

# Agenda

## Economy and Property Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 9 April 2025

Time 7.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Monique Bonney (Chair), Hayden Brawn, Derek Carnell, Ann Cavanagh, Lloyd Chapman, Shelley Cheesman, Simon Clark, Alex Eyre, Peter Marchington, Kieran Mishchuk, Lee-Anne Moore, Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair), Terry Thompson, Mark Tucker and Ashley Wise.

Quorum = 5

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Pages

### Recording and Privacy Notice

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- (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 30 January 2025 (Minute Nos. 594 – 602) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends.

The Chair will ask Members if they have any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) or disclosable non-pecuniary interests (DNPIs) to declare in respect of items on the agenda. Members with a DPI in an item must leave the room for that item and may not participate in the debate or vote.

Aside from disclosable interests, where a fair-minded and informed observer would think there was a real possibility that a Member might be biased or predetermined on an item, the Member should declare this and leave the room while that item is considered.

Members who are in any doubt about interests, bias or predetermination should contact the monitoring officer for advice prior to the meeting.

- |    |                                                    |         |
|----|----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 5. | Procurement of Provision of RNLI Lifeguard Service | 5 - 12  |
| 6. | Land rear of Guildhall, Queenborough - Disposal    | 13 - 22 |
| 7. | UKSPF 2025/26                                      | 23 - 34 |
| 8. | Forward Decisions Plan                             | 35 - 36 |
| 9. | Exclusion of the Press and Public                  |         |

To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the following item:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

**Issued on Monday, 31 March 2025**

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**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,  
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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<b>Economy &amp; Property Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	9 April 2025
<b>Report Title</b>	Procurement of Provision of RNLI Lifeguard Service
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Mike Knowles, Seafront and Engineering Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That the Committee approves the awarding of the Beach Lifeguarding Contract to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025 for a period of 5 Years at a predicted total value of £295,733

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The previous contract for the Provision of Lifeguard Services by Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) ran from 1 April 2017 to 31 December 2024, and included a 2-year extension to the contract term from 31 December 2022.
- 1.2 This report seeks Committee approval for the new five-year contract to be awarded to the RNLI through the publishing of a Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency (VEAT) Notice .

## 2 Background

- 2.1. The RNLI is the market leader on providing beach lifeguards in the UK. RNLI lifeguards are qualified in lifesaving and casualty care, highly trained, strong, and fit. They must be able to swim 200m in under 3 ½ minutes and run 200m on sand in under 40 seconds. It is worth noting that the qualification for beach lifeguarding is significantly enhanced on the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ).
- 2.2 RNLI lifeguards monitor sea conditions and set up the appropriate flags, watch visitors to the beach and offer safety advice to beach users. All RNLI lifeguards are equipped not only with the best training but the best equipment enabling them to deal with any situation.
- 2.3 The contract has previously covered the provision of lifeguard services on our three bathing beaches at Leysdown, Minster and Sheerness, but in recent years a lack of suitable recruits has meant we have had to reduce cover to two beaches. Minster beach was selected based on having a lower risk rating than the other beaches, backed up by data in the annual reports from RNLI. In the absence of local recruitment, the RNLI have had to cover Swale’s lifeguarding service by bringing in resources from other areas, which has had significant travel implications in moving staff from Thanet to Swale on a daily basis.

- 2.4 Due to the requirement for specialist training and observation of best practice in lifeguarding principles and all applicable law and regulations, it is deemed most appropriate to issue a VEAT Notice to award the contract to the RNLI. This will set out an intention to award the contract direct to the RNLI and will be published on Find a Tender.
- 2.5 Despite numerous attempts, Swale have been unable to source suitable alternative organisations or contractors to deliver this specialist service, and as such this was agreed as the most appropriate route. When undertaken for the previous contract, no appeals or challenges were lodged against the VEAT Notice.
- 2.6 The tender award criteria for the contract would have been based on a 60% price and 40% quality weighting, but with no other organisations submitting a tender it is proposed to issue a direct contract award. Another important consideration of using the RNLI is the fact that as a charity they provide a substantial amount of financial assistance to the provision of the lifeguarding service equipment, and local authorities pay a contribution towards the staff costs only through the contract. This is how you see the considerable lifeguard huts, powered watercraft, and lifesaving equipment for a low cost.
- 2.7 Performance of the previous contract has been strong. Their provision of staffing and equipment is unrivalled, they regularly report to SBC officers through contract meetings and there have been no major accidents under their stewardship.
- 2.8 Having a lifeguarding service is a key part of the Blue Flag criteria.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to approve the awarding of the Beach Lifeguarding Contract to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for a period of five years.

