

**Meeting** Executive  
**Portfolio Area** Leader of the Council  
**Date** 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022



## OVERVIEW PROPOSAL FOR THE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

### KEY DECISION

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### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report summarises the proposed approach for the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in Stevenage between 2022/23 and 2024/25 ahead of the closure of the Local Investment Plan window on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the proposed approach and outlined interventions of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan be approved for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

- 2.2 That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (TP), to make final amendments to the required Stevenage Investment Plan submission ahead of the 1 August, having consulted with the Leader of the Council.
- 2.3 That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (TP), having consulted the Portfolio Holder for Community, Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Councils and the Leader of the Council, to establish an appropriate method for allocating funding to support interventions within the Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme.

**3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The UKSPF is the government’s domestic replacement for the European Structural and Investment Programme (ESIF) which the UK continues to participate in until 2023. UKSPF provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025.
- 3.2 The ESIF programme has provided £27,337,581 of funding in Hertfordshire between 2014 and 2023. Alongside this, the European Regional Development fund has provided a further £17,945,052 in funding across the same period in Hertfordshire. This combines for a total £45,282,633 investment into the county focussed on the ‘Supporting Local Business and People and Skills’ priorities set out in this report below.
- 3.3 Some current ESIF and EDRF funding continues in 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. The government has phased the introduction of the UKSPF for local authorities, with the last year of the fund matching the levels of funding recently provided via programmes such as ESIF and EDRF.
- 3.4 All areas of the UK will receive an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. Receipt of the funding does require the submission of a Local Investment Plan, but this will not change the amount of funding received.
- 3.5 As part of this, Stevenage has received an allocation of £1,000,000 of the £13,379,087 total funding given to District & Borough councils in Hertfordshire.

Funding	Amount	22/23	23/24	24/25
<b>Stevenage</b>	<b>£1,000,000</b>	<b>£114,478</b>	<b>£228,956</b>	<b>£656,566</b>
Revenue	£827,475	£103,030	£199,192	£525,253
Capital	£172,525	£11,448	£29,764	£131,313

- 3.6 The funding is broken down over three years and split between revenue and capital. This is weighted heavily in the favour of revenue, but increases to capital contribution can be increased, provided justification is provided.
- 3.7 The UK government’s priorities around UKSPF are to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Places will be empowered to identify and build on their own strengths and needs at a local level, focused on pride

in place and increasing life chances. Local places will be able to use the fund to complement funding such as the Levelling Up fund, and mainstream employment and skills provision to maximise impact and simplify delivery.

- 3.8 The Government's objectives for the UKSPF are specifically to:
- 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
- 3.9 In order to deliver on these objectives, the fund is targeted at three investment priorities set out by the Government (summarised between paragraphs 3.10 and 3.22):

### **Communities & Place**

- 3.10 The communities and place investment priority will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships, creating the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.
- 3.11 Strengthening social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and amenities, such as community infrastructure, local green space, and community-led projects.
- 3.12 It will build resilient and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in. Additionally, by targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention.

### **Supporting Local Business**

- 3.13 The supporting local business investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.
- 3.14 This priority will create jobs, boosting community cohesion through investments that build on existing industries and institutions. This will range from support for starting businesses to visible improvements to local retail, hospitality and leisure sector facilities.
- 3.15 Promote networking and collaboration, through interventions that bring together businesses and partners within and across sectors, sharing knowledge, expertise and resources, and stimulate innovation and growth.
- 3.16 Increase private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities, through targeted support for small and medium-sized businesses to undertake new-

to-firm innovation, adopt productivity-enhancing, energy-efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques, to start or grow their exports.

## **People & Skills**

- 3.17 Through the people and skills investment priority, places can use their funding to help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.
- 3.18 This priority will boost core skills and support adults to progress in work, by targeting adults with no or low-level qualifications and skills in maths. It will upskill the working age population, yielding personal and societal economic impact, and by encouraging innovative approaches to reducing adult learning barriers.
- 3.19 Support disadvantaged people to access the skills they need to progress in life and into work. For example, the long-term unemployed and those with protected characteristics through funding life, and basic skills where this is not delivered through national or local employment and skills provision.
- 3.20 Support local areas to fund local skills needs and supplement local adult skills services e.g. by providing additional volumes; delivering through a wider range of routes or enabling more intensive/innovative provision, both qualification based and non-qualification based.
- 3.21 Reduce levels of economic inactivity and move those furthest from the labour market closer to employment, through investment in bespoke employment support tailored to local needs. Investment should facilitate the join-up of mainstream provision and local services within an area for participants, through the use of one-to-one keyworker support, improving employment outcomes for specific cohorts who face labour market barriers.
- 3.22 Interventions that are made against this priority are only eligible from the last year of the fund in 2024/25 unless they are a continuation of current ESIF funding that ends ahead of the final year.

