

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
6 July 2023

## ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Key Decision [Yes/No]

Ward(s) Affected:

### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Investing in Adur District and Worthing Borough**

#### **Report by the Director for Housing and Communities**

#### **Officer Contact Details**

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#### **Executive Summary**

##### **1. Purpose**

1.1 To provide Members with a detailed understanding of the approach being taken to deliver the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in Adur District and Worthing Borough, and how this is responding to local resident and business needs, aligned to the fund criteria.

1.2 To update Members on the process, procedures and regulations associated with the awarding of UKSPF, including the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That JOSC notes the overall approach to UKSPF in Adur and Worthing to deliver place-based interventions and activities to support our most vulnerable residents, support our businesses and to provide sustainable solutions in our places.

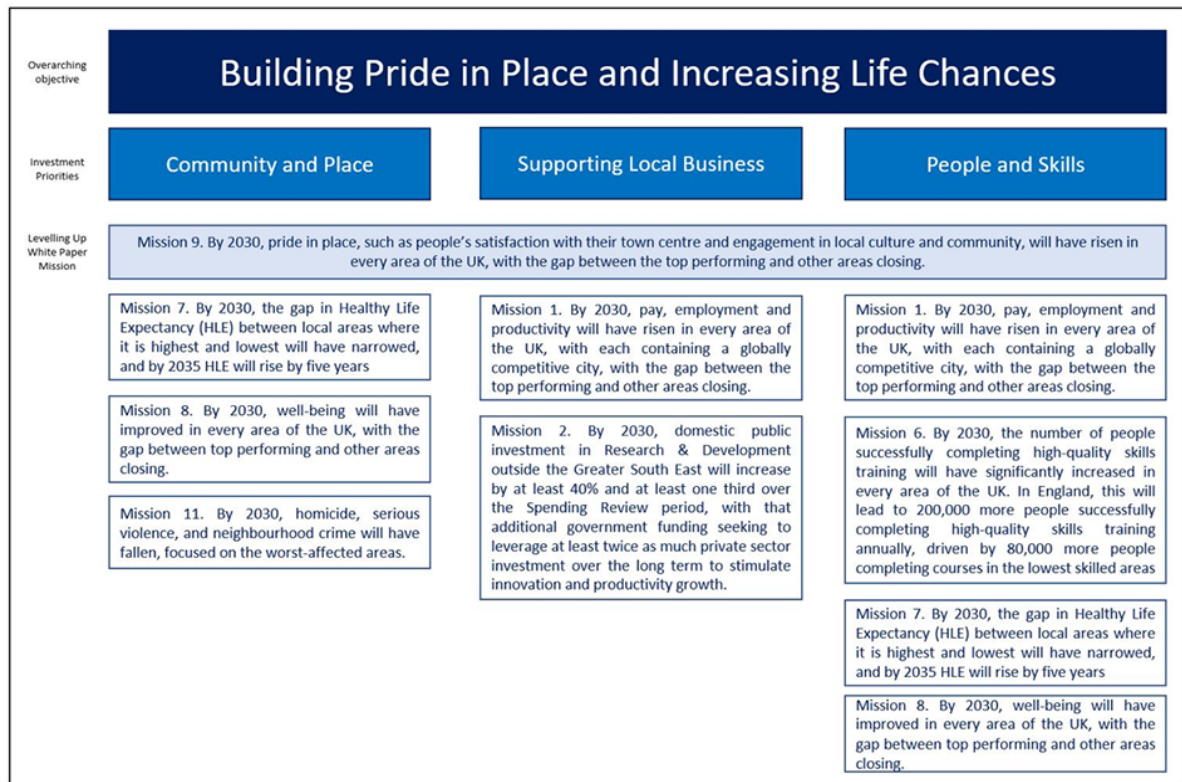
2.2 To agree to receive an annual report that provides a high level view of the progress of the interventions associated with UKSPF funding.

