

UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Local Investment Plan

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure PAC	5 July 2022
Communities, Housing and Environment PAC	12 July 2022
Leader of the Council	20 July 2022

Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Leader of the Council
Director	Chief Executive
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance and Anna Collier, Corporate Insight, Communities and Governance Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

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.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation

This report makes the following recommendations to the Policy Advisory Committee to recommend to the Leader of the Council

1. The planned projects and actions in Appendix Four 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.
-

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve all our priorities as evidenced in the interventions and outcomes and the objectives of our Recovery and Renewal Plan.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the cross-cutting objectives as evidenced in the interventions and outcomes.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	Covered in the risk section	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation will be funded by the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation. A funding breakdown can be seen at Appendix Five.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	The fund allows for up to 4% to be spent each year supporting the delivery of local investment plans. The proposal is that work	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

	will be managed with our existing staffing with additional project management support funded through the 4% allowance to be combined with other major project support.	
Legal	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers.	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Corporate Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	
Crime and Disorder	Some of the projects seek to increase and diversify activity in the town centre and to engage with local people and this complements our strategy to make the town centre a safer place to be.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises as required and in accordance with the Council's financial procedure rules and the rules of the UKSPF	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change will meet the council's commitment to take action to mitigate climate change and promote biodiversity	

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

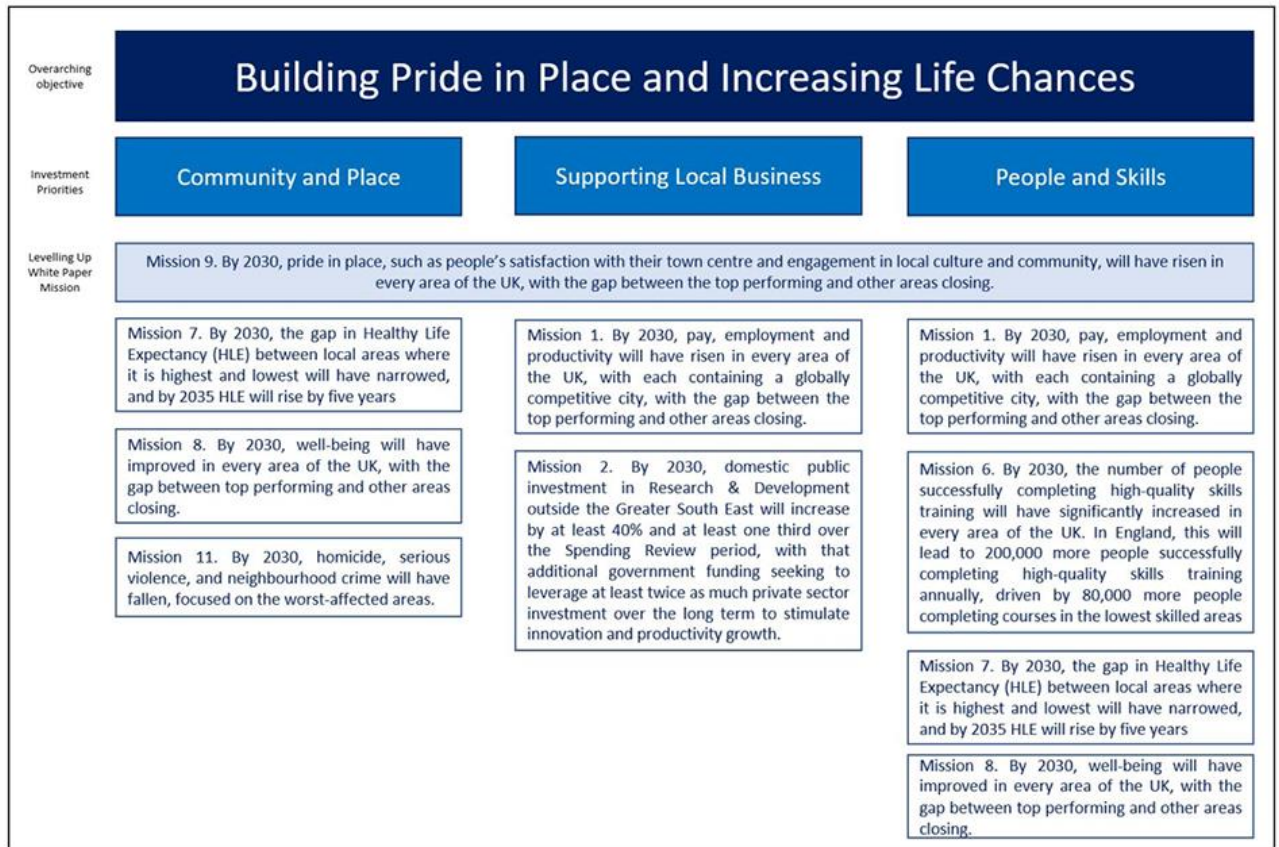
2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) forms part of a suite of complementary Levelling Up funding. It builds on the competitive Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund through long term, stable funding, allocated to all places. In England the fund has been allocated at District Level in two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

