



## REPORT of DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

---

to  
PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE  
28 SEPTEMBER 2023

### UK SHARED AND RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUNDS

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the delivery of Maldon District's UK Shared and Rural England Prosperity Fund allocations.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Committee acknowledges the update provided on Maldon District's UK Shared and Rural England Prosperity fund allocations and continues to monitor the delivery.

#### 3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

##### 3.1 UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- 3.1.1 In 2022, Maldon District received a £1m allocation from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) as part of UK Government's levelling-up agenda.
- 3.1.2 The funding is profiled over three years with an agreed 6% for management and administration costs.

| Funding Year                    | 2022 / 23 | 2023 / 24 | 2024 / 25 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Maldon District<br>(£1,000,000) | £59,019   | £118,038  | £822,942  |

- 3.1.3 As per the report provided to the Committee on 15 June, due to Government delays, a request was submitted to re-profile the £50,165.80 underspend from 2022/2023 to the current financial year. This request was approved.
- 3.1.4 **APPENDIX 1** sets out the projects being delivered via funding over the three-year period. Projects continue to be delivered on time and within tolerance despite delays in receiving funding.
- 3.1.5 Where projects are not being progressed due to feasibility, funding will be reallocated to other existing projects within the investment plan. With the current economic climate, and the cost of doing business increasing, it is prudent to ensure all projects align to our Corporate Plan and deliver its priorities.
- 3.1.6 To date, £168,307.41 has been committed to progression of projects and agreed costs for management and administration.

## 3.2 Rural England Prosperity Fund

- 3.2.1 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) prospectus in September 2022. The prospectus confirmed that Maldon District had been allocated £430,328 to be spent by March 2025.
- 3.2.2 The REPF is integrated into the UKSPF which supports productivity and prosperity in places that need it most. For eligible local authorities, the REPF is a rural top-up to UKSPF allocations. It supports activities that specifically address the challenges rural areas face. It is complementary to funding used to support rural areas under the UKSPF.
- 3.2.3 As agreed at Strategy and Resources Committee on 10 November 2022. The development of the investment plan was delegated to Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance (Director of Strategy and Resources) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee.
- 3.2.4 The submitted investment plan was approved by DEFRA and confirmed support for:

### **Supporting Local Businesses**

Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises.

### **Supporting Rural Communities**

Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects.

Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.

- 3.2.5 Unlike UKSPF, the Council does not receive any additional management and administration funding to support delivery. Officers proactively secured additional funding from Magnox for management and administration over a two-year period. This funding has facilitated the Council in partnering with the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) and ensuring organisations have a dedicated resource to support them making applications.
- 3.2.6 Officers are working with RCCE to develop the eligibility and awarding criteria for funding with programme expected to open in Autumn 2023.

## 4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 UKSPF and REPF continue to present a significant opportunity for the District to support, through direct investment, in our economy, businesses and communities.

## 5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

### 5.1 Supporting our communities

- 5.1.1 The UKSPF will support the UK government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the levelling up objectives, two of which are 'Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost' and 'Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency'.

## 5.2 **Enhancing and connecting our place**

5.2.1 The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns to the 'Promote civic pride in place and improve environmental quality' aspect of this priority.

## 5.3 **Helping the economy to thrive**

5.3.1 UKSPF delivery is delivering the Supporting Local Business engagement programme under this priority.

5.3.2 REPF will provide direct capital grants to eligible applicant businesses within the District.

## 5.4 **Smarter finances**

5.4.1 Ensuring UKSPF is spent sustainably for the benefit of the District directly supports this priority.

## 5.5 **A greener future**

5.5.1 Projects within the UKSPF investment plan will directly support the authority's Climate Action Strategy and yearly Climate Action Plan.

5.5.2 REPF will provide direct capital grants to eligible organisations within the District for rural circular economy projects.

## 6. **IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Any project delivered will be designed to enable community groups and businesses to engage with to ensure there is significant customer benefit from its outputs.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Projects will be delivered in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Should projects not progress as anticipated, future spend is at risk, so it is vital that activity is aligned and adequately reported to the funder to ensure compliance. The Council faces increased reputation risk if it fails to deliver to the expectations of stakeholders.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The authority has agreement to use 6% of its revenue allocation to support the management and administration of the UKSPF programme. However, with the cost of doing business and supply chain pressures increasing it will be prudent to regularly assess pipeline projects to ensure viability and value for money.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – The coordination work for UKSPF and REPF work will be undertaken by the Lead Specialist Prosperity for the remainder of their contract. The delivery will be reviewed and reallocated as necessary afterwards. Project delivery is being well supported by resources drawn from the wider organisation and a Project Delivery Group with clear Terms of Reference has been developed.

### Background Papers:

[Rural England Prosperity Fund Prospectus](#)

[Strategy and Resources Committee 10 November 2022 – Rural England Prosperity Fund](#)

Enquiries to: Leanda Cable, Lead Specialist Prosperity