

**CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS MEETING FOR REGENERATION,  
LEISURE, CULTURE AND TOURISM  
22.11.2023**

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Portfolio:</b>							
<b>Cllr. Hazel Evans</b>	<b>Cabinet Member Decisions Meeting for Regeneration, Leisure, Culture and Tourism</b>							
<b>RURAL INNOVATION FUND</b>								
<b>Purpose:</b> To consider 5 applications submitted under the Rural Innovation Fund, which forms part of the Rural Anchor within the Communities and Place intervention of Carmarthenshire's Shared Prosperity Fund.								
<b>Recommendations / key decisions required:</b>  To approve 2 out of the 5 applications as part of the Rural Innovation Fund:								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Carmarthenshire Federation of Young Farmers</td> <td>Grant requested</td> <td>£44,620</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heart of Wales LGBTQ+</td> <td>Grant requested</td> <td>£35,106</td> </tr> </table>			Carmarthenshire Federation of Young Farmers	Grant requested	£44,620	Heart of Wales LGBTQ+	Grant requested	£35,106
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Heart of Wales LGBTQ+	Grant requested	£35,106						
Applications recommended for approval: £79,726								
<b>Reasons:</b> To support the development of sustainable, yet innovative solutions to address some of the economic, social and environmental challenges facing rural Carmarthenshire.								
<b>Directorate</b> <b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Jason Jones  <b>Report Author:</b> Mared Pemberton	<b>Designations</b> <b>Head of Regeneration, Policy and Digital</b>  <b>Rural Programmes Co-ordinator</b>	<b>Jason Jones</b> <b>Tel: 01267 242 336</b> <a href="mailto:JaJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">JaJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>  <b>Mared Pemberton</b> <b>Tel: 07812475386</b> <a href="mailto:MEPemberton@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">MEPemberton@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>						

**Declaration of Personal Interest (if any):**

None

**Dispensation Granted to Make Decision (if any):**

N/A

**DECISION MADE:**

Signed:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
CABINET MEMBER

The following section will be completed by the Democratic Services Officer in attendance at the meeting

Recommendation of Officer adopted	YES / NO
Recommendation of the Officer was adopted <b>subject to the amendment(s) and reason(s) specified:</b>	
Reason(s) why the Officer's recommendation was <b>not adopted:</b>	

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS MEETING FOR REGENERATION,  
LEISURE, CULTURE and TOURISM**

**DATE 22.11.2023**

**RURAL INNOVATION FUND**

**Purpose:**

To consider 5 applications submitted as part of the Rural Innovation Fund.

**Background**

The Rural Innovation Fund provides opportunities for the third sector and public sector bodies to pilot and test new ways of working that provide innovative solutions to rural challenges. Funding has been secured via the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund as part of the Rural Anchor in Carmarthenshire.

All of the applications included in this report were submitted following the third call for applications, which closed on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Each application has been assessed and considered by the Sustainable Communities and Rural Innovation Funding panel before being presented to Cabinet member for final decision.

The total budget for the Rural Innovation Fund is £675,000 with £239,000 remaining for this third call for applications. Assuming that the Cabinet Member agrees with the recommendations of this report, there will be an underspend of £159,418 within the Rural Innovation Fund budget. We do not anticipate re-opening a further call for applications under this Fund. An exercise is currently underway to review the overall Rural Anchor budget and future proposals will be presented initially to the Shared Prosperity Fund Programme Management Office for discussion.

**Applications for consideration:**

**SPF-RIF-17 Carmarthenshire Federation of Young Farmers**

**Grant Requested: £44,620**

The YFC is seeking funding to employ a Rural Youth Officer for the county. The Officer's role will be to work closely with local schools and Coleg Sir Gâr which will involve delivering sessions relating to agriculture and food. By working with primary schools, the project will enhance the new curriculum to show where food comes from and the benefits that agriculture brings to the area. The secondary school and College engagement will involve promoting agriculture as a career path and encouraging more young people to become members. The movement can offer volunteering opportunities that can support pupils with their Welsh Baccaulaureate course at both GSCE and A Level.

Another element of the project will be the development and delivery of a Farm to Fork event. Primary school pupils will get the opportunity to attend the event and see a variety of farm animals, farming machinery and learn where local produce comes from. A digital

resource pack will be created for schools to complement the engagement with schools and the Farm to Fork event, utilising the skills of teachers who are members of the movement.

The Officer will also look to further develop the existing links between the movement and mental health charities. With the average age of members being 16, the YFC want to ensure they remain relevant for members up to the age of 28, by providing a strong support network around them and giving them opportunities to mix and socialise with others. The existing YFC membership will be developed further with the support of the Officer, ensuring that elder members develop their Agri and business skills. Whilst the funding for the officer will only be secured until December 2024, the team will work with the applicant to develop an exit strategy post funding.

