

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Decision Made: 20 July 2022

UK Share Prosperity Fund, Local Investment Plan

Issue for Decision

The Council has been allocated funding as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Release of the funding is dependent on submission of a Local Investment Plan (LIP) to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC); DLUHC has provided substantial guidance for the scope of how the funding should be applied, the outcomes it achieves and the profiling of spend. The deadline for submission is 1st August 2022. Work has been undertaken informally with the Cabinet and key partners to create a proposed list of priority projects for the Local Investment Plan the two Policy Advisory Committees whose remit this falls within are being consulted on the proposals prior to decision by the Leader of the Council.

Decision Made

1. The planned projects and actions in Appendix Four to the report are approved as the Local Investment Plan for Maidstone.
2. The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be delegated responsibility to submit the plan to government by 1 August 2022.

Reasons for Decision

1. Introduction And Background

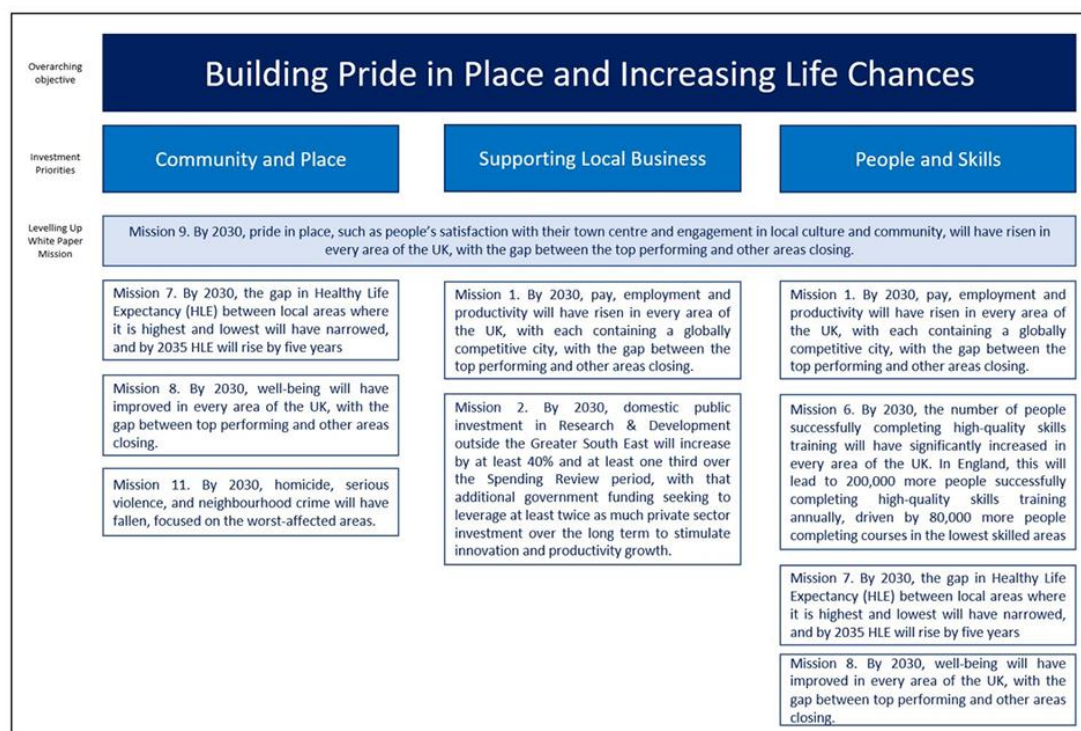
- 1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) forms part of a suite of complementary Levelling Up funding. It builds on the competitive Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund through long term, stable funding, allocated to all places. In England the fund has been allocated at District Level in two tier areas.

Vision and Objectives of the UKSPF

- 1.2 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will support the UK Government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the four parts of Levelling Up:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards, 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

1.3 The primary goal of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with Levelling Up White Paper missions, particularly: 'By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.' More detail is set out in the table below.



Funding

1.4 Maidstone has been awarded £1,199,253 to spend over the next three years profiled as follows:

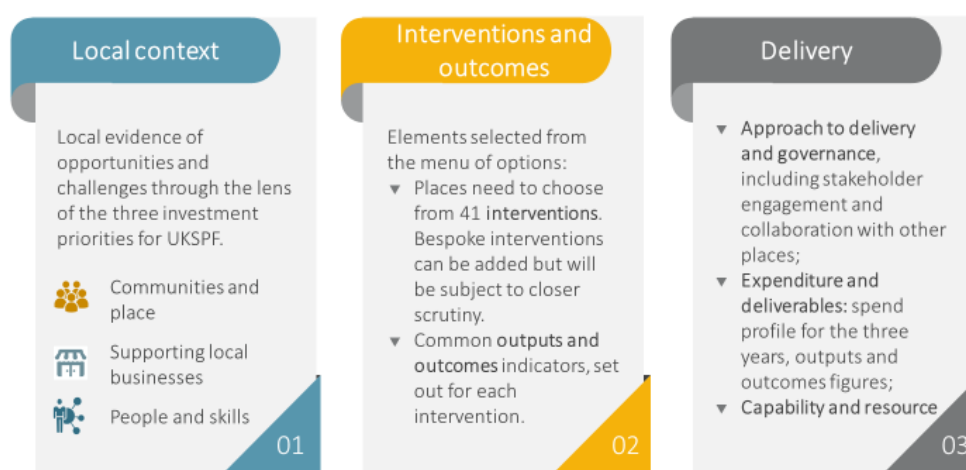
Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Amount	£145,540	£291,081	£762,632
Support Cost (up to and	£5,821.60	£11,643.24	£30,505.28

taken out of in year total)			
Minimum Capital Spend out of total	10% £14,554	13% £37,840.53	20% £152,526.40