## 3. Context

3.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (which replaced previous EU Structural funding) supports the UK government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the levelling up objectives:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

3.2 There are three UKSPF investment priorities: **communities and place**; **supporting local business**; and **people and skills**. There are detailed objectives associated with each of these priorities which are aligned to the relevant Levelling Up White Paper mission.



3.3. The core themes signalled above, align against the UKSPF criteria, the UK Government White Paper priorities but, helpfully also broadly connect to both Council's strategic ambitions and priorities.

3.4. The key dates associated with the UKSPF timetable were and are;

- Prospectus launch: February 2022
- Fund launch: April 2002
- Submission window: 30th June 2022 - 1st August 2022 (an extension was permitted to 30th September 2022)
- Submission review: 1st August - 1st December 2022
- First payments to early local authorities: from October 2022
- Funding period (for delivery): April 2022 - March 2025

3.5. The UKSPF provides a unique opportunity to engage and address local issues, elements of Government's national priorities whilst also adhering to the criteria of building pride of place and increasing life chances. The funded interventions are having a direct impact on and combat the following areas of concern/local priorities:

- Proactive and the Cost of living (which also includes fuel poverty)
- Support for local businesses
- Community participation and engagement

- Community-led sustainable transport solutions

3.6. It's worth noting that the government expected and had planned for the delivery of UKSPF interventions in 2022-23, in the context of the overall timetable above. Therefore, for all local authorities, Year 1 delivery (2022-23) was always going to be a challenge due to a short delivery window following the submission and review of the Investment Plans.

#### **4. Framework and process**

- 4.1. In order to secure the investment as signalled below, both Councils were required to submit an Investment Plan. A template was provided by the government and Officers and Members were asked to consider interventions and deliverables against a set of 'suggested interventions', however each Council had the ability to tailor and 'pick' which interventions were most pertinent to the local need and requirement.
- 4.2. In order to provide a rounded and robust process, Officers established a 'long list' of projects for Executive Members to consider, aligned to the recommended interventions by the government. There were a series of iterations of the Investment Plans as Officers worked with Executive Members, ahead of agreeing to the plans at Joint Strategic Sub-Committee meetings in January 2023 (links contained in background papers).
- 4.3. The Councils had to work within the timelines provided by the government, and due to the late release of information and the capacity of Officers, both Councils were provided with an extension to submit their Investment Plans. This was similar to other local authorities. The Investment Plans for both Councils were submitted on the following:
  - Worthing Borough Council: 9th September 2022
  - Adur District Council: 9th September 2022
- 4.4. All South East lower tier authorities received an allocation of £1m for the three years delivery term. Worthing Borough Council and Adur District Council fall into this bracket and therefore both authorities received £1m to spend on the agreed priority areas through to March 2025. The government provided both Councils with prescriptive yearly funding allocations, as below. This profile, as well as the overarching themes, have dictated when and how the Council can deliver on the interventions. The profile for each authority is:

|           | <b>Worthing Borough</b> | <b>Adur District</b> |
|-----------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 2022 - 23 | £68,814                 | £48,494              |
| 2023 - 24 | £137,628                | £96,988              |
| 2024 - 25 | £793,558                | £854,518             |

- 4.5 The funding is a split of capital and revenue with capital being required for 10% of the interventions in year 22/23, 13% in 23/24 and 20% in 24/25. The majority of the capital intervention will be seen under the Community-led sustainable transport solutions theme.
- 4.6 It should be noted that both Council's received their Year 1 allocation on 28th February 2023, following the submission review by the government, therefore had a period of 5 weeks to confirm delivery and spend arrangements. Due to the work that had taken place previously, Officers were able, with the agreement and oversight of Executive Members, to action this spend quickly and aligned to the Investment Plan agreement.
- 4.7 The funding release is different to most other external funding as monies are received in advance of delivery on an annual basis, subject to the interventions being delivered in the previous year. This limits the risk as projects can be forward funded, rather than the usual position of funding in arrears. However, it should be noted that as of 12th June 2023 neither Council has received their Year 2 allocations albeit the delivery plans have been signed off.
- 4.8 As part of the agreed UKSPF monitoring process, each Council has to complete a 6-monthly report and also an annual return. These processes are linked and request the same type of information, including money spent, interventions delivered and whether the outcomes have been achieved. To support the process, each Council has an assigned UKSPF Relationship Manager to ensure clear communication between the parties.
- 4.9 The UKSPF interventions are being delivered by Council staff, and are therefore also subject to internal programme governance. This consists of a monthly project meeting comprising Project Leads and Sponsors with specific invitations issued to other Officers and third parties where

applicable. Executive Members are provided with regular updates from the programme team.

