

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan 2025/26

Bromsgrove District Council has been allocated £917,878 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the period 2025/26. The funding will primarily be used to deliver priorities and key objectives in the Council Plan that align with the UKSPF. The way in which the funding will be deployed to do this is detailed below.

Vibrant Town & District Centres

The eight centres across the district meet a range of needs of shoppers, residents and businesses. The Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 vision focuses on developing an inclusive, vibrant and resilient town centre which is adaptable to change and we are building on this to develop a Strategic Framework for Bromsgrove Town Centre. Key to this is to bring together stakeholders to develop and deliver activities that improve safety and security, increase speciality markets, festivals and events and to promote the town centre as a leisure and retail destination.

We will:

- make improvements to Bromsgrove Town Centre public realm to improve traffic management on the high street and contribute to an attractive, high-quality environment that shoppers want to visit and businesses will want to locate in.
- provide grant funding to organisations and business consortiums deliver activities and events in the Bromsgrove centres which will attract visitors and bring communities together.

Supporting Our Businesses

By supporting businesses, we seek to create an environment conducive to growth and innovation, offering resources, incentives and infrastructure to bolster entrepreneurship and job creation. We will encourage and support new business start-ups to see Bromsgrove District as a natural place to locate and do business. Enabling established businesses to grow will embed them in the district and help us to retain them locally.

Business start-up rates are currently lower in Bromsgrove at 8.9% than Worcestershire (9%), the West Midlands (11.3%) and the UK (11%).¹ This is lower than recent very high start-up rates in the district but those rates have been attributed to a statistical anomaly. Recent 3-year business survival rates are unreliable due to this statistical anomaly. The current UKSPF funded start-up programme has experienced strong demand for pre-start support. There is a time lag between accessing supporting and starting a business so the conversion rate is currently 10%. Demand for support from early years businesses has not been as strong; however, grant funding is fully allocated.

The needs of established businesses vary depending upon their sector, size and business stage. Growth can come from scaling up young businesses through increased marketing or provision of additional services. More established businesses may be looking to develop new products or services, enter new markets through exporting or increasing their capacity through improved productivity. Data regarding innovation is not available at the local authority level; however, Worcestershire businesses are more likely to be engaged in innovation activity (51.7%) than the average for all of England (37.1%).² Productivity in Bromsgrove, measured in GVA per hour worked, has been growing steadily over the past 5 years and has consistently been higher than the UK average (£42.30 compared with £39.70 in 2022).³ The provision of high quality, business support programmes that meet the varying needs of our business community will sustain and enhance this positive performance.

We will:

- co-fund the delivery of the Enterprising Worcestershire start-up programme which will provide specialist support to help entrepreneurs from Bromsgrove to be enterprise ready. Match-funded grants will also be available to help businesses to start-up and become established.
- Procure an organisation to deliver an impactful business innovation programme offering advice and grants to help entrepreneurs and existing businesses to develop innovative products and services and to help established businesses to adopt new processes.

¹ Source: ONS Business Demography UK [Business demography, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

² Source: UK Innovation Survey [UK Innovation Survey 2023 Statistical Annex.ods](#)

³ Source: ONS [Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district - Office for National Statistics](#)

- continue to offer match-funded grants to businesses to help them invest in measures to help them to grow and create employment.
- continue to fund the Worcestershire Growth Hub to help businesses to identify, and apply for, national, regional and local programmes of support. The Growth Hub will also deliver the specialist advisor programme providing advice and coaching on a range of key business topics to help businesses to grow and create employment.

Upskilling the workforce

Bromsgrove has a relatively high economic activity rate with 82.9% of residents in employment, self-employed or actively looking for work.⁴ This compares favourably with the West Midlands average (77.7%) and the national average (78.4%). Reasons for economic inactivity include being a student, early retirement, caring responsibilities, health conditions and being discouraged. Whilst levels of economic inactivity in the district are relatively low, it does account for 17.1% of the population. In times of high employment, low levels of a skilled and available workforce can be a hindrance to economic growth; therefore, it is important to ensure that any barriers to employment that economically inactive people are experiencing are addressed. The unemployment rate in Bromsgrove is consistently lower than the Worcestershire rate and the national rate. In October 2024 Bromsgrove's rate was 2.8% compared to Worcestershire at 3.4% and England at 4.4%.⁵ However, unemployment amongst young people in the district is much higher than the general population, running at 4.7%. Bromsgrove residents are highly qualified with a higher proportion of the population having qualifications at every level than the West Midlands and national average. For example, 62.2% of residents are qualified to RQF Level 4⁶ and above compared to 42.5% of the West Midlands and 47.3% of Great Britain.⁷ Despite these high levels of educational attainment, employers frequently cite lack of a skilled workforce as a barrier to growth. Consultation that took place in the development of the Worcestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) identified a lack of common skills, ie

⁴ Source: ONS Local Authority Profile [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

⁵ Source: Worcestershire County Council [Economic Summary November 2024](#)

⁶ Regulated Qualifications Framework Level 4 is equivalent to a Higher National Certificate (HNC)

⁷ Source: ONS Local Authority Profile [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

transferable skills such as communication, teamwork and organisation; technical skills and knowledge such as AI, cyber security, data analytics, CNC programming; and leadership and management skills.⁸

The Council plan recognises the value of upskilling the workforce. Enabling individuals and businesses involves providing opportunities for skills development, education and employment in order to develop prosperous communities where businesses flourish, people thrive and places prosper.

