




OFFICER DECISION RECORD (ODR2)

This form records an officer decision and is published in accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Date of Decision	27.10.2025
Decision Taker (including Job Title)	Peter Skates Director of Growth and Enterprise
Specific Delegation	<p>This record relates to an officer decision taken under a delegation provided by the Corporate Policy Committee on 6 February 2025 whereby the Committee at minute:68 delegated authority to the Director of Growth & Enterprise manage the Cheshire East UKSPF programme, taking all necessary actions in the interests of maximising the impacts of the fund aligned to the fund parameters and local priorities, including but not limited to allocation of remaining funds to specific interventions, and reallocation of funds and movement of revenue funds to capital if required. As specified within Appendix 1 of this ODR.</p> <p>The Digital Communities Fund forms part of the Enabling Communities Grants Programme which was approved by Adults, Health and Integration DLT on 23 June 2025 as specified within Appendix 2.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center; gap: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Appendix 1 ODR - 14052025.pdf </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Appendix 2 Understanding Comm </div> </div>
Brief Description of Decision	<p>Approval of the first set of recommendations for E15 (UKRPF) totalling £27,919 and E15 (UKSPF) totalling £29,424 under the Digital Communities grant scheme following evaluation and scoring of applications.</p> <p>Please see list of recommendations at the bottom of this document. This leaves an underspend of £2,081 for E15 (UKRPF) and £37,076 for E15 (UKSPF). The underspend is likely to be allocated, as applicants are re-submitting their applications for</p>

	reconsideration by the panel on Monday 20 October.
Reasons for the Decision and alternatives considered	<p>Applications for both E15 were reviewed by the panel consisting of the two members of the Community Grants Team, Digital Programme Manager, Business Connector and Project Support Officer from the Digital Cheshire team and Community Development Officer within the Communities team.</p> <p>Those applicants meeting the fund criteria and objectives as well as the intended UK Shared and Rural Prosperity Fund outcomes for E15 have been recommended for funding.</p> <p>The objective of the Digital Communities fund is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. • Building resilient, safe and healthy neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention <p>Please see supporting document relating to, funding allocation for the year of 2025/2026.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  digital-communities-fund-supporting-docu </div>
Member consultation and interests declared	
Significant Decision	YES/NO
Legal Implications	<p>I approve and endorse this ODR on the following basis: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It complies with the Council's constitution. - Is entered into further to the appropriate delegation. - the approval of the recommendations as noted below represents a decision that has been made

	<p>on an objectively OFFICIAL reasonable basis as outlined in the reasoning set out above that complies with the Council's public law duties.</p> <p>Adrian Leslie - Lawyer Contracts & Procurement Team</p> <p>adrian.Leslie@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p> <p>20 Oct 2025</p>
Financial Implications	<p>The Authority received an allocation of £3.97m for UK SPF and £0.248m for Rural SPF in 2025/26. The funds were received by the Authority in advance of spend (E762220). There was wide latitude for the Authority to decide how to utilise the funding. The funding needs to be spent by 31 March 2026.</p> <p>Call outs for UK SPF eligible projects resulted in a £70K allocation for the E15: Digital Communities Facilities fund project administered through the Digital and Communities teams and a Cheshire East grant scheme has been established. In addition, a rural specific allocation of £30K from the Rural SPF was also secured.</p> <p>External applications have been invited and these were reviewed and moderated by a suitably qualified panel. This resulted in grants totalling £29,424 being recommended for distribution under the main SPF scheme and it is this that the decision incorporates. After accounting for £3,500 delivery costs this leaves £37,076 to distribute.</p> <p>The £30K allocation under the Rural SPF (E15: Capital grants for investment and support for digital infrastructure) is capital so the outward grants should be to cover third party capital spend. Delivery of the activity should be monitored to ensure that it is committed within 2025/26. £27.9K has been recommended for distribution via this decision leaving a small residual balance of £2.1K that will be distributed to an eligible applicant through a further funding round.</p> <p>The grants will be passported via the payments exception process. There will be no future liabilities or running costs falling upon the Council as a result</p>

	<p>of the third party grant distribution. It will be down to the recipients to manage any and all costs arising from the grant activity.</p> <p>Aaron Lecroy, Principal Accountant, 20/10/2025</p>
Confidential/Exempt Information	
Background Papers	

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise

Signed -



Dated – 27.10.2025

APPENDIX

Recommended Grants Digital Communities Fund

Organisation	Project Description	Recommended Grant Amount To Be Funded	RPF/UKSPF
Stable minds CIC	<p>This Project will use this grant to equip a new mobile outreach vehicle with essential digital infrastructure, enabling trauma-informed mental health and wellbeing support in Knutsford's most deprived and digitally excluded areas.</p> <p>Working with the Knutsford Community Care Board and CHAW Care Community, it will target areas with high need and low access to services, including Shaw Heath, Colshaw Farm, and rural villages like Chelford, High Legh, and Mobberley. The fully accessible Renault Master vehicle will host pop-up therapy sessions and community drop-ins.</p> <p>Upgrades include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Starlink satellite broadband (12 months) -Touchscreen terminal for service access -Smart TVs for wellbeing content -Laptop and 360° conferencing for remote therapy -CCTV and safety camera system <p>These enhancements will help the group reach 25% more people especially older adults, isolated individuals, and neurodiverse young people bridging gaps in digital and therapeutic access.</p> <p>This project reflects the belief that mental health support should be inclusive, timely, and accessible to all.</p>	£6,126	RPF

