

Matters Arising – Appendix 2

Sheerness Town Centre Regeneration

Levelling-Up Fund bid:

The £20m LUF bid, known as “Sheerness Revival” was submitted to government in advance of the 2nd August deadline (postponed by government from the original deadline of 6th July). The bid consists of three complementary regeneration projects:

1. Beachfields - upgraded and expanded health, wellbeing, community, leisure and visitor facilities will be supported by public realm improvements, in particular from the train station to the site. This includes relocating an expanded GP offer to the ground floor, and the addition of soft play, TAGActive and a new cafeteria on the ground floor, as well as adventure golf outside.
2. Sheppey College extension – the College will expand on to the adjacent car park, delivering new creative & digital and Junior College teaching facilities alongside additional adult and community learning.
3. Masters House workspace - The conversion and environmental upgrade of the main house currently being delivered would be supported by LUF investment in the studios to the rear, supporting local business and job creation.

We expect to hear during the autumn whether our bid has been successful. Swale’s priority 1 status puts our bid in a strong position (all local authorities were allocated to one of three bands according to levelling-up potential: Swale is in the highest band).

High Streets Task Force:

The work with the High Street Task Force (HSTF) on Sheerness Town Centre culminated in a workshop with local Stakeholders in June 2022. This was focused on what positive practical steps could be agreed upon and was led by the HSTF’s appointed expert.

The key areas of discussion for action were around the desire to see a public transport hub and the cost and frequency for connectivity of public transport; connectivity within Sheerness and with the wider Island community; parking; the need for improved street scene and shop fronts and tackling anti-social behaviour. There was also a desire to see activity which supported footfall within the towns, such as events.

Based on the workshops elements of the session and the views that stakeholders expressed, which were wide ranging, the HSTF expert concluded that to make progress the resourcing of a Place Manager should be investigated, with oversight provided by a new local town partnership. Provision of a Place Manager presents a resource challenge for local partners, which is not resolved by the report.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund:

Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund an initial allocation of £1.169m was made for the Borough for the period 2022/23-2024/25. This was largely revenue funding focused, but with minimum capital spend required across each of the three years.

A Local Investment Plan, required to unlock the funding, was submitted by the deadline of 1st August 2022 and was developed with the support of a Member Working Group.

Swale Borough Council awaits government feedback on the Plan, and ultimately sign off, prior to the funding being released. This is currently expected to be in late autumn 2022.

Project detail was not required by Government at submission stage project, but through the work with Members, specific funding areas identified for Sheppey included support for town centre activity to increase footfall and deliver some physical improvements; support for the Levelling Up Fund bid; display of the Montgomery masts, if secured and a strategic brown signage scheme to promote the Island from the trunk road network.

Further Borough-wide interventions identified were aimed at support for the local CVS, the development of the visitor economy, supporting decarbonisation projects and employment support, digital inclusion and engaging employers in upskilling staff

On 3rd September, an unexpected Government announcement was made allocating Rural Prosperity funding. Swale received an allocation of £501,000 and a further plan is required to be submitted to government before 30th November 2022 to unlock this allocation. We are currently establishing more details about the fund.

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September 2022