



UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Investment Plan Drafting Template

Version 2
May 2022

Your location

To be eligible for funding, you will need to be applying on behalf of a lead authority in one of the [delivery geographies](#).

Select the lead authority

For Scotland and Wales only: Who else is this investment plan being submitted on behalf of? Select all that apply

Your details

Name **Hilary Smith**

Email address hilary.smith@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Phone number **01892 554433**

Organisation name **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**

Local challenges and opportunities

In this section, we will ask you:

- If you've identified any challenges or opportunities, you intend to support
- Which of the UKSPF investment priorities these fall under

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

The borough of Tunbridge Wells is a mixed urban and rural locality, widely regarded as an affluent area with a high standard of living. This is apparent in the 2021 Happy at Home Index, which places Tunbridge Wells 10th in the South East and 50th in the UK; and in the Levelling Up White Paper, which highlights the borough's relative affluence.

However, the White Paper also recognises that there are disparities in prosperity in 'non-priority' areas and commits to addressing these pockets of deprivation to focus on levelling up the whole of the UK, not just the north of England. Despite Tunbridge Wells' apparent affluence, the borough has a number of local communities that face long term challenges, all of which have been exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, including:

- High Brooms & Sherwood (Ranking: 5503 – 2nd decile)
- Ramslye & Showfields (Ranking: 8862 – 3rd decile)

These areas are all ranked inside the 3 lowest deciles in the Lower Super Output Areas in England for the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019. Across these areas there is an identified need to improve local facilities and develop pride in place. Through our UKSPF consultation, priority needs have been identified by the communities themselves, relating in particular to sports facilities, public realm and local green spaces (other needs are addressed via the People & Skills interventions).

The local inequalities cited above have been compounded by the cost-of-living crisis, with 9/10 households experiencing the pressure of increased costs and bills (ONS: *The rising cost of living and its impact on individuals in Great Britain: November 2021 to March 2022*). In the year ending March 2021, the local Nourish Food Bank has provided groceries to 16,238 residents – a 60 percent increase on the previous year. The cost of living crisis is impacting residents across the borough, not just in the locations listed above but also in some of our rural locations. Another significant issue that has been identified is social isolation amongst some of our older rural residents.

Town Centre

Royal Tunbridge Wells, as our main town centre and key employment area is facing a number of challenges (also seen UK-wide) including:

- Reduced footfall and vacant retail units.
- Poor public realm and a need for improved maintenance of street furniture and footways.
- Car dominance.

Some areas of the town are performing better than others at present and a particular need to address issues in the northern part of the town has been identified by local businesses. Resolving these town centre issues is a priority for the Council and work is already underway to prepare a Town Centre Plan, including extensive engagement with businesses and residents.

Cultural and Creative Economy

The borough is already identified as a hot spot for cultural and creative activity and the Council has commissioned a number of studies (*Tunbridge Wells Cultural & Creative Sector Framework 2012 and 2019 and Cultural Compact Report, Golant 2021*) that explore how the sector can best be supported to grow and provide opportunities for local employment, skills development, new town centre uses and events to drive footfall. These studies have identified that there is more work to do to support the sector to maximise benefits for our local residents. Whilst there is often a focus on the needs of towns in the borough, our rural communities often feel left behind and there is a need to support them better and promote pride of place in the borough's villages through cultural and heritage outreach activities.

Our Environment

In July 2019, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council declared a 'Climate Emergency', setting the ambition to make our operations, services and buildings carbon neutral by 2030. Alongside this, the Council is also seeking to promote the greater recycling of waste in the borough and also to improve green spaces through rewilding and other improvement projects in identified locations, that will increase local engagement and pride in place.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre

The Council has identified the opportunity to provide further support for our town centres. In particular there is a need for improvements to the public realm across the borough. A recently successful scheme for the High Street in Royal Tunbridge Wells, funded by the Welcome Back Fund, has provided parklets and planters that have improved the environment, reduced the dominance of traffic and provided space for outdoor dining. The scheme has been positively received by local residents, businesses and visitors. The Council will seek to improve the environment across wider areas of RTW and other towns working with partners including Parish & Town Councils and Royal Tunbridge Wells Together Business Improvement District (RTWT).