- 1.5 Release of the funding is dependent on submission of a Local Investment Plan (LIP) to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC); DLUHC has provided substantial guidance for the scope of how the funding should be applied, the outcomes it achieves, the profiling of spend and the split between capital and revenue funding. This does not preclude alternative interventions being put forward in the LIP although to do so would require additional evidence to be included. The deadline for submission is 1 August 2022.

The Local Investment Plan

- 1.6 The local investment plans will feature three broad components:



- 1. Local context:** this provides an opportunity for places to set out their local evidence of opportunities and challenges through the lens of the three investment priorities for UKSPF. Please see summary at Appendix One
- 2. Selection of outcomes and interventions:** where places identify the outcomes they wish to target based on their local context, and the interventions they wish to prioritise, under each investment priority, from the menu of options. These should be clearly linked to local opportunities and challenges. Interventions and outcomes taken from the UKSPF prospectus have been included in the shortlisting at Appendix Four

3. **Delivery:** this will represent the most detailed stage of the investment plans and is broken down into the following:

- a) Approach to delivery and governance: where places outline the structures and processes that will support the delivery of their chosen interventions. Places will be expected to set out the engagement they have undertaken as part of the development of their Plan, including their engagement with MPs.

MBC has engaged with both MPs and a range of partner organisations to identify the challenges, outcomes and potential project proposals for our Local Investment Plan. Details are set out in paragraph 2.8 below.

It is proposed that strategic oversight is achieved through regular updates to the Executive and regular engagement with the MBC Anchor Institutions Group plus Maidstone MPs

Delivery of the projects will be within existing MBC staff resources complemented by One Maidstone (the Business Improvement District) and Involve Kent, with programme management overseen by The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance. Project management support will be funded through the UKSPF. There will be an operational programme board comprising representatives for each of the delivery partners managed by the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance.

- b) Expenditure and deliverables: detailing what places want to deliver with their investment plan, including the spend profile for the three years of the fund as well as outputs and outcomes figures, and where places have already identified specific projects, they wish to fund under each of the investment priorities.

It is proposed that the MBC Investment Plan focusses on Maidstone Town centre. This is consistent with our Strategic Plan, Our Economic Development Strategy, our associated Covid Recovery and Renewal Plan and complements the objectives of our Community Safety Plan. Appendix Three sets out the range of proposed projects. Given the scale of funding it is proposed to invest in a small number of projects to achieve maximum impact.

- c) Capability and resource: to allow places to outline the resource they have to manage and work on UKSPF, as well as their capability and previous experience of delivering similar funds.

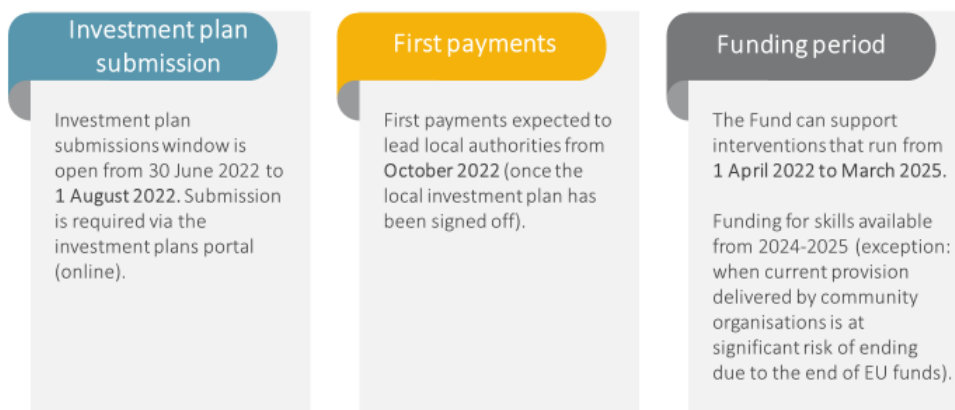
To be completed by Head of Policy, Communications and Governance as part of submission once decisions on the governance and specific projects to be included in the LIP have been made. The projects include feasibility studies, expert support from within the Council and external support from partners.

