

Blackpool Town Deal Board Meeting 21

Agenda Item 8

Report to: Blackpool Town Deal Board

Subject: UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme Update

Relevant Officer: Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director

Date of Meeting: 9 June 2023

1. Purpose of Report

To provide a written update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Programme.

2. Recommendation

To note the programme position and progress.

3. Programme Latest

3.1 Programme Background and Condition

On the 5th December 2022 Blackpool received confirmation that its SPF Investment Plan had been approved for £5,114,423 to the end of March 2025, so the programme is now into implementation stage. This approval was subject to 1 outstanding condition as below:

“Prior to committing funding to the people and skills bespoke intervention ‘Personalised employment support for 16 to 24 year-olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)’, the lead local authority is to provide DLHUC with confirmation that, in finalising the detail of these activities, it has considered mainstream provision in relevant policy areas (as it exists at the time) and has taken steps to ensure UKSPF provision does not displace activity from mainstream provision. A statement is to be provided at least three months before funding is committed to the proposed activities”.

This condition relates The Platform project due to commence in April 2024. A meeting was held on the 6th April with Nicki O’Connor, DWP Northwest SPF lead and Helen Warren who is the DWP representative on the Town Deal Board. She confirmed that DWP were supportive of the project and that the operation of the Platform both now and in the form proposed to be delivered from 2024 onwards through SPF funds, will not displace mainstream provision. It was therefore confirmed that the Council could submit a letter of confirmation that there was no local or regional objection to the scheme. Alan Cavill as Director of Communications and Regeneration signed off such a letter which was submitted



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on 19 April. A DLUHC response was received on the 3 May confirming acceptance to the letter and that the condition was now removed. The Platform SPF funded scheme can now commence in April 24 as planned.

3.2 Programme Spend and DLUHC Claim

DLUHC have allocated funding for 2022/23, as set out in the table below, with indicative allocations for the further two financial years up to and including 2024/25.

Table 1: Funding Allocations

| Allocation 2022/ 2023 | | | Indicative Allocation 2023/ 2024 | Indicative Allocation 2024/ 2025 |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Capital | Revenue | Capacity | £1,241,365 | £3,252,376 |
| £224, 472 | £396, 209 | £20,000 | | |

The indicative allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be reviewed on submission of reports detailing progress on spend and confirmed in annual Grant Determinations. A first report, approved and signed off by the Section 151 officer was submitted by the 02 May deadline. This covered progress on expenditure, outputs and outcome achievement and required an outline of how any underspend would be achieved in the 2023/4 year (a “credible plan”).

Total spend by end March was £343,069 against the available £620,682. £277,613 therefore needed to be carried forward made up of £23,208 capital and £254,405 revenue. The underspend was largely due to a delay in Government approval (December 2022 instead of October 2022). Please see table one below.

Table 2: Spend to End of March 2023.

| Project Name | Target Spend to March End | Actual Spend to March 2023 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Development & Collaboration (BITC) | £39,936 | £19,993 (Revenue) |
| Combined Business Support Programme | £16,710 | £0 |
| Low Carbon– Edge | £0 | £0 |
| Eco coaching | £50,000 | £0 |
| Town Centre Regeneration | £167,306 | £245,063 (Capital) |
| Grundy | £117,927 | £25,200 (Revenue) |
| Community Flood management | £48,922 | £0 |
| Eco hubs | £74,104 | £0 |
| VCFSE Support | £68,874 | £29,444 (£24,444 Revenue & £5k Capital) |
| Showtown | £12,076 | £4200 (Revenue) |
| Sub Total | | £323,900 |
| + Programme Management fee | £24,827 | £19,169 |
| Grand Total | £620,682 | £343,069 (£93,006 Revenue & £250,063 Capital) |

Despite the under-spend, the claim return was able to report very positive progress to date. It was outlined how the programme has started strongly with ten of the thirteen defined schemes in delivery phase including now, the “EDGE Low carbon” scheme which became formally operational from 01 April although activity will be limited until quarter four of 2023/4. The remaining 3 schemes are People and Skills projects (see section 3.3 below for more detail).

£57,777 of allocated revenue spend in the Town Centre Intervention scheme was “capitalised” to allow capital spend to exceed the original capital allocation by the end of March 2023. Revenue fund conversion is stated as eligible in the MOU guidance.

Table 3 below shows the SPF Programme spend profile from 23 April onwards.



