

**Gloucester UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

**Summary of Evidence Obtained to Inform the Investment Plan Interventions**

**July 2022**

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**Section 1**

**Introduction and Background**

In April the Government published the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus and identified the delivery geographies for the fund. Gloucester has been allocated the sum of £1.486m and the City Council has been identified as the lead delivery authority. The programme commenced on 1 April 2022 and will span a 3 year period to March 2025.

The City Council was required to prepare and submit an Investment Plan setting out the current challenges and opportunities of relevance to the UKSPF in Gloucester that would inform the allocation of the fund. Authority is given to the Council to agree the priorities, to be identified in consultation with a Local Partnership Group comprising local stakeholders.

This document has been produced to advise the Local Partnership Group of the evidence and intelligence gathered by the City Council to inform the design of the Investment Priorities recommended to Cabinet in July 2022. The evidence gathering consisted of three elements, namely:

* A review of relevant strategic documents produced at County and District levels in recent years, including the Council Plan, the Regeneration Strategy, Economic Growth Strategy, Heritage Strategy, Culture Strategy, Visitor Marketing Strategy, Digital Strategy, and Housing & Homelessness Strategy. The review will also include the Gloucestershire Draft Local Industrial Strategy.
* Consultation with the Local Partnership Group, plus other community partners. A survey was undertaken in June with around 100 local organisations, the majority of which are from within the Voluntary and Communities sector. The survey invited views on the top 3 challenges and the top 3 opportunities facing the city.
* Research commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council offering an economic profile of the City economy, plus a review of five issues in the County that are recommended for intervention through the UKSPF.

The Investment Priorities proposed for the fund in Gloucester are summarized in Section 5.2. The Council’s Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 13 July to the Investment Priorities to be included in the Investment Plan, subject to consultation with the Local Partnership Group, delegating authority to the Leader Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to sign off the submission to Government before end of July 2022.

**Section 2**

**The National UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

The following is a link to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), issued in April 2022.

The £2.6b UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a core element of the Government’s Levelling Up programme, which was set out in the Levelling Up White Paper in 2021, intended to create opportunity and prosperity and overcome deep-seated geographical inequality within the UK. The fund is about *building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training, supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances*. It is the Government’s domestic replacement for the European Structural and Investment Programme (ESIF), which supported local regeneration, employment and skills.

The UKSPF aims to:

* Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards
* Spread opportunities and improve public services
* Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging
* Empower local leaders and communities

The UKSPF has three specific investment priorities:

**communities and place;**

**supporting local business;**

**people and skills**

The **communities and place investment priority** will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. This priority covers a wide range of local interventions, including public realm projects, community-led initiatives, and cultural and heritage projects.

The **supporting local business investment priority** will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow. It will create jobs and increase private sector investment through interventions and support for SMEs.

Through the **people and skills investment priority**, places can use their funding to help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth. This Priority relates only to Year 3 (2024/25) of the programme, intended to pick up projects that were, until that year, supported by European funding streams.

Each lead authority is expected to develop an investment plan to be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) before 1 August 2022. The Investment Plan should be designed in conjunction with local stakeholders on a Local Partnership Group. This group should be convened by the lead authority and should comprise a diverse range of local and regional stakeholders, civil society organisations, employer bodies, businesses and business representative organisations.

**Section 3**

**3.1 The Council’s approach to preparing the Investment Plan**

In early 2021 the City Council created the Gloucester City Centre Commission to create a vision for the city centre. The Commission comprises around 25 individuals from public, private, voluntary and community sectors and has members who can speak on behalf of the economy, the environment and the residents of Gloucester. The group also includes a representative of the MPs office.

At its meeting in early May the Commission members were invited to separately form Gloucester’s Local Partnership Group for the UKSPF. The remit of the group would be city-wide. The group’s members would be invited to submit their views on the challenges and opportunities facing the city, and then to review and comment on the draft Investment Plan prior to it being presented for approval by the Council. The group includes a representative of the Richard Graham MP.

**Stage 1 - Engagement**

The members of the City Centre Commission agreed at a meeting in May 2022 to act at the Local Partnership Group for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Gloucester, with consultation to be increased to include the MP, Police and Crime groups, and organisations outside of the city centre, notably from within the Voluntary and Community sector.

**Stage 2 Consultation - Evidence Gathering**

During June 2022 direct consultation was carried out with around 100 local organisations in Gloucestershire, in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors, and ranging from very local, neighbourhood groups to County-wide statutory agencies.