### **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 As detailed above, due to the specialist nature of the lifeguarding service, alternative service providers have not been identified through our market research. The majority of neighbouring local authorities use the services of the RNLI, except for a neighbouring authority who run an in-house service covering two beaches. This is possible due to the significant size of their Coastal Team. Whilst no detailed analysis of costs has been undertaken at this time, the budget shortfall to run a like for like in-house service would be considerably more than the budget shortfall for the RNLI contract option. Full details of the cost calculations can be found in Appendix I, but in summary the shortfall for an in-house service over 5 years is estimated as £402,211. There is currently no

resource or funding identified for the option of an in-house service, so if members were to choose this option, this would need to be identified through the budget setting process. There is also the risk that an in-house service would be likely to worsen recruitment rates, which would ultimately put the service in danger.

- 4.2 It should also be noted that the costs to the neighbouring authority are revenue costs, and for a similar in-house service to be provided in Swale we would also require an upfront capital programme to provide the lifeguarding huts and lifesaving equipment.
- 4.3 The previous pandemic, and the substantial challenges it presented which led to no lifeguard service for a season, highlighted that there are no suitable alternative service providers who can deliver this specialist provision, and whilst a security company was able to provide staff presence on our beaches during this time, they were clearly not trained or equipped to the high standard of the RNLI and would not have been in a position to provide a reactive service to emergency water or coast-based situations.
- 4.4 Using alternative service providers would result in a substantial increase in costs to the local authority, as all costs would need to be met.
- 4.5 We could cease to operate a lifeguarding service completely. Whilst not a statutory service, the lack of beach lifeguards would bring an increased risk to the authority as was seen recently with other Councils that did not provide the service. It would almost inevitably stop the Council from applying for Blue Flags at the beaches.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 A meeting has taken place with Officers of Swale Borough Council, including the appropriate Head of Service, and a range of representatives at the RNLI to discuss current and future lifeguarding arrangements for our bathing beaches in Swale. Whilst current staff resources within the RNLI can only cover two of our bathing beaches, the contract does cover lifeguarding of the third beach in Minster if suitable recruitment is achieved.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications																
Corporate Plan	Appointing a trusted and nationally recognised charity such as the RNLI who meets a good quality standard and provides good value for money contributes towards all the corporate priorities as it ensures that the lifeguarding provision is undertaken in a professional and effective way. Corporate Plan objective to implement the visitor economy framework to increase investment, address new visitor demands and grow the value of the sector to the Swale economy.																
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The anticipated spend on the five-year contract is as follows, and further information can be found in Appendix I.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="495 745 1315 1123"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="495 745 917 808">Financial Yr</th> <th data-bbox="917 745 1315 808">RNLI Contract Costs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 808 917 850">2025/26</td> <td data-bbox="917 808 1315 850">£55,703</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 850 917 892">2026/27</td> <td data-bbox="917 850 1315 892">£57,374</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 892 917 934">2027/28</td> <td data-bbox="917 892 1315 934">£59,095</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 934 917 976">2028/29</td> <td data-bbox="917 934 1315 976">£60,868</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 976 917 1018">2029/30</td> <td data-bbox="917 976 1315 1018">£62,694</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 1018 917 1071"></td> <td data-bbox="917 1018 1315 1071"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 1071 917 1123"><b>TOTAL VALUE</b></td> <td data-bbox="917 1071 1315 1123"><b>£295,733</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It should be noted that these calculations are based on the annual RPI and have used predicted figures for future years. These figures give a total anticipated spend on the five-year contract of £295,733.</p> <p>The annual shortfall against budget will be covered by savings in other areas of the service.</p> <p>As stated above, the figures are contributions to the RNLI towards the total cost of providing this service.</p> <p>The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended (“TUPE”) do not apply to this contract.</p>	Financial Yr	RNLI Contract Costs	2025/26	£55,703	2026/27	£57,374	2027/28	£59,095	2028/29	£60,868	2029/30	£62,694			<b>TOTAL VALUE</b>	<b>£295,733</b>
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Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The provision of lifeguarding on our bathing beaches is a non-statutory service</p> <p>The contract has been drawn up by the RNLI to ensure consistency nationally and has been checked and approved by Mid Kent Legal Services and Finance.</p>																



