



	Agenda Item 7
<b>Report To</b>	<b>Town Deal Board</b>
<b>Subject</b>	<b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme Update</b>
<b>Relevant Officer</b>	<b>Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>

## 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

On 5th December 2022, Blackpool received confirmation that its SPF Investment Plan had been approved for £5,114,423 to the end of March 2025. The programme is in the implementation stage with £4,909,845 direct project spend available and £204,577 for programme management.

### 3.2 Programme Spend

DLUHC 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.

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

The indicative allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are subject to submission of claim reports to DLUHC.

A third DLUHC report covering to the end of September 2023, approved and signed off by the Section 151 officer was initially due to be submitted by the 1<sup>st</sup> November deadline. This would cover progress on expenditure, outputs and outcome achievement. However, unlike with claims 1 and 2, this required online submission via a new “Power App”. The new tool caused many accessibility and functionality issues for local authorities across the UK. The report was subsequently submitted 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024. No issues have been raised by DLUHC. Total spend amounted to £540,595.78 (£482,045.03 project spend and £58,550.75 programme management).

Total spend by end December 2024 is now **£901,856.66** against the available **£1,862,046.00** to end of March 2024. Please see Table 1 below.



**Table 1 – Active Schemes Denoting Spend to End of December 2023 and Forecast to End of March 2024 (from latest data)**

Project Name	Spend to December 2023			Forecast spend to end March 2024		
	Capital	Revenue	Total	Capital	Revenue	Total
Development & Collaboration (BITC)	£0.00	£73,186.32	£73,186.32	£0.00	£94,103.57	£94,103.57
Business Support Team capacity	£0.00	£88,762.00	£88,762.00	£0.00	£188,961.00	£188,961.00
Low Carbon – Edge	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Eco coaching	£4,426.00	£51,526.97	£55,952.97	£13,500.00	£159,316.96	£172,816.96
Town Centre Regeneration	£245,063.81	£35,000.00	£280,063.81	£306,635.09	£35,000.00	£341,635.09
Grundy	£0.00	£163,447.30	£163,447.30	£0.00	£178,500.00	£178,500.00
Community Flood management	£0.00	£1,710.00	£1,710.00	£51,508.92	£4,450.00	£55,958.92
Eco hubs	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£200,000.00	£17,779.50	£217,779.50
VCFSE Support	£5,010.97	£97,720.49	£102,731.46	£5,010.97	£165,094.03	£170,105.00
Showtown	£0.00	£35,204.57	£35,204.57	£0.00	£48,367.77	£48,367.77
Let's Get Digital	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00
Community Navigators	£0.00	£22,557.00	£22,557.00	£0.00	£75,050.00	£75,050.00
The Platform	Yet to commence	Yet to commence	Yet to commence	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£254,500.74</b>	<b>£569,114.65</b>	<b>£823,615.43</b>	<b>£576,654.98</b>	<b>£996,622.83</b>	<b>£1,573,227.81</b>
Programme management fee	£0.00	£78,241.23	£78,241.23	£0.00	£97,931.71	£97,931.71
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£254,500.74</b>	<b>£647,355.66</b>	<b>£901,856.66</b>	<b>£576,654.98</b>	<b>£1,094,554.54</b>	<b>£1,671,209.52</b>
<b>Minimum spend by end March 2024 to avoid funding loss:</b>						<b>£1,862,047.00</b>
<b>Forecast variance:</b>						<b>-£288,769.19</b>

It will be recalled from the previous meeting that a 9th November 2023 letter was received from DLUHC which confirmed their approach to the management of any Year 2 underspends. 100% of underspends from Year 2 can be retained, but a threshold-based approach would be used to determine the Council's Year 3 allocation (2024/5), based on the Council's previous spend over the first two years of the Fund.

Those authorities who, on account of their spend in 2022/23 and 2023/24, are not paid their full allocations in the initial payment at the start of the next Financial Year will be paid the remaining balance at the end of Financial Year 2024/25, based on actual spend. Where any underspends remain at the end of 2024/25, DLUHC will expect these to be repaid to them.

To receive our full £3,252,376 allocation, we would need to achieve 80% or more of spend



against the available allocation of £1,862,047.00. Therefore a spend level of £1.48million minimum would be required. Table 1 above shows that a profiled spend of £1,671,209.52 is anticipated which currently provides a buffer of some £288,769.19.

It has been made clear to project managers the importance to continue to spend as much as possible by end of March 24 to ensure the Council receives as large an amount of funds in advance as permissible to avoid incurring any interest costs.

