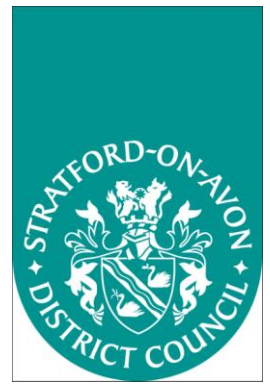


Application Process



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF or the Fund) is a central pillar of the UK government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. It will help places right across the country deliver enhanced outcomes and recognises that even the most affluent parts of the UK contain pockets of deprivation and need support.
- 1.2 The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with Levelling Up White Paper missions, particularly: 'By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.'
- 1.3 For further context the UKSPF prospectus can be found at the following link [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/ukspf-prospectus.pdf)
- 1.4 Following acceptance of the Council's investment plan submitted in July 2022, the Council is conducting the annual 'call for projects' from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 for consideration of funding.
- 1.5 In addition to the UKSPF fund, following acceptance of the REPF addendum, Investment Plan acceptance we will also undergo the Year 1 REPF call for projects as a joint funding application round. The Rural Fund is a top-up to the UKSPF and is available to eligible local authorities in England. It succeeds EU funding from LEADER and the Growth Programme which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England.
- 1.6 A total of up to £110 million is available across the UK for financial years 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025. Stratford on Avon District have been allocated £1,015,179 across the two years.
- 1.7 The REPF fund is for capital projects only and understood to be split across 2 years at 25% & 75% per year respectively
- 1.8 For further context the REPF prospectus can be found at the following link [Rural England Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/repf-prospectus.pdf)
- 1.9 The Council wishes to invite applicants to submit their project via the application process for the 2023-2024 funding round.

2.0 Purpose of the document

- 2.1 This document has been developed to provide clarity on the strategic drivers, objectives and the rules and regulations set by the UKSPF prospectus the context of which should inform the responses provided by the applicant.

- 2.2 The document sets out the considerations which will need to be observed and provide clarity on how the applications will be assessed.
- 2.3 A self-declaration section has been included for applicants to complete which sets out the minimum standards required for a project to be considered compliant with the process.

3.0 Objectives

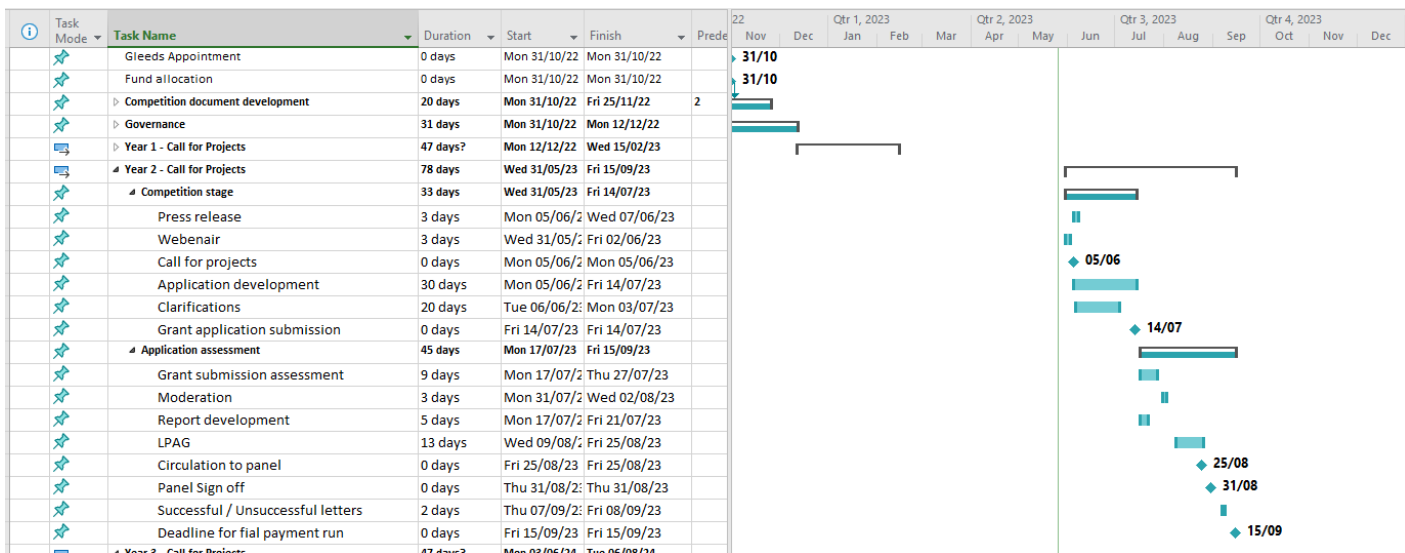
3.1 These key objectives of the challenge fund process are:

- 3.1.1 Compliance with legislation and government standards, including the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Grants Standards;
- 3.1.2 Value for money;
- 3.1.3 Timely delivery; and
- 3.1.4 Optimisation of outputs and outcomes set by the UKSPF & REPF prospectus.

4.0 Application parameters

- 4.1 Projects for year 1 must not exceed £100k. The challenge fund process can only allocate funds below this threshold.
- 4.2 The Grants Standards enable projects which exceed this amount to take part but they must be supported by a business case which must comply with the HM Treasury Green Book 5 case model. However due to the limited time available in year 1, only the challenge fund process will be observed.
- 4.3 Year 2 and 3 of the process will enable applicants to apply for larger sums and projects which require multiple years funding may also be considered, all of which are to be supported by a business case.
- 4.4 The outputs and outcomes must be deliverable for year 2 & 3 prior to December 2024 / 2025 respectively

5.0 Programme



6.0 Interventions

- 6.1 Applicants must consider which intervention(s) align with the project they wish to submit an application for. The interventions which have been selected by Stratford District Council for year 1 can be found in the table below along with their associated objective and the available fund;
- 6.2 For clarity: The applicant is not restricted on how many applications they wish to submit however only 1 intervention should be responded to in each application. The scores given in line with the guidance below rely on compliance to the intervention as minimum and is a Pass/Fail criteria of the application.
- 6.3 The applicant should consider how the project accomplishes the interventions intent and articulate clearly how the intervention will achieve alignment to the intervention in the projects nature and outcome.

Table 1

			2023-24	
	Investment Priority	Intervention	Capital	Revenue
UKSPF	Communities & Place	E2: Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects	£0.00	£51,000.00
	Communities & Place	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces	£137,149.71	£0.00
	Communities & Place	E7: Support for active travel enhancements in local area	£0.00	£51,500.00
	Communities & Place	E9: Impactful volunteering and/or social action projects	£0.00	£9,954.35
	Communities & Place	E10: Local sports facilities, tournaments, teams & leagues	£62,852.95	£100,000.00
	Communities & Place	E11: Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups	£18,691.86	
	Communities & Place	E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living	£7,476.74	£18,691.86
	Communities & Place	E14: Relevant feasibility studies	£17,009.59	£0.00
	Local Business	E17: Development & promotion of visitor economy		£68,367.01
	Local Business	E20: R&D grants supporting innovative product & service development		£111,991.67
	Local Business	E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems		£196,310.98
	Local Business	E24: Training hubs, business support offers, incubators & accelerators		£34,183.50
	Local Business	E26: Growing the local social economy		£9,766.72
	Local Business	E28: Export grants to grow overseas trading etc.		£102,876.07
REPF	Supporting Rural Business	Intervention 1.1: capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas	£101,517.90	
	Supporting Rural Communities	Intervention 2.1: capital grant funding for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities	£45,683.06	
	Supporting Rural Communities	Intervention 2.7: capital grant funding for rural circular economy projects	£106,593.80	

7.0 Outputs and Outcomes

- 7.1 Once the relevant interventions(s) have been selected the applicant should review the outputs and outcomes table below to ensure they can achieve the requirements set by the Fund's performance requirements.
- 7.2 The application process will be assessing projects on their ability to achieve tangible outputs and outcomes. Applicants will be required to provide quantified outputs (where necessary) and outcomes. i.e. "24 jobs created" rather than "we will create jobs" or "yes".
- 7.3 The table below summarises the outputs and outcomes. For more detail on the outputs and outcomes please review the following links
- 7.3.1 UKSPF - [UKSPF Indicators 22.02.2023.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)
- 7.3.2 REPF - [Rural England Prosperity Fund: interventions, objectives, outputs and outcomes summary - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 7.4