	The contract is within the scope of Swale's Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
Crime and Disorder	Lifeguards play a role in reducing anti-social behaviour management at our beaches.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified
Health and Wellbeing	The lifeguarding service provides a safer environment for both visitors and residents using the beach facilities at our bathing beaches, by providing fully trained and well-equipped staff on patrol on our beaches during the summer season.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	All lifeguards are DBS checked by the RNLI as part of their recruitment and training procedures. The RNLI have provided an updated Safeguarding Policy within their contract, which is currently being reviewed by Swale's Safeguarding Officer. Any required amendments to the policy will be discussed and agreed through the continued communications with RNLI prior to signing the contract.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	As part of the contract, the RNLI undertake a detailed Risk Assessment of every patrolled beach at the beginning of each season to identify and assess the risks posed by potential hazards and specify a series of control measures to mitigate against the identified risks. This helps the Council to measure and understand the risks on our beaches.
Equality and Diversity	None identified
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified

## 7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix I – Cost calculations for in-house service and RNLI contract costs

## 8 Background Documents

8.1 None.

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**Cost Calculations for In-House Lifeguarding Service Compared with RNLI Contract Costs**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>RNLI Contract Costs</b>	<b>Inhouse Service Costs</b>
2025/26	£55,703	£129,646
2026/27	£57,374	£133,535
2027/28	£59,095	£137,541
2028/29	£60,868	£141,667
2029/30	£62,694	£145,917
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£295,733</b>	<b>£688,307</b>

\* 25/26 contract costs are actuals with future years based on inflation estimates

\*\* In-house service costs based on revenue only and do not include cost of capital purchases (equipment etc.)

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<b>Economy and Property Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
<b>Report Title</b>	Land Rear of Queenborough Guildhall
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson, Head Place Services
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Kieren Mansfield, Strategic Programmes and Asset Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Part Exempt</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To delegate to the Head of Place to negotiate and agree terms of the disposal of the parcel of land known as Land rear of Queenborough Guildhall, to include the transfer of the Guildhall and 44 High Street, to Queenborough Town Council, within a 12 month period.</li> <li>2. To delegate the enactment of this disposal to the Head of Place, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services.</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 It is government policy that local authorities should dispose of surplus and under-used land and property wherever possible. This report recommends the disposal of the Land rear of Queenborough Guildhall alongside 44 High Street and the Queenborough Guildhall to Queenborough Town Council (QTC), as shown on the attached plans (Appendix I).
- 1.2 SBC's adopted Property Asset Strategy sets out the requirement to:
- “Make it a priority that the Council only retain land and property where it makes strategic or financial sense to do so. This should be to deliver services in line with corporate priorities, to generate income, to provide a return on investment, to enable regeneration or to provide social value.”*
- 1.3 The report sets out why officers recommend that negotiating a disposal as per the recommendation would be in line with this policy.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The Land to the rear of Queenborough Guildhall (plan at Appendix I) lies adjacent to Pipsqueaks Nursery on North Road and comprises a rectangular shaped parcel of land with an area of approximately 350sqm. It has been

vacant for a number of years and is currently in a poor state with vegetation and the remains of a metal frame building.

- 2.2 In 2019 Heads of Terms were agreed for a 25-year lease on much of the site with Queenborough Rowing Club (QRC). This would have in turn released the Club's existing council owned site, which also offered potential for development, with a Cabinet decision (25th September 2019) to dispose of this via auction should the rowing club move.
- 2.3 However, due to a range of issues QRC has confirmed it is not in a position to proceed. Consequently, the triggers for considering a disposal are met.
- 2.4 There are some complications to affect a disposal. The title of the site is split, with the majority falling into a title incorporating Queenborough Guildhall, which is occupied by Queenborough Town Council. A proportion of the site would also need to be retained to allow access to the rear of Queenborough Guildhall for access and maintenance.
- 2.5 Of the 350sq m it is estimated that circa 270sq m of the land could be disposed of for a meaningful use.
- 2.6 **Exempt (Appendix III)**
- 2.7 There have been a number of approaches to officers from interested parties, for commercial use or development. Swale Borough Council (SBC) has also been approached by QTC as to the possibility of it securing the site.
- 2.8 At present QTC occupies a number of rooms within Queenborough Guildhall and the adjacent 44 High Street, under licence from Swale Borough Council. QTC are now struggling for space and the approach regarding the land is driven by a need to create more room for storage and the operation of a foodbank. A more detailed proposal setting out the proposed terms for occupation, use, any planned development and community benefit is required from QTC but discussions to date have indicated an interest in the whole site.
- 2.9 Assuming members support the disposal of the land, it would be usual for the Council to take the site to open market, to meet its obligation to secure the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained.
- 2.10 However, the approach from QTC does offer potential advantages that may outweigh the likely capital receipt. Subject to agreeing terms with QTC, the land could be part of a wider transaction involving the transfer of the Guildhall and 44 High Street, Queenborough to QTC (titles are shown at Appendix II).
- 2.11 This is something that QTC has expressed an interest in and offers a number of potential advantages for both parties, including simplifying and consolidating the property holdings; providing certainty for QTC over its occupation and future service delivery; enabling local control and stewardship of a heritage asset and reducing current and future management, maintenance and insurance liabilities to Swale Borough Council.