**Table 2 – Latest Claim Position at 26/02/24**

Project Name	PMO Lead	Claim period 1 (to end Mar 23)	Claim Period 2 (Apr – Jun 23)	Claim Period 3 (Jul – Sep 23)	Claim Period 4 (Oct – Dec 23)	Claim Period 5 (Jan – Mar 24)	Claim Period 6 (Apr – Jun 24)	Claim Period 7 (Jul – Sep 24)	Claim Period 8 (Oct – Dec 24)	Claim Period 9 (Jan – Mar 25)
<b>Grundy Art Gallery, library &amp; Claremont feasibility study</b>	J-MS	Complete & approved*	Complete & approved	Claim forms with Project team	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Town centre interventions</b>	J-MS	Complete & approved	Complete & approved	Claim forms with Project team for revisions	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Community flood risk reduction</b>	J-MS	Complete & approved	Complete & approved	Claim forms with Project team for minor revisions	Draft claim form developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Eco coaching (residents)</b>	J-MS	Complete & approved	Complete & approved	Claim forms with Project team	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Eco-Hubs</b>	J-MS	Complete & approved	Complete & approved	Claim forms with Project team for revisions	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Showtown: laughter programme</b>	J-MS	Complete & approved	Complete & approved	Claim forms with Project team for revisions	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Business Support Team capacity</b>	J-MS	Complete & approved	Claim forms with Project team for revisions	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>The Platform</b>	J-MS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Lets get digital</b>	J-MS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Advance claim forms with project team	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Community Navigators</b>	KS	N/A	N/A	N/A	Claim forms with project team	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) capacity building support</b>	KS	Complete & approved	Complete & approved	Claim forms with project team	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Development and collaboration support services to Blackpool's business and community sectors</b>	KS	Complete & approved	Change request form with Project team	Advance claim form with team	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed
<b>Purchase of low carbon heating system and solar panels for The Edge</b>	KS	N/A	Claim forms drafted	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed	Claim forms to be developed

\* 'Complete & approved' indicates Section 151 Officer sign-off has been received



### 3.3 Project Outputs

Those to date have included: (**Please note** the lists below only show “achieved” and not the full suite of outputs and targets to be achieved by each scheme)

#### Town Centre Interventions

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
Commercial buildings developed or improved	E1	1.00	1.00
Rehabilitated premises	E1	1.00	1.00
Tourism, culture or heritage assets created or improved	E4	1.00	1.00
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Decrease in vacancy rates (number of occupancies)	E1	7	30.00

#### Development and Collaboration Support Services to Blackpool’s Business and Community Sectors (BITC)

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
People reached	E8	384.00	1,500.00
People attending training sessions	E11	39.00	150.00
People supported to access basic skills	E36	39.00	100.00
People supported to engage in life skills	E36	39.00	50.00
People supported to engage in life skills	E41	39.00	75.00
Rehabilitated premises	E1	1.00	1.00
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Increase in visitor numbers (number of people)	E8	260.00	500.00
Increase in engagement numbers (number of people)	E11	197.00	100.00

#### Eco-Coaching

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
Households receiving support	E13	57	1,500.00
Households supported to take energy efficiency measures	E13	44	1,500.00
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Greenhouse gas reductions (tonnes of CO2)	E13	6.1	6.69
Increased take up of energy efficient measures	E13	44	1,200.00



**Eco-Hub**

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
Households receiving support	E2	57	1,000.00
People receiving support	E13	57	1,000.00
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Households supported to take energy efficiency measures	E13	44	500.00

**Grundy**

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
Number of feasibility studies supported	E14	1.00	1.00

**Showtown**

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
Organisations receiving grants	E6	1	3.00
Local events or activities supported	E6	27	57.00
Events or participatory programmes	E4	27	57.00
Volunteering opportunities supported	E6	5	20.00
Projects	E9	1	7.00
People reached	E12	4,813	15,000.00
<b>Outcomes</b>			
New community-led arts, cultural, heritage & creative programmes	E6	1	7.00

**Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Capacity Building Support**

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
Organisations receiving non-financial support	E9	15	30.00
Local events or activities supported	E9	6.00	10.00
Volunteering opportunities supported	E9	120	500.00
Organisations receiving non-financial support	E11	35	100.00
People attending training sessions	E11	6	250.00
Organisations receiving non-financial support	E12	8	30.00
Local events or activities supported	E12	8	10.00
Volunteering opportunities supported	E12	5	30.00
People reached	E12	75	500.00
<b>Outcomes</b>			



Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
Increase in engagement numbers (number of people)	E9	197	250.00
Volunteers as a result of support	E9	150	500.00
Increase in engagement numbers (number of people)	E11	35	100.00
Increase in engagement numbers (number of people)	E12	50	250.00

