

Report title	Shared Prosperity Fund Update
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Department	Planning, Economy, and Built Environment
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

For information and to resolve.

Synopsis of report:

To provide an update on the development of the Runnymede Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Investment Plan.

Recommendation(s):

To note:

- **Progress on the development of the SPF Investment plan as detailed in section 2**

To approve :

- **A grant of £26,000 to Brooklands College to improve access for residents to basic skills, including literacy, numeracy and digital skills,**
- **A grant of £24,000 to Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to support a programme of digital inclusion.**
- **A grant of £15,000 to Surrey Careers Hub to support work experience, apprenticeships and employment for young people.**

Further details on the grant allocations are in paragraph 2.8 below.

1. Context and background of report

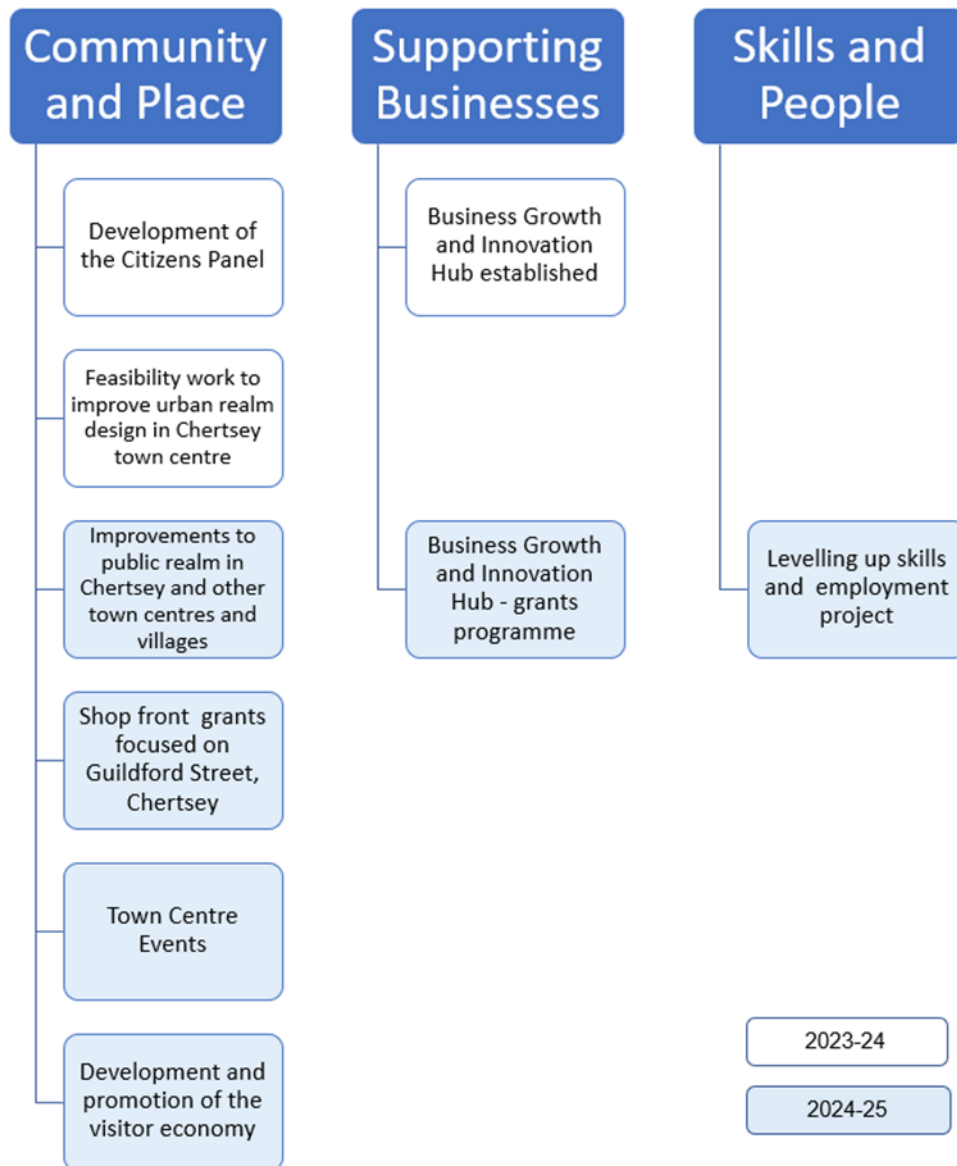
- 1.1 The Council's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Investment Plan was approved by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 11 January 2023.
- 1.2 An MOU between DLUHC and Runnymede Borough Council sets out the terms of the agreement for the delivery of the SPF programme in the borough. It states that SPF funding should be used to deliver the interventions, outputs and outcomes detailed in the Investment Plan.
- 1.3 The SPF is the key Government funding stream which supports levelling up. The primary goal of the SPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. There are three UKSPF investment priorities:
 - Communities and place.

