

Item 10 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update Report

The attached report was considered by the Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee on 28 February 2023. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee (28 February 2023, Minute 36)

The Economic Development Officer presented the report, which updated the Committee on the key programme to be delivered via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The Council was allocated £1,000,000 for the period 2022 – 2025. The programme included a range of projects working with other Council teams and external partnerships, emphasising building upon existing activity and groups. Some projects would also be delivered across the West Kent partnership with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, such as the West Kent business support scheme. For example, funding had been allocated to researching sector skills, to inform further People & Skills work. All funding for Sevenoaks District would only be used to support organisations within the District. The Officer then outlined the schemes within each priority.

The Officer outlined the Council's approach regarding the Rural England Prosperity Fund. Funding would be offered to rural businesses to provide a West Kent business support scheme, building on the successes from the former West Kent LEADER scheme. The Council were awaiting approval for spending for the REPF.

In response to questions, the Officer explained that the details of the actions were being refined, as permission to spend was only granted in December 2022. The Council was working with town and parish councils to ensure that work was supportive of their town plans. Members discussed the mentoring support for businesses included within the UKSPF plans, and were advised that the Council were commissioning a provider for the plan to support businesses with grants, advice, and events.

Resolved: that Cabinet be updated on the key programme to be delivered via the UK Shared Prosperity fund, including the Rural England Prosperity fund proposals.