Table 2

UKSPF

Intervention	Output	Outcome
E2: Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood improvements undertaken • Number of facilities supported / created • Number of local events or activities supported • Amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed • Number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created • Jobs safeguarded • Greenhouse gas reductions • Increased users of facilities / amenities • Improved perception of facility / infrastructure project • Improved perception of facilities / amenities • Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion
E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of rehabilitated land or premises • Sqm of land made wheelchair accessible/step free • Amount of public realm created or improved • Number of facilities supported/created • Amount of green or blue space created or improved • Amount of new or improved cycleways or paths • Number of neighbourhood improvements undertaken • Number of trees planted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased footfall • Increased visitor numbers • Increased use of cycleways or paths • Jobs created • Improved perception of facilities/amenities • Increased users of facilities/amenities • Improved perceived/experienced accessibility

E7: Support for active travel enhancements in local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of new or improved cycleways or paths • Number of neighbourhood improvements undertaken • Amount of public realm created or improved • Number of facilities supported/created • Amount of green or blue space created or improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of cycleways or paths
E9: Impactful volunteering and/or social action projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants • Number of organisations receiving grants • Number of local events or activities supported • Number of volunteering opportunities supported • Number of projects • Number of organisations receiving non-financial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved engagement numbers • Volunteering numbers as a result of support
E10: Local sports facilities, tournaments, teams & leagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of facilities supported/created (numerical value) • Number of tournaments/leagues/teams supported (numerical value) • Levels of participation in sports and recreational activities at facilities that have benefitted from funding (based on registered players/teams) (% increase) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved perception of facilities/amenities (% increase) • Increased users of facilities/amenities (% increase) • Improved perception of events (% increase)
E11: Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants • Number of organisations receiving grants • Number of organisations receiving non-financial support • Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved • Number of people attending training sessions • Number of facilities supported/created • Amount of green or blue space created or improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new or improved community facilities as a result of support • Improved engagement numbers
E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants (numerical value) • Number of organisations receiving grants (numerical value) • Number of organisations receiving non-financial support (numerical value) • Number of households receiving support (numerical value) • Number of households supported to take energy efficiency measures (numerical value) • Number of people reached (numerical value) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenhouse gas reductions (% decrease in Tonnes of Co2e) • Increased take up of energy efficiency measures (% increase)
E14: Relevant feasibility studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of feasibility studies supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies

<p>E17: Development & promotion of visitor economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants (numerical value) • Number of businesses receiving non-financial support (numerical value) • Number of businesses receiving grants (numerical value) • Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready (numerical value) • Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved (numerical value) • Number of commercial buildings developed or improved (numerical value) • M2 of commercial buildings developed or improved (m2) • Number of people reached (numerical value) • Number of local events or activities supported (numerical value) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created (numerical value) • Jobs safeguarded (numerical value) • Number of new businesses created (numerical value) • Increased footfall (% increase) • Increased visitor numbers (% increase) • Increase in visitor spending (% increase) • Increased amount of investment (£) • Improved perception of attractions (% increase)
<p>E20: R&D grants supporting innovative product & service development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants (numerical value) • Number of businesses receiving non-financial support (numerical value) • Number of businesses receiving grants (numerical value) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased amount of investment (£) • Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm (numerical value) • Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity (numerical value) • Number of premises with improved digital connectivity (numerical value) • Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes (numerical value) • Number of new to market products (numerical value) • Number of R&D active businesses (numerical value) • Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services (numerical value)
<p>E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants (numerical value) • Number of businesses receiving non-financial support (numerical value) • Number of businesses receiving grants (numerical value) • Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready (numerical value) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created (numerical value) • Jobs safeguarded (numerical value) • Number of new businesses created (numerical value) • Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm (numerical value) • Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes (numerical value) • Number of businesses with improved productivity (numerical value) • Number of businesses engaged in new markets (numerical value)
<p>E24: Training hubs, business support offers, incubators & accelerators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants (numerical value) • Number of businesses receiving non-financial support (numerical value) • Number of businesses receiving grants (numerical value) • Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready (numerical value) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created (numerical value) • Jobs safeguarded (numerical value) • Number of new businesses created (numerical value) • Increased amount of investment (£) • Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm (numerical value) • Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity (numerical value) • Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes (numerical value) • Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support (numerical value)

