero, accessibility and collaboration”. This vision is supported by six strategic objectives, including increasing visitor spend, actively supporting tourism businesses to reduce their carbon emissions, and building a sustainable, collaborative private sector network based on shared values.

Until the endorsement and adoption of the Tourism Strategy, EDDC did not provide dedicated support to the tourism sector to facilitate and enable growth. The first stage of delivering the Tourism Strategy was the allocation of Senior Economic Development Officer time to lead on its implementation. With this internal resource identified, the proposal for a Sustainable Tourism Fund was put forward for UK Shared Prosperity Funding to deliver key elements of the strategy, particularly focusing on reducing carbon emissions, improving accessibility, and developing an East Devon Tourism Network.

Year 1 Activity

The majority of Year 1 activity and spend related to the creation of the East Devon Tourism Network (EDTN). This aims to deliver on objective 5 of the Tourism Strategy, which specifically outlines a need for a ‘sustainable, collaborative, private sector network’. As a values-led network, businesses would be brought together based on a commitment to quality, Net Zero, improving accessibility, and working with other providers.

The de Bois Review – a government-commissioned report on Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) – specifically highlighted Devon and its fragmentation of organisations operating in the tourist landscape as a key issue and barrier to development of the sector. These findings were supported by feedback from stakeholder consultations undertaken during the development of the Tourism Strategy that highlighted a desire for a localised network to engage in meaningful collaboration between industry representatives to share ideas and learn from best practice. From this, the concept of an East Devon Tourism Network was formed to facilitate partnership working and enable providers to speak as a united voice on challenges faced by the sector.

The East Devon Tourism Network differs greatly from other membership organisations – such as DMOs – operating within the tourism sector. Whilst most DMOs seek primarily to market tourist destinations and promote the offerings of their paying membership, the EDTN focuses on equipping businesses with the skills, knowledge, and connections to become more resilient. Crucially, the benefits of EDTN membership are unlocked through demonstration of the core values of sustainability, inclusivity, quality, and collaboration, rather than ability to pay fees. Members of DMOs benefit through the promotion of their business, whereas EDTN members are provided with opportunities to learn from others and form partnerships that enable business growth that is sustainable, ethical, and improves the quality of their services.

There were two additional items of spend in Year 1 of the Sustainable Tourism Fund. One was the sponsorship of the Taste East Devon festival, an annual event series which celebrates the finest food and drink offerings across the district. Although the contribution utilised the Year 1 budget, the festival was held in September 2023, so will be assessed as part of the Year 2 evaluation.

The other item of spend was the Value of Tourism data produced by the South West Research Company. This is a yearly dataset that shows the number of trips, overnight visits, and visitor spend, all of which are broken down into various categories. Commissioning this data is key to the delivery of the strategy as it provides the baseline measurement for the year before implementation. Recommissioning of this data for each year of the strategy is the only way to show the impact of delivery and monitor progress, so is a necessary cost as part of our commitment to delivery on the Tourism Strategy. The South West Research Company is the only source of this data and they provided a single quote for the dataset.

Year 1 Procurement

A delivery provider was appointed to run the East Devon Tourism Network on behalf of EDDC. Research undertaken in the creation of the Tourism Strategy showed a clear desire for the network to be run by an existing organisation to maintain collaborations and to avoid further fragmentation of the landscape. Additionally, the officer time assigned to the implementation of the Tourism Strategy was insufficient to run this network.

An open procurement process was undertaken via the Supplying the South West portal. An open competition meant the procurement was transparent and enabled a wider range of organisations to bid for the contract. Tender submissions were scored on both quality and price, with the weighting skewed towards quality. This ensured that the successful tenderer was able to demonstrate good value for money in project delivery and provide the highest return on investment for the £13,000 awarded.

The maximum value of the bid was determined by assessing market rates and knowledge gleaned from previous procurements to produce a realistic expectation of cost for outputs produced. The payment model used for the EDTN contract – where initial costs were paid upfront and the rest was subject to satisfactory delivery – ensured contractors achieved the outputs and outcomes pledged in their tender submission. Additionally, update reports require a breakdown of spend, allowing the contract manager to scrutinise the budget and ensure value for money is achieved.

The successful bidder was East Devon Excellence (EDE), a membership organisation representing high quality tourist and hospitality businesses operating across East Devon. There is a robust monitoring process in place, with the expectations and key performance indicators clearly outlined in the contract. In their update reports, EDE must demonstrate progress towards target

numbers of network members signed-up, attendance at quarterly events, and increased social media reach. These reports are accompanied by in-person reviews with the contract manager to provide greater oversight and support from EDDC. Whilst this was a complex relationship to navigate in its infancy, it has resulted in a strong partnership, with the review meetings offering an opportunity for continuous refinement and improvement through collaborative problem solving.