- 1.7 The plan will be submitted via an online platform. The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance has been identified as the lead officer to complete the submission. £20,000 was made available to support development of the investment plan in addition to the UKSPF money. The Council appointed Mutual Ventures, a consultancy with expertise in strategic planning, investment planning and business case development in the public sector to deliver sustainable social, economic, and cultural value to local people, to assist and advise in the development of a plan which will be approved by Government.
- 1.8 To produce a successful plan, lead local authorities are tasked with working with a diverse range of local and regional stakeholders, civil society organisations, employer bodies responsible for identifying local skills plans, and businesses or business representative groups to achieve Fund outcomes in their areas. To achieve this, an event was held with key stakeholders facilitated by Mutual Ventures. This included Kent County Council, Mid Kent College, the police, health partners, the community sector, One Maidstone and a faith group. This engagement enabled us to bring together our Anchor Institutions as proposed in the Town Centre Strategy scoping report presented to and agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2022. There have been more detailed conversations with our key delivery partners for the LIP following the workshop. Other potential projects identified with our Anchor Institutions will be considered as part of our wider Town Centre Strategy. MBC contributed through officer expertise in housing, community safety, communications, events, biodiversity and climate change, parks, public health, economic development and financial inclusion. Details of this engagement will be set out in our submission.
- 1.9 A summary of the outputs of the workshop can be seen at Appendix Two. Key challenges and opportunities considered were greening in the town centre, creating pride in place, changing the narrative around the town centre to enhance its reputation and creating an attractive and interesting destination. Emphasis was placed on the importance of greater partnership working, improving community infrastructure, and improving mental health.
- 1.10 MPs should provide an advisory role to lead local authorities, reviewing the investment plan prior to submission to UK government for sign-off. Meetings have been held with Helen Grant, MP and Helen Whatley, MP who have both indicated support for the plan and the ideas put forward. The draft plan has been sent to them both for comment and their views will be included in the final report for consideration by the Leader.

- 1.11 Regular discussions have been held with the Executive throughout this process. The Executive have identified their priority for the fund to promote pride in place, through promotion of the Town Centre, local businesses and events including uplifting the quality of spaces and buildings with a strong emphasis on heritage and culture.
- 1.12 A full list of the 18 projects that have been produced through engagement with the Anchor Institution Group, Members and Officers submitted and considered by the Executive can be seen at Appendix Three. There are too many to be delivered with the amount of funding available and hence officers, in conversation informally with the Executive and our partners, have suggested a prioritised short list of projects.
- 1.13 The short list of projects and spend per year are at Appendix Four, with an easy read financial breakdown at Appendix Five.

Important Dates

- 1.14 There are key timescales set out by DLUHC for the submission of the investment plan, timings of the projects and connected funding, this is set out below.



- 1.15 The timing of shortlisted projects and the period from which they will be funded is set out in Appendix Four and Appendix Five.
- 1.16 To get the investment plan submitted there is a strict timeline to which we need to adhere.
- Economic Regeneration and Leisure PAC - July 2022
 - Communities, Housing and Environment PAC - 12 July 2022
 - Leader of the Council decision- 20 July 2022
 - Final Submission date – 1 August 2022
- 1.17 Not meeting the final submission date on the 1 August 2022 may result in losing the funding.

Consultation of Policy Advisory Committees

- 2.1 This issue was considered by the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Policy Advisory Committee on 5 July 2022 and the Committee supported the recommendations of this report. In addition, further requests were made and these are attached at Appendix 6: (draft) Excerpt of the Minutes of Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee Meeting held on 5 July 2022.
- 2.2 The matter is also due to be considered by the Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee on the 12 July 2022, with the outcome of that Committees consideration to be reported to the Leader of the Council prior to this decision being taken.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

- 3.1 The short list of projects can be seen below and full details including the correlating interventions as identified by government, outcomes, estimated spend and which year the project falls can be seen at Appendix Four with a summary of spend by year at Appendix Five.
 - A. Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events
 - B. A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting, supported by green volunteers
 - C. A Community Arts Hub and Maker Space
 - D. Links from the Town Centre to Lockmeadow - Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics
- 3.2 The Leader of the Council could choose to revisit the original list of potential projects and propose an alternative shortlist than as shown above at 3.1. This could also include narrowing the current proposed shortlist by removing projects, expanding it to include additional projects or combining projects as has been done already.
- 3.3 It is important to note that if the Leader of the Council chooses to do this, that any recommendation should be made with consideration of the available funds and the profiling of that funding that as set out at 2.4. DLUHC are very clear in their prospectus that funding has to be spent as profiled so we are not able to spend our allocation for future years early. Any spend beyond the in-year allocation would constitute growth to the Council's budget for that year. Any underspend would need to be returned to DLUHC.
- 3.4 The Leader of the Council could choose to a new project or ask for an additional project to be explored. Should the Leader of the Council consider this option then the timeline as set out at 2.14 should be considered as well as the requirement to engage key stakeholders.

- 3.5 Reject Entirely, if the Leader of the Council decides that the Council should not create a Local Investment Plan the Council would risk losing the allocation set out in the UKSPF. If a completely new plan was proposed this would require significant work in a very short space of time, with the final deadline for submission set as 1 August 2022.

Background Documents

None

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) set out.



Signed: _____
(Leader of the Council - David Burton)

Full details of the report for the decision can be found online at:

[Leader of the Council - 20 July 2022, 12.30pm](#)

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance by: **5pm on 27 July 2022**