### **Project Delivery timeline**

The project can begin as soon as full approval is granted. Projects must be completed by end of December 2024 in line with the Shared Prosperity funding period.

### **Outputs to be achieved:**

Number of local events or activities supported	10
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	30
Number of people reached	500

### **Recommendation**

To approve a grant request of £44,620 from the Rural Innovation Fund with the condition that the applicant develop links with other Food Growing projects in the County. The offer is subject to satisfactory financial due diligence checks being undertaken.

### **SPF-RIF-18 Heart of Wales LGBTQ+ Grant Requested: £35,106**

The Heart of Wales LGBTQ+ group is seeking funding to develop and deliver a Heart of Wales Fringe Festival (Gŵyl Ymylol Calon Cymru). They will pilot a new festival in Llandovery which aims to support the local economy with a view to developing a sustainable annual event. The festival will comprise of a diverse array of brand-new productions by prominent Welsh writers and theatre makers, created specifically for wonderful and unexpected locations within the picturesque rural town.

Five brand new, one-act plays (approximately 15 minutes) will be commissioned specifically for the festival. The performances will be fully accessible, and the festival will also include free adult masterclasses; children's workshops; post show discussions; street performers and market stalls. The commissions will reflect the region and promote inclusive sensibilities to locals and tourists alike. The productions will explore diverse issues that affect the communities in an engaging and enjoyable way. The festival will re-explore epic myths and legends from Llandovery's past for a contemporary audience e.g. Llyn Y Fan Fach's Nelferch or the many exploits of Twm Sion Cati.

It is anticipated that local businesses will benefit greatly from the added tourism of the festival and as part of the preparations too. During the week preceding the festival all of the actors and directors will be rehearsing and boarding locally, bringing revenue and custom to the many spaces, hotels, shops and eateries used. There will be opportunities for local trades people; self-employed individuals and volunteers to work in the many ancillary roles

required such as: set design, sound, stage-management etc. and all costumes will be bought/made in town, using local shops and crafts people. The team will work with the applicant to develop an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of the project post funding. The Authority's business team will also engage with the applicant in providing on-going support.

### **Project Delivery timeline**

The project can begin as soon as fully approved, with the delivery period being a maximum of 12 months. Project must be completed by the end of December 2024, in line with Shared Prosperity funding period.

### **Outputs to be achieved:**

Number of local events or activities supported	3
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support	10
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	14
Number of people reached	1000
Number of people attending training sessions	60

### **Recommendation**

To approve a grant request of £35,106 from the Rural Innovation Fund due it's alignment with the fund criteria. The offer is subject to satisfactory financial due diligence checks being undertaken.

### **SPF-RIF-19 Living Pictures**

#### **Grant Requested £16,400**

Living Pictures, a charity that delivers skills and development projects based in Coed Dylan near Llangain, is seeking funding for their Back to Earth project. The project will provide young people with opportunities to learn about sustainability, the local food cycle, and environmental stewardship and will engage neurodiverse young people and help them to develop a sense of place. The primary goal is to create real-life opportunities for young learners, enabling them to grasp the significance and relevance of the local food cycle. This understanding will promote healthier lifestyles and instil a sense of responsibility for nurturing our local environment, ultimately fostering a more prosperous and resilient community.

The current site at Coed Dylan is in need of additional investment to benefit the next generation of learners. They propose to repurpose the space currently occupied by a polytunnel to meet the needs of today's learners. This includes the installation of a new polytunnel equipped with a self-watering system that utilises harvested rainwater. This project aims to educate participants about the journey from food production to consumption and highlight the critical role of the food supply within our environment.

The project will benefit students of Canolfan Elfed Inclusion Centre and the local comprehensive school, QE High, as well as members of the local community.

### **Project Delivery timeline**

The project can begin as soon as full approval is granted, with the delivery period being a maximum of 12 months. Project must be completed by the end of December 2024, in line with Shared Prosperity funding period.

## Outputs to be achieved

Number of local events or activities supported	10
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	2
Number of people reached	100
Number of people attending training sessions	5

## Recommendation

The panel did not recommend this project for approval as a key consideration of the fund is to trial innovative approaches. The project failed to score the minimum weighted score required as the level of innovation was not clearly articulated, and the application did not sufficiently evidence local need. Support will be given to the applicant to explore other more appropriate funding sources.

## SPF-RIF- 20 - Menter Dinefwr

### Grant Requested: £35,000

Menter Dinefwr is seeking funding to develop a new digital platform for their services and projects. The main aim of the platform is to transform the way they engage with their customers. The work of the Menter includes provision of daily childcare, 2 community hubs and a Welsh language shop, professional language services, including translation and language planning.