### Community Navigators

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
Economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services	E33	7	200.00
Economically inactive people supported to engage with benefits system	E33	4	200.00
Socially excluded people accessing support	E33	5	200.00
People supported to engage in job-searching	E33	6	100.00
People receiving support to gain employment	E33	6	150.00
Effective working between keyworkers and additional services (number of engagements)	E33	10	500.00
Volunteering opportunities supported	E35	2	30.00
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support	E33	3	150.00
Active or sustained participants in community group as a result of support	E33	4	150.00
People engaging with mainstream healthcare services	E33	1	20.00
People engaged in job-searching following support	E33	6	150.00

### Business Growth Support

Results	Int.	Achieved by end December 2023	Contracted target
<b>Outputs</b>			
Enterprises receiving non-financial support	E23/E29 combined	11	200
Potential entrepreneurs given assistance to be business ready	E23	5	150

### 3.4 Project Updates

The Community Navigator scheme commenced October 1st. Let's Get Digital commenced December 1st.

NB the RAG rating of each project reflects its PMO team assigned rating.

## SPF Theme: Communities & Place Projects

### 3.4.1. Grundy Art Gallery, Library & Claremont Feasibility Study (RAG Rating: Green)

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023	Original forecast total spend to end March 2024	Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)	Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024	Forecast total spend to March 2025
	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
£178,500	£ 163,447.30	£178,500	£178,500	£0.00	£178,500

No capital element to project.

#### Project Outline

This scheme delivers a needs and options assessment, with completion of architects' designs and an engagement event. £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.

#### Project Update

Designs to RIBA Stage 2 prepared; internal QS has interrogated proposed costings and capital cost of £9.8 estimated (without public realm works included); regular meetings with Client Steering Group have taken place monthly to work on detail of the designs; interim touch base meetings with Council project management team and QS taking place fortnightly. Meeting with planning dept. officers for initial feedback was held in November with architects working on addressing any issues raised ready to submit full planning application later in Feb 2024.

Local residents and businesses were invited to attend a public information session to find out more about the project and share their views. The public information events were held at Blackpool Central Library on Thursday 8 February 2024, with presentations at 3pm and 6 pm. Scheme designs by scheme architects Ellis Williams were available showing an extensive refurbishment to Central Library and a new extension for The Grundy. Concept designs also include proposed enhancements to Queen Street and Abingdon Street, including public realm improvements, to enable a culture-led identity to be formed in the area.

The scheme aligns with the emerging 'Be Who You Want To Be' action plan for Claremont,





and a desire to improve and enhance existing cultural facilities in the area. It is estimated the project would bring 59,000 additional visitors to the site per year by increasing and diversifying the engagement in culture, learning, creativity and heritage of Blackpool residents and raising the contemporary cultural profile of Blackpool as a destination.

**3.4.2. Town Centre Interventions: (RAG Rating: Green)**

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023		Original forecast total spend to end March 2024		Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)		Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024		Forecast total spend to March 2025	
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue
£1,500,000	£245,063.81	£ 35,000	£306,635.09	£35,000	£306,635.09	£35,000	£0	£0	£1,257,000	£243,000

**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

**Project Update**

Work is well underway to produce a new Pedestrian Wayfinding Plan for Blackpool’s town centre, funded by the Town Centre Interventions project. Following a full procurement exercise (undertaken in order to assess all possible delivery options, in spite of the contract value being eligible for three quotes), Maynard Design were contracted to undertake the development of the new Plan, which will influence investment in physical wayfinding across the town centre. Desk-based research was completed by the end of December, with engagement being undertaken throughout January, and a completed Plan anticipated in February. This February completion date is intended to allow for initial investment in physical wayfinding to be made prior to the end of the financial year.

Activity within the Town Centre Action Group continues, in order to further prioritise investment across the 2024/25 financial year, with initial discussions around potential ways of improving lighting in certain areas, as well as further developing the public realm in the town centre taking place.

In December, Blackpool was confirmed as a High Street Accelerator pilot area by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This pilot will focus on the Abingdon Street and Queen Street area of the town centre. The timescales associated with High Street Accelerator pilot status mirrors that of the UKSPF programme, concluding in March 2025, and this will look to closer integrate the ‘Be Who You Want To Be’ area within the Claremont ward with the rest of the town centre. With the award of this pilot status comes £237,000 in seed



funding and access to a £5m greening fund split across the 10 pilot areas, which may be used in conjunction with SPF funding to provide larger scale impacts on the two streets in question.

