

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

SHARED PROSPERITY FUND BRIEFING



Report Reference C-22-11
Meeting Date 4th July 2022
Agenda Item 9
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is a new UK fund to replace previous EU structural funds and is part of the government's *Levelling Up* agenda. Cheshire East Council has been allocated £11,585,762 over a three-year period commencing in the current (2022/23) financial year¹. It is a mixed capital/revenue fund. Cheshire East Council is able to determine its own priorities within the fund parameters. There are three investment priorities set by the government:

- Community and Place
 - Strengthening social fabric and sense of local pride and belonging
 - Building resilient, safe and healthy neighbourhoods
- Supporting Local Business
 - Creating jobs and boosting community cohesion
 - Promoting networking & collaboration
 - Increasing private sector investment in growth enhancing activities
- People and Skills (2024/25 funding)
 - Reducing levels of economic inactivity
 - Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work
 - Supporting areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work

Cheshire East Council has to submit an investment plan setting out how it intends to use the funds by 1st August 2022. The plan will set out local challenges and opportunities, the kinds of interventions the authority wishes to fund and deliver mechanisms.

1.2 POTENTIAL INTERVENTION AREAS AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

The government has published a list of potential interventions which Cheshire East Council will be considering and determining which interventions it wishes to look to prioritise in its investment plan. The list of intervention areas are detailed in Appendix A.

A briefing for stakeholders was held on 28th June which was attended by the Town Clerk; representatives from other councils, Cheshire East Council departments and third sector organisations

¹ £1.4m (2022/23), £2.8m (2023/24) and 7.4m (2024/25)

were also in attendance. It was noted that whilst £11.4m is not an insignificant amount of money it could be spent multiple times over within the borough and that Cheshire East Council will have to carefully prioritise those projects where there is greatest demonstrable need and interventions deliver the greatest impact.

Cheshire East Council sought input to feed into its investment plan by 12pm on 4th July. The Town Clerk will be submitting a response outlining the interventions which would deliver the greatest benefit to Knutsford and detailing potential projects within Knutsford including those where the Town Council could be a delivery partner. The Town Clerk will report on this verbally at the meeting.

2.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

None, Briefing report.

APPENDIX A: GOVERNMENT LIST OF POTENTIAL INTERVENTION AREAS

- E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.
- E2: Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding. This could cover capital spend and running costs.
- E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.
- E4: Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer.
- E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.
- E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.
- E7: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.
- E8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.
- E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.
- E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.
- E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.
- E12: Investment in community engagement schemes to support community involvement in decision making in local regeneration.
- E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.
- E14: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies.
- E15: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.
- E16: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.
- E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.
- E18: Supporting Made Smarter Adoption: Providing tailored expert advice, matched grants and leadership training to enable manufacturing SMEs to adopt industrial digital technology solutions including artificial intelligence; robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing; industrial internet of things; virtual reality; data analytics. The support is proven to leverage high levels of private investment into technologies that drive growth, productivity, efficiency and resilience in manufacturing.
- E19: Increasing investment in research and development at the local level. Investment to support the diffusion of innovation knowledge and activities. Support the commercialisation of ideas, encouraging collaboration and accelerating the path to market so that more ideas translate into industrial and commercial practices.
- E20: Research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services.
- E21: Funding for the development and support of appropriate innovation infrastructure at the local level.
- E22: Investing in enterprise infrastructure and employment/innovation site development projects. This can help to unlock site development projects which will support growth in places.
- E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages

- of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- E24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.
 - E25: Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences that support wider local growth sectors.
 - E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.
 - E27: Funding to develop angel investor networks nationwide.
 - E28: Export Grants to support businesses to grow their overseas trading, supporting local employment.
 - E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity.
 - E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.
 - E31: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies.
 - E32: Investment in resilience infrastructure and nature based solutions that protect local businesses and community areas from natural hazards including flooding and coastal erosion.
 - E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps.
 - E34: Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), and life skills and career skills** provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications.
 - E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.
 - E36: Intervention to increase levels of digital inclusion, with a focus on essential digital skills, communicating the benefits of getting (safely) online, and in-community support to provide users with the confidence and trust to stay online.
 - E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.
 - E38: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs and high-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that is not being met through other provision.
 - E39: Green skills courses targeted around ensuring we have the skilled workforce to achieve the government's net zero and wider environmental ambitions.
 - E40: Retraining support for those in high carbon sectors.
 - E41: Funding to support local digital skills.