- 4.10 To ensure Member oversight, Officers meet with appropriate Executive Members regularly (every 6 - 8 weeks) to update them on the progress of the projects and interventions under the themes of proactive and cost of living, community participation, business support and sustainable transport.

## 5. The work programme

- 5.1 The proposed interventions align to UKSPF Criteria, Levelling Up and Adur & Worthing Council's Our Plan corporate strategy. In addition, the interventions identified align with Member priorities. The projects support interventions to address key themes including; cost of living, sustainable transport, business support, wellbeing, community participation and fuel poverty.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the majority of UKSPF spend is delivered as joint services as the majority of outcomes fall across both Adur and Worthing. There are local differences and greater emphasis on particular areas but economies of scale have been deployed to maximise the funding available across the two authorities.
- 5.3 Each Council had to identify the breakdown of cost associated with each core theme as part of the Investment Plans. The allocations are as follows, which match the prescriptive nature of the fund and interventions:

Worthing Borough Council:

|   | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25  |
|---|---------|---------|----------|
| Proactive / Cost of Living (including community participation and fuel poverty) | £50,000 | £89,628 | £410,372 |
| Community Participation   | £0      | £8,000  | £42,000  |
| Sustainable Transport   | £18,814 | £40,000 | £191,186 |

|                  |                |                 |                 |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Business Support | £0             | £0              | £150,000        |
| <b>Total:</b>    | <b>£68,814</b> | <b>£137,628</b> | <b>£793,558</b> |

Adur District Council:

|   | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b>  |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Proactive / Cost of Living (including fuel poverty) | £48,494        | £68,988        | £442,518        |
| Community Participation                             | £0             | £8,000         | £42,000         |
| Sustainable Transport                               | £0             | £20,000        | £220,000        |
| Business Support                                    | £0             | £0             | £150,000        |
| <b>Total:</b>                                       | <b>£48,494</b> | <b>£96,988</b> | <b>£854,518</b> |

5.4 For both Councils, supporting the Cost of Living crisis has been prioritised by both Councils. The Cost of Living Roadmaps detail the high level actions that each Council and its partners in the not for profit, government and private sectors will take to address the impacts of the rising cost of living. Further detail about the initiatives, including who will lead on their delivery, timeframes, and measures of success, are set out in connected Cost of Living Action Plans. These broadly cover four major areas of focus:

1. Coordinating an urgent response to the cost of living emergency through helping to meet short term need (including how this connects with Proactive)
2. Developing a sustained and co-ordinated community response to ensure that residents who are vulnerable and most at risk of experiencing financial exclusion are able to achieve better financial wellbeing and resilience
3. Considering Council's own organisational culture, policy and practice to ensure it addresses the cost of living crisis
4. Ensuring partners work collaboratively to better utilise resources to meet community needs and promote financial wellbeing and resilience

5.5 The Councils' have allocated significant investment from UKSPF to ameliorate against the impacts of the Cost of Living emergency, as there is a clear recognition that following the impact of the pandemic on communities, in particular for more vulnerable households, there is a need to act urgently to help alleviate personal pressures.

5.6 Under the aforementioned themes, the interventions that have been identified to be delivered will be done so over the three year project duration. The timing of the interventions are based on priority and funding available per annum. The identified interventions and proposed timings are set out below.

