

United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

Bridgend County Borough Local Investment Plan information

Challenges, Opportunities and Proposals

July 2022



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UKSPF Programmes Overview

The UKSPF will support the UK government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the levelling up objectives:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

Within the overarching objective of the UKSPF of building pride in place and increasing life chances, there are three key investment priorities:

1. Community and Place
2. Supporting Local Business
3. People and Skills

Within each of these investment priorities are the following objectives:

Communities & Place

- Strengthening social fabric and fostering sense of local pride and belonging
- Building resilient, safe and healthy neighbourhoods, through targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention.

People & Skills

- Boosting core skills and support adults to progress in work
- Reducing levels of economic inactivity through intensive life and employment support Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work
- Supporting local areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work

Supporting Local Businesses

- Creating jobs and boosting community cohesion, through investments that build on existing industries and institutions
- Promoting networking and collaboration
- Increasing private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities, through targeted support for SMEs to undertake new-to-firm innovation, adopt productivity-enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques, and start or grow their exports.

This document identifies the challenges and opportunities identified through a number of key strategic documents in Bridgend County Borough which identify potential areas of alignment with the UKSPF. The document also highlights some areas of opportunity that align with the UKSPF. Current thinking in relation to governance arrangements for programme oversight and fund disbursement, and programme risks are detailed, to ensure that the programmes are well structured, fairly administered, and deliver real outcomes to the residents, businesses and communities in Bridgend County Borough.

It is important to note however that detailed technical guidance is yet to be published and therefore the information contained, whilst valid at the time of writing is subject to change.

Local Challenges and Opportunities

The Bridgend Economic Strategy, the Bridgend Local Development Plan, the (draft) Bridgend Net Zero Carbon Strategy and the Bridgend and Cwm Taff Wellbeing Assessment set out key challenges across and within each of the three key investment priorities, accompanied by substantial evidence from research and from stakeholder engagement and consultations. Whilst there are clear areas of alignment between these documents and opportunities through UKSPF it is not the case that all areas are aligned, nor is it the case that UKSPF is the only source of funding available to deliver these key strategic documents.

Challenges aligned to Community and Place theme include:

- **Local resilience planning:** Support for local communities to undertake local resilience planning, focusing on Health, Climate and Economy. Linked directly to future delivery of key local strategies, such as the Climate Response Programme, Local Development Plan, Wellbeing Plan and Economic Strategy.
- **Nature recovery and resilience:** There is a pressing need for action to build resilient ecological networks across our whole land and seascape to safeguard species and habitats and the benefits they provide, addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss, and targeting interventions to help species recover where necessary (Economic Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment).
- **Decarbonisation of the economy:** The need for individual, business and community action to live more sustainably has been identified in community engagement work, and detailed in the Net Zero Carbon Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment and Economic Strategy.
- **Transport Infrastructure:** Lack of, or deficiencies in, public transport infrastructure, especially regarding “last mile” connectivity, particularly in the valleys (Economic Strategy).
- **Active Travel:** The need to expand active travel infrastructure beyond current plans (Economic Strategy, Net Zero Carbon Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment).
- **Town Centres:** Bridgend Town Centre in particular needs improvement, but all the town centres need attention (Economic Strategy, Local Development Plan).
- **Inequality:** The Economic Strategy, Local Development Plan and the Wellbeing assessment all identify substantial inequalities between areas (in terms of wealth/income, educational attainment, access to resources and employment, transport and digital connectivity).
- **Community Safety:** Whilst crime is generally lower in Bridgend than in many areas of Wales, there remain concerns for some feeling safe walking after dark, in particular, some worried about anti-social behaviour and gangs gathering (Wellbeing Assessment).
- **Feasibility Planning:** Feasibility studies will provide the required data, knowledge and understanding leading to further funding bids and will underpin the development of future bids to LUF, UKSPF and other strategic funds from any other relevant sources.

There are already 4 major projects ongoing in the County Borough which will all contribute to significant improvements across Bridgend:

- the proposed plan for Bridgend Town Centre in the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan;
- the renovation of the Maesteg Town Hall;
- the development plans for Porthcawl waterfront;
- and the “Employment Land” plans for the industrial areas outside Bridgend Town.