## 2.12 – 2.13 Exempt (Appendix III)

### **3 Proposal**

- 3.1 To delegate to the Head of Place to negotiate and agree terms of the disposal of the parcel of land known as Land rear of Queenborough Guildhall, to include the transfer of the Guildhall and 44 High Street to Queenborough Town Council, within a 12-month period.
- 3.2 To delegate the enactment of this disposal to the Head of Place, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services

### **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 To place the developable site to the rear of the Guildhall on the open market for freehold sale or lease, leaving the option for QTC to let the land remaining. This option should be considered if negotiations over the proposed land consolidation with QTC fail to progress. If the site were to be sold on the open market, then the Council could have the option to seek planning permission in advance, for example for residential. Whilst this may enhance the sale value, the cost of securing planning permission would need to be met by the Council and could be significant.
- 4.2 This option is not recommended for progression at this point. Although it would generate a capital receipt for SBC it would not reduce the ongoing liabilities relating to the Guildhall and 44 High Street that the land consolidation would, or deliver the benefits set out in 2.10. It would also not resolve QTC's requirement for additional space to facilitate services it provides to the local community.
- 4.3 To agree in principle to let all the land to QTC, with Heads of Terms to be agreed. It is assumed this would be at a reduced rate, through either the application of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Letting Policy or a Community Asset Transfer, based on the stated, intended use. This is not recommended as it would fail to deliver the overall benefits of consolidating the land holdings. Without these benefits, taking the surplus land to the open market would be the Council's starting position to meet its overriding duty, under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, to obtain the best consideration that can be reasonably obtained for the disposal
- 4.4 This option is not recommended for progression at this point as it would result in the council retaining the liabilities associated to the Guildhall and 44 High Street and would not generate a substantial rent or capital receipt to offset these.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed Considered and Rejected

- 5.1 There have been no formal consultations on this proposal, outside of discussion with Queenborough Town Council. The Land to the rear of the Guildhall is currently of no beneficial use and disposal of it as proposed would bring potential benefits to the community.
- 5.2 if the recommendations outlined in this report are agreed by Members then further negotiation with QTC will be required.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>Any proposed transaction with QTC could support the Community priority to “Work in partnership with the local towns and parishes and voluntary sector on our community assets – e.g., playgrounds, sports pitches and pavilions, community halls”.</p> <p>Disposal of the site on the open market would generate a capital receipt that would support the Council’s wider financial position.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Whilst the proposal would potentially forgoe a capital receipt, the proposal looks to reduce the Council’s future liabilities which would potentially exceed the benefit of such, over time.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The Council has fairly wide discretion to dispose of its property assets. When disposing of assets, the Council is subject to statutory provisions, in particular, to the overriding duty, under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, to obtain the best consideration that can be reasonably obtained for the disposal. This duty is subject to certain exceptions that are set out in the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.</p> <p>The council has the option to disregard the requirement for best consideration if the transaction is valued at under £2 million and if the disposal is in support of the council's key priorities and strategic goals.</p> <p>Legal will be required to draft relevant contracts with instructions from Place Services.</p> <p>Any future development proposals for the site would be subject to planning permission.</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>The property remaining vacant and unused will possibly be a target for anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. A disposal to allow beneficial use will remove this risk.</p>



Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	An unoccupied and underused site is at odds with the council's strategic goals and adopted Property Asset Strategy. Any future planning consent would need to meet the Bio-diversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements and ensure that the appearance and setting of heritage assets is preserved and where possible enhanced.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The proposal reduces the Council's risk in terms of holding a vacant and degrading property.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Site Plan
- Appendix II: Title Plans
- Appendix III Exempt Items

## 8 Background Papers

None

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# Land rear of Queenborough Guildhall