Creative Tunbridge Wells

The creative sector is well established and growing in the borough. Nesta in its 2017 report on the geography of the creative industries describes Tunbridge Wells in its typology of creative clusters as a 'creative district' as a result of the number of businesses present in the borough. Tunbridge Wells has recently been part of Arts Council England's Cultural Compact pilot and has been working to set up 'Creative Tunbridge Wells' - a partnership for the borough, linking heritage, arts and cultural institutions, businesses education and the health sector across the borough. Led by the sector, Creative Tunbridge Wells will seek to provide whole place leadership for culture and the wider creative economy, seeking to ensure maximum local social and economic benefit. The links between the creative sector and heritage are clear. Creative places are attractive to residents and visitors alike. Following the recent redevelopment of the Amelia in Royal Tunbridge Wells there are opportunities to support heritage placemaking across the wider borough, working with local communities (e.g. schools) to develop pride in place through a greater understanding of local heritage.

Our Natural Environment.

Tunbridge Wells is part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is well-known for its beautiful countryside that attracts people to live and visit the area. Residents are fortunate enough to live close to green spaces, even in the more urban areas of the borough. However, there are opportunities to improve these green spaces further to support biodiversity and provide local responses to the climate emergency. Across the borough local communities have identified specific opportunities and the Council works with partners including the Kent High Weald Partnership to deliver projects, working with volunteers and often providing new skills to those involved.

Local Sports Facilities

It is increasingly recognised that sport and active recreation (activities other than organised sports, such as dance, yoga, active play, recreational walking or cycling) has the potential to

improve the quality of life for residents and communities and deliver wider social, health, economic and environmental benefits. The Council's Sports Strategy identifies that there is now a shift in emphasis away from sporting achievement and participation for its own sake, towards harnessing sport for social good, including delivering health outcomes and promoting physical activity and wellbeing. There are already many local sporting teams that use the existing facilities in Tunbridge Wells but there is a recognised opportunity to improve some of these facilities (in identified priority areas), to enable further participation of local communities including children and young people.

Community Involvement

Across all of these opportunities the strength of our local communities is crucial, often led by volunteers through special interest groups or friends groups as well as by town & parish councils. Specific opportunities for interventions under all the headings above have been identified through consultation in the preparation of this Investment Plan.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

The borough's local economy is very varied. The urban area including Royal Tunbridge Wells and the North Farm Estate is a major centre for business and employment within West Kent with a substantial retail, creative, financial services and healthcare sector presence. The east of the borough is rural, punctuated by a number of country towns and villages. These rural areas are home to a wide range of businesses including land-based and home-based businesses.

Analysis undertaken as part of the 'Case for West Kent' (2022) shows that our economy performs relatively well within Kent & Medway comprising 20% of the population, 23% of jobs, 26% of enterprises and 28% of economic output. However, West Kent compares less well to other local authorities that are equidistant from London.

The borough is dominated by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with ONS data from the end of 2021 indicated that over 95 percent of businesses in the borough had under 20 members of staff. Whilst this indicates a diverse local business community, which has shown resilience during the recent pandemic, there remains a challenge to grow these businesses. The recent Tunbridge Wells Business Survey (Hardisty Jones Associates 2022) highlighted the high survivability rates for new businesses in the borough (91.9% of new businesses survive their first year of trading). However, the data also demonstrated a lack of scale up amongst these businesses, with a considerable proportion (13 percent) having no interest in growing their business at all (Evidence Base for Economic Development Strategy, Hardisty Jones Associates 2022).

Recent consultations as part of the Evidence Base for the Economic Development Strategy (HJA 2022) and the upcoming Town Centre Plan have identified vacancies in key locations in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre as a challenge. Respondents and other partners & stakeholders have highlighted the negative image it portrays of business health in the town and the related impact on footfall & investment.

The importance of the visitor economy within the borough is significant and the Council has worked with businesses within the sector to promote and market Tunbridge Wells to visitors from both the UK and further afield. However, as in other locations, the impact of the recent pandemic was severe. This was quantified by Visit Kent's Economic Impact Model for 2020. The research showed a 49% drop in visitors overall compared to 2019, and a 56% decline in value, alongside a 34% reduction in jobs in the sector. Although there has been some bounce back from this low point there is still much to do to support the sector to deliver growth and jobs and also to build resilience.