Opportunities aligned to Community and Place theme include:

- Establishment of community resilience committees, the development of a 'Resilience Hwb' (a virtual hub as well as physical location) offering exhibition, demonstration space and a trader's corner.
- A fund for community-driven resilience response actions such as feasibility, action plans, options appraisals, and a scheme for community projects to include some capital.
- Work with community venues, tying in cultural and heritage sites, to increase engagement in the community and sustainability of community groups.
- Review, refresh and deliver the Nature Recovery Plan in Bridgend to create and improve green space.
- Ensure suitable commercial premises, and flexible working spaces / co-working spaces.
- Coordinating net-zero strategies across the County Borough, including public/private/voluntary sectors.
- Create a long-term programme for rolling out low-carbon retrofitting solutions to the wider borough.
- Support the attractions in the Valleys and Coast through improved signage and marketing.
- Develop more accommodation options to increase the visitor capacity of the area
- Working with cultural groups to increase and broaden the cultural opportunities across the County.
- Coordinating the planning of public transport services into the evening to support the local night-time economy and to support last-mile public transport connectivity.

Challenges aligned to Supporting Local Businesses theme include:

Challenges identified through broad stakeholder engagement for the Economic Strategy in 2021 additionally identified:

- **Visitor Attraction / Marketing:** A perception of poor marketing and PR for Bridgend County (outside of the county) as a place to live and work (Economic Strategy)
- **Decarbonisation:** Significant challenges to businesses due to climate change, and the imperative to move to a low-carbon economy (Economic Strategy, Net Zero Carbon Strategy)
- **Business Premises:** A lack of available and suitable business premises prevents the Bridgend County business community from reaching its full potential with businesses required to be put on a waiting list for premises (Economic Strategy, Local Development Plan)
- **Recruitment:** Difficulties to recruit skilled individuals, specifically in hospitality, tourism, care etc., but more widely too (Economic Strategy consultations)
- **Business Skills:** Businesses require a skilled workforce, but they also need specific business skills to meet their full potential. The 2021 business survey undertaken by the council indicated that marketing, social media and digital skills (ranging from basic knowledge of Microsoft products to more technical IT knowledge) were deemed particularly important for local businesses. Industry-specific skills such as food hygiene were also indicated as important.

Opportunities aligned to Supporting Local Business theme include:

- Working across sectors to support businesses to diversify, decarbonise and grow

- Support for the creation of development and investment plans, built on local needs and engagement and the creation of 'fund ready' business plan and delivery propositions.
- Strategic capital interventions across the County that support adaptations to existing (council-owned) property to create more diverse business accommodation and development of new property.
- A local enterprise support programme to provide case and account management, training, advice and support to existing businesses and support the development of new business ideas.
- Supporting existing and developing tourism events across the County that offer opportunities in relation to targeted and niche markets and delivering a range of seasonal and targeted marketing campaigns in partnership with the local tourism industry.

Challenges aligned to People and Skills theme include:

- **Skills Gaps:** Bridgend County has a structural economic constraint of skill shortage which has caused a trend of long-term unemployment (2021 Economic Strategy). This has meant that over time, families and communities have become embedded in cycles of unemployment, exacerbating already existing issues of deprivation and inequality.
- **Economic Inactivity / Worklessness:** The Economic Strategy and Wellbeing Assessment identify deep-rooted economic and social problems within some areas of Bridgend County Borough. This is most clearly recognised in the labour market where there are issues of high economic inactivity (almost 30% in some areas) and significant geographical inequality. There is a large pool of jobless people who are potentially available to work, although a significant proportion of whom are likely to require varying degrees of assistance to re-enter the labour market one of the large drivers of the higher economic inactivity rate is a comparatively high number of people who are long-term sick.
- **Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET):** There is a need to reduce the number of 11 to 19-year-olds who are in education but at risk of becoming not in education, training, or employment (Pre-NEET), and those who are 16 to 24-year-olds who are NEET, to bring about their sustainable integration into the labour market, thereby contributing to a reduction in youth unemployment (Economic Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment).

