



WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee
12th January 2023

Key Decision Yes

Ward(s) Affected: All
Cabinet Portfolio: N/A

UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Investing in Place

Report by the Director for Communities

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Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to outline to Members the opportunity to obtain funding from Central Government, as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and use this to deliver against predetermined interventions relating to People and Skills, Community and Place and Supporting Local Business.
- 1.2. To outline how the funding will assist Worthing deliver interventions against agreed core themes which are pertinent locally. These include; Cost of Living, Community-led Sustainable Transport Solutions, Community Participation and Engagement, Fuel Poverty and Business Support.

1.3. To outline the impact of the UKSPF and associated interventions for Worthing Borough Council (WBC) with particular reference to those priorities that have been identified through other work strands.

1.4. To present rationale for WBC to deliver the project and agree relevant delegations and budgetary requirements to facilitate this.

2. Recommendations

2.1. To note that the s151 Officer has entered into a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (SOS) regarding the administration and delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

2.2. To delegate authority to the Director for the Economy and/or the S151 Finance Officer to enter into a binding Funding Agreement with the SOS for receipt of the funding (if required to do so) on terms substantially the same as those set out in the MOU and this Report.

2.3. To approve the virement of the UKSPF into the Council's budget and for that budget to facilitate accurate reporting for the receipt and spend of funds.

2.4. To delegate authority to the Director for the Economy, Director for Communities and Director of Digital, Sustainability and Resources to develop a procurement strategy for the delivery of the interventions and to enter into any necessary contract, grant funding agreement, or make any required investment under the Council's Treasury Management Policy, to enable the interventions specified in this Report, providing the spend does not exceed the UKSPF Budget.

2.5. To agree to an annual report being submitted to JSC to provide an update on the intervention delivery and monitor the spend against authorised budget.

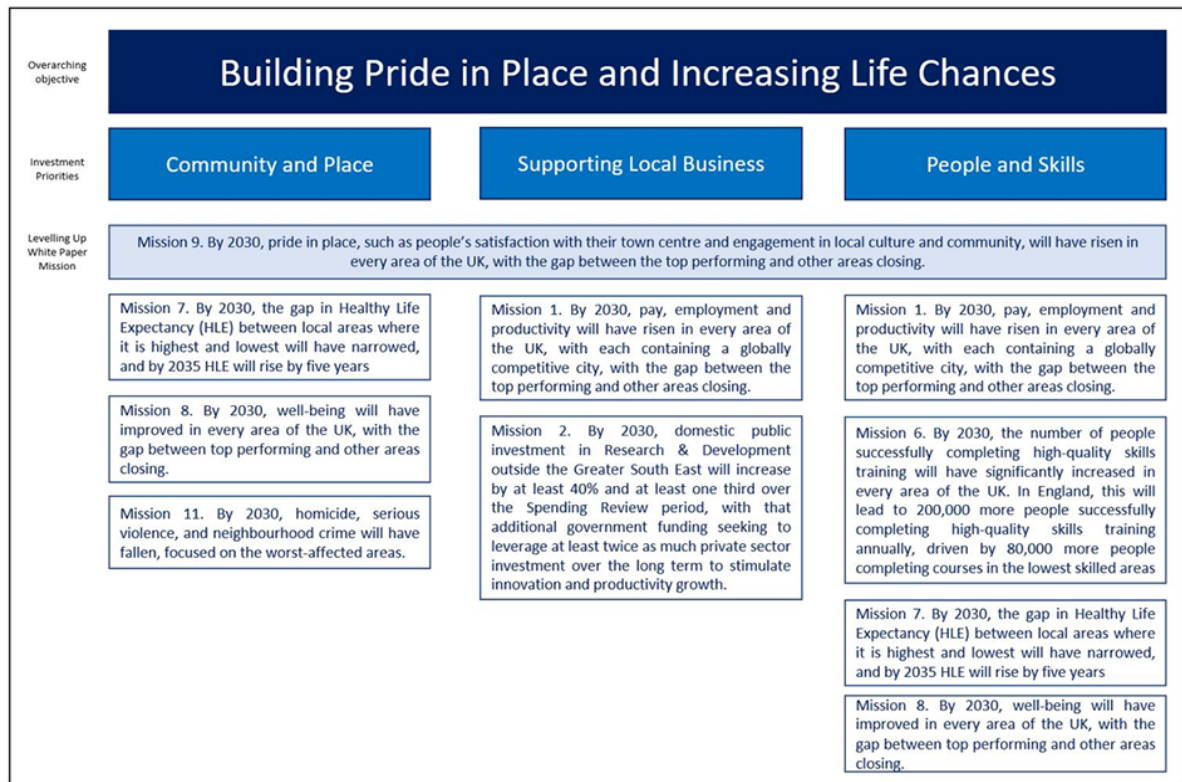
3. Context

3.1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (which replaces previous EU Structural funding) will support 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. Underneath the overarching aim of building pride in place and increasing life chances. It is accepted that the local economy, lives are shaped by the social and physical fabrics of the community and the unique character of local areas shapes where people want to live, work and invest.