### 3.4.3. VCFSE Capacity Building Support (RAG Rating: Green)

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023		Original forecast total spend to end March 2024		Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)		Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024		Forecast total spend to March 2025	
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue
£295,000	£5,010.97	£97,720.49	£5,010.97	£165,094.03	£5,010.97	£165,094.03	£ 0.00	£ 0.00	£5,010.97	£289,989.03

#### Project Outline

The scheme will increase the capacity of the local VCFSE 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

#### Project Update

- Following the successful Meet the Funders event in September, 12 groups attended the National Lottery Community Fund advice sessions held at the Volunteer Centre office in November. The NLCF also presented at the Fylde Coast Resilience Network meeting in November and Arts Council England will be attending the January meeting. Presentations from all funders attending the event and feedback from attendees has been uploaded to the Blackpool CAN website - <https://www.blackpoolcan.co.uk/presentations/> Video feedback from the event can also be viewed via the web-link <https://vimeo.com/883317033/7018b2c635>
- 6 VCFSE organisations attended a bid writing workshop delivered by Social Enterprise Solutions on the 16th of November (Social Enterprise Day).
- A Governance workshop is to be held in early 2024 (date to be confirmed).
- Volunteer Coordinators Network held on 30th November 2023. Key messages around needs were for access to directories and other networks.
- A series of 3 Volunteering Fairs across Blackpool are being planned mid-February 2024.
- 5 local community groups will be receiving £500 each from the VINCI Building small grants programme in December.
- Blackpool CAN has been an agenda item on a series of meetings and events where Blackpool whereby groups across the VCFSE, NHS and other statutory bodies have been able to find out about the project and how they can get involved.



- In September the VCFSE Leadership Group met, and organisations identified training around bid writing and income generation as a priority. This is going to be followed up in the next quarter with a VCFSE-wide survey to identify a range of training priorities, groups and organisations' need.
- Also in September, a residential took place with Blackpool based VCFSE organisations to develop their capacity in co-production, research, and evaluation. This was part of an on-going programme Citizens Advice Blackpool is supporting to upskill the VCFSE in generating income in new and innovative ways and from previously untapped sources.
- Regular strategic meetings with Blackpool & The Fylde College are ongoing to facilitate workforce development with the VCFSE sector and improved access to learning opportunities for Blackpool residents.
- Regular strategic meetings with Blackpool Coastal Housing are ongoing with regards to how BCAN can support the development of volunteering in Revoe and Bloomfield.
- Social Enterprise Solutions and Citizens Advice Blackpool are supporting individuals and groups with social enterprise support, governance and funding advice and partnership working.
- The BCAN Community Engagement/Development Officer is supporting the development of 9-10 community projects across Blackpool.
- Members of the BCAN team met with the LACVS LOCAL project in December. The aim of the LOCAL project is to build on the Lancashire LOCAL Manifesto and help support the VCFSE sector across Lancashire to achieve positive change in their communities.
- The next Blackpool CAN small grants round has been deferred to January 2024.
- VCFSE funding opportunities have been promoted via the Blackpool CAN website (VINCI Building Small Grants; Mental Health Transformation Grants; The VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme).
- The Volunteer Centre CEO has been invited to join the Blackpool Foundation Task & Finish Group

#### 3.4.4. Community Flood Risk Reduction (RAG Rating: Green)

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023		Original forecast total spend to end March 2024		Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)		Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024		Forecast total spend to March 2025	
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue
£100,000	£0	£1,710.00	£52,379	£10,996	£51,508.92	£4,450	- £1,320	- £6,546	£75,000	£25,000

#### Project Outline

- Provide free water butts to Blackpool residents to encourage the reuse of rain water and to reduce the amount of rain water entering the drainage system during heavy rain fall, therefore reducing the risk of flooding.
- Installation of a rain garden at the Eco Hub to improve water drainage and increase flood resilience at the site as well as showcase the potential benefits of installing rain gardens/sustainable urban drainage systems in other areas of the town.



**Project Update**

Intelligent Packaging Limited (IPL) were appointed as the water butt supplier and arrangements were put in place with Enveco for the distribution of the water butts and with the Volunteer Centre to support residents with installation where required. The application process opened on 27th November 2023 and resulted in 983 applications being received on the first day. Applications were capped at 1,000 and any subsequent applications were added to a waiting list (399). The initial order of water butts was placed with the supplier for delivery on 5th January 2024. Distribution of water butts to residents began to take place throughout January and a further allocation and promotion to residents was opened in early February.

The Parks service will deliver the rain garden element of the project. Proposals are currently being drawn up for the installation of a rain garden at Palatine Library (Eco Hub). Rain gardens slow the rate at which rain water enters the drainage system, significantly reducing the risk of flooding. The Parks service is also developing proposals for the installation of a living wall next to the main entrance at Palatine Library. A living wall is a vertical structure which holds plants and greenery connected to an irrigation system. Any remaining revenue and capital budget that remains upon completion of the water butt scheme will be used to contribute to this element of the project.