Traffic congestion, vehicle dominance and poor air quality are identified as matters of concern within the urban areas of Tunbridge Wells, cited by both residents and visitors in recent consultations. The Council has prepared a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan to support a greater number of trips to be made by active travel modes. There is anecdotal evidence of an increase in van-based delivery/business trips within Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre that needs to be addressed as part of our response to the climate emergency.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

Work undertaken to support businesses through the pandemic via the government grant programmes (e.g. Additional Restrictions Grant) has provided the TWBC team with a much greater understanding of the variety of local businesses in the borough which will assist in the delivery of initiatives under this theme.

Tunbridge Wells borough forms part of functional economic area with its West Kent Neighbours, Sevenoaks District Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council. The three local authorities have worked successfully on a range of economic development initiatives as the West Kent Partnership over recent years. Working collaboratively across administrative boundaries allows for: scaled funding and promotional activity; institutional expertise and capacity; and the input and support of senior West Kent partner organisations, comprising public, non-profit and private sector experts. In relation to the scale of the barriers to growth for SMEs in particular, this requires a wraparound approach focussing on the provision of business advice on: leadership; up-skilling staff; the productivity of staff; business plans; innovation and the introduction of new technologies; and attracting local and outside investment.

A number of opportunities have been identified that would support the regeneration of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre and respond to the challenges posed by both the recent pandemic and longer-term trends in shopping patterns/behaviours. Initiatives to support partners to bring vacant properties back into use and also to develop markets and events in the town centre would help to increase footfall and attract further investment into the town. The preparation of the Town Centre Plan will provide further support to ensure that the town centre is resilient and adaptable to future changes in economic pressures. On-going partnership working with local business organisations such as RTWT BID provides a good platform for new initiatives.

The Council already maximises limited resources to support the visitor economy in the borough. In responding to the Pandemic with additional funding there is an opportunity to increase this support further, working in partnership with the local business community and partner organisations such as Visit Kent and Royal Tunbridge Wells Together Business Improvement District. A 3 year Marketing Plan has been prepared and identifies both physical and digital marketing initiatives to promote the borough.

Working with Royal Tunbridge Wells Business Improvement District and other partners (e.g. local e-bike retailers), an opportunity to set up an e-cargo bike pilot scheme in the town centre. The initiative would take best practice from schemes set up in other UK locations. Feasibility work would be required to establish the most suitable approach for Royal Tunbridge Wells.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that between January and December 2021 15,000 people (21.2% of the working age population) were economically inactive in Tunbridge Wells. Whilst the unemployment rate for the borough remains low (2.4% in May 2022), the risk of people retreating from employment and becoming long-term unemployed remains high. Intra-borough inequalities in Tunbridge Wells are evidenced by unemployment levels that align with the affluence/deprivation of certain wards. For instance, the more affluent wards of (a) Pantiles & St Marks and (b) Speldhust & Bidborough sit a 1.2% unemployment; compared to Sherwood (3.7%), Southborough & High Brooms (3.3%) and Broadwater (3.1%) wards (KCC Facts & Figures, Unemployment Rate, May 2022). The level of unemployment among young adults (18–24-year-olds) in Tunbridge Wells (4%) tracks below the level in Kent (4.7%) but is higher than the other West Kent districts (Tonbridge & Malling 3.2% and Sevenoaks 3.4%) (KCC Facts & Figures, May 2022).

The Kent and Medway Local Skills Improvements Plan (2022) identifies a number of key challenges across the county including:

- Investing in soft transferrable skills – including wider considerations of work readiness, work ethic and ‘getting the basics right’.
- Upskilling and re-skilling the existing workforce, especially via accessible, non-qualification locally based short courses.

In addition, the West Kent Partnership Skills sub-group has highlighted the extent of barriers to employment or volunteering especially amongst our residents that are furthest away from the jobs market. For some residents, the barriers are such that even small improvements towards building confidence, addressing mental health or physical health challenges and learning new life skills would be an important step towards a positive outcome. Recent discussions with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and other local employment support providers have highlighted the urgency in breaking down barriers to employment and providing opportunities for young people about to enter the workforce.