Vision and Objectives of the UKSPF

2.2 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

2.3 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

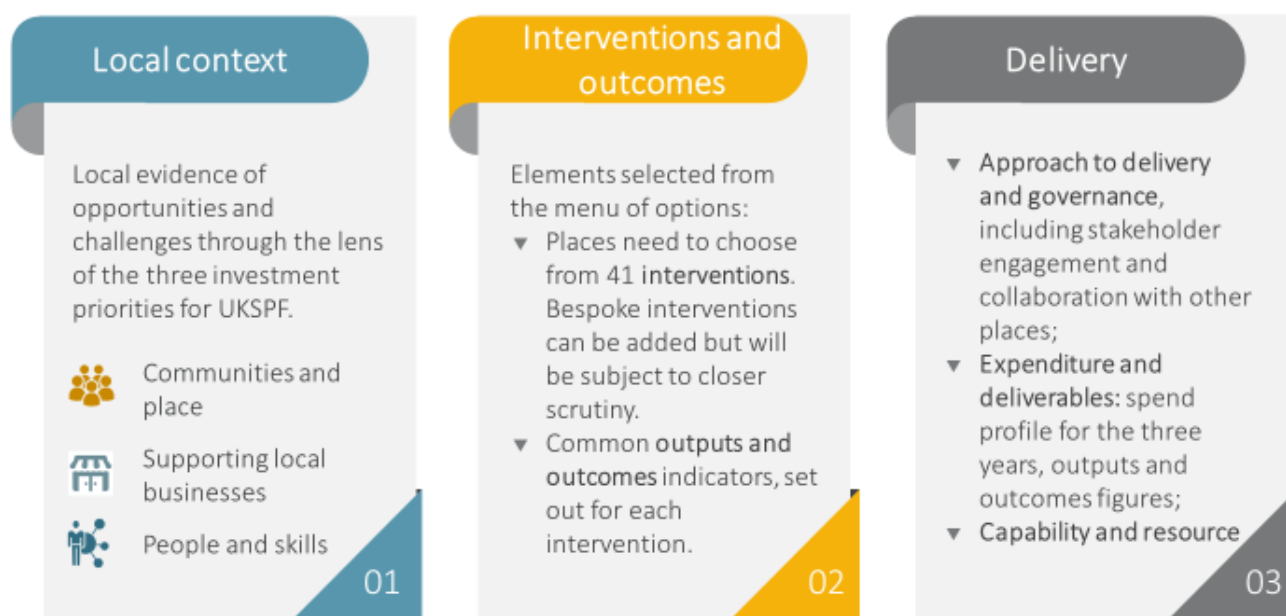
- 2.4 Maidstone has been awarded £1,199,253 to spend over the next three years profiled as follows:

Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Amount	£145,540	£291,081	£762,632
Support Cost (up to and taken out of in year total)	£5,821.60	£11,643.24	£30,505.28
Minimum Capital Spend out of total	10% £14,554	13% £37,840.53	20% £152,526.40

- 2.5 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

- 2.6 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.