**3.4.4. Eco Coaching (RAG Rating: Amber)**

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023		Original forecast total spend to end March 2024		Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)		Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024		Forecast total spend to March 2025	
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue
£265,250	£4,426	£51,526.97	£13,500	£176,588.50	£13,500	£159,316.96	£0	-£17,271.54	£13,500	£251,750

**Project Outline**

Scaling up an original ERDF 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.

**Project Update**

The team has now been fully recruited to. There was a soft launch of the service in October and there has been a steady stream of referrals. Groundwork have promoted the service at events such as the National Energy Action NW Forum and the Blackpool Cost of Living event. Specific service branding has been designed, and the service will now be referred to as Blackpool Eco Homes.



There will be a secondary launch of the Eco Homes service once the office space at the Eco Hub has been renovated. Designs have been created which will provide the look and functionality required for a demo space but with minimal disruption. Groundwork are awaiting confirmation of the costs and timescales for the work from the contractor with an anticipated completion date in February 2024.

A job description has been drafted for an Engagement Officer post to support both the Eco Homes service and the library around climate issues. However, it is unlikely this will be recruited to until 2024/25 and therefore this has impacted on the forecast revenue spend for 2023/24.

### 3.4.5. Eco Hub (RAG Rating: Amber)

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023		Original forecast total spend to end March 2024		Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)		Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024		Forecast total spend to March 2025	
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue
£380,000	£0	£0	£200,000	£17,779.50	£200,000	£17,779.50	£0	£0	£200,000	£180,000

#### Project Outline

- Establishment of an eco hub at Palatine Library in Blackpool, retrofitting low carbon technologies to an existing building.
- The hub will include renewable power generation and carbon free heating systems.
- The hub will be used as a base to deliver green skills courses to residents and businesses.
- The hub will also serve as an information point for services providing energy saving advice and information on green grants.
- When the hub is not in use renewable energy will be utilised in the local grid.

#### Project Update

Application to increase the electricity supply to Palatine Library was submitted to Electricity North West (ENW). We are currently waiting for a confirmed date for the work to be completed by ENW. The tender documents for the solar PV have been finalised. A further site visit for the supplier for the air source heat pump (ASHP) was undertaken and we are now awaiting a confirmed programme of works (work to take place in March).

Initial discussions have been held with ICT on the potential to use the remaining Eco Hub revenue funding to contribute to a data centre project at the Solaris. This project will act as a small scale proof of concept for the larger scale data centre demonstrator at Blackpool Airport. It will lead to a reduction in gas consumption for heating at the Solaris through the reuse of waste heat; therefore resulting in a carbon saving. It will also act as an educational tool to demonstrate how we can build data centres/digital infrastructures in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way and how this can potentially scale into a large decarbonised infrastructure for Blackpool.



**3.4.7. Showtown: Laughter Programme (RAG Rating: Green)**

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023	Original forecast total spend to end March 2024	Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)	Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024	Forecast total spend to March 2025
	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
£179,095	£35,204.57	£56,067.17	£48,367.77	£6,936.20	£179,095

**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.

**Project Update**

Laughter Club planning has progressed with the recruitment of West End Players from Morecambe. Together we have developed a 9 week programme of activity for adults who are struggling and have been referred via GPs, Volunteer Centre social prescribing and other mental health services across Blackpool. Laughter Club is a mini-course in comedy for adults there will be lots of fun sessions generating shared laughter and learning new things like; being different characters, how to hold the audience in the palm of their hand, how to use their body and voice, write jokes and create comedy sketches using Blackpool's rich history of comedy and entertainment as inspiration.

The aim is that the course helps the participants make new friends, build connections and confidence and ultimately improve their sense of wellbeing. The first of two courses will be delivered from 1 Feb to 28 March. All venues for activity have been booked and recruitment for participants is underway with dissemination via partner organisations.

Following a conversation with Blackpool Music Service, a brief was developed which went out in January 24 to find a musician to deliver the schools project, Music to my Ears.



### SPF Theme: Local Business Projects

#### 3.4.8. Development and Collaboration Support Services to Blackpool’s Business and Community Sectors (RAG Rating: Green)

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023	Original forecast total spend to end March 2024	Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)	Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024	Forecast total spend to March 2025
	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
£200,000	£73,186.32	£100,208	£94,103.57	£6,104.43	£200,000

#### Project Outline

- 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 co-ordinated 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

#### Project Update

##### Esports-

Over 350 individuals attended the EuropaHalo23 Esports event on the 11 & 12 November 2023 at the Blackpool Winter Gardens. This event was Halo’s largest European Esports tournament in terms of team entries, for over a decade.

- 30 Team Tickets Sold: Resulting in the largest European Halo Event in the past 13 years.