## **UK Community Renewal Fund**

- 3.23 The UKSPF builds upon the UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF), which was a £220m fund launched in 2021/22 as a precursor and testbed for the implementation of the UKSPF.
- 3.24 Unlike the UKSPF the CRF was run on a competition basis, with bids welcomed from local authorities throughout the UK, for a share of the fund.
- 3.25 The Council has been developing its approach to Community Wealth Building (CWB) over the last 2 years, which includes working in partnership with colleagues from the University of Hertfordshire. A motion supporting Community Wealth Building was passed by Full Council on 29 January 2020. The council adopted the Community Wealth Building Approach during the March 2020 Executive meeting. This approach was focused on four specific areas:



- 3.26 In July 2021, Stevenage Borough Council, supported by the Hertfordshire Growth Board and collaborated with colleagues from all district and borough councils in Hertfordshire, to convene a working group exploring opportunities to develop a partnership approach to Community Wealth Building (CWB) throughout Hertfordshire.
- 3.27 In November 2021, Stevenage Borough Council, on behalf of the Hertfordshire Growth Board, was awarded £700,000 Community Renewal funding to pilot various CWB approaches working collaboratively with all ten Hertfordshire councils.
- 3.28 The Programme has several core components, firstly a £500,000 delegated grant scheme targeted at supporting voluntary sector and micro businesses, increasing their access to support throughout Hertfordshire, as well as improving their sustainability and governance.
- 3.29 Alongside this, officers are also working with colleagues throughout the county in both procurement and strategic planning to share learning and best practice around approaches to CWB and Social Value.
- 3.30 To tie this all together, an evaluation and feasibility piece has been commissioned from the University of Hertfordshire. This will provide an analysis of the activity and highlight a focus for next steps.
- 3.31 The programme will run through to October 2022 for delivery, and December 2022 for evaluation. It is currently on track, with many of the deliverables already exceeding projected delivery.

### **UKSPF Next Steps**

- 3.32 The primary initial objective is for the council to complete the Local Investment Plan (LIP) ahead of the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 closing date. The

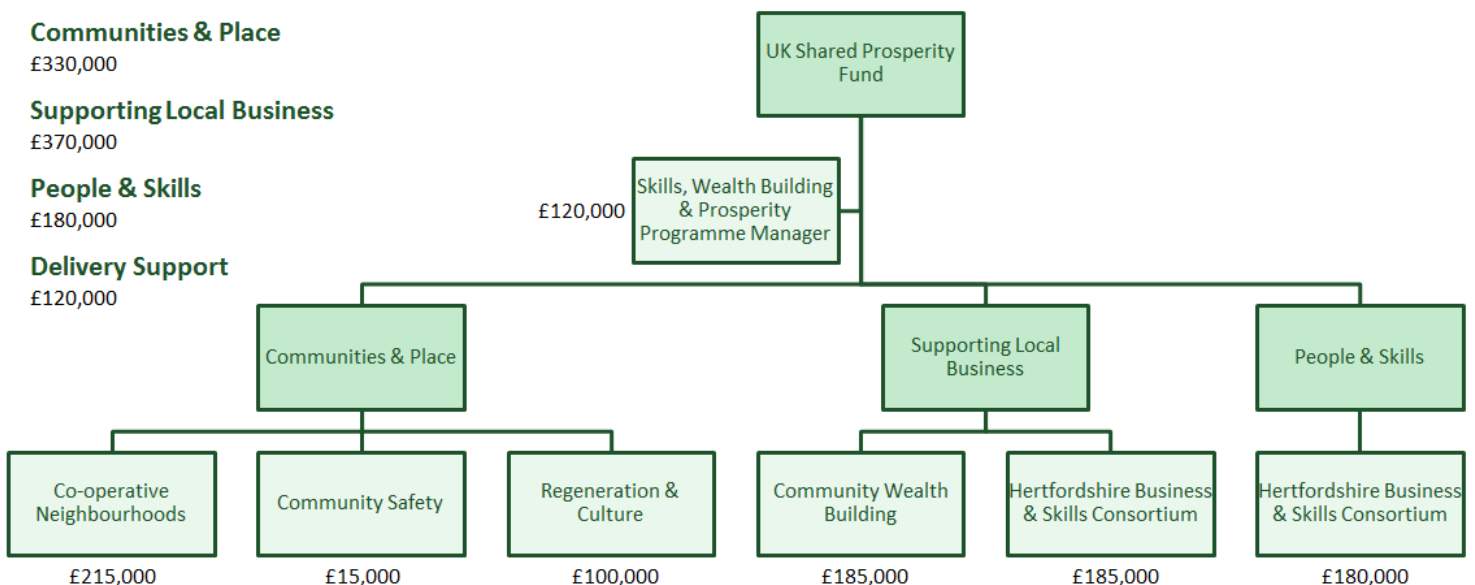
submission portal for this opens on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, and a draft submission is already underway.