Opportunities aligned to People and Skills theme include:

For Bridgend County, capacity building is essential across all levels of the community, to develop skills and competencies to take greater control of their own lives and contribute to inclusive local development.

- There is significant untapped economic potential to be unlocked by facilitating re-skilling and up-skilling of the existing workforce.
- Continued focus on basic skills is needed to ensure workforce (and potential workforce) with a strong and broad set of basic skills that encourages people into work and ensures they can succeed.
- Bridgend County can capitalise on its strong background in the advanced manufacturing sector, bringing economic advantage as that sector develops and enabling Bridgend County to consolidate its position as a regional hub.
- The Low Carbon economy is set to expand rapidly and create a wealth of new jobs. Bridgend County can capitalise on this with the right training programmes, aligned to national and local strategies to de-carbonise the economy.

- Support young people to make a positive transition into education, employment or training when they leave school, reduce the number of 11 to 24-year-olds who are NEET, and address wider issues such as poor emotional/physical/sexual health and youth homelessness.
- Boost learning, skills and employability in the immediate and future workforce especially those cohorts with barriers to establishing a secure employment situation.

Summary of Project Proposals

1. Community and Place

Bridgend County Local Resilience Planning

Support for local communities to undertake local resilience planning, focusing on Health, Climate and Economy, linked directly to future delivery of key local strategies, such as the Climate Response Programme, Local Development Plan, Wellbeing Plan and Economic Strategy. To include activities such as community resilience analysis, the establishment of community resilience committees, support for community-driven resilience response actions, the development of the 'Resilience Hwb' (a virtual hub as well as a physical, town centre location) offering exhibition, demonstration space and a traders corner. Also, Resilience Hwb on tour (a series of local-level talks, seminars and workshops targeted at the local level. In addition to this the options for action in relation to sites identified as community challenges will be explored.

This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value
£1,000,050

Bridgend County Thriving Communities

Part (a): Community Capacity and Development Building Programme

The community development and building capacity programme will include a range of new approaches co-produced with people and communities including the delivery of some approaches and programmes that have previously been progressed as pilot phases of development. This could include a new third sector fund to replace similar previous locally administered grant programmes.

Part (b): Transforming Bridgend County Borough/ Transforming Commercial Centres

Transforming Bridgend will support the design, development and feasibility of projects already identified through local placemaking and masterplanning strategies.

The capital element will extend funding to support commercial property grants beyond main town centres (outside of Transforming Towns Boundary), but also support major town centre infrastructure projects as match funding to the Transforming Towns programme.

Thriving Communities will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement, and grant fund.

Current proposed value
£2,080,000

Bridgend County Green Spaces Enhancement Scheme

Part (a): Bridgend County Local Nature Plan

This will take forward the delivery of the Bridgend County Local Nature Plan and deliver key actions outlined in the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Recovery Plan. A targeted approach will be adopted to carry out a wide range of locally focused biodiversity enhancement schemes based on local engagement and local involvement. Alongside this, a 'biodiversity' budgeting concept will be rolled out with resources being made available for community-led green space and biodiversity enhancement activities.

This will be delivered at a local level, although it has the opportunity to operate on a Sub-regional level, using a mix of in-house, commissioning and procurement.

Part (b): The Great Glamorgan Way.

This is a project which aims to continue to deliver a coherent 270KM network of green corridors within the South Wales Central region for the purposes of improving bridleway access and habitat connectivity. The project will also continue to develop its work on assessing and growing the economic impact the network will have with the varying local communities it passes through.

Current proposed value
£725,000

Bridgend County Community Future Scoping programme

Support the creation of development and investment plans, built on local needs and engagement and the creation of 'fund ready' business plans, funding bids and delivery propositions.

This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement, and grant fund.