E26: Growing the local social economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people attending training sessions • Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants • Number of businesses receiving grants • Number of businesses receiving non-financial support • Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created • Jobs safeguarded • Number of new businesses created • Increased number of businesses engaged in new markets • Increased amount of investment
E28: Export Grants to grow overseas trading etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses receiving grants (numerical value) • Number of businesses engaged in new markets (numerical value) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created (numerical value) • Jobs safeguarded (numerical value) • Number of businesses increasing their export capability (numerical value)
E31: Support relevant feasibility studies	Number of feasibility studies supported	Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies

Rural England Prosperity Fund

Intervention	Output	Outcome
1.1: capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses supported • Number of farm businesses supported • Number of farm diversification projects supported • Number of micro businesses supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created • Jobs safeguarded • Number of new businesses created • Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes • Number of businesses with improved productivity • Number of businesses experiencing growth
Intervention 2.1: capital grant funding for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organisations receiving grants • Number of facilities supported, created, or installed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created • Jobs safeguarded • Increased users of facilities or amenities • Improved perception of facility or infrastructure project • Improved perception of facilities or amenities
Intervention 2.7: capital grant funding for rural circular economy projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organisations receiving grants • Number of people reached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved engagement numbers • Improved perception of local facilities or amenities • Number of community-led programmes as a result of support

8.0 Self-Declaration

- 8.1 Please see below a short list of pre-qualification criteria which is considered the minimum standard to proceed for completing an application

Criteria	Yes/No
Your project aligns with one or more of the interventions identified in Table 1	
Your project will achieve at least 1 output and 1 outcome from Table 2	
Your project is ready to begin, and the terms and conditions of the fund can be signed up before April 1 st (Year 1 only)	
You can quantify the level of impact your project will have on the outputs & outcomes sought from the fund	
You will comply with the procurement conditions set by UKSPF when spending funds for the following amounts; Up to £2500 – Direct Award Up to £25k – 3 Quotes £25k to £100k – Formal Tender	
You have a Project Manager / Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)	
You are able to provide a risk analysis of the project proportionate to its size and nature	
You have a firm understanding of the cost of the project and are confident that any fluctuation upwards in cost post award can be accommodated outside of the funding agreement	
Any third party consents needed for the project have been attained	

9.0 Completing the Application Form

- 9.1 The application form can be found at <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/people-communities/ukspf-update-december-2022.cfm>
- 9.2 The form has been developed in compliance with the criteria set by the UKSPF prospectus, the Grants Standards and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 9.3 The questions are structured in line with the defined approach as indicated in the 'Grants Standards' and specifically the 'challenge funds process'.
- 9.4 For clarity: The applicant is not restricted on how many applications they wish to submit however only 1 intervention should be responded to in each application. The scores given in line with the guidance below rely on compliance to the intervention as minimum and is a Pass/Fail criteria of the application.
- 9.5 Each question must be completed for the application to be considered.
- 9.6 Questions should be responded to proportionately based on the value and complexity of the project. Applications will not be advantaged through wordsmithing or word volume and will be assessed based on the responses' alignment to the criteria set in the question's guidance.
- 9.7 All questions must be answered openly, honestly and as comprehensively as possible. Failure to do so may result in funding not being awarded, being withheld or being reclaimed after payment has been made.

10.0 Scoring Methodology

- 10.1 Applications will be reviewed in 3 key ways.

- 10.2 Information Only (IO) - Unscored

10.2.1 These questions are to provide understanding of the applicant and the project they wish to submit.

10.2.2 The questions relevant for information only are: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6.

10.3 Pass/Fail

10.3.1 SDC reserves the right with these questions to fail the applicant if an adverse position is observed. These questions and their response are considered a minimum standard of compliance which the applicant must achieve. Compliance with the questions' requirements and/or appropriate supporting information to assure compliance will be awarded a Pass.