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Table 3: SPF Programme Spend Profile April 23 onwards¹

| Project Breakdown | ORIGINAL Total Capital | ORIGINAL Total Revenue | ORIGINAL Overall Total | 2022/3 CAP | 2022/3 REV | 2023/4 CAP | 2023/4 REV | 2024/5 CAP | 2024/5 REV | Total CAP | Total REV | OVERALL PROJECT |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| People & Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The Platform / Youth Club | £ - | £ 450,000 | £ 450,000 | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ 450,000 | £ - | £ 450,000 | £ 450,000 |
| Pathways to Employment | £ - | £ 250,000 | £ 250,000 | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ 250,000 | £ - | £ 250,000 | £ 250,000 |
| Let's Get Digital | £ - | £ 112,000 | £ 112,000 | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ 112,000 | £ - | £ 112,000 | £ 112,000 |
| Subtotal | £ - | £ 812,000 | £ 812,000 | | | | | | £ 812,000 | | £ 812,000 | £ 812,000 |
| Supporting Local Businesses | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ORIGINAL Total Capi | ORIGINAL Total Rever | ORIGINAL Overall Total | 2022/3 CAP | 2022/3 REV | 2023/4 CAP | 2023/4 REV | 2024/5 CAP | 2024/5 REV | Total CAP | Total REV | OVERALL PROJECT |
| Development & Collaboration Support Services to the Business and Community Sectors | £ - | £ 200,000 | £ 200,000 | £ - | £ 19,993 | £ - | £ 99,975 | £ - | £ 80,032 | £ - | £ 200,000 | £ 200,000 |
| Combined Business Support Program | £ - | £ 900,000 | £ 900,000 | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ 465,532 | £ - | £ 434,468 | £ - | £ 900,000 | £ 900,000 |
| Low carbon Investments, The Edge | £ 100,000 | £ - | £ 100,000 | £ - | £ - | £ 100,000 | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ 100,000 | £ - | £ 100,000 |
| Subtotal | £ 100,000 | £ 1,100,000 | £ 1,200,000 | £ - | £ 19,993 | £ 100,000 | £ 565,507 | £ - | £ 514,500 | £ 100,000 | £ 1,100,000 | £ 1,200,000 |
| Community & Place | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ORIGINAL Total Capi | ORIGINAL Total Rever | ORIGINAL Overall Total | 2022/3 CAP | 2022/3 REV | 2023/4 CAP | 2023/4 REV | 2024/5 CAP | 2024/5 REV | Total CAP | Total REV | OVERALL PROJECT |
| Eco Coaching | £ 13,500 | £ 251,750 | £ 265,250 | £ - | £ - | £ 13,500 | £ 123,250 | £ - | £ 128,500 | £ 13,500 | £ 251,750 | £ 265,250 |
| Town Centre Regeneration | £ 1,257,777 | £ 242,223 | £ 1,500,000 | £ 245,063 | £ - | £ 61,657 | £ 34,945 | £ 951,018 | £ 207,317 | £ 1,257,738 | £ 242,262 | £ 1,500,000 |
| Grundy Art Gallery | £ - | £ 178,500 | £ 178,500 | £ - | £ 25,200 | £ - | £ 153,300 | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ 178,500 | £ 178,500 |
| Community Flood Management | £ 75,000 | £ 25,000 | £ 100,000 | £ - | £ - | £ 40,000 | £ 25,000 | £ 35,000 | £ - | £ 75,000 | £ 25,000 | £ 100,000 |
| Eco Hubs | £ 200,000 | £ 180,000 | £ 380,000 | £ - | £ - | £ 200,000 | £ 71,118 | £ - | £ 108,882 | £ 200,000 | £ 180,000 | £ 380,000 |
| VCFSE Support Scheme | £ 5,000 | £ 290,000 | £ 295,000 | £ 5,000 | £ 24,444 | £ - | £ 143,701 | £ - | £ 121,855 | £ 5,000 | £ 290,000 | £ 295,000 |
| Showtown: Laughter | £ - | £ 179,095 | £ 179,095 | £ - | £ 5,000 | £ - | £ 57,073 | £ - | £ 117,022 | £ - | £ 179,095 | £ 179,095 |
| Subtotal | £ 1,551,277 | £ 1,346,568 | £ 2,897,845 | £ 250,063 | £ 54,644 | £ 315,157 | £ 608,387 | £ 986,018 | £ 683,576 | £ 1,551,238 | £ 1,346,607 | £ 2,897,845 |
| OVERALL TOTALS | £ 1,651,277 | £ 3,258,568 | £ 4,909,845 | £ 250,063 | £ 74,637 | £ 415,157 | £ 1,173,894 | £ 986,018 | £ 2,010,076 | £ 1,651,238 | £ 3,258,607 | £ 4,909,845 |
| Total | £ 1,651,277 | £ 3,258,568 | £ 4,909,845 | | | | | | | | | |
| Plus 4% management fee (£204,576) | | | £ - | | | | | | | | | |
| Diff /rounding | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SPF Requirement Total | | | £5,114,423 | | | | | | | | | |