Alongside the retention of a proportion of the payment subject to delivery, the contract length was set at one year, with the option to extend to the full three years of UKSPF. Inclusion of these provisions in the contract, alongside the aforementioned monitoring process, allow EDDC to identify and mitigate issues with delivery and ensure outputs and impacts are being met.

Outputs, Outcomes, and Impacts

As the short time frame for Year 1 delivery was largely dedicated to the appointment of a delivery provider, the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the Sustainable Tourism Fund will be far greater in subsequent years. Achievement towards outputs in Year 1 came from the inaugural EDTN event held at the Deer Park, where 53 organisations attended against a target of 35. Additionally, 200 organisations were reached as part of the promotion of the event and the launch of the network. There was also a Slack channel set up to build upon relationships formed at the event and engage those unable to attend.

As the East Devon Tourism Network is about driving collaboration based on shared values – including a commitment to quality and sustainability – the qualitative impacts realised serve as a more accurate depiction of success than quantitative outcomes and outputs. Outcomes and impacts of the EDTN cannot be assessed at this stage and will be covered in future evaluations. Impacts such as partnership projects, greater inclusivity and implementation of accessibility equipment, and sharing of best practice will be monitored throughout the three years of the EDTN to capture the qualitative benefits.

Feedback from the first 6 months of the network reported 77% of attendees of network events rated them as either ‘good’ or ‘very good’ and over 10,000 people had been reached via social media against a target of 1,500. Once the first year of delivery is complete and the learning and partnerships developed have time to embed there will be a clearer picture of the qualitative impacts.

Evaluation Summary

Key Question	Response
1. Was the project effective?	An open procurement process was successful in awarding the contract to run the East Devon Tourism Network to East Devon Excellence. Full efficacy will be reliant on further delivery, but the establishment of a good working relationship between EDDC and EDE and the high attendance at the first event are positive indications of effectiveness.
2. Was the process of implementation efficient?	Although open procurements can be time consuming, the contract was awarded within Year 1 with sufficient time remaining to organise and hold the first EDTN event, demonstrating efficient implementation of the project.
3. Did the project provide good value for money?	As the open procurement process evaluates bids on quality and price, EDE had to demonstrate a higher quality offer for the amount awarded. Submission of spend items to the contract manager, with some funding withheld until satisfactory delivery is achieved, serve to incentivise achievement of value for money in how the contract is spent.
4. Did the project provide additionality?	The development of the EDTN aligns with but is distinct from other organisations operating within the fractured tourism landscape. Free membership subject to alignment with values and a highly localised approach presents a distinct offer to

	DMO membership which will provide additionality and avoid any duplication of services offered. The UKSPF provides additionality in enabling the procurement of the South West Research Company data for a further three years that core funding did not cover.
5. Did the project align with the strategic ambitions set out in the UKSPF Investment Plan?	The opportunities presented in the Tourism Strategy are outlined in the UKSPF Investment Plan, with specific mention of promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism. It seeks modest growth of the sector with a focus on supporting high quality tourism offers that align with EDDC values and address our core challenges such as climate change.

Lessons Learnt:

- The outputs and outcomes provided by DLUHC are better suited to measuring quantitative rather than qualitative impacts. Outcomes, such as those regarding improved perceptions, which aim to provide a qualitative measure of impact, are a challenge to gauge accurately and restricted by the definitions and guidance provided.
- Feedback to DLUHC on the reporting process should include requesting opportunities to provide qualitative performance indicators and testimonials as a metric of success.
- Only outputs and outcomes that are realistic, achievable, measurable, and attributable to UKSPF activity should be targeted for each project. Selecting appropriate outputs and outcomes should be prioritised over selecting a higher number.
- Open procurement with output-based incentives can help to ensure a clear demonstration of value for money and transparency within the process and should be considered for future projects where timing permits.
- Reviewing the trends outlined in the Value of Tourism data, or other district wide datasets, will not enable the attribution of impacts to UKSPF activity. Reporting on UKSPF outputs and outcomes and a greater understanding of impact may require the commissioning of project-specific baseline data or measurement tools. This expense should be allocated within project budgets to ensure ability to assess the value of projects and interventions.
- Directly attributing outputs and outcomes to UKSPF activity represents a serious challenge as it represents a small percentage of activity undertaken in the tourism sector. Monitoring will be limited to events where a direct connection can be made between interventions and change, however this means figures reported will fall short of displaying the real value of activity.
- Where possible, output and outcomes measurements should account for context, either through comparison of similar economic/weather conditions, or performance against other UK tourist destinations. Although indications of success are ordinarily measured via increases, where downward trends are experienced nationally, the maintenance of existing levels should be considered a success.