10.3.2 The questions appropriate for this type of assessment are 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

10.4 Scored Question

10.4.1 The responses will be scored objectively in line with the scoring criteria set out for each. Questions 18, 19, 20, 22 and 23 will be assessed against the following criteria and the 5 key questions which will be scored and their allocated weightings are:

- 10.4.1.1 Outputs and Outcomes - (35%)
- 10.4.1.2 Cost - (35%)
- 10.4.1.3 Risk Analysis – (10%)
- 10.4.1.4 Added Value - (12%)
- 10.4.1.5 Match Funding – (8%)

10.4.2 Outputs and Outcomes

Score	Criteria
0	The response does not relate to the question
1	The response does not contain any quantifiable benefits in line with the defined outputs and outcomes set by the prospectus
2	The response does indicate quantifiable benefits however the level of impact is considered proportionately low
3	The response does indicate a quantifiable benefit with an objectively high level of impact
4	The response indicates 2 quantifiable outcomes and outputs as set by the fund which offer a good level of impact
5	The response indicates more than 2 quantifiable outcomes and outputs as set by the fund which offer a high level of impact.

10.4.3 Cost

Score	Criteria
-------	----------

0	>£100k
1	>£80k-£100
2	>£60k-£80k
3	>£40k-£60k
4	>£20k-£40k
5	>£1 - £20k

10.4.4 Risk

Score	Criteria
0	The response does not relate to the question's requirements or has not been responded to
1	The response does not provide assurance that the Risk has been assessed appropriately or proportionately
2	The response has not provided a proportionate risk assessment based on the size and complexity of the project which raises major concerns
3	The response has provided a proportionate risk assessment based on the size and complexity of the project which raises major concerns
4	The response has provided a proportionate risk assessment based on the size and complexity of the project which raises minor concerns
5	The response has provided a proportionate risk assessment based on the size and complexity of the project with no concerns raised

10.4.5 Added Value

Score	Criteria
0	No response given
1	The response is not perceived to add any additional value in line with UKSPF outputs and outcomes or SDC's Strategic Needs
2	The response does indicate added value in line with UKSPF outputs and outcomes and/or SDC's strategic needs however the value has not been quantified
3	The response is considered to add minor value in a single area in line with UKSPF outputs and outcomes and/or SDC's strategic needs with a quantified outcome
4	The response is considered to add major value in a single area or minor in multiple areas in line with UKSPF outputs and outcomes and/or SDC's strategic needs with a quantified outcome

5	The response provides added value in multiple areas in line with UKSPF outputs and outcomes and/or SDC's strategic needs all of which have been quantified
---	--

10.4.6 Match Funding

Score	Criteria
0	0%
1	>0% - 20%
2	>20% - 40%
3	>40% - 60%
4	>60% - 80%
5	>80% - 100%

10.5 The Council reserves the right to fail an application if any of the scored questions do not meet the baseline requirement (i.e. 0 or 1) with the exception of 9.4.3 and 9.4.6.

11.0 UKSPF Spending protocol

- 11.1 Once applications are assessed they will be ranked based on the score achieved to provide clarity on the quality of the submissions.
- 11.2 These will then be aggregated to see where best value can be achieved when considering multiple projects. The cumulative impact of outcomes and outputs for different projects will be considered and projects may be batched accordingly.
- 11.3 The Council will be responsible for making the final decision on the allocation of funding raised through UKSPF. The aim of this Protocol is to ensure that the decision-making process is transparent. Through it the Council will identify and agree priorities for the use of UKSPF and the allocation of funds on an annual basis.
- 11.4 There scoring is considered similar and the higher scoring stakeholder has already received funds elsewhere it is at the councils discretion to select a less favourable score to enable equitable distribution of funds.

12.0 Procurement

- 12.1 Formal Tender Process – To spend fund moneys in excess of £25k with a single supplier you will need to undergo a formal tender process for compliance with the Fund's terms and conditions. This will involve the following key activities:
 - 12.1.1 Advertise the opportunity to as wide-reaching supplier base (within the district at minimum) as possible.
 - 12.1.2 You will create criteria which assess cost and quality of suppliers against their peers.
 - 12.1.3 You will operate an open/transparent process providing a fair opportunity for all suppliers to deliver the project's requirements.