¹ Note: The above profile does not include any proposed changes to the Business Support or EDGE Low carbon scheme or Eco-Coaching and Eco-Hub schemes (See sections 3.4 and 3.5 below).

At the end of March 2023 there were only limited outputs and outcomes to reference but this will improve in the April to June claim period. It should be noted that a number of schemes will be required to alter outputs and outcomes and this is under review now. There are a number of reasons for this including:

Belated removal of some indicators by DLUHC so alternatives need to be identified. Additional guidance on indicators has recognised some proposed are not now viable and so alternatives need to be appointed.

3.3 Project Updates

Project: Grundy Art Gallery, Library and Claremont Feasibility Study.

SPF Project Theme: Communities and Places

Project RAG Rating: 2 (Green)

Project Outline: This scheme includes a needs and options assessment which will lead to the completion of architects' designs). £178,500 total SPF budget is available to the scheme. A place-making vision and narrative will also be provided, including an analysis and articulated vision for how an expanded cultural and community offer could instigate wider place-making moves around Queen Street and Claremont that would support the development of a creative cluster for Blackpool.

Update: The overall RAG rating for this project remains green despite an under-spend. The original profiled spend for this quarter was £42,000 and to quote the claim form 'we have spent £25,200 due to the work taking longer than expected; however the feasibility study will be completed by the end of May 2023 and we will then be back on track in the next period'.

The work during the first claim period includes appointment of consultants to undertake a detailed feasibility study consultation and workshop activity with key stakeholders achieved; draft vision for the site developed and tested with Grundy, Library and Heritage Teams. This also includes audience data and analysis undertaken and benchmarking undertaken.

Project is not at stage to send out a press release yet and no significant purchases have been made, with only external consultancy fees in the claim. The key activities for the next claim period includes completion of feasibility study and contracting and briefing architects to start work on preparing extension designs to RIBA Stage 3.

Project: Town Centre Interventions

SPF Project Theme: Communities and Places

Project RAG Rating: 2 (Green)

Project Outline: Interventions in line with the refreshed Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan, particularly covering the following priority themes:

1A Streetscape: Furniture and planting; Promenade gateways.

1B Environment: Biophilia.

1C Illuminate: Lighting enhancements.

2C Signage and Wayfinding: Visual appearance; Key entry and decision points; Pedestrian traffic flow.

Update: The RAG rating for TCI is Green. 'All forecast spend for the 22/23 financial year has now been journalled. In addition, all additional forecast capital spend for the next claim period has also been confirmed'.

Activity during the first claim period includes a contribution of £245,063.81 towards the Abingdon Street Market latter stages of refurbishment works. This was due to refurbishment extending beyond the limitations of monies received from the Getting Building Fund, as a result of significant impacts on project costings brought about by inflation and other economic factors.

A decision that a contribution could be made to the completion of the works was deemed appropriate by Blackpool Council's Corporate Leadership Team. Within the contribution, there is also support for project services undertaken by CBRE across the claim period. Architecture services undertaken by TP Bennett are also supported, as are professional services from Steven A Hunt & Associates. A further contribution (£53,571.28) to the Abingdon Street Market refurbishment is due to be made in second claim period to support completion of the refurbishment. There are no changes to the risk register at this time.

A press release was circulated on 13 March 2023 announcing new operators of Abingdon Street Market. The first phase of the market will open on the 27 May 2023.

Project: VCFSE Capacity Building Support

SPF Project Theme: Communities and Places

Project RAG Rating: 2 (Green)

Project Outline: The scheme will increase the capacity of the local VCSE sector to deliver support to the community by:

- Delivering a small grants programme to build capacity of the sector;
- working with other funders and strategic partners to promote grants and encourage investment in the VCFS sector;
- Supporting groups to submit funding applications;
- Supporting the development of new groups through governance advice and training;
- Developing volunteering and increasing volunteer numbers and good practice in volunteer management;
- Supporting the development of community engagement.