Appendix 5: East Devon Towns Feasibility Work Year 1 Evaluation

Project Lead	Alison Hayward
Intervention	E31 - Funding to support relevant feasibility studies
Total Allocation	£105,000
Year 1 Allocation	£35,000
Year 1 Spend	£35,000

Output/Outcome	Target (across 3 years)	Achieved (in Year 1)
Number of feasibility studies developed as a result of support	3	2
The number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	3	0

Background

East Devon District Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan identified an opportunity to act on our Council Plan commitment to use our council assets to "support regeneration and create employment opportunities". From this, the East Devon Towns Feasibility Work project was developed with the aim of carrying out feasibility studies in towns across the district to find regeneration projects ready for future investment.

The scope of the project was informed by the previously undertaken Axe Valley study, which focused on finding regeneration opportunities in the towns of Axminster and Seaton. This study identified a package of projects that could deliver 150 jobs and £30m in GVA over a 10-year period, as well as informing EDDC's bid to the Levelling Up Fund 2. Although the LUF2 bid was not successful, there was a desire to replicate the Axe Valley study to identify a similar package of projects for the other East Devon towns. However, EDDC lacks the core budget and staff resource to carry out further feasibility work.

UKSPF funding provided the opportunity to conduct further feasibility studies in Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Sidmouth, and Exmouth, centring on regenerating EDDC assets to provide new and enhanced usages. Project design focused on bringing forward additional studies rather than implementation of the Axe Valley findings as the small amount assigned under UKSPF was insufficient to deliver significant capital works.

Year 1 Activity

In Year 1 feasibility studies were undertaken for Honiton and Ottery St Mary. The first step was to determine the assets in scope, which presented an immediate challenge. EDDC does not have any significant land assets in Ottery St Mary, and none of the assets owned by the council in Honiton were appropriate for regeneration/redevelopment at the time of the study. This required an alteration of project parameters to include the assets of other public sector bodies, information on which is not readily available to EDDC.

This knowledge gap presented a significant challenge to project delivery as without a comprehensive overview of public sector assets in place, it was hard to determine where feasibility studies would have the greatest impact. The eventual sites were selected in conversation with the town councils based on their strategic priorities, with the Ottery site owned by their town council.

Honiton's feasibility study investigated how improvements to the EDDC-owned Lace Walk and Thelma Hulbert Gallery car parks could enhance the visitor experience and attract custom for local businesses. It examined the possibility of incorporating a mobility hub and green/blue infrastructure into the car parks to extend sustainable travel options and enhance mobility for individuals without cars.

Ottery St Mary's feasibility study considered three refurbishment or development options for the Station Hub – currently used by several youth groups - including design work, an assessment of costs, and an understanding of commercial opportunities.

Year 1 Procurement

The second stage of Year 1 activity was to appoint consultants to carry out the work. Consultancy support was required on this project due to both insufficient in-house resource and the need for additional, specialist expertise. Due to the time constraints, the consultants were appointed directly. An Exemption Report for the Ottery St Mary study was obtained on the grounds that if the spend did not occur within the required time frame – which would not have been possible if a full tender exercise had been undertaken – EDDC risked the return of unspent funding to central government. The team of consultants chosen to conduct the study were appointed based on their successful completion of the Axe Valley study and the belief that they could be relied upon to deliver a comprehensive report in a short time frame whilst meeting the Project Lead's requirements.

For Honiton, the consultants were appointed via a Somerset County Council framework. A consultant with the required specialisms was on the framework and both the framework and the consultant has previously been used to positive results.

Outputs, Outcomes, and Impacts

The Feasibility Work project is on track to meet all of its outputs, as two of the three feasibility studies have already been undertaken. There are two more planned; Sidmouth for Year 2 and Exmouth for Year 3. No outcomes have been recorded, but none were anticipated at this stage as additional time and funding are necessary to bring forward identified projects. Full assessment of the impact of the feasibility studies will only be possible in future years and will be captured in future evaluation work.