The office of Richard Graham MP was included in the survey.

**Stage 3 – Cabinet sign off of Draft Investment Plan**

Following the above consultation, the Draft Investment Plan was approved by the Council’s Cabinet at its meeting on 13 July 2022.

**Stage 4 – Consultation on the Investment Plan Priorities**

The draft Investment Plan was shared for comment with the 25 core members of the City Centre Commission.

**Stage 5 – sign off**

The final Investment Plan was signed off by the Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer on xx July, following which it was submitted to the Government for approval.

The Council will invite Expressions of Interest for projects that meet the specified Interventions following sign off by the Government. It is anticipated that this will be in September 2022.

**Section 4**

**4.1 Consultation to inform the Investment Plan**

Consultation was undertaken in May and June 2022 amongst around 100 partner organisations, in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. The stakeholders including the following:

70 of the 100 consultees were with organisations in the Voluntary and Community Sector. The research was carried out by email, inviting each person on behalf of their organisation to complete an on-line survey on Google Forms. Specifically the survey asked respondents to identify the top three challenges and opportunities facing the city within each of the three Investment Priority themes. Responses were received from 21 of the organisations

Local Government (City and County Councils)

Local Enterprise Partnership

Further and Higher Education

Cultural and Arts organisations

Crime and Policing (incl the office of the Police & Crime Commissioner)

City-wide Community, Voluntary and Charitable sector groups

Local community groups

Business representative bodies

Gloucester Racial Equality Council

Environmental and Climate Change Groups

A summary of the key points made in the survey feedback is as follows.

**Community & place**

1. Gloucester needs an over-arching vision that people can get behind
2. Need to increase pride in the city and change perceptions amongst residents, visitors and potential investors.
3. Creating an attractive environment that will encourage more businesses to the city, such as cafes/restaurants and a better evening economy. Attract more families to visit
4. Keep the regeneration and sense of ambition in the city centre going, which will attract and retain young people
5. Maximise the funding available from Government, such as Levelling Up and High Street Heritage Action Zone.
6. Climate crisis and the need to create green infrastructure, biodiverse landscapes, and improve the city’s relationship with the River Severn (eg. Multifunctional nature park adj Alney Island).
7. We have an attractive landscape on our doorstep.
8. Decarbonize the city’s transport infrastructure by reducing private car travel, and supporting the decarbonization of homes.
9. Use investment in green technologies to reduce the impact of cost of living crisis and encourage healthier living.
10. Cost of living crisis and addressing deprivation
11. Need to address digital poverty and digital exclusion amongst residents
12. Need to engage communities innovatively and effectively and listening to residents to understand their needs.
13. Support communities to invest and find their own solutions
14. Ensure provision of community infrastructure like shops, health, transport links
15. Address crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety, including growing youth violence
16. Importance of arts and culture, develop the culture sector to create more jobs for young people, and create spaces for cultural & community organisations
17. Gloucester is a diverse city- should be celebrated

**Supporting Local Business**

1. Steps to support retailers and the high street, including attracting more footfall through investment in culture.
2. Attract inward investment, drawing on Gloucester’s excellent environment, location, property prices, and its transport infrastructure.
3. Offer grants to improve places
4. Cyber and other growing digital sectors are an opportunity
5. The importance of Gloucester’s small business community, and creating a ‘business friendly’ environment.
6. Continue business support services including community based social enterprises. Need to support start ups and local enterprise,
7. Address recruitment challenges and staff shortages, including attracting more young people to the workforce and retaining young people locally. Increasing student population in the city centre is an opportunity. Also promote inclusiveness in the workplace.
8. Support for the growing green sectors, including training in low carbon technologies to support a more sustainable economy.
9. Alter perceptions of Gloucester, eg the evening economy, including as a location to start a business.
10. Ensure existing small businesses are more resilient to climate change, incl adoption of low carbon technologies.
11. Address rising business costs and Business Rates