Update: The RAG rating is green. The project lead expects lots of extra hours working from staff will help project expenditure to get back on track in the next two quarters. No additional progress stated in Claim form.

Project: Community Flood Risk Reduction

SPF Project Theme: Communities and Places

Project RAG Rating: 2 (Green)

Project Outline: Provide property owners in areas of high risk of flooding a financial incentive to replace hard areas, with soft landscaping to reduce local flood risk. Providing £650 per domestic property with the potential to provide larger sums for larger reallocated areas such as business premises.

Update: The RAG rating is green. There has been no service delivery activity during this period with the key activity being around tender development. Next stages of the project include the procurement and initial purchase of water butts, as well as online order form and web page to be developed for Council website.



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Project: Eco Coaching

SPF Project Theme: Communities and Places

Project RAG Rating: 2 (Green)

Project Outline: Scaling up an existing project on the Grange Park estate, this scheme offers practical 1:1 support delivered within resident's homes to help them understand domestic energy efficiency and how their behaviour can increase/decrease energy consumption. The project will include a complete domestic energy assessment to maximise the efficiency of the property. The visit also includes the installation of low cost energy saving devices such as draft proofing, low energy lightbulbs and radiator reflector panels. Beyond this households can be registered with the Priority Services Register and onward referrals made to large domestic energy saving schemes. Numbers of residents seeking help for the scheme have risen substantially in light of the cost of living crisis and this would provide a resource across the town.

Update: The project RAG rating is green because although there has been some delay in the project, it is expected project delivery and expenditure to get back on track in the next claim period and within 10% tolerance. There is no service delivery activity during this period. There are no changes to the risk register.



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Project: Eco Coaching

SPF Project Theme: Communities and Places

Project RAG Rating: 2 (Green)

Project Outline: Establishment of an eco-hub in Palatine library, retro-fitting low carbon technologies to two pre-existing building and developing local green spaces to engage local communities with nature and biodiversity.

The Solaris Centre in the South of Blackpool has a history of being a centre for sustainability, and will be updated to renew its role as a sustainability hub. The Hubs will:

- Include renewable power generation, high thermal efficiency, nature rich public green space and carbon free heating systems.
- Be used to deliver courses to long-term unemployed, those currently in education, school leavers, business owners, entrepreneurs and others.
- Delivering courses in green skills (ecology, renewable energy generation, engineering, building management, carbon accounting etc.).
- Provide job seeking support.
- Serving as information points with multiple people providing energy saving advice and information on green grants.
- When the hubs are not in use renewable energy will be utilised in the local grid.

Update: The project RAG rating is green despite there being no service delivery activity during this period. Next stage plans for project include the finalising the procurement process finalised and awarding the tender for solar PV.

Project: Showtown Laughter Programme

SPF Project Theme: Communities and Places

Project RAG Rating: 2 (Green)

Project Outline: This is a unique community engagement activity programme completely grounded and rooted in Blackpool and its incredible history. It encompasses a range of laughter-themed activities ranging from a laughter club and festival, a funny bones artist residency, a laughter-based schools programme, an exhibition and an app to guide people around Blackpool on a laughter-themed tour of discovery. A dedicated officer coordinates and delivers the programme. This programme enables Showtown to continue and further develop its community engagement programme which is currently funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This includes the extension of the hugely applauded 'Open Up the Mic' programme. There is the potential for this to be matched against other sources e.g. Paul Hamlyn Foundation, National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Update: The project RAG rating is green and projects are making good progress. Updates regarding the two projects are as follows:

- **Open Up the Mic - Procurement exercise around using Ruth Cockburn to continue the exemplary work started in 2021.** Agreement signed. Early planning meetings with Ruth to plan activities for the summer school. Secured the use of venues around two for the week including; Grand Theatre, Aunty Social and Comedy Station. **Blackpool Comedy Festival - Meetings with Winter Gardens and Comedy Station to plan festival activity.** Plotting Showtown's programme of family friendly shows and workshops, adult's events for the Horseshoe area of the Winter Gardens. First phase of marketing complete with the announcements of the headline acts by the Winter Gardens. Distribution of the commission opportunity for individuals and organisations in Blackpool to apply for SPF money to put on a show/event as part of the festival. Planning the show content for the Comedy Carpet stage as part of the Blackpool Carnival (same weekend as festival).