A number of interrelated issues have arisen recently in regard to people’s mental health and wellbeing that require prioritisation and urgent action. The back-to-back crises of (a) the Coronavirus pandemic and related restrictions and (b) the cost-of-living crisis have put a greater strain than ever on the mental health of people across the country, including in Tunbridge Wells. Recent data demonstrates that the mental health shock stemming from the pandemic has not subsidised but has increased further. In Tunbridge Wells the suicide rate is 11.2 (above the national average of 10.4) and the borough has consistently placed well above the national average between 2015 and 2020 (PHE, 2021).

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

Although unemployment rates are low overall in the borough, this masks local areas where rates are higher and also groups within our communities that have remained out of employment for significant periods of time due to a variety of factors such as: disability, mental health issues and other longer term health issues and poor basic/life skills. At the same time we are aware that businesses are struggling to recruit across a range of sectors including retail, hospitality and the care sector.

With our neighbouring authorities of Sevenoaks and Tonbridge & Malling as well as with local DWP partners (based at Tonbridge Job Centre), the Council has worked to deliver a range of successful initiatives to address skills and employability issues faced by local residents, particularly those furthest from employment. There is more scope to work with West Kent Partners but also to focus

on hyper-local needs in areas of the borough that require greater focus, for example holding events in local community centres. A number of local community groups have identified specific needs amongst their communities, for example in the Showfields and Ramslye areas of the borough.

TWBC has a Health Action Group that comprises voluntary and health sector organisations that comes together regularly to co-ordinate programmes and deliver initiatives in support of local residents. Through this group an opportunity for life-skills courses and volunteering programmes has been identified.

In relation to younger people, over the past 5 years, the Borough Council (as part of the West Kent Partnership) has developed excellent links with local education providers through the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network, as well as delivering the West Kent Skillsfest and more local schools-based activities. The West Kent Partnership recently delivered a successful West Kent Kickstart scheme placing 100 young people with local employers.

Interventions

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Interventions you've chosen for each year of funding
- Outcomes you want to deliver
- Any interventions that are not listed here
- How these interventions fall under the UKSPF investment priorities, and your rationale for them
- Interventions not included in our list will be assessed before being approved, where you will need to show a clear rationale, how the intervention is value for money, what outcomes it will deliver and how you will monitor and evaluate the intervention. This may include a theory of change or logic chain.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	
Jobs safeguarded	
Increased footfall	
Increased visitor numbers	✓
Reduced vacancy rates	
Greenhouse gas reductions	
Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	
Improved perception of facilities/amenities	✓
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	
Increased users of facilities / amenities	✓
Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project	✓
Increased use of cycleways or paths	
Increase in Biodiversity	
Increased affordability of events/entry	

Improved perception of safety	
Reduction in neighbourhood crime	
Improved engagement numbers	✓
Improved perception of events	✓
Increased number of web searches for a place	✓
Volunteering numbers as a result of support	✓
Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support	✓
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.

E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.

E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.

E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.

E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.

E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

No.

Explain how each intervention meets the Communities and Place investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

Not applicable.

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

Not applicable.

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Communities and Place investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

Royal Tunbridge Wells Streetscene Improvements: this project will deliver improvements to the town centre streetscene in the northern part of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre. It will include the provision of new street furniture and maintenance of hard surfacing.

Greenspace improvements: improvements to local green spaces within priority communities.

Rural Heritage Placemaking: initiative to develop pride in place in our rural villages and their heritage (linked also to Creative Tunbridge Wells below).

Creative Tunbridge Wells: developing capability of a sector led-partnership that will then seek to maximise the social and economic benefits of the cultural and creative economy through specific initiatives relating to skills and events.

Community Kitchen: supporting vulnerable members of our local communities through volunteer-led café initiative.

Improved local sports facilities: improvements to sports facilities in priority communities.

Community Grants Programme: a grants programme to support community groups or town & parish councils to deliver small scale improvements including local green spaces, streetscene and events for example.