**People and Skills**

1. Matching skills needs with the needs of employers, eg to replace older workers who are retiring early from key local sectors.
2. Access to public transport
3. Raise the motivation of people to work
4. Business need to invest in training
5. Need to invest in our young people to encourage them to stay in Gloucester
6. Gloucester has a high proportion of young people. Need more jobs and apprenticeship opportunities for young people to encourage them to stay in gloucester, and need to address the high exclusion rate amongst young people.
7. Digital and cyber sector is an opportunity to create quality jobs for young people
8. Cultural sector will create opportunities for young people to develop skills
9. Low carbon economy will create new jobs for local people in subjects like retrofit.. Need to ensure they have the right skills at the right time
10. Need to create the right pathways and connections for people from within the city to get the new jobs and benefit from the regeneration opportunities
11. Provide support for people with low skills, including within disadvantaged communities, but tailored to the needs of communities, rather than a one size fits all approach.
12. Strengthen qualifications and employability skills amongst economically inactive and amongst school leavers.
13. Strengthen links between education providers, including FE & HE, and local employers, to strengthen confidence and employability of leavers.

**4.2 Summary of key strategies**

This section provides a review of existing strategies and reports that cover Gloucester, including relevant strategies at county and district levels. The reports have been organised according to their relevance to the Levelling Up ‘missions’ as set out in the Levelling Up white paper and to the three UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment priority areas.

The review is based on an initial County-wide piece of work produced by Shared Intelligence, commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council, in 2022. It is supplemented by strategies of relevance to Gloucester in order to inform Gloucester’s UK SPF Investment Plan.

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| **List of Documents in Review** |
|  |
| 1. **Gloucestershire** |
| Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy – Adopted 2017 - [Home - OneDrive (sharepoint.com)](https://jointcorestrategy-my.sharepoint.com/personal/website_jointcorestrategy_onmicrosoft_com/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fwebsite%5Fjointcorestrategy%5Fonmicrosoft%5Fcom%2FDocuments%2FJoint%20Core%20Strategy%20%28JCS%29%20website%2FHome%2FJCS%20Plan%20Adopted%20Version%2011%20December%202017%2Epdf&parent=%2Fpersonal%2Fwebsite%5Fjointcorestrategy%5Fonmicrosoft%5Fcom%2FDocuments%2FJoint%20Core%20Strategy%20%28JCS%29%20website%2FHome) |
| [GFirst LEP Gloucestershire Skills Strategy](file:///Z:/Shared/General/CONSULTANCY/04%20ACTIVE%20PROJECTS/Gloucestershire%20Investment%20Framework/3.%20Evidence%20Base/Existing%20Strategy%20Documents/GFirst%20LEP_Gloucesterhire%20Skills%20Strategy_2022-2027.pdf) |
| [GFirst LEP Local Industrial Strategy 2019](file:///Z:/Shared/General/CONSULTANCY/04%20ACTIVE%20PROJECTS/Gloucestershire%20Investment%20Framework/3.%20Evidence%20Base/Existing%20Strategy%20Documents/gloucestershire_draft_local-industrial-strategy_2019-updated.pdf) |
| [Gloucestershire County Council Building Back Better 2022-2026](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2111899/council-strategy-2022_dev5.pdf) |
| [Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan 2020-2041](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2108466/ltp-policy-document-final-v132.pdf); Gloucestershire County Council |
| [Gloucestershire's Climate Change Strategy 2019]](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2094404/gloucestershire-climate-change-strategy.pdf) |
| [Gloucestershire Rail Investment Strategy](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2096940/gloucestershire-rail-strategy.pdf) |
| [Gloucestershire Police & Crime Prevention Plan 2021-2025](https://www.apccs.police.uk/media/6963/draft-gloucestershire-police-crime-plan-202125.pdf); Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire |
| [Gloucestershire Draft Statement of Common Ground](https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s68129/Gloucestershire%20SOCG.pdf) (draft) – Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee – January 2021 |
|  |
| Digital Divides; working towards digital equity in Gloucestershire 2022 - [Digital+Divides+Report.pdf (squarespace.com)](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/617abf9b742ed51f29193232/t/62443af43d9fc81d2d9a14e4/1648638711164/Digital+Divides+Report.pdf) |
|  |
| 1. **Gloucester** |
| The Council Plan 2022-2024 [GCP] [gloucester-council-plan-2022-2024.pdf](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/6058/gloucester-council-plan-2022-2024.pdf) |
| City Vision, 2012-2022 [GCV] [cityvisionfinal.pdf (gloucester.gov.uk)](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1370/cityvisionfinal.pdf) |
| Playing Pitch Strategy, 2015-2025 [GPPS] [gloucester-playing-pitch-strategy-2015-2025.pdf](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1377/gloucester-playing-pitch-strategy-2015-2025.pdf) |
| Gloucester Economic Growth Strategy, 2019-2022 [GEGS] [Gloucester City Council Economic Growth Strategy 2019-2022](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/3745/egs-v3.pdf) |
| Gloucester Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2016-2021 [GRS] [regeneration\_economic\_development\_strategy\_2016\_2021.pdf (gloucester.gov.uk)](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1378/regeneration_economic_development_strategy_2016_2021.pdf) |
| Gloucester Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2025 [GHHS] [city\_1294-housing-and-homelessness-strategy\_adopted-version.pdf (gloucester.gov.uk)](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/4887/city_1294-housing-and-homelessness-strategy_adopted-version.pdf) |
| Gloucester Cultural Vision and Strategy, update 2021 – 2026 [GCVS] [Gloucester-Cultural-Vision-and-Strategy-GCT-GCC.pdf (gloucesterculture.org.uk)](https://gloucesterculture.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Gloucester-Cultural-Vision-and-Strategy-GCT-GCC.pdf) |
| Gloucester Heritage Strategy, 2019-2029 [GHS] [Gloucester Heritage Strategy 2019-29](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/3025/draft-gloucester-heritage-strategy-feb-2019.pdf#:~:text=The%20overall%20aim%20of%20the%20Heritage%20Strategy%20is%3A,to%20guide%20Gloucester%20City%20Counciland%20its%20partners%20activities.) |
| Gloucester Business Improvement District, , [2022-BID-Business-Plan.pdf (gloucesterbid.uk)](https://www.gloucesterbid.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022-BID-Business-Plan.pdf) |
| Matson, Robinswood and White City Community Partnership, The Power of Three: 2020-2024 [Po3] [power\_of\_three\_report\_final.pdf (gloucestershiregatewaytrust.org.uk)](https://www.gloucestershiregatewaytrust.org.uk/uploads/9/4/4/4/94442743/power_of_three_report_final.pdf) |