Press release for the comedy festival on Showdown's website. Next stages for 'Open Up the Mic' include preparing the summer school and the recruitment of young people. The next stages for the Blackpool Comedy festival include finalising all act bookings, commission performances and preparing marketing materials.



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Project: Development and Collaboration Support Services to Blackpool's Business and Community Sectors

SPF Project Theme: Local Businesses

Project RAG Rating: 2 (Green)

Project: Work with Blackpool Council to bring forward an Employment Charter and support the rolling out of the initiative to Blackpool businesses;
 Act as an advocate for Blackpool and its development amongst businesses and residents including activity to promote the town to visitors, for example through events;
 Provide activity to support and encourage the use and development of existing community buildings and infrastructure and its enhancement for example through additional green space. This would be facilitated by coordinated business level input and expertise;
 Provision of activity to develop life skills either directly or through a delivery partner, to those who are disadvantaged across Blackpool, and upskill local residents, either directly or through a delivery partner, to provide localised digital support and advice in key community spaces;
 Support and enhance existing local activity that looks to bring those furthest from the labour market in to access opportunities to secure work experience and placements;
 Provide activity that will support and facilitate innovation and growth for business start-ups. It is anticipated this would be undertaken alongside the Council's existing Economic Development Team making use of its existing and proposed new facilities e.g. the EDGE once complete;
 Provide networking opportunities for local businesses to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and work collaboratively to boost productivity, innovation and growth;
 Co-ordinate and support activity including the above to deliver the specified Shared Prosperity Fund outputs and outcomes.

Update: The overall project RAG rating is green despite the original profiled spend for this quarter being £19,993 and has only spent £8,523.45. It is expected project expenditure to get back on track in the next financial year. Underspends will be reviewed and this will, along with the carry forward, be caught up by March 2024. This is reflected in the reforecast for FY23/34. They are considering re-profiling the investment plan values due to staff changes and allocation of projects.

A breakdown of some project delivery activity for the initial claim period;



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Working with Blackpool Council to bring forward an Employment Charter and support the rolling out of the initiative to Blackpool businesses.

Leading talks with multiple partners (RTS, Lancashire Careers Hub, Careers & Enterprise Company) about the ask of businesses in relation to sign up of existing programmes.

Speaking at events to an audience of thirty five Businesses and Residents of North Shore and an audience of fifty locals at a SPARKS community group.

Initial planning on a number of 'town hall' style events, to promote the town to help restore civic pride.

Utilised existing partnership with Lloyds Banking Group, and so far have secured eleven free devices and training for residents who are digitally excluded due to affordability.

To bring the unused Claremont Community Centre back into use and establish community activities, such as 'slow cooker classes'.

Pride of Place has also been delivering digital support and advice to twenty eight residents at various Community Centres across Blackpool, such as Boston Way, Kilmory, Lowmoor and Cherry Tree & Blackpool FC's Warm Hub. The support given so far; getting help online, completing a government application, using apps and connecting to the internet.

No marketing or press releases have taken place so far.



Project: Business Support Team Capacity

SPF Project Theme: Local Businesses

Project RAG Rating: 4 (Amber)

Project: Recruitment and resources to increase the capacity of the Business Support Team to increase entrepreneur and business engagement and to help realise the ambitions for The Edge and other Strategic projects. Blackpool needs a flexible place-driven business support service to complement and underpin strategic capital investment in the town. The service will aim to support and encourage business success and growth with a particular focus on more high quality jobs for local people. The Blackpool Business Support service will provide support for self-employment, business start-up and business growth. It will also significantly contribute to the establishment of The Edge (a Town Deal project) as a focal point for small business in Blackpool. There are two key parts to the Blackpool Business Support service:

1. To increase capacity of the existing Blackpool Council Business Support Team to enable greater entrepreneur and business engagement. This greater engagement is essential for more business start-up and growth, and to help realise the ambitions for Blackpool.
2. To create a commissioning fund to bring in relevant external expertise to meet the needs of local businesses. Support is expected to include Incubation, Business Networks, Business Growth, Made Smarter, R&D, Innovation, Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, International Trade, Supporting Decarbonisation and Mentoring.

