

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 7 JULY 2022

TITLE OF REPORT: UKSPF – LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Report of: Joint Chief Executive

Cabinet Portfolio: Leader of the Council

Key Decision: Yes

Confidentiality: Non-Exempt

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report provides a framework for Hart's Local Investment Plan in connection with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which needs to be submitted to the Government in July 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet:

- Approves the drafting of the Local Investment Plan for the administration of the UKSPF in Hart based on the proposed framework presented in this paper;
- Agrees in principle, and subject to guarantee's from Central Government in their confirmation agreement to the Investment Plan, to forward fund projects identified from the Council's reserves as set out in paragraph 22 to 24; and
- Delegates final authority to submit Hart District Councils UKSPF Investment Plan to DHLUC, to the Joint Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader

BACKGROUND

2. The UKSPF was launched in February 2022 and is a central pillar of the UK government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. Please see **Appendix 1** for more details.
3. The primary goal of the UKSPF 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.'
4. The UKSPF has three investment priorities:
 - Community and Place
 - Supporting Local Business; and
 - People and Skills
5. Each Council is required to draft a Local Investment Plan based on one or more of these investment priorities, which need to be submitted to the government in the summer for approval.
6. Hart has been allocated £1 million to be spent over three years, broken down as follows:
 - 2022-23: £39,708 (Revenue at a maximum of 90%, £35,737 and capital at a minimum of 10%, £3,971)
 - 2023-24: £79,417 (Revenue at a maximum of 87%, £69,093 and capital at a minimum of 13%, £10,324)

- 2024-25: £880,875 (Revenue at a maximum of 80%, £704,700 and capital at a minimum of 20%, £176,175)
7. Hart is the least deprived local authority in England, however it still has pockets of deprivation and areas with lower achievements than other parts of the District.
 8. Based on this, at the workshop, two principles were agreed:
 - that Levelling up for Hart would mean therefore levelling to Hart's average rather than to the UK's.
 - that our resources should be targeted to those areas or specific needs rather than universal provision
 9. National databases/statistics for the Hart district (including the English Indices of Deprivation 2019, data from the Office for National Statistics and Census Data 2011), identify areas of the district which fall below Hart's average in:
 - Income and employment
 - Education
 - Crime
 - Barriers to Housing and services
 - Living environment
 10. In June, the Council held a workshop, which brought together a wide range of key stakeholders, to identify significant issues in the district and potential projects that could address some of the local issues. Projects identified as potential opportunities were presented at the workshop for consideration to help initiate the discussions. The workshop participants were also asked to prioritise their top three projects. The findings of the workshop are summarised in **Appendix 2**.
 11. The outcomes of this workshop have formed foundation blocks for the investment plan and have influenced the type of projects recommended to be included in Hart's Local Investment Plan.

MAIN ISSUES

12. Hart's Local Investment Plan must identify which of the UKSPF's three investment priorities the Council intends to focus on (recognising it can focus on all three, or just one or two). It must also identify the local challenges we intend to tackle and associated interventions, projects and initiatives we anticipate going forward, within these priorities.
13. Based on the feedback from the workshop, it is recommended that the investment plan focus on the following investment priorities:
 - Community and Place
 - Supporting Local Business
14. Under the Community and Place priority, the following projects are identified:

Directly deliverable projects

 - Community Hubs - The community hubs will increase access to a range of services as well as facilitating education, skills and training opportunities at local venues across the district. The dispersed nature of the hubs would tackle geographical/ transport barriers that exist for more rural communities.
 - Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement - The project will increase access to a range of education, skills and training opportunities for younger people at local venues across the district.

Feasibility studies (which would help to inform future projects)

- Data mining to better understand what the issues hidden within the district - The project will investigate the need identified in the national datasets/statistics to help the Council and our local stakeholders target support to maximum its impact.
- Development of the Green Grid Strategy - The project will advance the development of Hart's Green Grid, which will provide sustainable transport infrastructure across the district with benefits for physical and mental health, road safety and reducing pollution. It will also have a direct impact on delivering carbon reduction targets.

15. Under the Supporting Local Business priority, the following project is identified:

Feasibility studies (which would help to inform future projects)

- Refresh of the Economic Development Strategy - The project will create a strategy to help the Council and our local stakeholders target future economic and employment support to maximum its impact.

Directly deliverable projects

- Attract small/medium business/people to invest in Hart through marketing campaigns – This project will deliver a two-year marketing campaign aimed at small to medium businesses. The campaigns will utilise the Hart for Business website as well as other opportunities.

16. Details of each project are provided in **Appendix 3**. Opportunities under the People and Skills priority were considered but given the restriction on its use and the projects identified at the workshop, no projects are proposed in this round.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

17. The following projects were not identified as priorities at the workshop:

- Physical activity programme, including extending the healthy walks programme - Extending walks in country parks, at different times and different groups. This has been funded from CEV until now and will cease unless additional funding is found.
- Minding the Garden - Develop the success of the current project into individual gardens, creating front gardens as safe and healthy spaces.
- Green Energy - Green energy at Edenbrook Country Park to help provide heat/electricity to the leisure centre. This could be fuelled by HDC owned woods and offer a green alternative. A similar example is currently provided at Horsell Common, which is operating successfully.
- Employment and Skills - Funding for an Employment and Skills Officer at Hart District Council.
- Re-purpose/re-generation plan for Fleet, Yateley and Hook
- Transport initiatives:
 - Community Transport such as 'Uber' shared bus service, micro-mobility with key links to main bus and train routes
 - Investment in e-scooters/e-bikes etc to help link key towns and villages and infrastructure around it
 - Attract small/medium business/people to invest in Hart through marketing campaigns