- Global Attendance: 368 attendees with representation from the USA, Netherlands, France, and more.
- Social Media Impact: A remarkable 2.5 million social media reach from launch to one-week post-event.
- Online Engagement: A total of 44,000 hours of content was watched online.
- Media Value: The media value for 'EuropaHalo Blackpool' and #EHBlackpool2023 amounted to £231,000 from launch to one-week post-event.

It is anticipated that due to the success of the test event, and demand, that we will plan to host a second event – EuropaHalo24 later on this year.

### **Seeing is Believing Visit (SIB)**

Further to the Seeing is Believing visit, which took place in July 2023, a number of the SIB Delegates, including the CEO's of Aviva & United Utilities, provided Westminster School with support over the Christmas period. Aviva's Exec team paid for Xmas presents and crackers for every child in the school (£2,500). Morgan Sindall (Muse) – sent the whole of Year 5 to the Pantomime with Ice Creams and Popcorn (£1,100). United Utilities sent the whole of Year 4 to the Pantomime with Ice Creams and Popcorn (£1,100). Hydrock paid for a Theatre Company to come to the school for the younger years – including popcorn and ice cream £1,000. This shows the strength of the relationship with national business leaders post the Visit, that continues to drive activity and support for Blackpool's renewal.

After attending (and being inspired by) the Blackpool Seeing is Believing, United Utilities CEO wrote to BITC to confirm they were moving their 5-day annual conference from Manchester to Blackpool in December 2023, where 6,500 delegates attended, bringing overnight stays and spending to the town. There will be a significant economic value of this conference to the Blackpool Winter Gardens (their biggest one to date) and also to the wider town – we are waiting on these figures so we can report.

### **NEET Project**

BITC have been instrumental partners in the Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) project which is looking to create systems change and reduce the levels of NEET in Blackpool. It is through the learnings within this partnership that BITC have begun to think about and develop their own 'NEET project' (to tackle the number of NEET's) which will consist of a programme that includes life-skills, training, work placement and job opportunities across all roles in the catering and hospitality sector, by co-ordinating existing provision that is supplemented by a network of commercial kitchens. The project will link closely to Chef's Academy, which is an Alternative Provision for Year 10 and 11 students.

### **Headteachers Forum**

The Blackpool Head Teachers Forum took place in October 2023, and the key focus was the work readiness of young people and was well attended by all Blackpool Secondary Heads and College Principals. The Chair of the RBN opened an after-dinner discussion which led to an





honest dialogue of the pressures upon schools but also the acknowledgement that current careers provision can be improved to better prepare young for the world of work, and how business could support this. The following day, 6 business leaders convened to share their experience and knowledge of industry with the Heads and discuss and challenge the current careers offer across schools. This collaborative approach will lead to a town-wide careers strategy which encourages businesses and schools to work more closely in partnership.

### **Fylde Coast RBN 5th Anniversary**

The Fylde Coast RBN celebrated its 5-year anniversary on 20 October 2023 at Blackpool Football Club. The event was attended by 96 local business leaders, school leads, and key partners such as Lancashire Careers Hub and Blackpool Council. The event was also an opportunity to present to the audience the impact that the Blackpool Pride of Place Partnership to date. Dame Julia Cleverdon engaged with members of the RBN network (Choice Hotels, Evolution, DES & Hesketh Press) and asked them to share their knowledge and best practice in terms of inspiring young people and promoting employment opportunities to those cohorts such as care leavers, and young people who are NEET. Table discussions took place about the future focus of the RBN and the notes captured will help devise the RBNs 5 year strategy.

### **Fylde Coast RBN Careers Fair**

The Fylde Coast Responsible Business Network Careers Fair took place on the 31 January 2024 at the Blackpool Conference & Exhibition Centre. Press releases of the event can be found here:-

[Event inspires young people with dynamic range of career opportunities \(bblg.co.uk\)](https://www.bblg.co.uk)

[Event inspires Blackpool students with range of career opportunities - Educate magazine](#)

13 schools (mainstream, Alternative Provision and SEND) were registered to attend with almost 1,500 Year 9 Students timetabled to arrive throughout the day. The invitation was also extended to Electively Home Educated students and their parents/carers. The key objectives of the event were:

- Young people to understand the variety of careers and opportunities available to them on the Fylde Coast (and beyond), linking to LMI (Labour Market Information) data and future opportunities.
- Young people to understand the various pathways into employment/ careers (Further Education, Apprenticeships, T-Levels, etc)
- Inspire young people into careers they had not previously considered.
- Educate young people as to what employers expect from them in the workplace.

Up to 50 employers were involved (some exhibiting) and 9 Further/Higher Education providers. BITC managed to partner 9 of the 13 schools with a local business to take part in a pre-event activity to talk to students about their own organisations, cover what employability skills are key within their organisation and how to make the most of the Careers Fair. The plan is that the school will then build upon that relationship and ask the employer to take part in a post-event activity as best-practice highlights that a series of activities (rather than a one-off event) has the most impact.