Menter Dinefwr and service users see the need to expand the online services in order to increase engagement.

The proposed new digital provision will include establishing a digital platform to

- register children, book and pay for a place in the childcare clubs.
- book and pay for specific activities, including gigs, fun mornings for the family, workshops, etc.
- book space in Hengwrt, including meeting rooms for organisations, training rooms, and hot desks for individuals and businesses.
- establishing an e-commerce system where the public can buy goods from Menter Dinefwr's shop, Cyfoes, online. The above will be an opportunity to trial new ways of working and to modernize and simplify systems and processes.

At present, the public book and pay for activities or hire rooms over the phone or face to face. This project will provide an alternative, more convenient and accessible offer.

## Project Delivery timeline

The project can begin as soon as fully approved, with the delivery period being a maximum of 12 months. Project must be completed by end of December 2024, in line with the Shared Prosperity funding period.

## Outputs to be achieved

Number of local events or activities supported	25
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	10

Number of people reached	1800
Number of people attending training sessions	20

**Recommendation**

The panel did not recommend the project for approval as it did not meet the key aims of the fund. Whilst the project is seeking funding to look at new ways of working, the project would mainly benefit the applicant’s core business operation as opposed to piloting innovative service delivery within the community. Support will be given to seek funding from more appropriate sources.

**SPF RIF 21 - Age Cymru Dyfed  
Grant Requested: £45,000**

Age Cymru Dyfed (ACD) is seeking funding to address the digital void in rural areas for older people, so they are equipped to take advantage of digital innovations and access essential services and support which have moved online in recent years.

On-line transactions can be daunting for older people, and they need continued support until they reach a point of confidence and comfort in conducting such activities as banking and shopping online. Older people to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to manage their finances better and to be able to take steps to improve their situation in a digital financial world.

To achieve this, Age Cymru Dyfed want to retain 2 part time digital advisers to cover the county delivering tuition through face-to-face workshops/digital groups and individual, bespoke training. The adviser will be supported by a part time outreach worker who will coordinate the sessions and provide the follow-up reference material to residents.

**Outputs to be achieved**

Number of local events or activities supported	45
Number of people reached	570

**Recommendation**

The panel recognised the importance of this proposed project, however as the focus of the project was to retain existing services, the project failed to demonstrate innovation and hence did not meet the minimum weighted score required to be recommended for approval. Support will be given to seek funding from more appropriate funding sources.

**OTHER OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND THEIR PROS AND CONS**

The option of not approving these projects in whole or part is open to cabinet member. However non approval will put at risk the Council’s ability of delivering the Rural anchor programme within the UK Government’s programme timeframe.

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED</b>	<b>NO</b>
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# IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: **Jason Jones**      **Head of Regeneration, Policy and Digital**

Policy and Crime & Disorder	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Organisational Development	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO

## Policy, Crime and Disorder

This fund is aligned with the county's existing strategies and plans including the Local Investment Plan for Carmarthenshire, Economic Recovery Plan, Local Innovation Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment, and the South-West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan and Corporate Strategy.

The Programme will support the objectives of the Wellbeing & Future Generations Act by targeting interventions which aim to ensure that the Welsh speaking communities of the County remain vibrant and sustainable communities.

## Legal

At a project delivery level, the Authority will enter into a funding agreement with all delivery partners which will be executed as a deed. The Authority's legal team have been involved in the development of the funding agreement.

## Finance

The funding requested will be provided from the Rural Innovation Fund secured from the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund as part of the Rural Anchor in Carmarthenshire. A total budget of £675,000 has been made available to deliver this fund across the funding period. In line with current policy, the finance department will undertake financial due diligence checks on organisations that are seeking funding in excess of £25,000 and grants will not be awarded until confirmation of satisfactory outcome is received.

## Risk Management Issues

A programme level risk management process will be followed to ensure that risk is assessed and managed at all levels.

A key risk is the short delivery timeframe of SPF with all 3<sup>rd</sup> party grants required to be financially completed by the end of December 2024.

At a project level, a risk register will be maintained together with appropriate mitigation measures. The Rural Anchor Team who are responsible for administering both funds will



closely monitor progress of the project individual awards. Where a lack of progress is being made, applicants will need to provide clarification as to how they will be able to deliver against the original approved amount. As a last resort this may mean suspension of a project mid delivery.

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Jason Jones

Designation: Head of Regeneration, Policy and Digital

**1. Local Member(s)** N/A

**2. Community / Town Council** - N/A

**3. Relevant Partners** - Rural Innovation Fund and Sustainable Communities Fund Panel ( to include Regeneration Partnership Communities and Place Sub group members)

**4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** N/A

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW**

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
SPF-RIF-17 SPF-RIF-18		HELD DIGITALLY