Although there are currently no projects in the works from the feasibility studies, there are proposals being created to take forward the findings in Ottery St Mary. The Ottery St Mary Town Council wishes to explore how a new centre in the Station Hub would operate, how it would be funded, and how it would be managed. This would ensure that Ottery St Mary Town Council have a full understanding of how a community led centre could operate prior to pursuing an expensive and resource intensive refurbishment on the site. Next steps from the Honiton study will be considered by the Council's Green Team this autumn.

The high costs associated with delivering the capital improvements recommended by both feasibility studies presents a serious obstacle to bringing forward the larger projects proposed. For Honiton, implementation of the essential components of the scheme would cost £100,000, with full delivery costing up to £450,000. The three options presented for the Station Hub in Ottery St Mary range from £250,000 to £1,040,000. The enormous expense involved in the full realisation of these projects makes it unlikely that all aspects of the studies will be delivered. In contrast to the Axe Valley study, there are no future grant schemes identified where funding could be sought to improve the viability of these projects. Remaining feasibility studies funded via UKSPF and any future projects supported by the council should consider the likelihood of capital works proceeding and the availability of funds to deliver these before they are undertaken.

Without open procurement, it is hard to demonstrate that the feasibility studies provided good value for money. However, the quotes provided from the consultants came under the budget threshold set for the work, and procuring the consultants as a partnership was more cost effective than finding separate contracts. As the Project Lead has procured similar studies in the past, they have an awareness of the typical costs involved in this kind of work, and the quotes provided were in line with market costs.

Identifying towns, rather than sites, to focus feasibility studies on, created challenges in finding suitable sites and meant that those selected did not represent the greatest regeneration opportunities available within the district. A key piece of learning to inform future decision-making on feasibility work is to approach the selection of assets differently to find those with the most

potential and where there is a clear route to delivering on the reports produced. It is worth noting that the reason this approach was not taken in this project - and which could present a challenge to future schemes run in this way - was to ensure a fair geographical spread and work across as many towns as possible. As a politically sensitive issue, future approaches must ensure that settlements across the district feel they have opportunities to benefit from funding for regeneration projects.

The Ottery St Mary feasibility study realised some unexpected additional benefits. The closer working relationship with the town council enabled the chosen study to align with the aspirations in their Neighbourhood Plan. Through interactions with the youth groups currently using the Station Hub, the vision for the building as a better functioning youth and community space incorporated feedback from the town's young people to ensure it aligned with their needs. This fits with the Investment Plan's intention to address demographic change and make East Devon more appealing for young people.

This learning is directly informing the Year 2 Sidmouth feasibility study, which will also look at refurbishment opportunities for a youth facility. Early engagement with the town council has helped to overcome challenges in identifying suitable projects and facilitated a partnership approach to Year 2 delivery.

Evaluation Summary

Key Question	Response
1. Was the project effective?	The project was effective at delivering the feasibility studies in the towns identified for Year 1 activity within the timeframe. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the project in identifying regeneration opportunities that can be brought forward.
2. Was the process of implementation efficient?	Procurement of the consultants was done simply and rapidly. Site identification would have been more efficient had it been undertaken prior to Year 1 delivery phase and been site specific rather than geographically focussed.
3. Did the project provide good value for money?	The very short timeframes imposed by DLUHC prevented a proper tendering process, but prices were in line with previous work undertaken.
4. Did the project provide additionality?	This work would not have been carried out had UKSPF funds not been available. Feasibility studies are not a core part of council operation and require external funding.
5. Did the project align with the strategic ambitions set out in the UKSPF Investment Plan?	Links to the Council Plan commitment to "support regeneration and create employment opportunities". It builds on Opportunity 4 in the investment plan to invest in our town centres, but has not realised the ambitions to 'explore new and innovative ownership and project delivery mechanisms'. Engagement with youth groups aligns with the IP desire to address demographic imbalance.

Lessons Learnt

- The process for identifying future sites for feasibility studies should first begin with a review of EDDC assets to identify those presenting the strongest regeneration opportunities, with geography considered second
- Greater understanding is needed of the current levels of supply and demand for space in employment, leisure, placemaking, and residential sectors across our main towns in both public and private ownership

- Where the regeneration of non-EDDC assets is to be prioritised, joint working with other public sector bodies, such as town councils and county councils, is required to both identify and understand how all public sector assets can be used more strategically to deliver wider impacts
- There needs to be sources of capital/grant funding/appetite to bring forward the projects identified prior to the undertaking of feasibility work, which could include investigation into innovative funding mechanisms
- A longer lead in time than available in Year 1 of UKSPF is needed to provide a thorough options assessment and do the background work needed to determine the most suitable sites