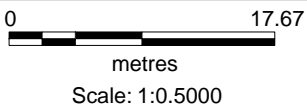
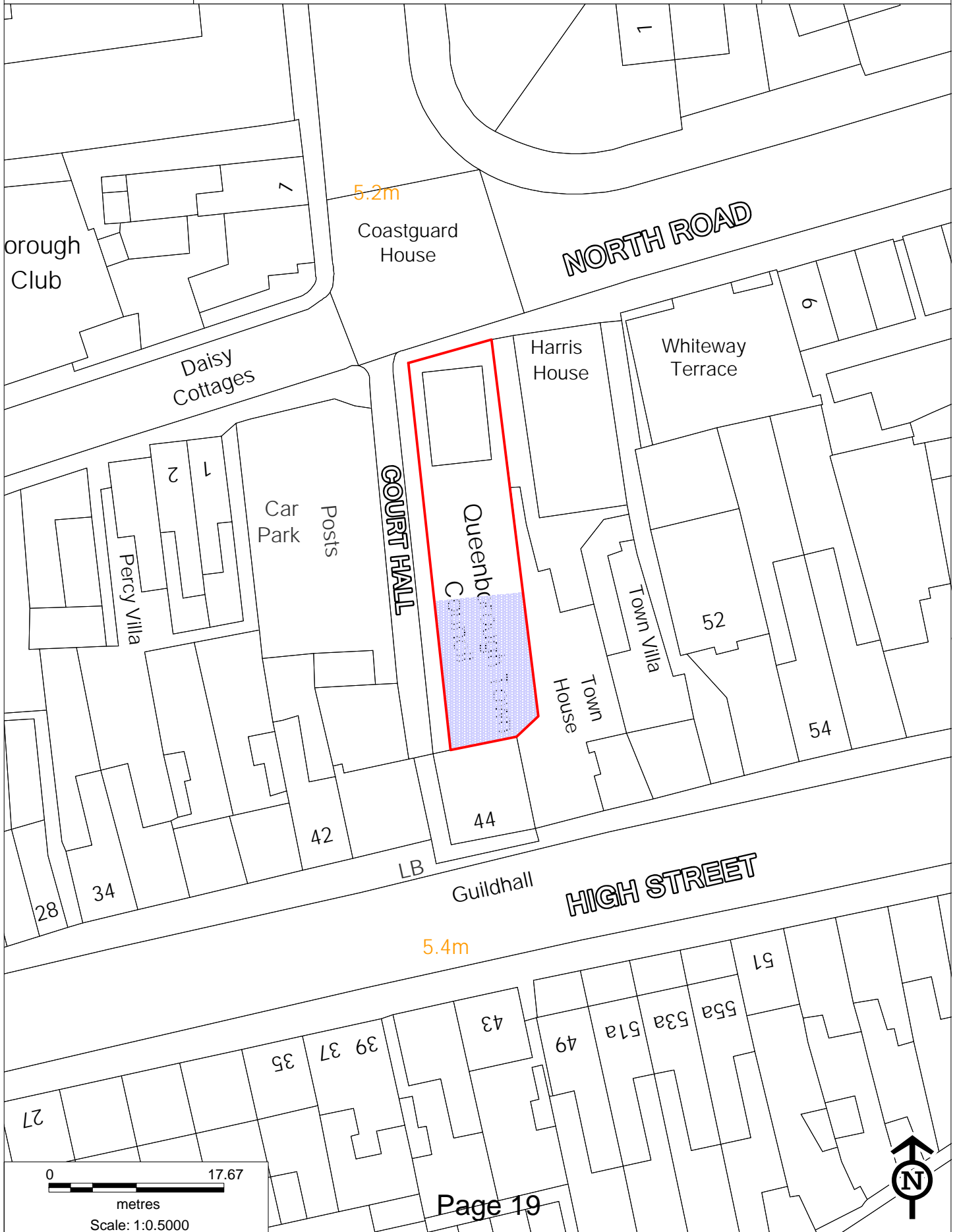
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Date:  
13/08/19

Scale:  
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Address  
North Road  
Queenborough

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<b>Economy and Property Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
<b>Report Title</b>	UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025/26 - Delivery
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson, Head of Place
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Kieren Mansfield, Strategic Programmes and Asset Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To agree the outline scheme of delivery for projects through the 2025/26 allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund, as set out at Appendix I.</li> <li>2. To agree that a Prosperity Fund Member Working Group is continued, as per the updated terms of reference at Appendix II.</li> <li>3. That the Head of Place is given delegated authority to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approve grants to third parties (following an application and assessment process)</li> <li>• make changes to the programme as required. This will be in consultation with the Prosperity Fund Member Working Group where these are material changes as defined by Government and where individual projects cannot proceed or are to be significantly reduced in scale by more than 50%.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for the management of funding allocated, or to be allocated, to Swale Borough Council for 2025/26 through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The proposals have been informed by discussion with the existing Prosperity Fund Member Working Group.
- 1.2 At the time of writing the Council awaits confirmation as to the value and terms of funding allocated to Swale Borough Council through the Rural England Prosperity