The themes that emerge from the strategies are varied and diverse, reflecting the complex nature of Gloucester and its communities. Of relevance to the Gloucester UKSPF programme, they include:

**Communities and Place**

* Encourage and support the shift from private car use to alternative forms of transport, including active travel.
* Drive the city towards becoming a ‘Smart City’ with digital technologies to support the growth and development of Gloucester’s communities
* Address the digital divide that exists in the County and take steps to enable digital inclusion, particularly in those communities and localities that have the highest levels of digital exclusion
* Support communities to identify their own challenges and opportunities and support them to address them.
* Recognise the potential of culture to create inclusiveness within communities, including a year-round programme of cultural events
* Protect sport and recreation and invest in new facilities to encourage healthier lifestyles
* Work towards achieving net-zero emissions within the city by 2045
* Aim for a significant reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour and encourage people to feel safer of an evening on the streets of the city.
* Ensure housing that meets local needs and is well designed, reduce homelessness and remove rough sleeping
* Improve the built environment in the city centre, creating attractive open spaces and new buildings, whilst protecting and enhancing Gloucester’s extensive heritage.

**Supporting Local Business**

* The key sectors of relevance to Gloucester that will drive economic growth include cyber and digital, green technologies (including energy production), health, creative and cultural industries, and advanced manufacturing. However, sustaining retail and building a strong hospitality economy (including tourism and the evening economy) are important to the city centre
* Need to support growing businesses at all stages in their life cycle, from start ups through to major inward investors, ensuring the right infrastructure is in place (business advice, property, communications, skills and people)
* There is a shortage of available space for businesses of all sizes and sectors, from small start ups to large, strategic sites, which represents a potential impediment to growth.
* Need to improve perceptions of Gloucester as a visitor and investment location
* Digital infrastructure has an important role to play in support growth in all types and sectors of businesses, not just digital and cyber.
* Businesses of all sizes and types need to adapt to climate change and improve their environmental performance.