3.3. 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.



3.4. 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 will have a direct impact on and combat the following areas of concern/local priorities:

- Cost of living (which also includes fuel poverty)
- Support for local businesses
- Community participation and engagement
- Community-led sustainable transport solutions

All of these interventions deliver against UKSPF criteria, UK Government White Paper priorities, Adur & Worthing Councils 'Our Plan' and Member's strategic priorities.

3.5. Key dates for the funding are detailed below;

- Prospectus launch: February 2022
- Fund launch: April 2022
- Submission window: 30th June 2022 - 1st August 2022 (extension permitted)
- First payments expected to early local authorities: from October 2022
- Funding period: April 2022 - March 2025

The Council submitted the Investment Plan for Worthing Borough on 9th September 2002, aligned to the extension window.

3.6. All South East lower tier authorities received an allocation of £1m for the three years. Therefore, Worthing Borough Council will have £1m to spend on the agreed priority areas through to March 2025. The government provided the Council 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 Worthing is:

- 2022-23: £68,814
- 2023-24: £137,628
- 2024-25: £793,558

3.7. 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.

3.8. Each allocated fund can only be accessed following submission and acceptance of an Investment Plan. The Investment Plan details how the funding will be used in terms of the interventions, the local priorities and how they will be addressed, the funding and how this will be managed.

3.9. The UKSPF will be delivered by officers from Worthing Borough Council and will therefore be subject to internal project governance. This will consist of a monthly project meeting comprising Project Leads and Sponsors with specific invitations issued to other Officers and third parties where applicable. Members will be provided with regular updates from the project team.

4. The proposed work programme

4.1. The identified interventions align to Worthing's priorities (see Background Papers) through supporting infrastructure locally, developing sustainable transport, connecting communities, supporting local business and promoting the development of local skills. In addition to the economic gain, the funding will facilitate the delivery of interventions that will seek to alleviate or prevent key issues around

housing, finance and wellbeing through schemes such as Proactive and supporting Food Networks.

- 4.2 The proposed interventions align to UKSPF Criteria, Levelling Up and Adur & Worthing Council's Our Plan corporate strategies. In addition the interventions identified align with local and Member priorities. The projects support interventions to address key themes including; cost of living, sustainable transport, business support, wellbeing, community participation and fuel poverty.

The Worthing Cost of Living Roadmap details the high level actions that the 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 an accompanying Cost of Living Action Plan which broadly covers four major areas of focus:

1. Coordinating an urgent response to the cost of living emergency through helping to meet short term need
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 in Worthing work collaboratively to better utilise resources to meet community needs and promote financial wellbeing and resilience

We have allocated significant investment from the 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 Worthing communities, in particular for more vulnerable households, there is a need to act urgently to help alleviate income pressures.

- 4.3 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 include;

Year 1:

- Cost Of Living - Support the delivery of our Proactive approach delivering to our Thriving People Mission by embedding resources in the Multidisciplinary Team, to deliver services to the right people, at the soonest possible time.
- Further embed and expand 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.
- 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 for Worthing, matched by Adur, is anticipated to have a lasting legacy beyond the funding duration, due to this being a replenishing pot, through loan repayments.
- 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.

- Community Participation and Engagement - develop a culture of participation to enable people to be better informed, engaged with and involving people in every day decisions that affect their lives.
- Fuel Poverty - Grant scheme to provide financial assistance to households that are experiencing hardship and require help with fuel.

Year 2:

In addition to the Year 1 interventions:

- Reduce housing demand, improve homelessness prevention services, developing upstream approaches and target hardening entrenched high cost accommodation, through building additional resource capacity.
- Community-led Sustainable Transport Solutions - enable an increase in active and sustainable travel with improved infrastructure and a role to promote and coordinate community projects initiatives and resident engagement campaigns.

Year 3:

In addition to the Year 2 interventions:

- Business - private sector investment, incubation and start ups - support to develop digital and decarbonisation capabilities whilst also seeking to attract new green economy investment and providing a platform for business to innovate.

4.4 Due to the nature of the interventions identified and the project delivery method applied, the programme may shift during its natural evolution. This will be discussed regularly within the project group meetings however all proposed changes will be detailed within the Annual Review. 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 project.

4.5 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 and have been identified to combat such issues and whilst the funding will facilitate the delivery but it must be emphasised that the interventions had been identified prior to the UKSPF application.

- 4.6 The project will be overseen by the delegated responsibility (Directors), with the project team being made up of key and senior officers and sponsored by the Head of Place and Economy. All members of the project team have an evidenced track record of delivery and be governed by Worthing Borough Council project practices.