- 3.33 Our allocation has been calculated utilising a formula which takes into account, population profile and needs, but is weighted per capita. By the default allocation, the funding profile is back ended into the final delivery year (2024/25) and has a significant focus on revenue funding over capital. However, by request, this capital funding can be increased as part of the LIP. More information is included in the Financial Implications section of the report.
- 3.34 Many programmes that are funded utilising ESIF will continue to be funded through 2022/23. This includes several county wide initiatives supported or delivered by the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 3.35 Alongside this, the council will continue to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have been consulted, especially through partnership groups. This is a core aspect of the investment plan. A more detailed overview is provided in the stakeholders consulted section below.

## 4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

### Summary Approach

- 4.1 The preferred approach contains an allocation of funding against all three of the core pillars of the UKSPF: Community & Place, Supporting Local Business and People & Skills. An overview of the proposed spending breakdown is included below:



- 4.2 This approach is based on a number of overarching principles that look to guide the interventions into each of the UKSPF priority areas. These are:
- Ensure alignment with the goals of UKSPF
  - Support delivery of the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) programme
  - Maximising the use of public resources, Officer and community capacity, while delivering on the FTFC programme
  - Deliver positive outcomes for residents by meeting their priorities
  - Demonstrate impact and value for money
  - Secure match funding to continue to add additional value
  - Work with a view to the longer term future of UKSPF funded interventions beyond the original delivery period.
- 4.3 The approach specifically looks to build on the opportunity to align with the core FTFC Strategic priorities. This includes the Co-operative Neighbourhoods agenda, which has a significant crossover with the interventions highlighted in the Communities & Place priority, as well as furthering the council's ambitions around Community Wealth Building and the Council's Clean and Green priorities. All of these also add value to the Making your Money Count priority by providing opportunities to add value and leverage in key priority areas, whilst not placing increased financial burden on the Council.
- 4.4 The submission window for the Local Investment Plan is from the 1<sup>st</sup> July through to the 1<sup>st</sup> August. The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have made it clear that they are focused on the interventions, outputs and outcomes that will be supported and do not require specific detail on exactly what projects will be delivered to meet these.
- 4.5 This will allow the Council to continue to develop and inform these priorities over time either through the Executive directly, and with policy development input from the Select Committees.

### **Community & Place**

- 4.6 This aspect of the fund is focused on place making activities. The focus of the fund being to tie into local communities and build outcomes that meet the needs of local places. Of the total £1,000,000 fund, Officers propose to utilise £330,000 in support of interventions around this objective.