- Supporting local business.
- People and skills.

1.4 The £1M budget for the investment plan is spread between April 2023 and March 2025. Over £916,000 (91%) of funding is allocated to 2024/25.

	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Revenue	£73,756	£732,950	£806,706
Capital	10,057	183,237	193,294
Total	£83,813	£916,187	£1,000,000

1.5 The following provides a summary of the objectives and scheduling of activity over the two years for each of the three SPF priorities in the Runnymede Investment Plan.



2 Update on the SPF programme

- 2.1 An update on the development of the SPF programme was provided to members in March 2023 and to CMC on 14 September 2023. A further update was provided to the Regeneration and Major Projects Members Working Group in December 2023.
- 2.2 The following provides an update on progress since September 2023.

Priority 1 Communities and place

- 2.3 The objectives for the Communities and Place priority are to level up Runnymede residents' pride in their places through improvements to the urban environment, a stronger social fabric and better life chances. Building on our £160 million investment into Addlestone and Egham town centres, our next place shaping objective is to deliver improvements to Chertsey Town Centre – our third major town. Chertsey is therefore the focus for the SPF investment in Community and Place. This funding will enable the Council to take some initial steps to improve the town centre environment. At this stage, however there can be no further commitment for regeneration in Chertsey until we are clearer on the Council's capital position.

Priority 1 Communities and place		
Project	Progress to date	Budget
<p>Citizens Panel Set up a Citizens' Panel, made up of representatives from across our resident and business communities to enable Runnymede Borough Council to conduct both qualitative and quantitative market research and to reach all segments of the community, combining social media with face-to-face panels or paper-based questionnaires.</p>	<p>The Citizen's Panel will be developed in 2024/25 and is being led by the Head of Community Services.</p>	<p>£10,000</p>
<p>Levelling Up town centres and villages through retail and tourism Deliver improvements which will build pride in Chertsey Town Centre's heritage and identity and improve the vibrancy and vitality of the town. We will transform Guildford Street into a central community, social, cultural and entertainment hub, encouraging pedestrians, improving safety, air quality, health, and wellbeing to increase footfall and dwell time through investment in the historic environment and urban realm. The Communities and Place SPF programme will include the following:</p>	<p>A feasibility study to improve the urban realm design in Guildford Street in Chertsey will be completed by March 2024. The study is building on the recommendations of the revised Chertsey Masterplan Refresh 2022.</p> <p>The study is engaging with stakeholders, undertaking a public consultation, and producing recommendations for improvements for Guildford Street. These will be funded utilising £356,000 of SPF in 2024/25.</p>	<p>£371,000</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved wayfinding and interpretation, planting, new street furniture. • improved accessibility through installation of bollards to enable pedestrianisation, and active travel improvements. • investment in the improvement of shop fronts • the establishment and development of innovative markets and arts, heritage and cultural events. 	<p>Town Centre Wayfinding Improvements A contractor will be appointed to carry out a wayfinding audit and to develop proposals for new signage in the Boroughs three main town centres. The audit and report on recommendations for improving wayfinding will be completed by July 2024. The purchase and installation of new signage will be completed by March 2025.</p>	<p>£119,000</p>
	<p>Investment in the improvement of shop fronts The consultants who will be undertaking the feasibility work on improving the public realm in Guildford Street will also complete a guide for improving shop fronts on Guildford Street. The guide will inform the allocation of grants to businesses in 2024/25. The funding will support up to 20 businesses with grants of between £5,000 and £20,000. Businesses will need to contribute at least 15% match funding.</p>	<p>£165,000</p>
	<p>Support to develop the tourism and visitor economy. In 2024/25 a strategic working group of stakeholders and businesses in the borough's tourism and visitor economy will be established. The group will help develop an action plan to support the sector.</p>	<p>£15,000</p>
	<p>Town Centre Events. A calendar of events in the</p>	<p>£30,000</p>