Current proposed value
£400,000

Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework

This cross-cutting framework will provide the opportunity to adopt a co-production approach to design and delivery and adaptable and responsive delivery mechanisms by specialist organisations with targeted local to regional delivery in response to needs as they are considered to be and change. This will be delivered locally and will involve in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value
£1,000,000

2. Supporting Local Business

Bridgend County Business Prosperity programme

This programme will work across sectors to support businesses to diversify, decarbonise and grow through a wide range of targeted, clustered and County-wide interventions that enhance the capacity of businesses to develop and support opportunity maximisation. This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value
£1,100,000

Bridgend County Business Future Scoping programme

Support the creation of development and investment plans, built on local needs and engagement and the creation of 'fund ready' business plans, funding bids and delivery propositions. This will enable the exploration of longer-term options to diversify, decarbonise and grow. This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value
£425,000

Bridgend County Centres of Enterprise

A series of strategic capital interventions across the County that support adaptations to existing property to create more diverse business accommodation and development of new property. This could include the target to develop the 'Net-Zero market'. Examples, such as:

- Bridgend carbon neutral indoor market
- Industrial property development
- Town centre business premises

This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value
£ 3,500,000

Bridgend County Local Enterprise Support Programme

A local enterprise support programme to provide case and account management, training, advice and support to existing businesses and support the development of new business ideas. To enable a focus on 'meanwhile' spaces as a mechanism for businesses to test new products and markets and a series of meet-the-buyer-focused interventions. This would work with the Bridgend Business Forum.

This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value
£450,000

Bridgend County Tourism Events Support

Tourism events support will provide a tiered approach to supporting existing and developing tourism events across the County that offer opportunities in relation to targeted and niche markets. Coordination will be through a central portal and point of contact that will enable local supply chain development. Alongside these opportunities to identify suitable assets and event spaces will be explored and developed as is considered feasible. This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement, and grant fund.

Current proposed value

£450,000

Bridgend County Local Destination Management and Marketing

This will enable local attraction enhancement and support the delivery of a range of seasonal and targeted marketing campaigns in partnership with the local tourism industry. That partnership approach will support the development of a new and unique range of package offers.

Coordination of County wide destinations will enable the local economy to better respond to peak and seasonal demand placed upon it by tourism and ensure that visitor experience is enhanced. This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value

£150,000

Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework

This cross-cutting framework will provide the opportunity to adopt a co-production approach to design and delivery and adaptable and responsive delivery mechanisms by specialist organisations with targeted local to regional delivery in response to needs as they are considered to be and change. This will be delivered locally and will involve in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value

£1,000,000

3. People and Skills

CELT+ (as part of a regional model)

This programme has 3 parts:

CELT + Bridgend Inspire 2 Work /Achieve

Preventative work with Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and other young people who are disengaging and disengaged with education, training and employment and need support to secure a suitable post-16 destination. Resources for participants (homeless, poor digital skills) to engage with services. The programme will delivery on the CELT model of engagement, community based using third sector partners as the point of contact, health board, young people.

This will be delivered locally and there is an aspiration for it to be co-ordinated regionally by a lead Local Authority. It will be delivered locally via in house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value
£3,150,000

CELT+ Employability - Bridgend County

The programme will support a number of key intervention stages to support people within the County Borough: Getting involved; Becoming more employable; accessing employment; staying in employment; employment progression.

The programme will delivery on the CELT model of engagement, community based using third sector partners as the point of contact, health board, young people.

This will be delivered locally and there is an aspiration for it to be co-ordinated regionally by a lead Local Authorities will be delivered locally via in house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value
£4,000,000

CELT+ Regional Procurement Opportunities

In order to support clients to achieve the best and most sustainable job we will work with regional partners, supported by the Regional Skills Partnership, to procure appropriate support for the CELT + cohort which will provide training and support to all age clients in Bridgend to access opportunities across the region. These industries which are currently new and niche are expecting high growth and investment and are predicted to provide secure sustainable employment going forward requiring skills which will be in high demand in the future.

Current proposed value
£875,000

Multiply - Bridgend County

Multiply is a standalone programme within the UKSPF that will seek to support adults (19+) by improving their functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses.

UK Government has defined success measures under the Multiply programme as:

1. More adults achieving maths qualifications / participating in numeracy courses (up to and including Level 2/ SCQF Level 5).
2. Improved labour market outcomes e.g. fewer numeracy skills gaps reported by employers, and an increase in the proportion of adults that progress into sustained employment and / or education.
3. Increased adult numeracy across the population.