Theme	Interventions (*Detailed in Appendix B)	Potential Projects	Match Funding	Budget
<b>Co-operative Neighbourhoods</b>	E2, E3, E5, E6, E7, E9, E11, E12, E15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public realm improvements</li> <li>- Development of parks and open spaces</li> <li>- Improvements to neighbourhood centres</li> <li>- Upgrading of existing footpaths and cycle ways</li> <li>- Shrub bed maintenance and tree planting</li> <li>- Focussed work in areas of greater deprivation to help provide volunteering, skills development opportunities and social capital</li> <li>- Local arts and culture projects</li> <li>- Support for Local volunteering/social action or events</li> <li>- Investment in Local projects to tackle climate change</li> <li>- Enabling new pilot schemes that can promote wellbeing and health</li> </ul>	<b>Community Infrastructure Levy**:</b> £45,000  <b>Co-operative Neighbourhoods 2022/23:</b> £60,000  <b>Local Community Budgets 2022/23:</b> £60,500  <b>PropTech Digital Engagement:</b> £125,000	£215,000
<b>Community Safety</b>	E9	Targeted work with individuals from ages of 11-21 (25 if they have additional needs) around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offending</li> <li>- Involvement in drugs and alcohol abuse</li> <li>- Any form of exploitation</li> <li>- Risk of eviction</li> <li>- Domestic abuse</li> <li>- Employment or training</li> </ul>		£15,000
<b>Regeneration &amp; Culture</b>	E1, E4, E6, E7, E8, E11, E16, E17	Funding to provide additional support for additional culture and arts capacity to support the delivery of cultural projects and activities, and maximising the impact of funding allocated via the Town's Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arts &amp; Culture Strategy</li> <li>- Diversification of Retail</li> <li>- Stevenage Museum</li> <li>- Events programme funding for bus apron and town centre events</li> <li>- Heritage trail and public realm</li> </ul>	<b>Towns Fund:</b> £80,000	£100,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>£290,500</b>	<b>£330,000</b>

4.7 The largest allocation in this area is around the provision of funding for local areas as part of the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme, an established Future Town Future Council priority that will greatly benefit from additional investment to support local interventions and improvements.

4.8 This approach can draw together a number of match funding opportunities through things such as; core Co-operative Neighbourhoods funding, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and Local Community Budgets (LCB), as well as project specific funding through the PropTech Digital Engagement fund. As a package of match funding, this will bring welcome investment that can enable a range of local projects and investments to support the quality of the local environment in local areas, strengthen connections with community groups, and improve key locations in neighbourhood areas. The proposed allocation of funding via the UKSPF should be seen alongside the match



funding, to ensure the delivery of projects and activities over the next three years.

- 4.9 It is proposed that a core allocation of funding is made to all six Co-operative Neighbourhood areas, to support the delivery of priority projects within the current neighbourhood action plans, and those identified through local engagement and consultation. All six Co-operative Neighbourhood areas will be invited to work on project ideas to maximise the impact of the funding. This can include investments into the local environment, from local climate change projects, improvements to public realm, green spaces or key locations such as the appearance of neighbourhood centres.
- 4.10 It is also recommended that a proportion of this £215,000 funding is targeted to areas of greater deprivation, where additional work with community groups and local residents could help generate maximum impact in the areas of the town most in need of targeted interventions.
- 4.11 This could include physical improvements to the areas, support to prepare longer-term plans for the enhancement of the neighbourhood area, and potentially targeted schemes with community and voluntary groups. This could help meet needs improving skills from digital access to targeted work connecting residents with other skills and employment programmes addressing health challenges. Further targeted work can be carried out to address anti-social behaviour, or schemes such as environment and sustainability activities to help improve the local environment.
- 4.12 The specifics of this allocation do not need to be included in the Local Investment Plan and as outlined in the recommendations section above. It is anticipated that this approach will be developed over the coming months, with engagement from the six neighbourhood areas, the Co-operative Neighbourhoods board, and as appropriate, a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group before the final plans are agreed.
- 4.13 This aspect would be developed as part of the Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme with a focus on highlighting and responding to resident's priorities in the areas of the town that most need support.
- 4.14 Alongside this, the fund would also look to support the delivery of Arts & Culture events to support the ongoing cultural, arts and heritage regeneration efforts in the town centre. This would augment the funding already received to support the development of the town centre and represents another opportunity to demonstrate match funding.
- 4.15 Finally, an allocation to support The No More Service Youth Service has been included. Working with individuals from ages of 11-21 (25 if they have additional needs) around offending, involvement in drugs and alcohol, any of form of exploitation, risk of eviction, domestic abuse and employment or training.
- 4.16 All of these areas fully align with the list of UKSPF interventions in the Community and Place focus and represent a good opportunity to provide a robust package of outputs and outcomes that meet resident's needs.
- 4.17 This approach has been informed by the priorities highlighted as part of the Stevenage Residents Survey. As part of this, residents throughout the town

strongly prioritised environmental and public realm improvements, alongside community safety initiatives to bring about improvement to local areas.