Fund (REPF). This is a fund specific to identified rural communities identified by DEFRA, but with management and monitoring aligned to the UKSPF.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) were established by Government in 2022/23 and, broadly, are replacements for European Structural and Investment Funds. Swale Borough Council received initial funding allocations from both funds of £1,169,496 and £502,995 respectively for the period 2022- 2025.
- 2.2 Funding received for 2022-2025 had to be spent and projects delivered by 31 March 2025. There was no provision for the rollover of funds into 2025-26. At the time of writing, remaining funds were negligible.
- 2.3 The Government announced the extension of support available through the UKSPF in December 2024. Swale Borough Council's UKSPF allocation for 2025/26 is £554,150, to be used to support investment in activities from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Of this, a minimum of £70,639 must be used for capital. Funding.
- 2.4 It has also been confirmed that that REPF funding is also to continue, with an allocation received at the end of March for £150,886. This is for capital investment only and will have geographical limitations, excluding urban Sittingbourne.
- 2.5 Unlike the previous 3-year funding allocations, Government does not require local authorities to submit an investment plan. Instead, it has asked for an update on plans to be provided alongside the monitoring report to be submitted by the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025. The Council has received an updated Memorandum of Understanding, to be followed by a grant determination letter, including a payment schedule, at the beginning of the 2025-26 financial year.
- 2.6 The government has amended the guidance for the funding, including an updated list of outputs and outcomes that has been recently published. Overall, these changes have made only very limited change to the eligible activity that funds can be spent on. Projects remain under three headline investment priorities; Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills.
- 2.7 Based on what will be submitted in May, the published guidance requires Government approval to be sought where a 'material change' to the programme is needed. This is defined as a single reprofiling of funding from one UKSPF investment priority to another, of more than 30%.
- 2.8 The table at appendix I sets out a list of recommended projects for inclusion within the UKSPF and REPF programme for 2025/26. This has been derived from a wider list based on suggestions that have come forward through service areas of the Council and approaches made to the Council from outside organisations.



- 2.8 The projects and funding identified in the list looks to take account of the (assumed) available funding; the geographical balance of how specific projects are distributed (where not Borough-wide) and a set of principles discussed and agreed by the cross-party Prosperity Fund Member Working Group, which included
- Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities
  - Contribution to Pride in Place
  - Continuity benefits:
    - building on the lessons and achievements of the previous programme.
    - creating a community legacy, and looking to the next funding period
- 2.9 For the programme operating from 2022-2025, management of the Swale UKSPF and REPF funded programmes has been through delegated authority to the Head of Place, supported by a Prosperity Fund Member Working Group. This has focused on monitoring and provides input on material changes to the programme, both as defined by Government (as at 2.7) and where individual projects cannot proceed or are likely to be significantly reduced in scale, by more than 50%.
- 2.10 These arrangements have to date worked well and maintained a level of flexibility that has allowed the Council to respond to changes in circumstances, within a time limited funding programme.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 To agree the outline scheme of delivery for projects through the 2025/26 allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, as set out at Appendix I.
- 3.2 To agree that a Prosperity Fund Member Working Group is continued, as per the updated terms of reference at Appendix II
- 3.3 To agree that the Head of Place is given delegated authority to
- approve grants to third parties (following an application and assessment process)
  - make changes to the programme as required. This will be in in consultation with the Prosperity Fund Member Working Group where these are material changes as defined by Government and where individual projects cannot proceed or are to be significantly reduced in scale by more than 50%.

### **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The value of projects put forward exceeds the value of the (assumed) funding available and there are a range of configurations for a programme that could be

made within this. The choices presented reflect the views of officers and the Member Working Group as a set of deliverables that are the most advantageous and that meet the requirements of the funding.