18. It is recommended that, whilst these projects all have merit, they are not progressed in this stage of the UK SPF.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

19. The proposed projects would fit with the Corporate Plan as follows:

Corporate Plan Objectives	Proposed Project
Actively engaging with local businesses, both large and small to understand business needs	Refresh of the Economic Development Strategy
Working with partners such as the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership to promote the District to new businesses and to identify funding sources	Refresh of the Economic Development Strategy Attract small/medium business/people to invest in Hart through marketing campaigns
Partnership working with the Citizens Advice Bureaux, Hart Voluntary Action, Department for Work and Pensions and skills training providers	Community Hubs Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement Data mining to better understand what the issues hidden within the district
Supporting the transition to a low carbon future, making efficient use of resources, increasing levels of recycling, encouraging an increase in journeys made by cycling, walking and public transport, and encouraging the use of renewable resources	Development of the Green Grid Strategy
Working with Town and Parish Councils and voluntary sector partners to help them explore youth provision in their area	Community Hubs Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement
Supporting the voluntary and community sector to develop	Community Hubs Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement Data mining to better understand what the issues hidden within the district
Taking account of and supporting local strategies to improve physical and mental health, social and cultural wellbeing and supporting the delivery of sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs	Community Hubs Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement Data mining to better understand what the issues hidden within the district
Including the delivery of infrastructure that encourages people to walk, cycle and use buses	Development of the Green Grid Strategy
Working with education providers and other partners to promote learning and	Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement

skills programmes	
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20. The proposed projects would also fit with the Hart Vision 2040:

Hart Vision 2040 Objective	Proposed Project
Ensures work, education, health and other facilities are easily reachable through effective walking, cycling or road and rail transport links.	Development of the Green Grid Strategy
Developing the skills we need for the future working alongside our business sector and local education providers to ensure our young people succeed.	Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement Data mining to better understand what the issues hidden within the district
... encouraging new businesses to locate in the district by highlight the strengths of the district including skills, impressive connectivity and environment.	Refresh of the Economic Development Strategy Attract small/medium business/people to invest in Hart through marketing campaigns
Continuing to build a great sense of community, reducing social isolation, celebrating our diversity, and strengths and through this increasing community connectedness and resilience.	Community Hubs Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement Data mining to better understand what the issues hidden within the district
Empowering people to help themselves whilst ensuring there is support for the most vulnerable. Working closely with our partners to enable people to live safely and independently and help our most vulnerable residents can get the support they need, when they need it.	Community Hubs Employment & skills interventions and young persons engagement Data mining to better understand what the issues hidden within the district
Creation of green corridors between all settlements to encourage sustainable healthy transport and provide cycles for hire to enable movement	Development of the Green Grid Strategy
Using its own assets (people and property) by building the skills and space for partnerships to flourish, in order to deliver on the Vision 2040	Community Hubs

Service Plan

- Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan? Yes
- Is the proposal being funded from current budgets? NO
- Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?
Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

21. The Council will need to adhere to the rules and guidance set out for the UKSPF.

Financial and Resource Implications

22. £1 million for capital and revenue funding will be provided by the Government. This funding is staggered over the three-year period as follows:

- 2022/23 - £39,708
- 2023/24 - £79,417
- 2024/25 - £880,875

23. The government have confirmed that Councils could forward fund the UKSPF spend against the final year three allowance, to better distribute the funding over the three years. This must be agreed in the Investment Plans. It is recommended that Hart's Investment Plan proposed this in order to reduce the risks associated with the delivery the projects. The majority of the projects would otherwise have to be delivered in year three, creating resource implications for the Council. Forward funding would come from the Council's reserves.

24. It is requested that Cabinet approve the principle of forwarding the UKSPF projects and the details of the projects, including the amount/timing for forward funding, would be presented for Cabinet approval once Hart's Local Investment Plan is approved by the Government. By way of an example, it is anticipated that forward funding to better balance the funding over the three years could be:

- 2022/23 - Funding from UKSPF, £39,708 and funding from reserves could be £150k
- 2023/24 - Funding from UKSPF, £79,417 and funding from reserves could be £300k
- 2024/25 - Funding from UKSPF £880,875 and funding reimbursed to reserves, £450k

25. Hart District Council must administrate the fund and up to 4% of the allocation (£40k over three years) can be allocated for this purpose. Given the level of officer time required, it is recommended that the Investment Plan includes the full 4% to cover administration costs.

Risk Management

26. Once the investment plan has been approved by government, each project will have a designated project plan, risk assessment and Integrated Impact Assessment to ensure suitable management of the project.

EQUALITIES

27. Equalities impact assessments may need to be carried out for any successful projects.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

28. Many of the projects identified will have positive roles in delivering the Council's carbon reduction targets for example by providing services in walking and cycling distance of residents or will help to facilitate sustainable travel in the district. The climate change implications will be assessed for any successful projects.

ACTION

29. Subject to the decision of Cabinet, Hart District Council will progress work associated with drafting a local investment plan.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: UKSPF Fund details

Appendix 2: Summary of the UKSPF workshop held in June 2022

Appendix 3: Details of identified projects for the UKSPF