**People & Skills**

* Ensure that development and regeneration creates social value, offering employment and business opportunities for local people.
* there appears to be a skills mismatch in the county and the City, especially in STEM sectors such as in cyber and renewable technologies. Need to ensure that the skills, training and education available are directly linked to the future jobs being created
* There is a shortage of ‘green’ skills
* The Construction industry offers opportunities for local people. Need to ensure residents have the right skills.
* There is an increasing digital divide within the city. Drive digital inclusion by ensuring that residents have access to the digital skills they need
* Provide support to residents of key communities in Gloucester – such as Matson, Robinswood and White City - to improve their skills and employment opportunities.
* Ensure that the supply of homes enables young people to stay in the city

**4.3 Economic Overview of Gloucester and key themes for intervention**

In June 2022 Gloucestershire County Council commissioned ***Shared Intelligence*** to prepare a strategic framework to drive invest in the County. The framework included a review of relevant strategies, which was used as a base to inform Section 3 of this Prospectus, and a review of economic data of relevance to the County and to each of the six districts. The report concludes with an overview of priorities that connect national policy and local policy whilst focusing on UKSPF themes of community and place, supporting local business and people and skills, using evidence to set out where investment is needed within the County.

**Economic Profile of Gloucester District**

*Gloucester is the county city and administrative centre of Gloucestershire, located roughly in the centre of the county. It has the largest population of the county’s districts and also the youngest with the greatest proportion of its residents being younger that 65 compared to the other districts. It is also a member of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) group and carries out strategic planning with its partner districts. Gloucester City Council is an urban district and has the highest levels of deprivation in the county, with nine of its LSOAs in the 10% most deprived in the county (Podsmead, Matson & Robinswood 1 & 5, Westgate 1 & 5, Kingsholm & Wotton, Moreland, Tuffley, and Barton & Tredworth).*

*Between 2015 and 2020, Gloucester City saw strong growth in the number of active businesses and was the only district in the county to see an increase in business births in this period. It also had the highest one-year business survival rates by district and for Gloucestershire, South West and England (2019-20) at 93.1%, above the South-West and England average. However, during the same period, it had the lowest five-year business survival rates by district at 41.7%. Typically, when businesses reach this milestone, challenges arise around sustainability linked to available premises and skilled labour.*

*In order to accommodate its growing business base, Gloucester may look to improve its stock of industrial and commercial space. According to its Employment Land Review, Gloucester’s stock of employment land performs fairly well but there remains a clear demand from new and expanding businesses. In connection with this, it has also been identified that over recent years, Gloucester City centre has converted a lot of its office space into residential use which maybe stemming growth and sustainability.*

*The industry base in the city is very varied but a large number of people are employed in the health sector, including in social care. The key employment sectors have been identified as: the public sector; finance and business services; manufacturing, care and distribution; and retail and wholesale. Gloucester has the highest proportion of medium-sized businesses, with 3% of their businesses employing 50 to 249 workers which provides a different dynamic for business support and the provision of business accommodation.*

*Recent investment from the Levelling Up fund has enabled funding for three projects to transform the city centre. This includes Higher Education courses in Gloucester City Centre from the University of Gloucestershire, a new and the city’s first 4-star hotel called The Fleece and a new digital innovation hub called The Forge which will provide business accommodation for cyber businesses among others.*

*It is also clear that housing is an important issue, as it is across the county, especially if Gloucester is to attract and retain more young people. Addressing this, the JCS document speaks of plans to build new job and housing developments in Gloucester City Centre. While providing more housing and employment land, these developments are also expected to increase the ‘vitality’ of the city centre. In connection to this, the proposed improvements to transport between Gloucester and Cheltenham are forecast to be even more economically valuable if the increase of housing stock is realised.*

*Gloucester is anticipated to have the highest number of Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy jobs within the county up to 2050, accounting for 45% of total LCREE jobs across the county in 2030 and 44% in 2050. There is an opportunity to further advance this across those core sectors to invest in new technologies and skills for the future.*

*Finally, Gloucester**is also projected to have the highest number of jobs at risk of automation due to its industrial profile. With potential job losses across the county is in four key industry sectors: wholesale and retail trade (22%), manufacturing (19%), administrative and support service activities (11%), and human health and social work (7%). The need therefore for enhancements to digital skills programmes and access to funding for businesses to adopt new technologies may be an opportunity to enable sustainability*.

A draft Local Investment Framework for Gloucestershire,

Shared Intelligence, June 2022

**Themes emerging from County-wide priorities**

The draft Local Investment Framework for Gloucestershire identifies 5 themes, based on its strategic and evidence review. These themes are intended to set out where investment could be directed and reflect both the Levelling Up white paper (and its twelve missions) and the interventions identified through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Within each of the 5 themes the Framework presents opportunities for investment.

