

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting:	SPECIAL MEETING OF PLACE AND SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
Date and Time:	WEDNESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2023, AT 2.00 PM
Place:	COUNCIL CHAMBER - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA
Enquiries to:	Email: democratic@nfdc.gov.uk Karen Wardle Tel: 023 8028 5071

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Members of the public may watch this meeting live on the [Council's website](#).

Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:

- (a) on items within the Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
- (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item. Speeches may not exceed three minutes.

Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above no later than 12.00 noon on Friday, 22 September 2023.

Kate Ryan
Chief Executive

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This agenda can be viewed online (<https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk>).

It can also be made available on audio tape, in Braille and large print.

AGENDA

Apologies

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive any public participation in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme.

3. CALL IN REQUEST - SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING, TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS (Pages 3 - 8)

Following the request from Cllrs B Dunning, J Davies and C McCarthy to call-in the Shared Prosperity Funding, Town Centre Improvements Portfolio Holder decision, which confirmed the process for allocating and progressing Shared Prosperity Fund funding which has been identified to support town centre improvements in the District, it is for the Panel to consider the issues being raised by Cllrs Dunning, Davies and McCarthy as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

Please note: In accordance with the Council's procedures, as more than two Members requested that the decision be called in, the decision has not been implemented and will not be implemented until the procedures in paragraphs 4.2 and 5.2 in the Council's Call in Procedure for Executive Decisions have been completed. The matter has been referred to this Panel for consideration. Cllrs Dunning, Davies and McCarthy have been invited to attend.

To: **Councillors**

Steve Rippon-Swaine (Chairman)
Alvin Reid (Vice-Chairman)
Peter Armstrong
Keith Craze
Allan Glass

Councillors

Matthew Hartmann
Stephanie Osborne
Adam Parker
Malcolm Wade

PLACE & SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL: 27 SEPTEMBER 2023

CALL IN REQUEST - SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING, TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Panel consider the call-in submission by Cllr Barry Dunning, Cllr Jack Davies and Cllr Colm McCarthy.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 On 15 September 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Derek Tipp, made a decision on how to distribute that element of the New Forest's UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies which would be targeted at town centre improvements. The towns included were Totton, Fordingbridge, New Milton, Ringwood, Hythe and Marchwood. The decision purely related to the town centre improvement project, which was one part of the Council's UKSPF submission agreed by Cabinet on 29 July 2022.
- 2.2 Following this Portfolio Holder decision, Cllr Barry Dunning gave formal notice to call-in the decision. He stated the following as the reason for the call in. "Owing to the omission of Lymington & Pennington in the list of Towns chosen to benefit from Shared Prosperity Funding, I am obliged to call this decision in. With a population of 15,832 I do feel that Lymington & Pennington is, once again, being overlooked." Additionally, Cllr Jack Davies also gave formal notice to call-in the decision. He stated the following as a reason for the call-in: "I wish to call in the decision because the proposal does not include the town of Lymington and Pennington within the list of allocations". Finally, Cllr Colm McCarthy also gave formal notice to call-in the decision. He stated the following as a reason for the call-in: "I would like to join my colleagues in calling in the portfolio holder decision to allocate the shared prosperity fund in the way that he did". Further clarification was received from Cllr McCarthy after the call-in period had closed in relation to his reasons as follows: "Lymington & Pennington deserve to be included in obtaining these funds that would be beneficial and used in areas throughout our neighbourhood. To be excluded, seems to be unfair to the residents that we support, and these funds could ideally help to generate a positive attitude especially at a time when there are so many retirement homes being allocated throughout our area."
- 2.3 In accordance with Council procedures, as three call-in notices have been received, the decision will be discussed at this meeting of the Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
- 2.4 As the decision is being reviewed by the Panel, the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder has been invited to attend. The Panel may also wish to call upon the appropriate officers to provide further information to the Panel in connection with the decision.
- 2.5 The panel will either accept the decision or request the decision-maker to reconsider the decision giving reasons for the request.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The full details of what led the Councillor to put forward the decision in relation to the allocation of town centre funding can be found in the report to the Portfolio Holder at appendix 1.

4. EXCLUSION OF LYMINGTON AND PENNINGTON

- 4.1 All of the call-in notices specifically relate to the exclusion of Lymington and Pennington from receiving an element of the town centre support fund. It is therefore appropriate to address that issue specifically.
- 4.2 It is worth underlining that this decision only related to that part of the UKSPF funding which is specifically geared towards supporting our town centres, one element of the district's SPF investment plan. As the decision notice points out, the allocation is based on those towns which are not at the heart of the district's tourism offer. The main focus of the funding is Totton which does not have a major role to play in the New Forest tourism offer. Whilst all of our other town and district centres arguably benefit to some degree from a degree of tourism, those larger towns excluded (notably Lymington, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst) are clearly at the very heart of our tourism offer and could not be said to meet the requirements of UKSPF as set out in the Cabinet report of 29 July 2022 – specifically that funding would be used to “restore a sense of pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost”.
- 4.3 Pennington falls within the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country and, as such, might be an appropriate focus for how UKSPF funds are distributed. However, this decision purely related to support for town centres and Pennington does not have a critical mass of town centre activity or focal point where an investment of town centre funds is likely to make a significant difference. Residents of Pennington also benefit from the close proximity of town centre provision at nearby Lymington.
- 4.4 There are several other initiatives which could benefit the businesses and communities of Lymington and Pennington. In particular, both of these areas fall within the geographic boundary of the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) which is top up funding to the UKSPF, specifically geared towards rural areas. £540,000 of funding is being made available through this route and a bidding round is currently open should there be projects in Lymington and Pennington which would meet the criteria.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial implications are as set out in the Portfolio decision, attached as Appendix 1