5.7 **From Year 1 (2022/23):**

### **Proactive and the Cost of Living**

1.) Developing through a local community bank a **No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)** which supports our Ethical Debt policy and approaches. An investment of £50,000 per authority has been delivered to have a lasting legacy beyond the funding duration, due to this being a replenishing pot, through loan repayments. Further details include:

- Financially excluded or vulnerable households have no access to affordable loan products. They can't borrow funds because they don't have sufficient income, and they can't afford to pay back interest on any funds borrowed.
- In the context of financial exclusion, no income loans are usually offered by non profit, community based, credit agencies such as credit unions, or community banks. They offer no interest loans that attract no interest and repayment is solely of the principal loan amount. Loans are typically small - on average around £2,000 and used to purchase essential goods or services that enhance financial independence for the borrower. A loan repayment schedule is established based on the real income of the borrower. Repayment schedules are tailored to reflect borrower's financial circumstances, other calls on their money and their capacity to pay.

### **Sustainable Transport**



- 2.) In order to achieve the capital spend requirements, each Council supported the purchase of new bikes associated with the new bike share scheme being introduced across Adur and Worthing. This intervention, within the 5 weeks delivery period enabled each Council to utilise the capital monies and not return these funds to the government. These bikes are now installed and the new expanded scheme, including in Adur, is up and running as of 9 June 2023.

#### 5.8 **From Year 2 (2023/24):**

In addition to continuing the Year 1 interventions, Officers are currently working on the following projects following agreement from the Executive Members oversight groups to proceed:

##### **Proactive and the Cost of Living**

- 1.) Support the delivery of our **Proactive** approach increasing our capacity and resources to deliver to our Thriving People Mission by embedding resources in the Multidisciplinary Team, to deliver services to the right people, at the soonest possible time, by:

- a) Further embedding and expanding our **TellJO** pilot, using the online screening tool that residents can access by completing a simple online questionnaire which will show them how to request a fair repayment plan with the Councils, get discounts on their utility bills and receive debt advice.

The tool also provides signposting to third sector organisations offering support for those dealing with issues including mental health conditions, drug or alcohol problems, or domestic abuse. Where residents face barriers in accessing digital forms of support, or where there residents face higher levels of complexity, there is person centred contact support offered through our OneStop service that will underpin and complement our TellJo offer.

- b) Expand the provision and use of the **LIFT platform**, using their Low Income Family Tracker “LIFT” to carry out predictive data analysis and modelling via the use of our data sets held within the Revenues and Benefits Team. Using data (LIFT) and technology (Tell JO) the objective is to create and develop the capacity and approaches to proactively identify and reach out to those experiencing vulnerability. Using person centred approaches (in person and digitally) the purpose is to inform, support and signpost residents to help and support, enabling people to sustainably manage, be more resilient and improve their wellbeing.

- c) Increase the capacity and fund three **Proactive Case-worker posts** (all full-time) to support the work of Proactive, ensuring our most vulnerable residents have more direct access to the support they need.
- 2.) To develop the Councils' aspiration of listening and engaging with communities, continue to establish a series of local conversations to enable Officers and Members to upskill regarding **participatory methods**. Outcomes include the number of events and number of people engaged. In Worthing, this is likely
- 3.) This year will see the Council developing an approach to provide financial assistance to households that are experiencing hardship and require help with energy and fuel costs / advice. Whilst work will be developed in this year, it's likely that any intervention will be delivered in Year 3.

### **Sustainable Transport**

- 4.) To develop a number of localised interventions, primarily capital, to support greater travel by walking and cycling. These projects are yet to be determined by both sets of Executive Members for this financial year, however Officers are currently exploring the potential of the following:
  - Additional cycling stands
  - New secure cycle storage in town / village centres and in neighbourhood areas
  - In partnership with West Sussex County Council, identify funding gaps for delivery and investment into current projects including Safe School Streets

### **Business Support**

- 5.) This year will also see the design of a **Business Support Programme** across Adur and Worthing to fill the gap of a number of EU-funded packages that will be coming to an end in 2023, including the Hothouse Programme (delivered by the University of Chichester) and RISE (delivered by Brighton and Sussex Universities). These programmes had a focus on innovation and sustainability and these are likely to be key themes for the delivery of the Programme from late Year 2 and into the main delivery in Year 3.