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

The BEIS Guidance on the UK's international subsidy control commitments (June 2021) highlights a subsidy as a measure which meets all of the following:

- Is given by a public authority
- Makes a contribution to an enterprise conferring an economic advantage that is not available on market terms
- Affects international trade

The Council has considered these criteria and does not believe that the proposed projects constitute a subsidy. A further assessment will be undertaken when appraising project proposals to ensure that financial contributions to projects do not constitute a subsidy.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	✓
Jobs safeguarded	

Increased footfall	✓
Increased visitor numbers	✓
Reduced vacancy rates	✓
Greenhouse gas reductions	
Number of new businesses created	
Improved perception of markets	✓
Increased business sustainability	
Increased number of businesses supported	✓
Increased amount of investment	
Improved perception of attractions	✓
Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm	
Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity	
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	
Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	
Number of new to market products	
Number of R&D active businesses	
Increased number of innovation active SMEs	
Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services	
Increased number of innovation plans developed	
Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support	
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	
Number of businesses increasing their export capability	
Increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed	✓
Number of businesses with improved productivity	
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

E16: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.

E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.

E22: Investing in enterprise infrastructure and employment/innovation site development projects. This can help to unlock site development projects which will support growth in places.

E24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.

E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

No.

Explain how each intervention meets the Supporting Local Business investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

Not applicable.

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

The BEIS Guidance on the UK's international subsidy control commitments (June 2021) highlights a subsidy as a measure which meets all of the following:

- Is given by a public authority
- Makes a contribution to an enterprise conferring an economic advantage that is not available on market terms
- Affects international trade

The Council has considered these criteria and does not believe that the proposed projects constitute a subsidy. A further assessment will be undertaken when appraising project proposals to ensure that financial contributions to projects do not constitute a subsidy.

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Supporting Local Business investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

New Open Air Market: a new open air market will be delivered in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre to increase footfall and support local businesses.

Support for the visitor economy: Working with local partners, a three year Marketing Plan will be delivered to support businesses in the visitor economy across the borough via digital and physical initiatives.

Bringing vacant retail back into use: a number of key sites are currently vacant in Royal Town Centre and working with private sector partners will be brought back into active use.

West Kent Business Support Programme: this programme will focus on providing mentoring and small scale financial support to start-up and new small businesses through a work-hub network.

E-cargo bike loan scheme: a bike loan scheme to support local businesses to decarbonise and save time and cost on making deliveries in Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

The BEIS Guidance on the UK's international subsidy control commitments (June 2021) highlights a subsidy as a measure which meets all of the following:

- Is given by a public authority
- Makes a contribution to an enterprise conferring an economic advantage that is not available on market terms
- Affects international trade

The West Kent Business Support Programme would be undertaken by a public authority, and as a small grant scheme could be seen to confer an economic advantage to an enterprise that is not available on market terms. However, the scheme is not considered to affect international trade for the following reasons:

- It is focused on supporting locally based organisations or enterprises that are unlikely to be engaging in international trade.
- The grant levels on offer through the Programme is very low at £500.

The conclusion that these interventions would be exempt accords with the BEIS guidance that "(s)ubsidies to truly local companies or a small tourist attraction are unlikely to be caught as this is unlikely to affect international trade". A further assessment will be undertaken when appraising project proposals to ensure that financial contributions to projects do not constitute a subsidy.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support	
Increased active or sustained participants of UKSPF beneficiaries in community groups [and/or] increased employability through development of interpersonal skills	
Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	
Number of people in supported employment [and] number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services	
Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services	
Number of people engaged in job-searching following support	✓
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	✓
Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months	

Increased employment, skills and/or UKSPF objectives incorporated into local area corporate governance	
Number of people in education/training	✓
Increased number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	✓
Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace	✓
Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences, and skills	
Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education, and training.	
Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions	✓
Number of people with proficiency in pre-employment and interpersonal skills (relationship, organisational and anger-management, interviewing, CV and job application writing)	✓
Multiply only - Increased number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2.	
Multiply only - Increased number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2.	
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps.

E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

No.

Explain how each intervention meets the People and Skills investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

Not applicable.

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

Not applicable.

ENGLAND ONLY: People and Skills interventions can only be used in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 if you have identified a local voluntary and community provision, previously supported by the European Social Fund, at risk of closure. If you have not identified a suitable provision, you will not be able to select interventions for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 and your investment plan will not be approved.

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS for 2024-2025 WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Yes

Describe the projects for 2024-25, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

Breaking Down Barriers to Employment Programmes: working with those furthest from employment to develop the skills and confidence to find work or volunteering opportunities that will lead employment in the future.