**Climate Change Action**

Opportunities for investment include:

* Business support to encourage and enable businesses to develop carbon reduction plans as well as invest in the development of supply chains to provide carbon neutral goods and services.
* Investment in research and development across agri-tech, food and farming sectors to create a healthy circular economy and develop supply chain in for example to improve food security, enable carbon reduction, create more start-ups and grow sustainable businesses.
* Developing a plan for increasing levels of renewable energy in order to resolve issues of a lack of energy grid capacity.
* Work across engineering and manufacturing sectors where a green revolution could transform industry and build on stable levels of R&D investment. This has specifically been identified across Stroud, Tewkesbury and Forest of Dean District Council areas.
* Working with housing associations, public sector asset managers and commercial landlords to create a retrofit programme, connected with skills and training development.

**Inclusive employment**

Opportunities for investment include:

* Reducing health inequalities for people who are at risk of long-term unemployment
* Improving wellbeing for participants on current skills-led projects which are mostly due to finish when funding stops in 2023.
* Promoting inclusive workplaces and working with employers to open up opportunities for people with barriers to employment.
* A programme to encouragement engagement with employment provision and need equality across the county to ensure everyone has opportunity to participate and eliminate the “postcode lottery”.
* The need to develop a “whole household” approach to supporting residents into jobs
* Improvements in public transport which can serve businesses vulnerable to recruitment issues.

**Skills for the future workforce**

Opportunities for investment include:

* Developing a programme to match employers with talent across the county, understanding where reskilling and upskilling needs to take place, in which sectors and at what levels.
* Developing an awareness programme for the emerging county-wide green skills offer for jobs across retrofit, modern methods of construction, biodiversity and emerging green technologies.
* Sector-based skills delivery across clusters in cyber and fusion technology, advanced manufacturing and engineering and emerging areas of knowledge intensive services focussed on IT and digital computing.
* Projects identified for example in Cotswold District to encourage big businesses to aid job creation by employing young apprentices and place promotion.

**Start-up and scale-up**

Opportunities for investment include:

* Feasibility work to improve the supply of industrial, commercial and office premises to encourage scale-up businesses and create high quality accommodation.
* Develop an “innovation factory” with strong influence from R&D investment, improving the level of patents listed locally and bring forward more research and spin-outs.
* Developing a more targeted business support offer to focus on start-ups and entrepreneurship to grow the business base and create a greater internal supply chain economy.
* Development of an access to finance programme which can help start-up and scale-up businesses.
* Focus on programmes to scale ups ensuring they can be nurtured and thrive in the county.

**Digital investment**

Opportunities for investment include:

* Introduction of a new household grant to provide a short-term digital 4G solution as a stopgap until Project Gigabit is successfully delivered.
* Develop a feasibility study to explore Gigabit provision to hard-to-reach areas which have not even received a superfast upgrade.
* Work with the digital and cyber industry to identify solutions to end rural digital poverty.
* Extend provision across Gloucestershire’s Innovation Labs to bring awareness of digital potential to residents and businesses.

**Section 5**

**Conclusions and Interventions included within the Investment Plan**

**5.1 Summary of Gloucester’s needs**

Section 4 summarises the extensive research undertaken and the evidence collated to inform Gloucester’s UKSPF Investment Plan. This section summarises that background into a set of proposed interventions.

The City Council is given discretion by the Government to identify those local priorities that should be addressed through its allocation. The Council’s Cabinet considered the conclusions and proposed interventions at its meeting in July 2022.

Unsurprisingly there are clear and consistent needs that come through the research and evidence base. These might be summarised as:

**Communities & Place Investment Priority**

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| 1. **Restore civic pride** in the city through:  * Better marketing of the city to visitors and investors, leading to improved perceptions of the city and better pedestrian movement within the city centre. * Improvements to the built and natural environment in the city centre, through schemes to improve the public realm and to support the owners of private properties to invest in their upkeep and improvement * celebrating the richness of heritage and culture in the city, using both as a mechanism to engage residents in the city, build the talent pool, and stimulate business growth and investment. * Taking steps to design out crime through better design of buildings and public realm  1. **Improve sports and recreation facilities**, reducing health inequalities across the city and increasing activity, particularly in those who are currently inactive. 2. **Tackle climate change** by taking measures to improve the natural environment:  * In the city centre by providing new green spaces and improving the quality and usage of those existing * Encouraging and facilitating green travel, including supporting investment in walking, cycling and public transport. * Enhancing the riverside as the River Severn passes through the city, improving its biodiversity and recreational opportunities.  1. **Address the digital divide** by ensuring provision of community based digital facilities and support for users. 2. **Empower local leaders and communities** through asset based community development (ABCD) to lead on shaping their own community based on local aspirations. 3. **Consult inclusively and meaningfully** on opportunities which affect residents across broad demographics and in line with the make up of our population. 4. **Celebrate diversity** and deliver action to reduce the divide between minority ethnic groups and the wider population, building on the work of the Race Commission 2021 (this can be referenced and used as evidence). |