## **5.9 From Year 3 (2024/25):**

In addition to the continuation of the Year 2 interventions it's anticipated the Councils will also deliver the following:

### **Proactive and the Cost of Living**

- 1.) This year sees the core delivery of the **Fuel Poverty** scheme, as designed in Year 2. This may be in the context of the overall Proactive and Cost of Living Roadmaps and / or react to other schemes (external and internal) that may be available tackling the same outcomes. The Councils will ensure additionality of any scheme.

### **Business Support**

- 2.) This year sees the core delivery of the **Business Support Programme**, and is likely to consist of direct consultancy advice as well as specific 'grants for growth'. This programme is currently being designed with Executive Members and stakeholders.
- 5.10 Due to the nature of the interventions identified and the nature of the Fund, the programme may shift during the delivery period. This will be discussed regularly within the project group meetings and Executive Member oversight groups, however all proposed changes will be detailed within an Annual Review.
- 5.11 Any proposed changes must be agreed by the delegated authority internally before being formally agreed with the UKSPF Relationship Manager. The interventions detailed are those that reflect the most pertinent priorities locally at the current time and appreciation must be made that these could change over the three year life of the Fund.
- 5.12 It must be stressed that the interventions identified are not new or additional to the current priorities and / or planned workstreams. All interventions align with the UKSPF criteria and address local priorities but have been identified as those that will be most impactful for the communities of Adur and Worthing.
- 5.13 All interventions have also been identified as having lasting impacts and sustainable beyond the 3 year programme. This was an important factor as the Councils' didn't wish for provision to 'switch off' in April 2025, following the close of the Fund. Officers and Executive Members will continue to monitor the projects to ensure continuity, subject to the needs and priorities at the end of the term.

## **6. Engagement and Data**

- 6.1 A UKSPF Multi-Disciplinary Team was initially established to ensure that the Councils had a grip on the funding and allow for the submission of the plans. This cross-cutting team was represented by all Directorates and especially those Officers that matched against the UKSPF criteria the most, for example wellbeing and economic

development. The terms of reference for the group was, and continues to be, as follows:

- To review the fund and establish a governance structure
  - To design interventions and a spend profile, matching the fund criteria and funding release profile (see 5.3)
  - To provide recommendations to Executive Members on all projects and intended spend
  - To deliver, and where required adapt, all projects and interventions across the 3 year programme
  - To monitor and provide regular returns to the government on delivery and performance (6 monthly and yearly returns)
  - To provide regular updates to the Executive Member Oversight Groups, including signalling any successes or risks
- 6.2 To ensure Members had control of the process, Executive Member Oversight Groups were established following the Joint Strategic Committees in January. Meeting independently, so adaptations in delivery can be made dependent on Adur or Worthing emphasis, these groups are made up of relevant Executive Members from each authority and provide the approvals for spend, aligned with the delegations to Directors for the day-to-day delivery of the interventions.
- 6.3 To support the design and development of the Investment Plans, and consideration of what interventions to select, Officers initially presented a 'long list' of solutions to the Executive Member Oversight Groups, informed by existing data within the organisation (identifying those areas of need) and an understanding of what existing projects were in the pipeline that UKSPF may / could fund.
- 6.4 From the long list, Officers engaged with teams, services and partners to rationalise the list down to a short list that identified the most pressing local themes that also adhered to the funds criteria. Themes were developed and interventions designed and these were contained in the Investment Plan submissions. Whilst there is some flexibility and adaptability in the plans, UKSPF representatives have made it clear that the Councils' will be monitored on the interventions and outcomes within these plans.
- 6.5 To 'test' the Councils' design and thinking regarding the interventions, it was important that partner agencies and stakeholders were contacted as part of the design process, which included organisations such as West Sussex County Council, DWP, Universities of Brighton, Chichester and Sussex and local organisations such as Guildcare. This consultation did result in a number of amendments to the interventions, therefore the Councils' are confident the interventions support rather than duplicate any provision in our communities.