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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

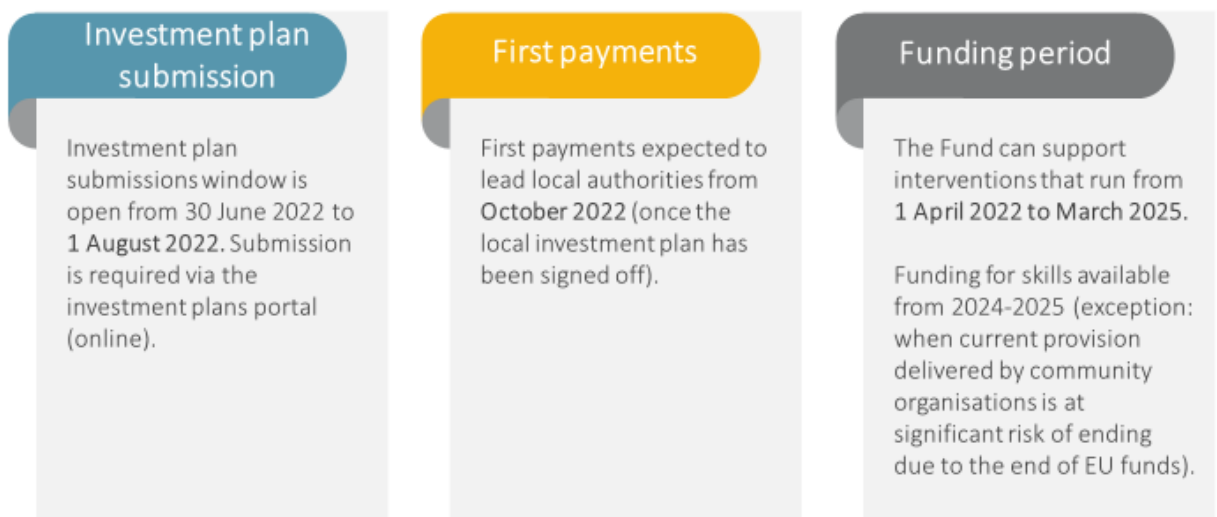
events including uplifting the quality of spaces and buildings with a strong emphasis on heritage and culture.

2.12 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.

2.13 The short list of projects and spend per year are at Appendix Four, with an easy read financial breakdown at Appendix Five.

Important Dates

2.14 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.



2.15 The timing of shortlisted projects and the period from which they will be funded is set out in Appendix Four and Appendix Five.

2.16 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

2.17 Not meeting the final submission date on the 1 August 2022 may result in losing the funding.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 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 Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) 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 PAC choose 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 PAC could choose to recommend a new project or ask for an additional project to be explored. Should the PAC 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 Committee recommends 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.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the short list of interventions shown at Appendix Four is approved. The interventions have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders with the final list reviewed, developed and supported by Cabinet.
- 4.2 The projects meet the funding allocated by Government and can be delivered within the timescales as required as part of the investment plan.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 An event was held with key stakeholders and facilitated by Mutual Ventures. The event was well attended and included representatives from Health, housing associations, KCC, Police, education, faith as well as council officers from Housing, Community Safety, Climate Change, Parks, Health Economic Development and Financial Inclusion.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 Regular discussions have been held with the Executive throughout this process, identifying key priorities to guide discussions with key stakeholders and reviewing the list of identified proposed interventions.
- 6.4 Further feedback has been sought on the draft plan from stakeholders, their feedback will be reported to PACs if available and to the Leader prior to making the decision
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once approved the Head of Policy Communications and Governance will prepare the Investment Plan with advice and support from Mutual Ventures to ensure a high-quality plan and its submission before the deadline of the 1 August 2022.
- 7.2 Projects planned for the period 2022/23 can be implemented prior to receipt of funding in October 2022. So key officers and the relevant partners will put plans into action as soon as the projects have been approved by the Leader of the Council for submission as part of the Local Investment Plan.
- 7.3 The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance will appoint the operational programme board chairing the meeting monthly.
- 7.4 It is proposed that strategic oversight is achieved through the MBC Executive and regular engagement with the MBC Anchor Institutions Group plus Maidstone MPs.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Evidence of Challenges, the Local Context
- Appendix 2: Workshop Event Summary
- Appendix 3: Long List of Interventions
- Appendix 4: Short List of Projects to form part of the Local Investment Plan
- Appendix 5: Funding breakdown

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.