### 3.4.9. Business Growth Scheme (RAG Rating: Amber)

Project Name	Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023	Original forecast total spend to end March 2024	Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)	Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024	Forecast total spend to March 2025
		Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
Commissioned Business Support	£571,410.80	£14,839.02	No forecast	£ 75,000 (low estimate) **	No forecast	£571,410.80
Marketing	£100,000.00	£27,836.00	No forecast	£ 42,836	No forecast	£100,000.00
Management / Staffing Costs	£178,589.20*	£46,087.00	No forecast	£ 71,125	No forecast	£178,589.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>£850,000.00</b>	<b>£88,762.02</b>	<b>Project was under review</b>	<b>£ 188,961</b>	<b>No forecast</b>	<b>£850,000.00</b>

\*Actual management costs will exceed this value during project lifetime (by an estimate of c£50k).

\*\*Contractor spend is subject to client take-up and progression and based on contract performance. It is difficult to forecast but an additional £60k of claimed spend is on the low side.

#### Project Outline

The Council aims to enhance its offer to local businesses by investing SPF in an integrated range of quality business advice for start-ups and growth ambitious companies; and to accelerate business decarbonisation. It also seeks to strengthen the capacity of the Council's Business Growth Team to enable it to commission, manage and market the new programme. To deliver this new offer two new business academies will be formed.

The first Academy - *The Blackpool Growth Business Academy* - provides both business start-up and business growth advice services. This commissioned service will support and encourage business success and growth by providing tailored business advice services to empower the local business community to achieve their growth objectives and generate high quality job opportunities. This will include a range of workshops, 121 advice from specialist advisors, the development of quality business plans for start-up and new businesses; and growth action plans for existing businesses with growth ambitions.

The second Academy, *The Blackpool Net Zero Business Academy*, will assist businesses on the journey to net zero, assessing carbon footprints, developing a fully costed Decarbonisation Action Plan, and helping businesses assess the greatest impact and payback on any future investment. As such growth businesses can tap into both growth advice and decarbonisation support at the same time and the contractors are encouraged to work together to provide an integrated offer.

To promote the new offer, and refresh the existing Blackpoolunlimited.com branding, a separate marketing commission will also be initiated.

#### Project Update

Following the completion of the commissioning process three experienced contractors were chosen as follows:

- Growth Business Academy – Small Business Academy Ltd
- Net Zero Academy – Adler & Allan Ltd



- Marketing – Happy Creative Ltd. Please note: a significant amount of work has been undertaken to refresh the BU.com branding and to brand and launch the new academies in Q3.

Various induction and set up meetings followed as with the launch of the new business academies. These offers were fully live from November 2023.

In terms of management capacity at the Council:-

- The new Head of Business Growth, Angela Kershaw, commenced employment on November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Council’s Business Partnerships Coordinator (BPC) provided interim Project Management, supported by a Project Assistant. More formal posts are to be established in coming months to reflect updated duties.
- A new post of Business Growth Projects Manager is undergoing job evaluation and will be recruited thereafter (especially as the BPC has decided to leave the Council in January '24).

Evolutive, the CRM system used to capture business data and contract performance against agreed delivery targets, has recently been finalized, with all consultants trained on effective use. This will inform claims processes and contractor payments.

There is a steady flow of enquiries and networking events in the calendar for the next 3 months.

Detailed forecasts will be included in next claim to show performance against target.

We will be taking part in a pilot scheme to commence soon, which will record and monitor the Social Value impact using the Social Value Engine.

**3.4.10. The Edge – Low Carbon (RAG Rating: Amber)**

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023	Original forecast total spend to end March 2024	Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)	Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024	Forecast total spend to March 2025
	Capital	Capital	Capital	Capital	Capital
£150,000	£0	£150,000	£0	£ 150,000	£150,000

No revenue element to project.

**Project Outline**

This funding contributes to the cost of installing low carbon measures within Stanley Buildings, a Town Deal project known as The Edge, which seeks to renovate a locally listed building in the town centre to create office, meeting and co-working space suitable for small businesses and entrepreneurs.



Specifically, the funding will contribute to replacing an outmoded gas boiler heating system with air source heat pumps and solar panels to heat and power the new office space. Any additional electricity needs, especially in winter months, will be sourced from renewable and non-polluting sources.

SPF is contributing to the additional cost of installing the low carbon measures which would otherwise be unaffordable. It will also enable the office complex – some 1200sqm - to be classed as net zero.

The total cost of the project including installation is estimated as follows. The balance of funding is met from the Town Deal.