	three main Town Centres will be delivered in 2024/25.	
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Priority 2 Supporting Business

- 2.4 The Runnymede Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026 identified an opportunity to accelerate business growth by focusing support to help scale up new, small and micro businesses, increase innovation, and support growth clusters in the tech sector, ie Cyber Security and Createch.
- 2.5 Following an open tender process Coast to Capital were appointed in September 2023 to deliver a business growth and innovation service, to encourage business start-ups, innovation, and growth.
- 2.6 Runnymede Business Boost was launched on 1st November 2023. It targets small and micro businesses based in Runnymede, which have been trading for one year, or have become incorporated. The support includes business coaching, peer to peer support and access to small grants which unlock growth potential.
- 2.7 The service is not aimed at businesses which are lifestyle businesses which do not have potential to grow or businesses which are struggling and are at risk of closing. These businesses will be signposted to other advice and information services.

Priority 2 Supporting Business		
Project	Progress to date	Budget
<p>A Business Growth and Innovation Hub will be established to help entrepreneurs, business start-ups and small micro businesses to scale up. The hub will provide specialist advice, coaching and mentoring particularly for cybersecurity, creative/immersive technologies, and low carbon businesses. It will assist businesses with expert development of growth plans.</p> <p>A grants programme will provide small grants of up to £5,000 to business to support innovation and growth. Grants will be targeted at small and micro businesses based in Runnymede, which have been trading for one year, or have become incorporated. The grants programme will incorporate business support which will ensure that businesses are viable and have business growth plans in place.</p>	<p>Runnymede Business Boost has made a good start. It has been established in Royal Holloway University of London's Enterprise Hub. In the first 3 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 businesses have received advice to date. • 8 businesses have received in depth mentoring and coaching, • 2 peer to peer networking events have been completed. • Grant funding of £22,319 has been awarded to support the growth of 6 businesses. • A series of workshops with Royal Holloway University of London will begin in March 2024 focusing on supporting innovation and growth. 	£184,000

Priority 3: People and Skills

- 2.8 The Runnymede Economic Development Strategy 2022 to 2026 includes the priority to ensure that residents have the appropriate qualifications and skills to access local employment opportunities. The objectives for the SPF investment in People and Skills is to upskill residents in the local areas of greatest deprivation, levelling up opportunities towards entering work, mitigating the current mismatch between skills and vacancies in the borough and supporting growth of the local economy.

Priority 3: People and Skills		
Project	Progress to date	Budget
<p>We will deliver employment support to hard-to-reach groups. This will include employability skills, job search skills, understanding your skills and motivation, confidence building, presentation skills, interview techniques, networking skills, understanding self-employment, volunteering, and work experience. We will work with partners to provide specialist support with financial management, and support with housing and mental health and other barriers which prevent people from deprived communities progressing into employment. We will increase the number of local businesses investing in skills and employment and providing employer talks and visits to workplaces, work placements and apprenticeships.</p>	<p>Improving employment for young people DWP funding has been secured to fund the Elmbridge and Runnymede Youth Hub up to September 2024. The Youth Hub will therefore continue to provide young people with support to access employment without the need for support from SPF.</p> <p>In 2024/25 £15,000 of SPF will be awarded as grant funding to the Surrey Careers Hub to build links between local employers, colleges and education providers and develop quality work experiences leading to improvements in careers support and employment and apprenticeships for young people. Groups of students, teachers and career advisors will visit employers during the autumn and winter terms. 90 students from 6 schools to benefit.</p>	£15,000
	<p>Strengthening pathways to employment for people aged 25 and over.</p> <p>Following an open tender process £24,000 of SPF was awarded to Room for Work to deliver career support programmes specifically designed for residents aged over 45 year old. 24 residents will complete careers support</p>	£85,000