Update: Scheme RAG rating is amber due to the project not expected to be in full flow before 23 July due to staffing issues and a delay in tendering some support activities. Meetings have taken place with East Lancashire Chamber to discuss their low carbon programme, which is being taken up by other local authorities and is expected to have a strong team overseeing its operation. A review of output and outcomes to be undertaken to better recognise likely scheme delivery (e.g. more innovation support elements) but there will be no overall reduction.



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4. EDGE Low Carbon Scheme/ Combined Business Support Programme

This project contractually commenced on 01 April. However, as the scheme only includes equipment purchase and installation no activity of note is anticipated over the next few quarters. The scheme currently has £100k (capital) assigned to it and the Business Support Programme £900k (revenue). As has been highlighted in previous meetings, there are cost pressures on the Town Deal funded EDGE project.

The Net cost of low carbon 'added value' for the Edge has come in at £152,167 now rather than the previously anticipated £100k. This pays for heat pumps and solar panels (to power the pumps). A request was submitted by the Project Manager for both schemes for an additional £50,000 to be vired in from the SPF Business Support project into the EDGE scheme, thus reducing the former to a scheme value of £850k and the latter an increase to £150,000.

The project manager has confirmed that there will be no reduction in outputs and outcomes to be delivered by the Business support scheme and that the scheme can be delivered for £850,000 due to some efficiencies identified due to later than expected recruitment of internal staff and also in using external providers who are able to deliver "more activity for less" than originally anticipated.

The TDIP at its meeting on 24 May 2023 endorsed this approach. A change request form has been requested for both schemes.

5. Eco-Coaching and Eco Hub Scheme

On 4 May an early discussion was held with regards to the potential to take some of the revenue budget originally allocated to the Eco Hub scheme and transfer it into for Eco Coaching scheme. (Both schemes are managed by the same Project Manager in the Council). It has been determined that it is unlikely that all the revenue budget originally allocated to the Eco Hub project would be required but there is a potential deficit in the Eco Coaching scheme. Such a request is eligible and in the gift of the accountable body. A formal change request is awaited which will set out the funding change required.

The Eco-Coaching scheme is currently allocated £265,250 (£13,500 capital and £251,750 revenue). The Eco-Hub scheme allocated £380k (200k capital and £180k revenue).

6. People and Skills Project Approach

The 3 “People and Skills” schemes are:

- The Platform
- Community Navigators (formally Pathways into Employment)
- Let’s Get Digital

Originally none of these were due to commence until 2024/5 due to DLUHC stipulation, and this remains the case for the Platform which has Town Deal monies until end of March 25.

However, DLUHC correspondence shared with the PMO on the 23/04/23 stated such People and Skills activity could now commence in the 2023/4 year if the Council wished to. However, this would only be if any underspend would be available as no People & Skills theme funding monies could be brought forward from 2024/5. To ensure spend and output and outcome delivery, this is deemed welcome and so it is being considered to bring forward the other 2 schemes with “Community Navigator” targeted with an October 2023 and “Let’s Get Digital” December 2023. This will be kept under review as spend levels are monitored over the following months.

Community Navigators

This £250,000 scheme will require full tender using the Chest procurement platform. The tender paperwork is nearing completion further to discussion with the procurement department. A tender launch date of mid-June with returns by late July is currently proposed.

Let’s Get Digital

When the original SPF Investment Plan was submitted, a project called Let’s Get Digital was included under the People & Skills Theme at a value of £112,000. The project proposal noted that it would “develop the digital skills of a minimum of 100 Blackpool residents who have not had the opportunity, access or finances to secure an understanding of technology and the benefits it can provide them in their daily lives, with training delivered in community venues”. The output to be delivered is:

- No. of people supported to access basic skills – 100.

Following consultation with the Council’s procurement team it was determined that if this was to be provided by a non-Council department then a full tendering exercise would be required. As this is not a discipline that the Programme Monitoring Office (PMO) team are familiar with, it was determined appropriate to discuss the beneficiary needs, current provision and best approach to this scheme with the Council Adult Learning Team (The Learning Rooms). Initial discussion were held in March where some concern was raised at the need to avoid any duplication in this area, not least with activity that the Council team are already providing.

With this in mind, it is proposed to assign overarching delivery of this project to The Learning Rooms. They would act as project lead and will oversee sub-contracting of activity with local suppliers (e.g. Blackpool & The Fylde College). A clear benefit is that this team already oversee the UKSPF linked “Multiply” programme, and so have a panel of training providers who they can approach to undertake these activities.