**Supporting Local Business Investment Priority**

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| * **Supporting the growth of sectors with significant growth potential**, such as digital, cyber, creative, health and green sectors. * **Continue the support for start ups and growing businesses** by * Increase the rate of start ups in the city, targeting support at disadvantaged communities * continue independent business support and advice to SMEs across all sectors from pre-start up to medium sized business * provide support and advice to businesses to become more digitally aware and to take advantage of new markets * **Marketing the area to inward investors** * To provide support and **advice to businesses to adapt to climate change** * **Support businesses in the city centre** to * Attract new occupiers to vacant commercial property * Attract start ups and entrepreneurs to the high street, including identifying and promoting the variety of mechanisms to secure a presence in the city centre, such as markets and market stalls, pop up shops and meanwhile uses. * Support existing city centre businesses to adapt and diversify. * Develop the Evening Economy in the city centre |

**People & Skills Investment Priority**

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| 1. Support residents (including homeless people) to overcome barriers to economic participation and to support them to play a more active role through employment, training and volunteering. 2. Support residents through skills development to move out of poverty. 3. Addressing the digital divide by increasing levels of digital inclusion and providing digital skills |

**5.2 Interventions included within the Gloucester UKSPF Investment Plan**

The above conclusions may be translated into the following Interventions, as identified in the UKSPF Prospectus

**Communities and Place Investment Priority**

E1 – Improvements to town centres and high streets

E2 - Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects

E3 - Creation of and improvements to local green spaces

E5 – Built and landscaped environment to ‘design out crime’

E6 – Local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities

E7 - Support for active travel enhancements in local area

E8 – Campaigns to encourage visits and exploring of local area

E10 - Local sports facilities, tournaments, teams & leagues

E11: Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups

E12 - Community engagement schemes, local regeneration

E15 - Digital connectivity for local community facilities

**Supporting Local Business Investment Priority**

E16: Open markets & town centre retail & service sector

E21: Development of innovation infrastructure at a local level

E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems

E24: Training hubs, business support offers, incubators & accelerators

E29: Supporting decarbonisation & improving the natural environment

E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth

**People & Skills Investment Priority (year 3 only)**

E33: Employment support for economically inactive people

E34: Courses including basic, life & career skills

E35: Enrichment & volunteering activities

E36: Increase levels of digital inclusion, essential digital skills

**Section 6**

**6.1 Expenditure Profile**

The Council has been allocated £1.486m to the programme, to be allocated to projects over the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025.

Expressions of Interest to deliver projects and services that meet the Investment Plan will be invited during September with the intention of allocating the funding as soon as the Investment Plan is signed off by Government in October. At this stage it is therefore impossible to predict how much funding will be allocated to individual projects as much as it is to ascertain the outputs and indicators

The following table summarises how the funding will be allocated between years and between Investment Priorities. Note the split between financial years (the bottom line) has been pre-determined by Government.

**UKSPF allocation per year**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | **Total per Priority** |
| Investment Priority 1  Communities & Place | £130,383 | £178,765 | £545,204 | **£854,352** |
| Investment Priority 2  Supporting Local Businesses | £50,000 | £182,000 | £220,000 | **£452,000** |
| Investment Priority 3  People & Skills | - | - | £180,000 | **£180,000** |
| **Total per year** | **£180,383** | **£360,765** | **£945,204** | **£1,486,352** |

In line with Government guidance allocations towards Investment Priority 3 (People and Skills) can only be made in year 3. This is intended to take account of the withdrawal of European Social Funds, which currently support these types of project.

4.8 Government Guidance also requires the UKSPF to be split between capital and revenue funding, with a minimum bar set for capital expenditure. Based on the above allocation between years and Investment Priorities, the Council has nominally identified a capital / revenue split as per:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Year 1 (Rev: 90%)** | **Year 2 (rev: 87%)** | **Year 3 (rev: 80%** |
| Capital | £20,000 | £60,000 | £270,000 |
| Revenue | £160.383 | £300,765 | £675,204 |