- 4.2 Do not involve members in the management of the programme. This is not recommended. The Prosperity Fund Member Working Group input through the 2022-25 programme has provided a clear political steer where needed, particularly in respect of material changes to the programme.
- 4.3 Do not form a Prosperity Fund Member Working Group and make decisions through the Economy and Property Committee. This is not recommended as this would not provide the agility to respond to issues in a timely fashion, given the time limits on use of the funding available.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The UKSPF and REPF project proposals were derived from internal consultation across service areas of the Council in line with the Corporate Plan and reflect approaches that have been made by outside organisations. These have been reviewed by the established Prosperity Fund Member Working Group.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan identifies delivery of economic development through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) as a priority action. Individual projects cut across many of the Corporate Plan Priorities
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The UKSPF does not require any match funding, but implementation of this and REPF will require significant officer time across a number of service areas. The funding allocated to support this has been increased within the proposed programme for 2025/26, seeking full cost recovery for a key post in its co-ordination and monitoring. This will be contained within the existing staff resource, making use of the knowledge and experience gained in the previous funding period.</p> <p>Whilst the funding allocations have been made there may be some delay in its receipt during 2025/26.</p> <p>Projects would need to be monitored for any potential overrun on spend and managed within the confines of the agreed funding allocation within the programme.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	All activity identified within the proposed programme of activity is non-statutory but with Prosperity Funds seeking to add value to core activity.

	<p>It may be necessary to undertake procurements to deliver the priorities. Any procurement, whether by an outside body or directly through Swale Borough Council, will need to comply with Contract Standing Orders and are anticipated to be of a value that falls within officer delegations.</p> <p>Compliance with subsidy control will be required and where required legal advice will be sought. Grant programmes will need to ensure recipients declare their position in respect of receipt of other public funds, subsidy control, and other relevant regulatory considerations. Claw back provisions will be made in grant agreements with third parties, where proportionate.</p>
Crime and Disorder	Some projects within the proposed programme provide specific benefits to reducing crime and the fear of crime.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The UKSPF prospectus indicates that overall investment should demonstrate contribution to net zero and nature recovery objectives. Specific interventions within the UKSPF Programme will support this
Health and Wellbeing	Specific interventions within the proposed UKSPF Programme will support this
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	<p>The primary risks are associated with the management of budgets, outputs and outcomes within the funding that has been made available, up to the deadline of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2026. It is anticipated that there will be no opportunity to roll funds into the following financial year.</p> <p>The Council will be required to provide detailed monitoring reports on spend, outputs and outcomes to government every 6 months. Monitoring and project management will identify the need to accelerate or make makes changes within the programme of activity.</p> <p>Compliance with subsidy control and any procurement and other rules set around the funding will also be necessary.</p> <p>Grant funding to third parties will have agreements that specify the rules that will need to be adhered to and the expectations in terms of outputs, outcomes, data collection and reporting. Grant agreements will make provision for the recovery of money where delivery has not take place.</p>
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- **Appendix I** – UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund outline proposals for 2025/26
- **Appendix II** – Draft Terms of Reference for the Prosperity Funds Member Working Group

## 8 Background Papers

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114122/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus-2022.pdf)
- Rural England Prosperity Fund Prospectus [Rural England Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114123/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus-2022.pdf)
- Report to Regeneration and Property Committee, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, July 2022
- Report to Regeneration and Property Committee, Rural England Prosperity Fund, September 2022
- Report to Regeneration and Property Committee, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Delivery, January 2023

## Appendix I UKSPF and REPF Outline proposals for 2025/26

Project	Funding 2025/26	Description	Principles Met	Government Theme/Sub-theme
Contribution to Administration @8.5%	£46,500	Contribution to administration costs as set by Government	Use to partially offset costs of staff monitoring and managing overarching programme	n/a
<b>Community and Place</b>				
Contribution to delivery of the Levelling up Fund	£25,000	Contribution to the delivery of a priority project and offsetting potential overrun on spend, beyond the LUF grant. Funding level could be increased in the event of underspend elsewhere in programme and/or increased REPF allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Thriving Places Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
Works at Bartons Point and Shingle Bank	£25,000	Funding for removal of the concrete blocks, repairs to surfacing, improved signage, CCTV unit, safety barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
Enhanced carbon reduction measures at leisure centres	£102,036	Investing in carbon reduction measures will help us save on operating costs and contribute to climate emergency targets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swallows - £40,000</li> <li>• Sheerness Pool/HLC- £ 32,036</li> <li>• Faversham Pools - £30,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
Swallows Leisure centre – wet-side changing room improvements	£60,000	Condition surveys have indicated the need for investment to improve customer experience. Would be a great time to do it ahead of letting the new leisure contract as may help increase value of tenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
Enhanced lighting at seafront locations	£10,000	Enhanced LED lighting along promenade and seafront areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	
Improvements to Oare Gunpowder Works Visitor centre	£60,000	Potential to make premises more attractive to concession. Maintain visitor centre as a relevant attraction and enhance the toilet provision for the venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Thriving Places
Public toilets	£40,000	Capital for improvements following member decision on review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities Thriving Places
Work to support Asset Transfers	£30,000	Could support capacity to undertake legal and professional work to facilitate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
Continued support of Swale Community Voluntary Alliance	£20,000	Ongoing support to continue to develop a more effective network within which local CVS organisations can work together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
Contribution to Swale CVS project delivery TBD	£15,000	Support for the recruitment and training of volunteers across the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
Loneliness Project	£40,000	The project will improve residents' health & wellbeing by preventing loneliness and reduce health inequalities in the borough. First year start-up funding for 3-year programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> <li>• Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
Community Infrastructure Grants	£140,000	Small capital grants scheme to improve community facilities inc. carbon reduction measures and digital connectivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>• Contribution to Pride in Place</li> </ul>	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities

		£40,000 UKSPF (urban Sittingbourne) £90,000 REPF (rest of Borough)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	
<b>Support for business</b>			•	
Swale House	£10,000	Estimate to improve first floor of Swale House for occupation through IT installation to support multi-occupier use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Support for business Business Sites and Premises
Neptune Terrace – further improvements to prepare for letting	£20,000	Heating installed, access improvements and further internal works. Improve facility for letting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Support for business Business Sites and Premises
<b>People and Skills</b>				
Continued support of the Pyramid Project	£72,000	Revenue funding to support ongoing 1-2-1 support of NEETs on the Isle of Sheppey, with Pyramid Project being the only remaining organisation to do so. Funding level assumes full year support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting agreed Corporate Priorities</li> <li>Continuity benefits</li> </ul>	Employability and Skills – support people who are or at risk of becoming NEET
<b>Total</b>	<b>£705,036</b>			

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## Appendix 2

<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b>	Prosperity Funds (UKSPF and REPF) – Member Working Group
<b>CHAIRPERSON</b>	Chair – Chair of the Economy and Property Committee
<b>MEMBERSHIP:</b>	One representative from each political group from the Economy and Property Committee, inclusive of the Chair. Substitutes to represent the relevant group can be nominated as required.
<b>PURPOSE AND OPERATION OF THE WORKING GROUP</b>	<p>The Member Working Group will meet and/or review papers to consider and advise the Head of Place regarding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The detailed, local eligibility criteria for any grant schemes</li> <li>2. Material changes to the programme, defined as follows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving funding between investment priorities if the change involves moving 30% or more of the total funding allocation</li> <li>• Removing or substantially reducing the scale of a project by more than 50% within the programme and redeploying the funding within the programme</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The 6-monthly substantive monitoring of the programme, to be made to Government</li> </ol> <p>The Member Working Group will be asked to review any proposed course of action as required, either via email correspondence or a meeting.</p> <p>As a minimum, a programme review and update meeting will take place on 6 monthly basis, in line with the reporting timetable provided by Government. The review meeting will take place in advance of the submission of the substantive 6 monthly monitoring report to Government.</p>
<b>CONDUCT OF MEETING:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Papers relevant to the matter will be circulated at least 3 days prior to a decision deadline and/or meeting wherever possible.</li> <li>2. Notes of any meetings will be circulated within 2 weeks of the meeting.</li> <li>3. Officers or Members named for actions in the notes will update the group on progress against these tasks.</li> <li>4. Should any Member of the working group have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in a project to be considered, this will be declared and they will not participate in this part of the discussion.</li> <li>5. Where recommendations are to be made, the group will seek to achieve this by consensus or by a clear majority view. Where no clear majority view is reached the mix of views will be considered by the Head of Place and the Chair, and a course of action determined.</li> </ol>

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**Economy and Property Committee Forward Decisions Plan – April 2025**

<b>Report title, background information and recommendation(s)</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Open or exempt</b>	<b>Lead Officer and report author</b>
Bourne Place / Princes Street – contract award	TBC	Part Exempt	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Kieren Mansfield
Great East Hall – future of land	TBC (not before January 2026)	Part Exempt	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Kieren Mansfield
Old Library – review of disposal decision (was previously named as 44 Trinity Road – future of property)	TBC (not before August 2026)	Part Exempt	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Kieren Mansfield
VCS Lettings Policy - Refresh	TBC	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author:

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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