We will:

- continue to deliver the Careers Worcestershire programme for young people aged 16 to 24 years old who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). This programme provides wrap around support for education and career choices and engages with employers to open up opportunities to young people. In the first 6 months of delivery, the current programme has supported 88 young people.
- procure delivery of a targeted employability support programme designed to assist the economically inactive, to move closer to the jobs market. The programme will complement existing, national provision including recently announced programmes such as Connect to Work and WorkWell. The programme will support those that are not able to access mainstream support due to their complex barriers to employment.
- deliver a programme of support, via the Family Hubs, to help people caring for young children to develop employability skills in preparation for returning to the jobs market. The programme will also assist participants to access funded childcare provision to enable them to re-enter the jobs market.
- provide opportunities for residents in employment to upskill through the provision of fully funded training or grants to fund specialist courses.

⁸ Source: Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce [Local Skills Improvement Plans | Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce](#)

Energy Efficient Homes

The Council aspires to create a thriving and inclusive community where everyone has access to safe, healthy, affordable, and environmentally responsible housing options. Prioritising energy efficient homes will not only reduce environmental impact but will also contribute to long term sustainability and cost savings for residents.

We will:

- fund Act on Energy caseworkers to provide intensive support to residents to help them to adopt energy efficiency measures. The support will be focused on those that are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, fuel poverty.

Parks & Open Spaces

Since Covid, maintenance of green spaces has consistently been identified by residents as a priority in the annual community survey. Parks and open spaces link strongly with the Council's Environment priority, providing green spaces where people and nature can flourish. They provide opportunities for communities to come together and people to be active.

We will:

- provide grants to organisations that manage public spaces, such as parish councils, for improvements to parks, public gardens, playing fields, play areas, as well as green corridors.

Bringing Communities Together

Bromsgrove District is predominantly rural with 90% of the land designated as Green Belt. Whilst Bromsgrove Town and other large centres such as Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Rubery and Wythall are the main centres of population, smaller rural villages and hamlets are spread throughout the district. Maintaining the vitality of smaller villages is identified as a key challenge in the Bromsgrove District Plan.⁹ Provision of locally delivered services and places for communities to come together are vital across the district.

⁹ Source: Bromsgrove District Council [Adopted BDP January 2017](#)

We will:

- Provide a grant for improvements to community and neighbourhood infrastructure such as village halls, sports facilities, public toilets and other facilities.

Expenditure

Council Priority	Project	Deliverer	Capital	Revenue	Total
Community & Place					
Bringing Communities Together Parks & Open Spaces	Community Infrastructure Grant Grant programme providing funding for improvements to places where people come together such village halls and community parks	Grant administered by BDC	£280,000		£280,000
Energy Efficient Homes	Community Caseworker Providing advice and support to households vulnerable to fuel poverty to take up energy efficiency measures	Act on Energy		£70,000	£70,000
Vibrant Town & District Centres	High Streets & Town Centre Improvements Improvements to public realm in Bromsgrove Town Centre and grants to businesses and community groups for activities that attract visitors to the centres.	BDC	£20,000	£26,523	£46,523
Supporting Local Business					
Supporting Our Businesses	Enterprising Worcestershire Specialist advice for pre-start businesses	Worcestershire County Council		£25,000	£25,000

	Business Innovation Programme Specialist programme of support to help new and existing businesses to development new to market products or services or for existing businesses to adopt new processes	To be procured		£100,000	£100,000
	Growth Hub Business signposting and account management service helping enterprises to access support. Delivery of the specialist advisor programme providing coaching and advice covering key business topics such as marketing, growth planning and financial management.	Worcestershire Growth Hub		£60,000	£60,000
	Business Grants Grant funding for new and existing businesses to support them to start-up and grow.	BDC		£79,349	£79,349
People & Skills					
Upskilling the Workforce	Careers Worcestershire Bespoke advice to young people 16 – 24, including those who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, to move into employment, education and training	Careers Worcestershire		£100,000	£100,000
	Employability Support in Family Hubs Support to economically inactive people with caring responsibilities to move towards employment through the development of employability	BDC		£20,000	£20,000

	skills, job search support and accessing help with childcare.				
	Employability Skills Programme Support for economically inactive people to move towards employment through the development of employability skills.	To be procured		£48,000	£48,000
	In-employment Training Provision of grants and fully funded training to upskill the workforce	To be procured		£52,291	£52,291
Management & Administration of UKSPF				£36,715	£36,715
	Total		£300,000	£617,878	£917,878