### Supporting Local Business & People and Skills

- 4.18 These two investment priorities are grouped below, as there is significant overlap between them, and also as the People and Skills priority can only be directly contributed to in the final year of the fund (2024/25).
- 4.19 With the responsibility for the distribution of skills and business investment funding moving to lower tier local authorities, there is an opportunity for the council to take on a much broader commissioning role to make sure that all interventions are representative of local priorities.
- 4.20 The overarching objective in this priority area to shape an efficient and cost effective programme of interventions, with a focus on creating opportunities for local people, especially those with more complex needs who are furthest from the labour market.
- 4.21 This area is split between two large funding profiles:
- One targeting the continuation of ESIF outcomes and local provision. This planned approach is based on a consortium delivery method, enabled through match funding and support from the Local Enterprise Partnership. This consortium approach seeks to put in place specialist programmes from WENTA, Exemplas, Step2Skills, Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal, and other local suppliers to help target needs and meet local priorities.
  - The other looks to build on the Council’s Community Wealth Building approach and some of the activities and interventions that have been supported by the Community Renewal Fund project ‘Community Wealth Building Together’.
- 4.22 The county wide business and skills package itself is split into two areas, for both the Supporting Local Business and People & Skills priorities. Many of these are a continuation of ongoing ESIF projects and all are county wide interventions.

Theme	Interventions (*Detailed in Appendix B)	Potential Projects	Match Funding from Herts LEP	Budget
<b>Hertfordshire Growth Hub</b>	E23, E26, E30	Delivered through Exemplas. - Business support provision - Job creation and safeguarding - Delegated grant funding	£52,000	£60,000
<b>Hertfordshire Start-Up &amp; Get Enterprising</b>	E23, E24, E26, E30	Delivered through Wenta: - Gateway to other service providers - Individual receiving support - Job creation and safeguarding - New businesses started and supported	£60,000	£52,500

<b>Supporting Local Places and Sectors</b>	E4, E6, E8, E17, E22, E23, E30	<p>Continuing Community Renewal Funding that can support key sectors such as film and life sciences.</p> <p>Potential for investment into schemes that support attracting visitors and investment into Stevenage via schemes such as Visit Herts.</p> <p><i>(NB this programme area is at very early stage of development and is likely to change over time)</i></p>	£10,000	£45,000
<b>Attracting Growth, Investment &amp; Local Jobs</b>	E21, E22, E23, E26, E30	<p>Delivered through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other partners such as WENTA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued key sector development including Life Sciences</li> <li>- Increased capacity to support businesses in these areas</li> <li>- Development of a an inward Investment service addressing barriers to future growth such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of available commercial premises,</li> <li>- Access to skilled workforce</li> <li>- Access to finance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	£27,500	£27,500
<b>Total</b>			<b>£149,500</b>	<b>£185,000</b>

Theme	Interventions (*Detailed in Appendix B)	Potential Projects	Match Funding	Budget
<b>Pathways Employment</b>	E34, E35, E38	This funding request will deliver a programme tailored to the needs of each district / borough supporting people into training and education. - People into education/training - People into employment - Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment	£47,000	£45,000
<b>Building Better Opportunities</b>	E33, E34, E36, E38	Delivered through Step2Skills - Providing help to individuals who have greater barriers to employment such as mental health conditions, physical or learning disabilities or other socio-economic factors that can prevent access to employment and therefore are furthest away from the labour market - Helping them to develop the confidence, skills and resilience they need to access employment and or training,		£80,000
<b>Inclusive Employment Programme</b>	E34, E35, E36, E38	Delivered through Step2Skills - The aim of the programme is to provide one-to-one supported employment intervention to unemployed residents, aged 18 and above, that are further away from employment because they have a learning difficulty or disability.	£75,000	£25,000
<b>Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal</b>	E30, E37, E38	Delivered by the LEP in collaboration local government. - Jobs portal for apprenticeships - Local vacancies - People engaged in job searching - People engaged in education, training or gaining a qualification	£15,000	£30,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>£137,000</b>	<b>£180,000</b>