- 6.6 Further to supporting the design, the Councils' also contacted a wider set of partners and stakeholders to assess demand and interest in those wishing to deliver aspects of the programmes, whether in Year 1, 2 or 3. A number of initial consultees on the Investment Plans have followed up their interest and, through appropriate contracting methods, are now supporting the Councils in delivering the UKSPF Plans.
- 6.7 It is important to note that the Councils' are continually 'checking in' with partners and stakeholders throughout the delivery of the interventions, to ensure these remain relevant to not just the Councils but also our communities. The intention of the fund is to support greater prosperity and this requires continuous 'inside and outside reflections' to ensure the interventions continue to be impactful, especially against the outcomes contained in the Investment Plans.
- 6.8 Finally, to ensure open and transparent communication the Investment Plans have been made available on the Councils' website (links below). This page will be updated regularly to ensure the general public are aware of how the UKSPF funds are being directed and distributed in both Adur District and Worthing Borough. Furthermore, where UKSPF funds are being used (e.g. Proactive) this will be referenced in other Committee Reports to show the connection to this fund.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The work programme set out in the report is funded from the Councils UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant allocations over the three years 2022/23 to 2024/25. There will be no further financial implications if the Councils adhere to the conditions of the grant.

Finance Officer: Emma Thomas

Date: 09/06/23

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 8.2 s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation
- 8.3 Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure

continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

- 8.4 s1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 confers power on the Council to enter into a contract for the provision of making available assets or services for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the Council.
- 8.5 When entering into a public contract, the authority is required to comply with the Councils' Contract Standing Orders found at Part 4 of the Councils' constitution. All expenditure of the Grant Funding needs to be in accordance with the terms of the grant.
- 8.6 In using the grant funding for its purpose, the Council is to ensure that consideration is given to the rules relating to Subsidies.

Legal Officer Joanne Lee

Date: 09/06/2023

### **Background Papers**

- [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus \(Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities\)](#)
- [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Investing in Place \(Adur JSCC 10/01/23\)](#)
- [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Investing in Place \(Worthing JSSC 12/01/23\)](#)
- [UKSPF Webpage \(Adur\)](#)
- [UKSPF Webpage \(Worthing\)](#)

## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

- Interventions that create a 'Pride of Place' and 'Increase Life Chances' are important to create the right setting for the local economy. By improving local infrastructure, engagement practices, skills, sustainable green economy and alleviating financial pressures for many, the local economy will benefit through local spend, improved and sustainable business, increased employability and viability to live, work and visit the area.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

- The interventions support a number of stakeholders, including those local businesses, residents and employees. The UKSPF delivery will improve the sustainable transport experience whilst also serving to improve life skills, employability and the wellbeing agenda. All elements combine to improve the attractiveness of our places and the opportunity to support our local communities.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

- The interventions are aimed to ensure all that live, work and visit our places and interact with our services are positively affected. Wider equality points will be considered and implemented further as the interventions progress through design, procurement and delivery.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

- Matter considered and no issues identified

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **3. Environmental**

- Interventions include projects seeking to decarbonise local businesses with grants also made available to facilitate retrofitting of local residential

properties which will see a significant reduction in carbon and help work towards Adur & Worthing Council's net zero target.

- The scheme will also support improvements to the cycling and walking infrastructure across Adur and Worthing, encouraging residents and visitors to utilise natural spaces to support their own wellbeing.

#### **4. Governance**

- The UKSPF Project Team is existing and functional, and they act as the key operational control for this project. Executive Members have strict oversight of all elements of the project, including spend and programme progression.
- The Investment Plans have been signed off for the three years at JSC, the Directors for Communities, Place and Digital and Sustainability and Resources, in consultation with Executive Members have delegated powers to enter into appropriate contracts associated with UKSPF work.