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

The BEIS Guidance on the UK's international subsidy control commitments (June 2021) highlights a subsidy as a measure which meets all of the following:

- Is given by a public authority
- Makes a contribution to an enterprise conferring an economic advantage that is not available on market terms
- Affects international trade

The Council has considered these criteria and does not believe that the proposed projects constitute a subsidy. A further assessment will be undertaken when appraising project proposals to ensure that financial contributions to projects do not constitute a subsidy.

HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A LOCAL VOLUNTARY PROVISION AT RISK AS PART OF YOUR PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?

Yes

No

(If Yes) Describe the local voluntary provision at risk and your rationale for supporting it.

Not applicable

Provide the European Social Fund Project Names and Project References for this voluntary and community provision at risk.

What year do you intend to fund these projects? Select all that apply.		
2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Describe the projects for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.		
Not applicable.		
Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.		
Yes	No	
Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.		
The Council has considered these criteria and does not believe that the proposed projects constitute a subsidy.		

SCOTLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY	
HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?	
Yes	No
Describe the projects, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.	
Not applicable.	
Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.	
Yes	No
Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.	
Not applicable.	

Approach to delivery and governance

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Structures you have in place to support delivery
- Support you have from stakeholders and the local community
- How you've engaged with MPs as part of your investment plan
- Opportunities you have identified to work with other places

Places need to show how MPs that cover the lead local authority have been engaged on the investment plan and whether they support it. More detail on the role of MPs can be found [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Have you engaged with any of the following as part of your investment plan? Select all that apply.

Public sector organisations X Private sector organisations X Civil society organisations X

Describe how you have engaged with any of these organisations. Give examples where possible.

TWBC has engaged the following groups as part of the preparation of the Investment Plan:

- All borough Parish & Town Councils
- All TWBC Members (Councillors)
- West Kent Partnership local authorities – Sevenoaks DC and Tonbridge & Malling BC
- Kent County Council
- Local Business Representative Organisations: RTWT Business Improvement District and Federation of Small Businesses
- Creative Tunbridge Wells
- Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum (resident's group)
- West Kent Mind (representing the third sector)
- Department for Work & Pensions (including the local Jobcentre Plus)

Information about the UKSPF was sent out to partnership organisations directly and an initial call for project ideas was launched. A further call for projects was made to ensure as good a response as was possible within the given timeframes. The Economic Development Team provided answers to queries that were received in timely manner.

Approximately 75 project ideas were put forward relating to the Government's list of interventions.

Summarise the governance structures you have in place, including how any advisory panels or associated partnership groups are made up

A UKSPF Local Partnership Group has been set up including representatives from the above organisations. The first meeting was held on 27 May.

The Investment Plan will be agreed by Cabinet at a meeting on 20 July 2022.

The Local Partnership Group will also meet on a monthly basis initially with scope to reduce the frequency of meetings over time as necessary. Terms of Reference for the Group have been prepared.

Confirm all MPs covering your lead local authority have been invited to join the local partnership group.

Yes

No [Helen Grant hasn't been invited or even seen the direction of travel]

Are there MPs who are not supportive of your investment plan?

Yes

No

(If Yes) Who are the MPs that are not supportive and outline their reasons why.

PROJECT SELECTION

Are you intending to select projects in any way other than by competition for funding?

Yes

No

(If Yes) Describe your approach to selecting projects, and why you intend to do it this way.

In developing, assessing and approving projects the Council will implement the Fund in four ways:

- grants to public or private organisations

- commissioning third party organisations
- procurement of service provision
- in-house provision

It is assumed that the majority of projects will be delivered through competition for grants or procurement of works but there may be some where this is not the case because they involve existing contracts or can be delivered more appropriately in-house.

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	

Describe any interventions not included in this list?

Not applicable.

Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?

Not applicable.

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
E24 – Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, incubators and accelerators for local enterprise which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services	✓

Describe any interventions not included in this list?

Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?

Sevenoaks District Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council – as members of the West Kent Partnership.

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
--------------	--------------------

<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people	✓
E35 – Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote well-being.	✓
Describe any interventions not included in this list?	
Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?	
Sevenoaks District Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council – as part of the West Kent Partnership.	

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

How have you considered your public sector equality duty in the design of your investment plan?