It is proposed that a combination of the following could be offered through Council and partner delivery:

- Digital for home shopping, banking, benefits, bills, setting up direct debits, social media, buying and selling, GP (health related), E-safety.
- Digital for work - Microsoft Office (spreadsheets, Calendar, emails, letters, teams), Google.
- Digital for families - Social media, WhatsApp, photographs, E-safety, calendars, World Wide Web searches, smart phones, price comparisons.

This approach would clearly ensure more joined up delivery, including a co-ordinated marketing and PR approach to the importance of digital skills. The project would run from December 2023 to end March 2025.

Enhanced outputs are also proposed to those originally outlined namely:

- Number of people supported to access basic skills: 200

The outcome would include:

- Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course: 70

An approach was made to both Paul Smith (Town Deal Board Chair) and Steve Williams (TDIP Chair) to propose this way forward. Whilst both supported the approach it was recommended a discussion be held with Blackpool & The Fylde College (Daryl Platt) who had originally proposed the scheme idea. A short meeting was held on the 30 March at which the College expressed agreement that there are a number of positive reasons to take this approach and therefore, in essence, outline support was provided to the proposal. This was however, on the understanding that there will need to be thorough discussions between the Adult Learning team and the College over appropriate costing and timescales for any contract(s) and clear understanding on how this will work for all parties.

In summary, the proposed approach is deemed acceptable to the Town Deal Chair, TDIP Chair, the College, Adult Learning team and PMO and was also endorsed by the TDIP after detailed discussion at their meeting on 24 May. This approach will be therefore be proceeded with which will ensure a joined up and collaborative approach to scheme delivery. The Council do not require any DLUHC approval to appoint the Learning Rooms as lead (given their procurement for the Multiply scheme) and also to deliver the enhanced outputs and outcomes, although they will obviously be updated of the positive position in the next claim return.

7. Programme Management

7.1 General Update

Full programme management systems and procedures are in place with quarterly claims processes outlined. The first full claim process was undertaken with projects in April, covering spend to end of March 23.

A monthly Shared Prosperity Project Board (SPPB) sits with representatives from all schemes. Four meetings have been held to date.

All delivery organisations have been requested to provide a project level Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Risk Register. A due diligence form has also been requested of the two external providers which have been completed and returned. A programme level PSED is also in place.

Seven SPF Plaques have been commissioned for respective sites highlighting the funding support provided. Full reference to receipt of the SPF funds is provided on the council website as required by DLUHC.

Three projects have formal legal docs signed off. The remaining seven schemes operating in 2023 have draft legal agreements in place and are due to be completed by the Council legal team and sent out for signature in late May/early June.

7.2 Evaluation

DLUHC, on the 8th March 2023, published its full SPF Evaluation Strategy which can be found at the following link UK Shared Prosperity Fund: evaluation [UKSPF: evaluation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-evaluation-strategy)

From the above linked document, it is clear that Government are to undertake substantial evaluation activity centrally. However, in the more general evaluation guidance in section 4.31 it states:

“4.31 Places are encouraged to undertake their own place-based evaluations of how the UKSPF has worked in their area, particularly process evaluation on individual projects. Proposed methods could include measuring outputs, contribution analysis, developing case studies, conducting surveys and interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries”.

With this in mind, Blackpool Council have gone out to tender (20 April) using its existing economic consultant framework panel, to seek an independent consultancy who can deliver an evaluation activity and specifically:

1. To undertake process evaluations of 11 of its 13 projects (the “Grundy Art Gallery” and “Purchase of low carbon heating system and solar panels for The Edge” are not deemed relevant to require a separate evaluation).
2. Produce an overarching Blackpool Programme level evaluation document based on the evaluations provided in (1) above and their deliverables. Lessons learned, legacy

and any best practice (including any social value benefits of note) should be drawn out and an overarching opinion provided of the programmes impact. A brief review of the programme management activities of the Council's Programme Monitoring Office (PMO) team would also be provided.

3) Provide the vast majority of activity in the 2024/5 year in line with all activity needing to have completed by end March 25. Some initial ground work activity would be anticipated to be required in the 2023/4 year.

The tender is set at a maximum value of £70k. An allocation of the programme management budget will be used to fund this alongside an allocation from each project budget. This has been based this on the total value of the SPF scheme to support fairness. 26 May is the tender deadline.