12.1.4 You will score responses back from the suppliers to rank the submissions and find the preferred supplier/contractor.

12.1.5 You will report back the results of the process to support the Fund's reporting procedures.

13.0 Performance management

- Process evaluation: which typically analyses whether an intervention is being implemented as intended, whether the design is working, what is working more or less well and why;
- Impact evaluation: an objective test of what changes have occurred, the scale of those changes and an assessment of the extent to which they can be attributed to the intervention; and
- Value for money (VfM) evaluation: a comparison of the benefits and costs of the intervention (for more information **on VfM please refer to Minimum Requirement Four: Business Case Development**)

Appendix 1 – Strategic Drivers – Council Plan

14.0 Community & Place

14.1 Responding to the climate emergency

This challenge is shared by all districts and is prioritised across all strategic literature. The district will do all it can locally to contribute to national carbon reduction targets, fulfil our aim to becoming a carbon-neutral District by 2030 and support measures to adapt to the impact of climate change

14.2 Rural Isolation & Community Support

Due to the rural nature of the district unique challenges are presented especially for the more venerable members of the community. As the district has a relatively older population (55th District in the Country), initiatives which provide improvement to health and wellbeing are considered key especially addressing rural isolation and offering improved community support and outreach to the more venerable and in need in the district

14.3 Bringing people into the district

Stratford-on-Avon's economy is particularly at risk due to its reliance on the tourism & hospitality. Bringing people in the district is considered key to reinvigorating the economy.

14.4 Crime related activities

It is recognised that the total number of recorded crimes in the year to July 2021 was 6,72610 for Stratford District. This is a rate of 52 crimes per 1,000 people, which is the lowest rate across Warwickshire. Whilst this is considered a positive position the district remains committed to providing support in this area and to 'design out crime'

14.5 Assets & Infrastructure

New, rural and lower economic communities in the district have indicated challenges with their community assets and infrastructure. Some of which found to be dilapidated, not fit for purpose, requiring modernisation or not currently available. The need to restore pride of place and provide key community activities, which enhance physical, cultural and social ties is to be addressed

15.0 Supporting Local Business

15.1 Support Tourism

Stratford-on-Avon's economy is particularly at risk due to its reliance on the tourism industry. Tourism-related jobs are an important part of the District services sector. Resulting benefits will be realised by the hospitality sector which shared the economic pressures created by the pandemic.

15.2 Employment rates

Stratford upon Avon experienced the sharpest decline in employment rates pre-pandemic to Q3 2021 at 10.2% and the sharpest increase in unemployment at 1.5%, over the same period. A notable portion of this is attributed to the effect on the Hospitality and Tourism sectors by the pandemic.

15.3 Local - Barriers to business growth

It is widely recognised that businesses face a number of barriers to growth. These include access to finance (both the availability of finance at different stages of business growth and the management skills to access it), access to knowledge, access to skills including digital skills, and access to the property or land needed to grow.

15.4 Strategic barriers to growth

Currently exacerbated by the “perfect storm” (or “new norm”) of fresh challenges facing businesses in the Stratford Upon Avon District (and all areas of Warwickshire for that matter). These include recovery from the pandemic, rising costs, skills shortages, and changes to international trade arrangements post-Brexit.

16.0 People and Skills

16.1 Employment rates

Stratford upon Avon experienced the sharpest decline in employment rates pre-pandemic to Q3 2021 at 10.2% and the sharpest increase in unemployment at 1.5%, over the same period. This is attributed to the effect on the Hospitality and Tourism sectors by the pandemic. Providing skills training to get the people back into work is considered a key challenge

16.2 Skills Gap

The district wish to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress into employment, also supplementing local adult skills provision. The most recent Coventry and Warwickshire Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) found that 70% of businesses actively engaged in recruitment are currently experiencing difficulties with the majority seeking workers of a skilled or technical nature

16.3 Responding to Emerging & Green industries

Supporting ‘further education’ initiatives and establishments in adapting to the needs of courses, its facilities and equipment which support emerging and green industries such as EV, Hydrogen or other sustainably led technologies providing a skill base cable of adapting to current and future employment needs and in turn providing a positive contribution to a sustainably minded carbon neutral society.