**Estimated total cost is £237k** (versus an estimate of £85k for 'like for like' boiler replacement). Excludes additional costs for crane lifts etc. The funding gap of circa £150k is the rationale for this SPF funded project.

Breakdown as follows, which will be firmed up with the contractor, in terms of relevant timescales and spend to inform future claims.

**Air Source Heat Pumps**

New ASHP installation & Plant room Installation	£ 82,057.57
New LPHW pipework installation	£ 66,396.99
New LPHW emitters	£ 44,637.72
Allowance for Builders Work (5%)	£ 9,654.61
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 202,746.89</b>

**Solar Panels (PVs)**

P.V. Installation	£ 28,019.30
Allowance for Builders Work (5%)	£ 1,400.97
Mansafe System to Roof	£ 5,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 34,420.27</b>

Analysis is available which highlights the recommended solution required for the space. The project lead will look to quantify CO2 reduction as a result of these measures. This is the decarbonisation plan for the project.

**Project Update**

The installation timescale is bound up in the redevelopment programme of Stanley Buildings which commences on 12/2/24 and over 60 weeks will complete by 4/4/25. The exact installation timescale is awaiting an updated development programme from the main contractor, F Parkinsons Ltd, which is expected shortly. The overall project has all funding approvals required, including planning permission. Delays in the overall project approval has ultimately delayed spend on the installation which is now almost certainly going to fall within 24-25 financial year. The only alternative to achieve spend earlier would be to purchase equipment prior which will impact on the available warranty period and may also rule out the latest technology available i.e. more efficient heat pumps.

### SPF Theme: People & Skills Projects

#### 3.4.11. Community Navigators (RAG Rating: Green)

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023	Original forecast total spend to end March 2024	Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)	Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024	Forecast total spend to March 2025
	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
£250,000	£22,557	£83,385	£75,050	£8,335	£250,000

#### Project Outline

Aim to provide intensive wrap around support via a team of dedicated individuals/"navigators" to 200 economically inactive Blackpool residents living in the most disadvantaged wards who are furthest away from the labour market, including help with practical issues and navigating systems, such as Welfare Benefits.

#### Project Update

Since 1st November 2023, 3 of the 5 Community Navigators have been in post including the Team leader. The other 2 are being recruited at the moment and should be in post in February 2024. The main focus of the work to December 2023 has been promoting the project and building relationships with referral organizations. This has resulted in a steady flow of referrals into the team.

The Project Board met in December for the first time.

The output figures [provided earlier in the document] represent the referrals up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. The forecasts remain the same as per the project plan.

#### 3.4.12. Let's Get Digital (RAG Rating: Green)

Approved SPF allocation	Total actual spend to end December 2023	Original forecast total spend to end March 2024	Updated forecast spend to March end (including accruals)	Variance between actual and forecast spend to end March 2024	Forecast total spend to March 2025
	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
£112,000	£0.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£0.00	£112,000.00

#### Project Outline

This project will develop the digital skills of a minimum of 200 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.

#### Project Update

We contacted and met with Blackpool Providers that had originally expressed an interest in supplying Multiply Programmes to enquire if they were interested in delivering digital courses



in the most vulnerable areas of Blackpool. The allocations were based on availability and previous application. We advised them that a variation of contract would be sent out in the New Year and that would outline expected requirements and allocations.

The Multiply Project Team liaised with Procurement to ensure timely delivery of variations so that the programme was ready to start in January 2024.

## **4. Programme Management**

### **4.1 General Update**

Full programme management systems and procedures are in place with quarterly claims processes outlined. Substantial efforts have been made by project leads and the PMO team to get all SPF claims up to speed. However, this has been hampered by a member of the team leaving and due to the extensive wider DLUHC claims activity ongoing, which has had some impact on progress. Jayjay Sanson is now in post and getting up to speed so that the PMO team can continue to work with projects to speed up the claims.

A Shared Prosperity Project Board (SPPB) continues to sit monthly with project managers from all schemes. After consultation with Project Managers the frequency of this has been agreed reduced to six weekly from January 2024.

On 16th January members of the evaluation team from Arcadis joined members of the PMO and the SPF Project Leads for a workshop exploring the progress of the programme to date. The Arcadis team presented on the data they had received so far and led a number of discussion and breakout sessions to gather insights from the project teams on current performance; delivery and processes; measurements of success and barriers to these. After this, Arcadis introduced the Logic Models that will be needed for the projects; Arcadis will be developing these for the projects in the first instance. Information gathered at the session will inform the evaluation of the SPF Programme at Blackpool Council.

PMO has launched a new SPF Project Hub on Teams. This is in response to feedback received at the Arcadis workshop that project teams would like to be able to collaborate, share information, resources and best practice. The new team offers channels by SPF theme, a resource library, and a channel for questions and answers.