A range of delivery mechanisms are being explored for Multiply within the region and at a local level. Therefore, it is currently considered that it will be delivered locally via in house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value
£3,990,295

Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework

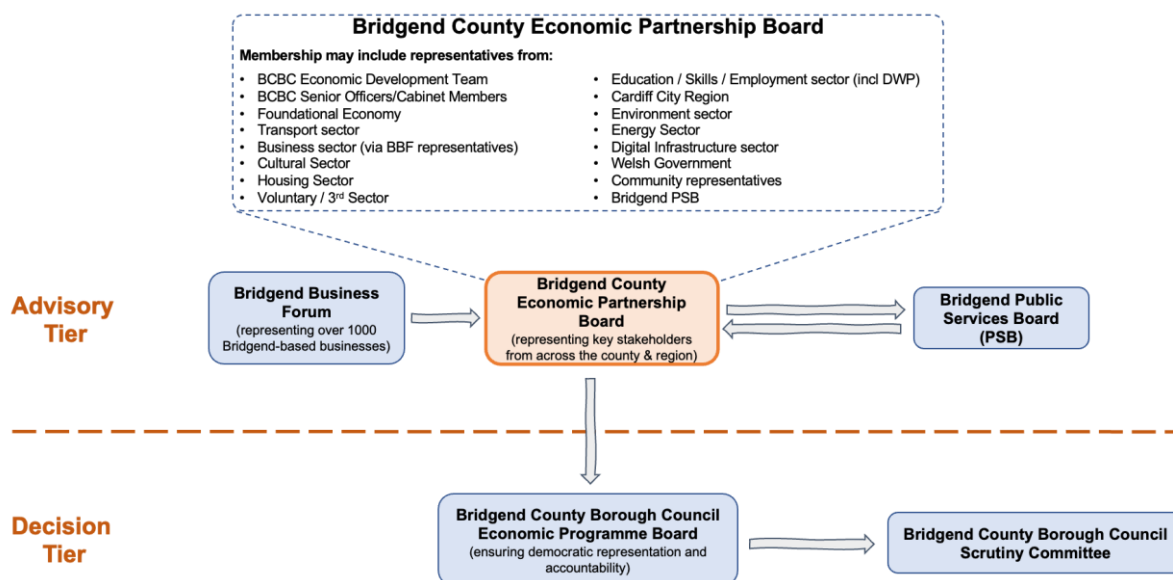
This cross-cutting framework will provide the opportunity to adopt a co-production approach to design and delivery and adaptable and responsive delivery mechanisms by specialist organisations with targeted local to regional delivery in response to needs as they are considered to be and change. This will be delivered locally and will involve in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value
£1,000,000

Local Governance

A two-tier governance structure has recently been implemented at a local level as the result of the 2022 Economic Strategy, resulting in the establishment of the Bridgend Economic Partnership, which reports to the BCBC Economic Programme Board. Given that the majority of the potential UKSPF funded programmes address economic development challenges, it is proposed that the Economic Partnership and Economic Programme Boards are appropriate structures for governance and oversight of the UKSPF programmes within Bridgend County Borough. Close liaison and interaction will be required for oversight of the programmes that align more closely to the Public Services Board (PSB) agenda.

This is represented in the following diagram:



The focus will be on balancing requirements for business recovery/growth with community wellbeing, environmental imperatives and ecological health, and recommending short, medium and longer-term actions to address these.

The council already has well-established governance models for programme execution in the existing Programme Board model. This model, along with the existing Council, Cabinet and Committee structures is employed to ensure democratic oversight, decision making and accountability for decisions that affect the communities, businesses and the natural environment. The Economic Programme Board is comprised of representatives from key departments, is chaired by the relevant cabinet member or director, and reports into the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB).