	<p>programmes and 15 will be supported into employment.</p> <p>£26,000 of grant funding will be allocated to Brooklands college to improve basic skills including digital skills, literacy, numeracy and employment skills for 150 residents. Support will be delivered in Community settings and will focus on supported residents in areas of deprivation. The support will enable access to training which is funded by the adult education budget.</p> <p>£24,000 of grant funding will be allocated to the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to deliver the Tech to Community Connect project. The project was developed during the Covid 19 pandemic as a means of improving digital inclusion and reducing rising levels of loneliness and isolation amongst people who are house bound. 40 residents will benefit from one to one support from a Tech Angel and the loan of a tablet to get online. The support will benefit residents with disabilities and those living with a long term health condition.</p>	
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3 Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The SPF is designed to help deliver the Government’s Levelling Up Agenda. The aim of the funding is that ‘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.’
- 3.2 The SPF Investment Plan supports the council’s Economic Development Strategy 2022 -2026, which aims *‘to build on the Borough’s economic strengths to support a resilient, productive, low carbon and high-value economy. The Council wants to ensure that Runnymede continues to be a leading economy, in Surrey, the wider sub-region, and the UK’.*
- 3.3 The SPF investment strategy will support the following priorities

- Priority 2: Maintaining competitive advantage through business engagement, strengthening business networking.
- Priority 3: Developing the vitality and vibrancy of our town centres and growing the tourism and leisure economy
- Priority 4: A dynamic workforce for a high-tech, creative economy

3.4 The SPF Investment Plan supports the following Corporate Strategies:

- **The Empowering Communities Strategy 2022** , by improving engagement with residents through the development of the Citizens Panel.
- **The Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030** by supporting businesses to become more sustainable, supporting the development of businesses working in the green economy and by raising awareness amongst residents of skills and employment in the green economy.,
- **The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026**, by supporting residents with health issues and poor mental health back into employment.

4 Resource implications

- 4.1 Our SPF expenditure in 2023/24 is £76,801 representing 91.6% of our allocation for the year. The underspend is due to delays with the delivery of the Citizen Panel. The SPF guidance allows local authorities to carry over any underspend into 2024/25 providing a credible plan is provided which sets out how the funding will be spent.
- 4.2 A request to carry over the £7,012 of underspend will be set out in the next monitoring return to UKSPF which is due on 1 May.

5 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications flowing out of this report as it merely provides an update on various projects being undertaken using SPF funding. Clearly each project may have legal implications and those will be addressed as each project is progressed and delivered.

6 Equality implications

- 6.1 The Council has a Public Sector Duty under the Equalities Act 2020 to have due regard to the need to:
- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a Protected Characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share those characteristics.

6.2 An equalities impact assessment was completed for the Economic Development Strategy in April 2022. This included an assessment of the work covered by the SPF Investment Plan.

7 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 The SPF Investment Plan will support Runnymede`s Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030, by supporting businesses to become more sustainable, supporting the development of businesses working in the green economy and by raising awareness amongst residents of skills and employment in the green economy.

7.2 In line with some of the key corporate objectives, the feasibility study aims to unlock the potential for Guildford Street to create a greener environment and encourage a circular economy (a concept advocated by the Council's climate change strategy).

7.3 The feasibility study aims to facilitate changes to Chertsey Town Centre which would encourage localised events that people can cycle or walk to. This is in line with the 20-minute neighborhood concept which is supported by the Council's Climate Change Strategy, by bringing essential services within easy reach of local communities by walking, cycling and public transport.

8. Risk Implications

8.1 None.

9. Other Implications

9.1 None.

10. Timetable for Implementation

10.1 N/A

11. Conclusions

11.1 N/A

12. Background papers

None

13. Appendices

None