5. Issues for consideration

- 5.1. To ensure the smooth receipt of UKSPF grant money and to meet the deadline set by the funder (to return the Memorandum of Understanding and Grant Conditions document), it was necessary for the Chief Executive to sign the required documentation and return it to the funder by COP 23rd December.
- 5.2. To ensure transparency and a full audit of the decision making process, a decision notice was presented to Members and published prior to the deadline for submission.
- 5.3. The UKSPF funded interventions present a significant opportunity to improve and create a sustainable model to support the lives of those that have a connection to places in Worthing.
- 5.4. The project will seek to address issues on a local and national scale as well as deliver interventions that will provide significant strides towards achieving pride of place, improving life chances and reducing carbon usage.
- 5.5. To facilitate the delivery of the interventions Members approval is being sought to approve the following elements;
- Approval to receive the funding and agree to the proposed delivery and core objectives.
 - Approval to create a UKSPF budget to receive funding and facilitate expenditure.
 - Delegation of responsibility to the Director for the Economy, Director for Communities and Director of Digital, Sustainability and Resources to approve appropriate procurement processes and agree contracts associated with the delivery of the interventions. All delivery will be subject to the development of a procurement strategy, the outcome of a compliant procurement process and the award being within the available budget.
- 5.6 To ensure compliance to WBC project governance and to ensure appropriate monitoring of expenditure and delivery, approval is sought

for a six monthly report, which will be submitted to JSC. The Project Team will also complete quarterly reports to ensure the delivery and spend is progressing as planned with any key decisions or issues raised and presented to the relevant delegated authorities.

- 5.7 The Investment Officer, in collaboration with senior Finance Team officers will take the role of Budget Managers for the project with Delivery Leads being formed of key Heads of Service (Wellbeing, Major Projects and Place and Economy) and Service Managers (Housing Needs, Carbon Reduction Manager and Participation Leads).

6. Engagement and Communication

- 6.1. A UKSPF Project Group has been engaged in the design for interventions that can be delivered based on the local priorities and permitted use of funding. To start, Senior Officers within the organisation were tasked with creating a 'long list' of interventions and local priorities. From the long list, Senior Officers engaged with teams, services and partners to rationalise the list down to a short list that identifies the most pressing local themes that also adhere to the funds criteria. Themes were developed and interventions designed with the Project Group seeking engagement with Officers and Members to ensure the correct methodology is employed and resulting interventions reflect the local need.
- 6.2. Partner agencies and stakeholders were contacted as part of the process, notably around the possibility of engaging delivery partners, with potential agreements to be formed upon acceptance of the Investment Plan.
- 6.3. As with Officer and Member engagement, the interventions and core themes align to national and local government strategies as well as political policies and manifestos.
- 6.4. Throughout the delivery the Project Team will continue to engage internally and externally to ensure the maximum benefit is realised to all with a connection to Worthing.
- 6.5. The funding will provide the resources to deliver interventions to combat 'real' issues that are critical to so many locally. It is imperative that the funding realises the maximum benefit as future opportunities (both externally and internally) are very uncertain.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. There is no financial implication to the Councils budget as the expenditure associated with the proposed will be met from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation. Overall the Council will receive £1.02m as follows:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£	Indicative Allocation	Indicative Allocation
	£	£	£
Revenue			
- General funding	58,814		
- Capacity funding	20,000		
Capital	10,000		
Total	88,814	137,628	793,558

In addition to the £1m each lead authority has been awarded from the UKSPF, £20,000 capacity funding has also been provided to enable the preparation of investment plans.

- 7.2. The main financial consideration will be aligning the intervention work with the allocation of the funding over the next 3 year period with the largest proportion of the funding coming in 2024/25.
- 7.3. Under the MOU, if the Council exceeds the funding allocation then this will be the responsibility of the Council to fund.

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.

Background Papers

- [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus](#)
- [JSC Paper \(5 July 2022\) - Priorities for Worthing Borough Council](#)
- [JSC Paper \(6 September 2022\) - Cost of Living Roadmap](#)

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. Not only does this project represent an opportunity for our businesses, it will also provide possibilities for all to improve their 'quality of life'.
- A number of the activities will support our changing high streets, notably regarding business support; even more so in response to the outturn experienced by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as transport infrastructure and skills development. The 'interventions' will support and give confidence to residents and visitors regarding the Adur and the benefits of living and working within.

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- The interventions will support a number of stakeholders, including those local businesses, residents and employees. The proposal will upgrade and 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 Adur and the opportunity for the local community.

2.2 Equality Issues

- The interventions are aimed to ensure all that live, work and visit Adur 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 in Adur, encouraging residents and visitors to utilise the additional pedestrianised space to support their own wellbeing.

4. Governance

- The UKSPF Project Team is existing and functional, and they will act as the key governance control for this project. These will have strict oversight of all elements of the project, including spend and programme progression.
- Overall delegated authority will be help by the Directors for Economy, Communities and Digital and Sustainability and Resources
- These groups combine Members and Officers from WBC and WSCC.
- Further granularity of key roles can be found in point 5.5