Risks

UKSPF funded proposals face a number of key risk areas that could impact their success in achieving the target outcomes. General risks include:

- **Mobilisation and scale-up of delivery capacity:** there is a significant amount of delivery expected within a two-year period. A key risk relates to a failure to recruit sufficient project delivery staff, to ensure capacity to deliver (this applies equally to BCBC staff and staff within delivery partners).
- **Insufficient funds to complete target objectives:** In preparing the UKSPF proposals, informed assumptions have had to be made regarding the cost of delivery. Given ongoing inflationary pressures, there is a risk that funding falls short of the actual cost to deliver.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** All of the proposals will require on-going engagement with local residents, businesses and stakeholders in order to deliver true co-production of programmes. Insufficient engagement with stakeholders will lead to poor take up of opportunities provided by UKSPF, resulting in likely shortfalls in target outcomes.
- **Poor collaboration / alignment across delivery partners and within the council:** Effective collaboration across council departments and delivery partners will be vital to ensure effective and integrated delivery planning and delivery.
- **Council Processes:** The ability of participating local authorities to process all the required actions within a timely manner will be vital to delivery success.
- **Unknown support landscape from March 2023:** There exists a risk of planning a programme without full knowledge of the support landscape post March 2023, which may subsequently turn out to be insufficient to sustain the programme.
- **Significant external events:** large scale, disruptive external events or developments (e.g. Covid, International Conflict) beyond the influence of BCBC or delivery partners could cause significant disruption / delay to delivery programmes.
- **Poor quality of contractors:** Where contractors are required to deliver works or elements of a programme, it is essential that appropriate minimum quality standards are maintained.
- **Alignment of UKSPF with Welsh Government Programmes and funding:** It will be important to ensure alignment between UKSPF and WG programmes and funding streams, to maximise the benefits from both.
- **Timing of UKSPF funding:** Delays in the decision-making timetable of UKSPF could have knock-on impacts in relation to the delivery timetable of UKSPF.

Summary of UKSPF Programme Proposals

Community and Place

Proposals	Activities	Delivery model	Delivery level	Current proposed value
Bridgend County Local Resilience Planning	Health; Economy; Climate	In-house; commission; procurement	Local; sub-regional	£1,000,050
Bridgend County Thriving Communities	Capital/revenue grant fund for community group access	In-house/commission; grant fund	Local	£2,080,000
Bridgend County Green Spaces Enhancement Scheme	Targeted green space and biodiversity enhancement programme, including Great Glamorgan Way	In-house; commission; procurement	Local; sub-regional	£725,000
Bridgend County Community Future Scoping programme	Fund to test the feasibility of longer term community-led ideas	In-house/commission; grant fund	Local	£400,000
Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework	Core fund to support deliverability across all themes	In-house; grant fund	Local	£1,000,000
				£5,205,050

Supporting Local Business

Proposals	Activities	Delivery model	Delivery level	Current proposed value
Bridgend County Business Prosperity programme	Grant fund to support business diversification, decarbonise and growth	In-house; grant fund	Local; sub-regional	£1,100,000
Bridgend County Business Future Scoping programme	Grant fund to support feasibility of longer-term options for diversification, decarbonise and growth	In-house; grant fund	Local; sub-regional	£425,000
Bridgend County Centres of Enterprise	Capital support to create more diverse business accommodation	In-house; commission; procurement	Local	£3,500,000
Bridgend County Local Enterprise Support Programme	Networking, training and development for local businesses	In-house; commission; procurement	Local	£450,000
Bridgend County Tourism Events Support	Tiered grant fund to support events across the County	In-house; grant fund	Local	£450,000
Bridgend County Local Destination Management & Marketing	Product-led marketing campaigns	In-house; commission; procurement	Local	£150,000
Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework	Core fund to support deliverability across all themes	In-house; grant fund	Local	£1,000,000
				£7,075,000

People and Skills

Proposals	Activities	Delivery model	Delivery level	Current proposed value
CELT+ Bridgend Inspire 2 Work / Achieve	Support for NEETS	In-house; Commission; procurement	Local	£3,150,000
CELT + Employability -Bridgend County	Employability support for employees to improve labour market position	In-house; Commission; procurement	Local and regional co-ordination	£4,000,000
CELT+ Regional Joint Commissioning	Support for local employers to improve the skills of their workforce	Commission; procurement; grant fund	Sub-regional; regional	£875,000
Multiply – Bridgend County	Adult numeracy support programme	In-house; Commission; procurement	Local; sub-regional; regional	£3,990,295
Bridgend County Prosperity Co-production Framework (cross-cutting)	Core fund to support deliverability across all themes	In-house; grant fund	Local	£1,000,000
				£13,015,295