- 4.23 Following revisions to the overall profile this is around the £365,000, but with £45,000 of this funding ('supporting local places and sectors') considered at a very early stage of development. This has potential to either design interventions to help attract investment via schemes such as Visit Herts, specific plans to develop and attract sector investment from areas such as life sciences, film, or be available to reinvest in other parts of this plan.
- 4.24 As part of the county-wide business and skills piece, a high level match funding profile has been included in the proposals. This highlights a potential £286,500 per district and borough that would be on offer through highlighted partners to maximise impact. This match funding approach would also mean that there would be deliverable results in 2022/23 and 2023/24, ahead of UKSPF funding being available to local authorities for this priority area.
- 4.25 This consortium approach allows us to build on established projects and contracts that can benefit from economies of scale throughout the county,

and reduced costs owing to the joint procurement. Equally this approach enables the Council to reshape the deliverables and approach to the commissioned programmes, ensuring access to schemes is targeted at key local groups, residents and businesses. These programmes will require close engagement with Hertfordshire LEP and relevant providers, to ensure the scope meets the need of Stevenage, and to ensure clear reporting and performance management of the programmes to achieve greatest local effect.

- 4.26 Should the consortium approach not cover all 10 district and borough partners, the Council will seek to a targeted Stevenage specific offer with these providers, as whilst we would not be able to benefit from the economies of scale we would still want to continue deliver such programmes.
- 4.27 Alongside this, we have also highlighted opportunities to build upon the council’s Community Wealth Building approach, building on the momentum and taking lessons from the experience of managing and delivering the Community Wealth Building Together project as part of the CRF.

Theme	Interventions (*Detailed in Appendix B)	Potential Projects	Match Funding	Budget
<b>Community Wealth Building</b>	E19, E20, E21, E24, E26, E29, E38, E41	Interventions would support projects around: - Skills Strategy for Stevenage - Continuation of Community Renewal Fund provision. - Cost of living response - Bespoke support for the development of Co-operatives - Sustainability & Climate Change - Funding to support local digital skills	<b>Community Renewal Fund 22/23:</b> £256,640	£185,000
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£256,640</b>	<b>£185,000</b>

- 4.28 As part of this, Stevenage would look to target interventions towards the cost of living crisis, a focus on the development of support for co-operatives in Stevenage, building on the programmes of VCSE access to business support as well as; sustainability and climate change and funding to support digital skills.
- 4.29 Part of this would include the continued development of the Social Inclusion Partnership. Maturing the partnership formed into a Multi-Stakeholder Co-operative that would be positioned to attract further funding to support the councils ambitions around things such as Community Wealth Building and the cost of living crisis.
- 4.30 There may also be the opportunity to look at some of those businesses that are not fully catered to by the countywide offering, such as retail, hospitality

and leisure businesses, all of whom have been hit hard by pandemic restrictions over the last two years.

- 4.31 The proposed approach also seeks funding for a Stevenage Skills Strategy over the next two years, to ensure we are well positioned to connect various initiatives within the town – from the Stevenage Works programme, to the skills programmes set out above, the North Herts College offer, the STEM Discovery Centre, and the emerging opportunities from growing STEM and life science organisations that can provide opportunities for local people and businesses. The strategy would also be intended to help prepare priorities for the period beyond 2025, and the likelihood of a second phase of the UKSPF programme.