Interventions and project outlines, have been assessed regarding their appropriateness for inclusion within the Investment Plan. Part of this overall assessment considered our Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 Equality Act 2010), specifically covering the following three aspects of the duty:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Consideration was given to whether the initial project proposals would have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our equality duty. All of the project proposals identified for inclusion within the Investment Plan are considered to have a positive or neutral impact on the three aspects of the duty. In appraisal before delivery the assessment will be reviewed to ensure the proposals deliver

How will you consider your public sector equality duty when implementing your investment plan, including in the selection of projects?

The approach outlined above will be embedded into decision-making when it comes to the appraisal and delivery of projects, be it through the delivery of various grant schemes or the procurement of goods and services. For example, in running the Community Grant Fund, questions will be built into the application forms to ensure that the applicants have policies that eliminate discrimination and advance equality.

RISKS

Have you identified any key risks that could affect delivery, for example lack of staff or expertise?

Yes	No
-----	----

(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.

Risk/Issue - Loss of key staff and difficulty recruiting, creating lack of required skills to deliver the programme. **Mitigation** – Regular review of staff resources and skills via service reviews and regular dialogue with our partners.

Risk/Issue – Further outbreaks of Covid-19 (or similar) that require a change of focus of resources or increased disruption to staffing. **Mitigation** – The Borough Council has built up its business resilience measures in recent years and is now in a strong position to maintain business continuity through any future outbreaks.

Risk/Issue – Inflation increases and gives rise to higher costs than currently envisaged. **Mitigation** – realistic costs have been sourced and will be regularly tracked. In the event of such a change the Borough Council would look to work closely with DLUHC to tweak the programme accordingly.

Risk/Issue – Delivery of materials may be hit by supply chain issues leading to delivery slippage. **Mitigation** - Plans will be monitored regularly and the Borough Council will work closely with DLUHC to manage the impact of any delivery slippage.

Risk/Issue – The political, social or economic environment may change during the course of the investment period leading to misaligned interventions to the changing needs. **Mitigation** – Regular monitoring of priorities and the Borough Council will work closely with DLUHC to manage the impact of any changes.

Have you identified any key fraud risks that could affect UKSPF delivery?

Yes

No

(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.

Risk/Issue – an applicant to one of the proposed grant schemes provides false information in order to fraudulently claim public funds. **Mitigation** – necessary checks will be undertaken in assessing applications to ensure that they are genuine and provide correct information. In addition, funding will only be given to successful applicants once they have provided evidence of project delivery, or in the case of the business start-up support grant, once the business assessment /training /mentoring has been undertaken.

Capacity and capability

In this section, we will ask you about:

- The capacity and capability of your team to manage funding
- The resources you have in place for work related to UKSPF

Your answers here will help us know how to support you with delivery. They will not affect the amount of funding you will get.

Answer as honestly as possible.

TEAM RESOURCE
How many people (FTE) will be put in place to work with UKSPF funding?
<p>Overall Project Management – it is proposed that approximately 1 FTE will be in place to project manage the programme spread across 5 members of staff.</p> <p>In addition a number of Council staff will be engaged across the Council, including but not restricted to Finance and Legal. Service departments are also expected to play a role in advising as appropriate.</p>
Describe what role these people will have, including any seniority and experience.
<p>Director of Finance, Policy & Development (s151 Officer) Will assume overall responsibility for overseeing and authorising the financial side of the UKSPF Investment Plan.</p> <p>Head of Economic Development & Property Will work with the Economic Development Manager to manage and coordinate the appraisal and delivery of the UKSPF Investment Plan.</p> <p>Economic Development Manager Will work with the Head Economic Development & Property to manage and coordinate delivery of the UKSPF Investment Plan.</p> <p>Senior Economic Development Officer To support the work of the Economic Development Manager and take responsibility for delivering and monitoring economic development initiatives.</p> <p>Procurement Manager Will scrutinise the financial conduct, competitive bidding and monitor the delivery of UKSPF projects.</p> <p>Intervention Support and Delivery:</p> <p>Head of Housing, Health & Environment Will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of schemes relating to public and environmental health.</p> <p>Housing Services Manager Will work with the economic development team, Preventive Health Team Leader and partners to deliver or support the delivery of people and skills initiatives linked to housing.</p> <p>Waste & Street Team Leader To deliver or support the delivery of projects relating to recycling.</p> <p>Preventive Health Team Leader To work with partners to deliver project(s) related to E33 and E35 that focus on mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Parks & Sports Centres Team Leader To work to support the delivery of projects relating to the regeneration of sporting facilities and the delivery of public/natural realm improvements in public parks.</p> <p>Health & Safety Advisor To ensure that projects where the responsibility for ensuring health and safety standards sits with the Council are delivered to appropriate health & safety standards.</p> <p>Marketing & Communications Assistant (Economic Development)</p>