Stable Minds CYP CIC	<p>This project will fund an OMI Platinum Sensory Projector to support children and young people (ages 3–18) with additional needs across Cheshire East. It will be used at the Knutsford hub, in a mobile outreach vehicle, and during school visits in underserved areas.</p> <p>The projector will create interactive sensory experiences through motion-responsive floor and wall projections ideal for neurodivergent or non-verbal children, and those affected by trauma.</p> <p>Benefits include: Increased engagement in therapy sessions Safe, non-verbal participation Improved digital access in low-service areas</p> <p>Timeline: Sept 2025: Setup at Knutsford hub Oct 2025: Rollout to schools and outreach Nov 2025 onward: Weekly use supporting 150+ children in year one.</p> <p>This project will reduce barriers to support and promote digital inclusion for vulnerable young people.</p>	£5,184	RPF
Just Drop In Youth Info and Advice Ltd	<p>This Project aims to expand the support for children, young people, and families in Knutsford by enhancing digital access at the community building. After 25 years of service in Cheshire East, they have changed their focus from Macclesfield to underserved areas like Knutsford, where they now hold a three-year lease on a dedicated space.</p> <p>They currently offer free counselling and parenting support, and are introducing therapeutic groups and mentoring. With the grant money they are wanting to purchase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A laptop for mentees working on goals like employment and reducing isolation -A sensory projector to support neurodiverse children in therapy 	£977	UKSPF

	<p>-A Toucan device and LED TV for hybrid delivery of parenting classes and meetings</p> <p>This funding will help them reach more families facing disadvantage, mental health challenges, and SEND, improving access to inclusive, high-quality support.</p>		
Armed Forces Community HQ CIC	<p>This project will digitally equip an Armed Forces Community (AFC) hub in Cheshire East, creating a safe, inclusive space for veterans, families, and carers. Funding will improve internet connectivity and provide access to digital tools, computers, tablets, and assistive tech, supporting access to employment, training, health services, and benefits. Secure systems will enable virtual counselling, safeguarding, and confidential case management, helping build trust and engagement. The hub will also host digital skills workshops and peer-led IT support, reducing isolation and closing the digital divide especially for those in rural or disadvantaged areas. This investment will strengthen digital resilience and wellbeing across the AFC community. This project will benefit Veterans/service leavers, Families and carers.</p>	£7,000	UKSPF

Christ Church Alsager	Christ Church Alsager seeks to upgrade its digital audio equipment to improve community engagement through 2025–2026. They aim to purchase a modern sound mixing desk and two wireless microphones to support local groups and events, while offering training to volunteers boosting confidence and digital literacy, especially among older adults. Our facilities are used by Scouts, schools, choirs, and orchestras, helping reduce isolation and foster community. All AV support is provided by volunteers, including retired and young people, who benefit from learning new skills and gaining experience. This investment will enhance the quality of events, encourage wider participation, and support skill development across generations.	£5,000	RPF
Citizens Advice Cheshire North	This project will provide self-help digital devices at offices and drop-in sessions across Wilmslow, Handforth, Knutsford, Poynton, and Macclesfield. Clients will use tablets to complete online forms (benefits, jobs, housing, etc.), set up email accounts, and learn basic digital skills with support from advisers. Also introducing secure, GDPR-compliant online forms for debt and care assessments, improving efficiency and empowering clients to take an active role in their support. Devices will be locked in kiosk mode for safe, supervised use only within the premises, with theft prevention measures in place. This initiative will boost digital inclusion and streamline service delivery for those most in need. This project will benefit everyone from adults, adults with disabilities, veterans/service leavers, families and carers.	£1,650	UKSPF

Shavington-cum-Gresty Parish Council	<p>Shavington-cum-Gresty Village Hall plans to upgrade its audio-visual equipment to better serve over 250 weekly visitors and support a growing range of community activities. They aim to install Bose speakers, Bluetooth and clip-on microphones, a Blue Yeti mic, and a livestreaming stand for mobile devices.</p> <p>These improvements will Enhance sound quality for events and presentations enable hybrid and livestreamed sessions for remote participation, Improve accessibility for those with hearing impairments, support diverse groups from fitness classes to council meetings and performances.</p> <p>This upgrade will boost engagement, increase footfall, and strengthen the hall's role as a digitally connected community hub. This project will benefit everyone: adults, children and young people, parents and carers, children and young people with disabilities, adults with disabilities, veterans/service leavers, families and carers.</p>	£1,500	RPF
Ce8 Macclesfield	<p>This project at The Cre8 Building on Macclesfield's Moss Estate supports vulnerable young people through music, confidence-building, and creative expression. The building includes a recording studio, control room, and practice spaces, but its digital facilities are outdated. They seek funding to: Upgrade WiFi to cover the entire building Purchase a new printer for music materials Replace two ageing Apple computers used for music production and workshops These improvements will ensure young people especially those referred through the Youth Justice Service can fully engage with music-making and digital creativity in a safe, inclusive space.</p>	£2,998	UKSPF