### **Officer Support**

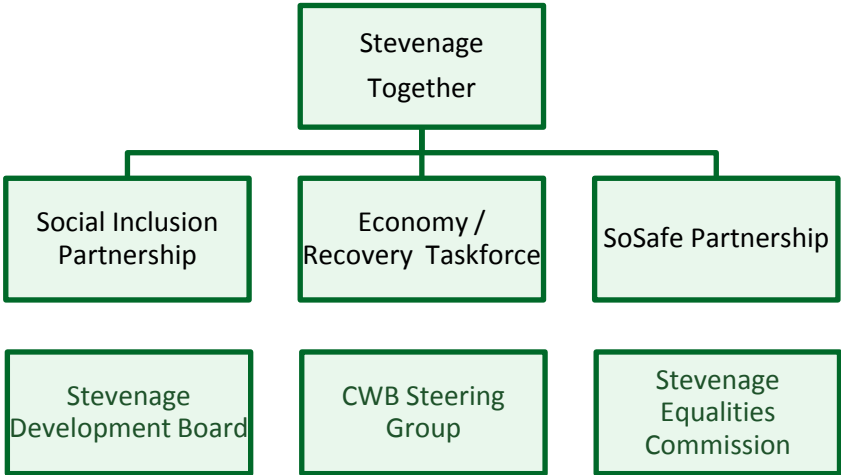
- 4.32 The final aspect of the package is funding to support a dedicated Skills, Wealth Building & Prosperity Programme Manager. This role would be funded for the duration of the programme, with recruitment occurring as soon as the fund is finalised by central government.
- 4.33 They will have an overview of all aspects of the delivery and will provide the monitoring and assurance both to DLUHC as well as from delivery partners.
- 4.34 The match funding totals above, do not take into account the delivery capacity that will be provided from associated teams who are undertaking the operational delivery of projects and interventions.
- 4.35 Alongside this they will help to further the agendas that are the focus of the fund, adding capacity to those delivery teams. The role will also lead on the development of a Skills Strategy and action plan for Stevenage. This will allow us to continue to build upon the Council's ability to commission services through the LEP and others to co-ordinate with schemes such as Stevenage Works, whilst also preparing for future rounds of the UKSPF to maximise the local impact.

### **Other Options**

- 4.36 Other options have been considered with key officers being asked to provide ideas and feedback for the makeup of the package.
- 4.37 Interventions are based on the council's strategic priorities, identified needs, engagement activities over the last 12 months and ongoing dialogue with core stakeholder groups.
- 4.38 The primary consideration around other options has been how much of the fund we would be comfortable freeing up in order to fund business and skills interventions throughout Hertfordshire. The full ask came in at around £615,000 which would have made it extremely difficult for us to deliver on SBC strategic priorities as part of the fund.
- 4.39 As detailed above, we proposed an adjusted approach that acknowledges the size of the funding pot and the size of Stevenage when compared to other areas in Hertfordshire.

**Stakeholders Consulted**

4.40 Consultation with key stakeholders is currently underway and will be mostly completed ahead of the Executive meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> July. This is a key requirement of the UKSPF funding as set out in the prospectus.



- 4.41 Our engagement approach is centred on utilising the already established Stevenage Together partnership framework and its sub-groups as the primary focus for engagement.
- 4.42 Alongside this, Officers will share proposals and information with the Stevenage Development Board. .
- 4.43 Officers will present draft proposals to Stevenage Equalities Commission as part of their Business and Skills workshop.
- 4.44 Alongside this Officers have also been in direct communication with other partners, such as the Local Enterprise Partnership, Department for Work & Pensions, DLUHC and Hertfordshire County Council.
- 4.45 Beyond this, Officers also have an evidential base from the Residents Survey and subsequent engagement activities. This includes over 1,800 pieces of qualitative feedback around what residents want to see prioritised in their ward as well as the core section of the resident’s survey which talks about the councils priorities.
- 4.46 This will also be built upon over the summer, as we can build the proposed interventions into ongoing engagement activities. This could include placing a focus on specific neighbourhood centres for residents in specific localities or asking residents to further prioritise the highlighted issues that have previously been highlighted.

## 5 IMPLICATIONS

### Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are limited financial implications to the funding; as the UKSPF is not being awarded on a competitive basis there should be no scenario where we are not in receipt.
- 5.2 The match funding that has been identified as part of some of the interventions, is funding that is already in place and currently being delivered with no expectation for us to provide match funding beyond these current commitments as part of the Local Investment Plan.
- 5.3 The desire to continue countywide interventions around previously funded ESIF element has somewhat limited the councils ability to prioritise other strategic priorities. However, it is clear that these interventions are providing value, and by moving to a commissioning role, we can further define a more bespoke offering for Stevenage by being involved in the design process of interventions.
- 5.4 The funding profile for UKSPF is significantly back ended, with an equivalency to the ESIF only achieved within that third year of the scheme. The funding is also revenue heavy, with at least 17.5% needing to be capital across the three years. The capital spend can be increased if agreed as part of the LIP, but cannot be reduced below this figure.