To deliver project(s) related to Intervention E17: funding for the development and promotion of the visitor economy.

***West Kent Partnership Manager & Skills Lead**

Delivery of collaborative projects across West Kent.

- Strong capability: Has extensive experience and/or a proven track record of delivery in this area.
- Strong capacity: High degree of confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Some capability: Has previous experience of delivery in this area.
- Some capacity: Confident that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Limited capability: Does not have previous experience and/or no track record of delivery in this area.
- Limited capacity: Limited confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area. Additional resource may be needed to support delivery.

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

How would you describe your team's current experience of delivering funding and managing growth funds?

Very experienced	Some experience	No previous experience
------------------	-----------------	------------------------

How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?

Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------

How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?

Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------

How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for procurement?

Strong capacity	Some capacity	Limited capacity
-----------------	---------------	------------------

How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for subsidies?

Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------

How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for subsidies?

Strong capacity	Some capacity	Limited capacity
-----------------	---------------	------------------

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Communities and Place interventions you have select?

Yes	No
-----	----

How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?

Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------

Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.

The Council considers that it has significant capability to deliver the interventions set out in this Investment Plan. There are no significant concerns relating to internal capacity.

Describe what further support would help address these challenges.

Direct contact/project manager at DLUHC to assist with any issues.

Examples of best practice disseminated over the course of the programme.

How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
It is considered that the Council's team has good capacity to manage the funding for Communities & Place.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
Building in a degree of flexibility within the programme. Access to a dedicated point of contact at DLUHC to discuss any issues as soon as they arise.		

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Supporting Local Business interventions you have select?		
Yes	No	
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
It is considered that the team has significant capability and expertise to deliver the Supporting Local Business interventions outlined in this plan.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
See above.		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
It is considered that the Council's team has good capacity to manage the funding for Communities & Place. The West Kent Project will be managed jointly by officers from the three authorities and the WKP Co-ordinator.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
See above.		

PEOPLE AND SKILLS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the People and Skills interventions you have select?		

Yes	No	
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
<p>The Council Team has good capability and experience to deliver the People & Skills interventions set out in this plan.</p> <p>The Borough Council (along with the West Kent Partnership) has a very good working relationship with the Department for Work and Pensions and training providers, and over the years has delivered a range of successful employability and skills initiatives such as local jobs fairs, community information days and careers events in schools.</p>		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
See above.		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
It is considered that the Team has sufficient capacity to deliver the People & Skills interventions.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
See above.		

SUPPORT TO DELIVERY UKSPF	
<p>All lead authorities can use up to 4% of their UKSPF allocation to support the delivery of their chosen interventions but by exception, lead authorities will be able to use more than 4%. Are you planning to use more than 4%?</p>	
Yes	No
(If Yes) Explain why you wish to use more than 4%.	
Not applicable.	

Approvals

Before submitting your investment plan, you should have approval from your:

- Chief Executive Officer

- Section 151 Officer
- Leader of your lead authority

Do you have approval from your Chief Executive Officer for this investment plan?

- Yes

Do you have approval from your Section 151 Officer for this investment plan?

- Yes

Do you have approval from the leader of your lead authority for this investment plan?

- Yes
- No

If you do not have approval from any of these people, please explain why this is:

Additional documents

You will have received an email giving you access to a folder where you will need to upload supporting evidence to your investment plan. All applicants must complete and upload the following spreadsheet to the folder prior to submitting their investment plan:

- UKSPF Expenditure Profile spreadsheet
- UKSPF Indicative Deliverables spreadsheet

Your investment plan submission will be considered incomplete without the required documents.

Have you completed and uploaded the two spreadsheets to the SharePoint folder as requested?

- Yes
- No