CreweCreates CIC	<p>This Project will transform the SIGNALBOX container in Crewe's Lyceum Square into a year round community DJ hub. With grant support, they will install professional DJ equipment, acoustic treatment, and ventilation to enable live performances and high-quality streaming via YouTube and Mixcloud. Weekly sessions will showcase local talent and offer inclusive, positive music. They will run intensive DJ courses for young people and adults, prioritising those referred through schools, care-leaver and job-centre pathways, aiming to teach at least 50 learners in six months. Partnering with local organisations and using SIGNALBOX's public location, they aim to build a grassroots audience, boost digital skills, and create an online archive of recorded sets. With match funding and volunteer support, the hub will be sustainable beyond 2025.</p>	£4,000	UKSPF
Ruby's Fund	<p>This project will use the Digital Communities grant to purchase two tablets with 12 months of 5G access, enabling mobile digital support for SEND families across Cheshire East. They aim to deliver 12 two-hour sessions at the centre and via the sensory bus, helping families build confidence in essential online skills like accessing meetings, completing benefit forms, and navigating local and national support resources. The tablets will also provide hotspot access for those without internet, making digital support more accessible. The project will benefit parents and carers, children and young people with disabilities, families and carers.</p>	£2,498	RPF

Disability Information Bureau	The Disability Information Bureau supports people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to overcome everyday barriers. To improve access to accurate support, They need a new, accessible website to replace the outdated Drupal 7 site, which can no longer be updated and risks sharing incorrect information. They also seek funding to replace two ageing laptops used by our welfare officer and support coach. These upgrades will improve efficiency in delivering benefit advice, digital skills sessions, and remote support. Together, the new website and laptops will help them reach more people, provide faster, more reliable support, and improve outcomes for vulnerable clients. The project will benefit adults, parents and carers, adults with disabilities and families and carers	£2,280	UKSPF
Visyon	Visyons Parent/carer workshops have become a vital support for families facing children's mental health challenges. Topics include anxiety, sleep, neurodiversity, emotional regulation, and self-harm. Currently delivered only in-person at the Congleton site, access is limited for many families across Cheshire East. To meet growing demand, they have trialled online webinars and saw a 240% increase in attendance. With support from this grant, they aim to invest in professional digital equipment to deliver high-quality online and hybrid workshops, making sessions more accessible for working parents, single carers, and those in rural areas. This project will remove barriers to support, empowering more families with the tools to navigate mental health challenges and build stronger, healthier relationships. This project aims to benefit adults, children and young people, parents and carers, children and young people with disabilities, families and carers.	£2,481	RPF

New Life Church	This project will improve accessibility and digital inclusion at the community centre. A digital door access system will make the building more inclusive for disabled users. Laptops for the Benefit Support Group will improve access to online services, and smart TVs will upgrade digital facilities in rooms used by up to 200 people. They also plan to expand our IT and video game design pilot project for young people, especially those who are home educated. This will teach programming, digital art, sound design, and game creation—free of charge—helping build valuable digital skills.	£3,330	RPF
Hope Centre In North East Cheshire	This project will create a Digital Hub to improve digital literacy in the local community, with a focus on older adults. By providing access to computers, tailored instruction, and the right equipment, they aim to help people build confidence in using technology for everyday tasks such as managing healthcare, accessing services, and staying socially connected. Improving digital skills will promote independence, reduce isolation, and enhance quality of life, making the centre a safe and welcoming space to learn, work, and engage.	£5,619	UKSPF
Knutsford Town Council	This project will enhance the usability of the newly renovated Market Hall by installing AV equipment to support a wider range of community activities outside market hours. The upgraded space will be better equipped to host events, workshops, meetings, and performances, making it a more versatile and inclusive venue for local groups and residents so it will benefit everyone.	£1,100	RPF

Bollington Initiative Trust	<p>This project will install broadband on the first floor of Water Street, making the space more attractive and functional for community use. Many hirers now expect reliable internet access as a minimum requirement, and this upgrade will help increase bookings and overall usage.</p> <p>The improved connectivity will benefit a wide range of users, including adults, children and young people, parents and carers, veterans/service leavers, and families, by enabling access to online resources, hybrid meetings, digital workshops, and other inclusive activities.</p>	£700	RPF
Concrete (Honeycomb Charitable Services Limited)	<p>Concrete has been commissioned to deliver General Needs Supported Accommodation and Floating Support in South Cheshire East, helping people at risk of homelessness to build independence and maintain tenancies. The project supports a diverse range of individuals—including refugees, those with limited English, digital access, or literacy—and aims to reduce barriers to essential services. To improve digital connectivity and accessibility, it will provide Alexa devices for reminders and companionship, Wi-Fi hubs for internet access without costly contracts, interpreter devices for real-time translation, tablets for completing forms and applications, and transcription tools to streamline support session documentation.</p>	£4,900	UKSPF