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<b>Stevenage</b>	<b>£1,000,000</b>	<b>£114,478</b>	<b>£228,956</b>	<b>£656,566</b>
Revenue	£827,475	£103,030	£199,192	£525,253
Capital	£172,525	£11,448	£29,764	£131,313

- 5.5 Year to year funding profiles have been fully established for the Joint Business and Skills offer as well as the provision of a Skills, Wealth Building and Prosperity Programme manager. This creates a significant funding pressure the first and second year of the programme, with the second year being the most significant challenge. Provisionally, other interventions could be profiled as below:

Project	Amount	22/23	23/24	24/25
<b>Joint Business &amp; Skills</b>	<b>£365,000</b>	<b>£10,000</b>	<b>£122,500</b>	<b>£232,500</b>
Community Wealth Building	£185,000	£25,478	£5,456	£154,066
Culture & Regeneration	£100,000	£20,000	£20,000	£60,000
Neighbourhoods	£215,000	£30,000	£28,000	£157,000
Community Safety	£15,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
<b>Skills CWB &amp; UKSPF Officer</b>	<b>£120,000</b>	<b>£24,000</b>	<b>£48,000</b>	<b>£48,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,000,000</b>	<b>£114,478</b>	<b>£228,956</b>	<b>£656,566</b>



- 5.6 Given that realistically funding in 2022/23 will be for the final six months of the year from October, rather than spread over the whole year, this places a challenge in the second year of the fund.
- 5.7 DLUHC have confirmed there is no opportunity to utilise the funding profile in years other than as indicated, meaning several activities will be planned for the third year of the programme, or as in the case of Co-Operative Neighbourhoods projects, be planned to use match funding in the second year of the programme to maintain momentum and visible impact.

### **Legal Implications**

- 5.8 It is possible that the method by which the above objectives are met will differ on a case by case basis. In some cases, the Council might be required to commission services whilst in others the Council might simply be grant funding a particular project. The legal rules pertaining to each scenario will be different and the Council's legal team will be consulted and utilised prior to any proposed allocation.
- 5.9 The Council has to be mindful of acting in accordance with the funding conditions imposed by the UKSPF as well as any regulations or policies that affect the Council.

### **Risk Implications**

- 5.10 The fund is not a competitive one, and as such there are fewer risk to the acquisition of the funding than would typically be the case.
- 5.11 The largest risk is the small size of the pot and the inability to be able to cater for all strategic priorities in the pot. This makes prioritisation essential.
- 5.12 Similarly, there are challenges around the size of the pot in the second year of delivery, which pales in comparison to both the first year (which is actually more like six months) and especially the final year. This means that some projects and interventions may see a significant lag in the second year of delivery, as compromised need to be made to meet the funds requirements.
- 5.13 The short remaining timeline on the Local Investment Plan window is a clear risk. This is mitigated by the low level of detail required into interventions at this stage. DLUHC have made it clear they are not interested in the specifics of project delivery, but are focused on their list of interventions and subsequent outputs and outcomes.
- 5.14 The fund makes it clear that explicit contact must be made with the MP. There is a section in the Local Investment Plan that specifically asks whether the plan has the MPs support and if not, to detail any reasons why this is the case. Government have made it clear that this will not typically cause the plan to be dismissed. Officers will provide a summary of the proposals to the MP for comment.

### **Climate Change Implications**

- 5.15 The UKSPF presents the potential for a positive demonstration of sustainability and climate change projects to be funded at a local level.

- 5.16 Interventions to support the council's ambitions in support of climate change and sustainability are included in the Communities and Place (interventions E3, E7 and E13), Supporting Local Business (intervention E29) & People and Skills (interventions E39, E40) investment priorities.
- 5.17 These would fit as projects in the Co-operative Neighbourhoods and Community Wealth Building themes in the fund, presenting opportunities to invest in local initiatives.

### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 5.18 As part of the submission of the full Local Investment Plan to DLUHC an Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken to assess the specific impact of planned interventions, outputs and outcomes.
- 5.19 The UKSPF presents the potential to target projects at areas and individuals of greatest need, particularly through the People and Skills investment priority in 2024/25. This would include those individuals in the protected characteristics groups, including support for those furthest from the labour market.
- 5.20 As part of monitoring and reporting requirements, projects delivered through the programme would be expected to collect demographic data so that impact can be measured.

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- BD1 [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus](#)
- BD2 [UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus](#)
- BD3 [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Overview \(LGA\)](#)

### **APPENDICES**

- A UKSPF Delivery Timeline
- B UKSPF Interventions, Outputs & Outcomes