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The crime and disorder implications are as set out in the Portfolio decision, attached as Appendix 1

For further information contact:

Clive Tritton
Interim AD, Place Development
07956 304 823
clive.tritton@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Cabinet, 29 July 2022:
Item 4, UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Cabinet, 1 March 2023:
Item 7, Totton Community Engagement

PLANNING AND ECONOMY PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION – 8 SEPTEMBER 2023

SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING, TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report confirms the process for allocating and progressing SPF funding which has been identified to support town centre improvements in the district.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The government launched its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Prospectus in April 2022 as part of its Levelling Up agenda. The funding covers the three year period up to March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. New Forest District Council received an allocation of £1m and was required to submit a Local Investment Plan to government by 1 August 2022.
- 2.2 In July 2022, Cabinet agreed to delegate to the Chief Executive the submission of an Investment Plan for New Forest District and endorsed the allocation of our £1m fund to support 11 projects across the three priority themes, namely Community and Place, Business Support and People and Skills.
- 2.3 One of the projects considered by Cabinet at its July 2022 meeting focused on the use of SPF funds to realise town centre improvements.
- 2.4 In March 2023 Cabinet additionally considered a report in relation to Totton Town centre and supported progressing delivery of “quick win” projects along with supporting, in principle, six design principles as part of a vision for Totton. This report was based upon a major community engagement exercise, undertaken by consultants Feria, which realised 874 responses from around 250 different contributors. The March 2023 Cabinet report underlined the importance of making early progress at Totton and outlined that the UKSPF town centre project would have a Totton focus through early pilot schemes.
- 2.5 This decision paper establishes how the SPF town centre project will be progressed.

3. PROPOSED TOWN CENTRE ALLOCATIONS**Budget allocations**

- 3.1 The total SPF allocation for the New Forest is £1m of which £762,000 is revenue funding and £238,000 is capital funding. The New Forest SPF Investment Plan which was submitted to government in August 2023 identified £220,000 to support our town centres all of which is revenue funding.
- 3.2 The town centre funding will be split in the following way, noting that 4% (£8,800) is reserved to manage the SPF programme:
- Totton Town Centre - £136,200
 - Other district centres - £75,000, with the following split of funds:
 - Fordingbridge - £15,000
 - New Milton - £15,000

- Ringwood - £15,000
- Hythe - £15,000
- Marchwood - £15,000

3.3 Funding allocations for the five district centres may be varied to reflect the nature and cost of individual schemes coming forward.

Rationale for budget allocations

3.4 The majority of the town centre development funding, £136,200, has been allocated to Totton. The rationale for that is that Totton has been identified by the Administration as a key priority for regeneration investment. Additionally, Totton is well progressed in terms of identifying potential areas for investment following the work undertaken by Feria. Previous cabinet reports have established that Totton, through pilot projects, should be a focus for the SPF funding and that there is a need to progress proposed quick wins. Additionally, having undertaken a major engagement exercise in the town, it is essential that we maintain momentum and offer confidence that we are listening to views and moving quickly to respond to issues raised.

3.5 However, the benefits of the SPF programme should also be spread across the district. It is important, therefore, that a reasonable allocation of SPF funding is provided to other town centres. Five town centre locations have been chosen, which are away from the major tourist areas across the district. This decision has been made on the basis that investment in these centres is most needed. The £15,000 allocation for each of these five centres is significantly more modest than in Totton but is still a significant amount of funding to either build on existing projects or to facilitate new ideas.

Developing programmes in each town centre

3.6 The above allocations will need to be progressed through specific projects in each town centre. Officers will meet with representatives of the relevant town and parish councils to agree priority projects which can be delivered within the SPF timeframe, noting all projects must be complete by March 2025. In the case of Totton, projects will need to show alignment with the principles of the March 2023 Cabinet paper and supporting Feria report – either delivering quick wins or progressing design principles.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The March 2025 deadline for spending the £1m UKSPF allocation for NFDC makes it imperative that we make progress on all aspects of the programme. This report provides a way forward to progressing projects to support 6 town centres across the district with a particular focus on Totton.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 New Forest District Council was awarded £1m by government from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Following submission of the District's UKSPF Investment Plan, the Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in December 2022. That Investment Plan identified £220,000 of revenue funding to support our town centres. Therefore, the commitments in this paper can be met through that fund. 4% of UKSPF funds are available to manage the programme. There are no additional cost commitments arising out of this paper.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All town centres face significant challenges at the present time for numerous reasons including, in particular, new ways of shopping. These have been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. One impact of declining high streets and town centres is an increase in anti social behaviour (ASB). Whilst the proposals in this paper are modest in scale, any investment to animate and diversify our town centres should help to address any prevalent ASB issues.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Whilst detailed projects for each of the town centres identified have still to be worked up, one area of potential focus for all areas will be to consider how to improve environmental sustainability in those centres – for example through bike stands, bike routes or promotion of walking trails.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The allocations made above specifically reflect those town centres which have seen less investment in recent years than some New Forest centres. As such, ensuring that residents have access to high quality facilities regardless of where they live is a key element of this programme.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 9.1 The net £211,200 SPF funding for town centre projects will be split in the following way:
- Totton Town Centre - £136,200
 - Other district centres - £75,000, with equal amounts to Fordingbridge, New Milton, Ringwood, Hythe and Marchwood.
- 9.2 Proposals will be worked up with the appropriate Town or Parish Council and will then be considered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy for endorsement.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: Councillor Derek Tipp

Date: 8 September 2023

For further information contact:

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clive.tritton@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Cabinet, 29 July 2022:
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Cabinet, 1 March 2023:
Item 7, Totton Community Engagement

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 8 September 2023

Last date for call in – 15 September 2023

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