

Eden District Council

Cabinet

19 July 2022

Inspiring Eden – Update

Portfolio:	Economy and Enterprise
Report from:	Assistant Director Development
Wards:	All Wards
OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	

1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present, for approval:

- An update on Inspiring Eden Expressions of Interest process and next steps.
- Interventions that will form the basis of the Eden Investment Plan to draw down Eden’s share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) as the basis for submission on 1 August 2022.

1.2 The Report also provides a progress update on the Inspiring Eden Delivery Programme and associated activity.

1.3 As well as driving local economic recovery and prosperity Inspiring Eden will ensure Eden District Council is well placed to shape the economic policy focus and associated work streams as part of both the local government reorganisation process across Cumbria and the national review of local enterprise partnerships.

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The update to the assessment of the Inspiring Eden Expressions of Interests are noted.
2. Authority is delegated to the Assistant Director Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Enterprise, to agree the allocation of the current Inspiring Eden Investment Fund budget against specific projects.
3. Proposed interventions for inclusion in the Inspiring Eden UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment plan, as detailed in Section 3.4 of this report, are agreed in principle with authority delegated to the Assistant Director Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Enterprise, to finalise and submit the investment plan by the deadline on 1 August.

3 Report Details

3.1 Inspiring Eden Work Stream Prospectus Consultation

3.1.1 Inspiring Eden is being developed around the following family of documents (which can be added to if /as required):

- **State of the District Report** – To be produce in autumn 2022
- **Economic Prospectus** – Published in January 2022
- **Work Streams Prospectuses** – To be produced through 2022
- **Annual Economic Report** – To be produce in autumn 2022

3.1.2 Inspiring Eden has established a clear policy position and direction of travel to galvanise the Council and it partners behind their collective response to current economic factors with a particular focus on the impact of the pandemic, Brexit, emerging national rural and environmental agendas and the opportunities presented in shaping an economy underpinned by decarbonisation. The flexibility of this approach will enable the policy focus and direction of travel to pivot as required to unlock the full potential of local and strategic capacity, capability and associated resources. It will also provide a clear direction for the new unitary authority in respect of economic development ambitions for Eden which could be applied on the wider geography of the new authority.

3.1.3 Inspiring Eden will support delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, other relevant policies (such as the local plan) and the Local Industrial Strategy as well as national agendas regarding productivity, entrepreneurship and rebalancing the economy along with best practice around economic development.

3.2 Inspiring Work Stream Prospectuses

3.2.1 Consultations has been undertaken for the following four Inspiring Eden work stream prospectuses:

- Visitor Economy
- Business Support
- Business Charter
- Rural Economy

3.2.2 Given the extensive stakeholder engagement already undertaken before this final round of consultations, the main thrust of responses was support and the need to focus on delivery. The only substantive proposed change is to embed the emerging Rural Enterprise, Arts and Culture Hub (REACH) theme across all Inspiring Eden policy and delivery documents. This theme has emerged from discussions around LUF, the ambition to unlock the full potential that arts and culture can bring to driving enterprise and entrepreneurship and contribute to achieving rural excellence. It is considered that this focus will help Eden stand out as a district at the forefront of grasping the levelling up challenges and opportunities facing rural communities and economies.

3.2.3 It is proposed that the Inspiring Eden Enterprise Hub (detailed in 3.4 below) is developed as a platform for delivering REACH and, for this reason, is

recognised as a priority project and catalyst for achieving and driving forward the ambitions set out in the Inspiring Eden Economic Prospectus and associated work streams.

3.2.4 The other work stream prospectuses will be produced over the coming months and presented to Cabinet for approval following consultation.

3.3 Update on Development of Inspiring Eden Levelling Up Programme

3.3.1 To date 104 Inspiring Eden Expressions of Interest (EOI) have been subject to an initial evaluation to help develop a comprehensive pipeline and programme of projects to:

- Inform the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 Bid – Analysis has highlighted that only the REACH Inspiring Eden Enterprise Hub met all the necessary criteria (especially with regards to deliverability) as agreed by Cabinet in June;
- Inform the production of the UKSPF Investment plan over the coming weeks around a range of interventions; see Section 3.5 below. This will include working in partnership with South Lakeland District Council, Barrow Borough Council and Cumbria County Council to develop a joined up approach;
- Inform the production of other bids and investment plans including the current Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal for Penrith; and
- Produce an Inspiring Eden Levelling Up Prospectus to describe and present the overarching Inspiring Eden Programme and how the EOIs will be moved forward to support project development and delivery.

3.3.2 The evaluation of the EOIs included an assessment of each project against strategic fit, value for money and deliverability criteria along with a recommendation as to next steps which will include (not an exhaustive list):

- Being invited to complete a full application towards being considered for inclusion in funding bids or investment plans;
- Signposting to existing programmes to seek support eg Greening Eden Business Grants, Inspiring Eden Apprenticeship Grants and Inspiring Eden Welcome back Fund;
- Provision of project support to develop the project to a position where it could be considered ready for completing a full application; and
- Consideration for new local government arrangements post 1 April 2023.

3.3.3 With regards to those EOIs being invited to submit a full application, consideration will need to be given to those projects that can be completed in the current financial year. It is proposed that authority is delegated to the Assistant Director Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Enterprise, to agree the allocation of the current Inspiring Eden Investment Fund budget (£780k agreed as part of this year's budget) against specific projects.

3.4 Inspiring Eden UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan (UKSPF)

3.4.1 Following an assessment of current proposals via the Inspiring Eden Expression of Interest process and the aims of our economic strategy, the focus for Eden's UKSPF investment plan will be developed around the following 15 interventions that have been identified as most relevant from the suite of 41 interventions set out in the Government guidance:

- E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets.
- E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.
- E7: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.
- E8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.
- E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.
- E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.
- E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.
- E12: Investment in community engagement schemes to support community involvement in decision making in local regeneration.
- E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.
- E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- E24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise.
- E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy.
- E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.
- E33: Employment support for economically inactive people.
- E37: Tailored support to help people in employment.

3.4.2 These interventions will be refined and worked up in more detail as part of the final Investment Plan following the full assessment of the Inspiring Eden Expressions of Interest. In particular, the Eden Investment Plan will ensure local priorities are captured and driven forward via these interventions including, for example, support for farmers, the visitor economy, creative industries and young people and driving decarbonisation across the economy.

3.4.3 The investment plan and associated proposed interventions are being developed in partnership with Barrow Borough Council, South Lakeland District Council and Cumbria County Council so as to develop a common approach and enable a smooth transition as part of the local government reorganisation process. It is important to note that each district council will still produce their own investment plan. To aid this common approach all three councils have agreed to appoint the same consultants to co-ordinate their respective plans.

- 3.4.4 The investment plan will need to be signed off by the local and strategic partners which will be done via the Inspiring Eden governance arrangements as agreed at the June 27 Cabinet meeting. To this end a local partnership board across the Westmorland and Furness area has now been established with meetings planned for 7 and 19 July.
- 3.4.5 Once the investment plans and associated interventions are agreed via this local partnership board, they require approval from by the respective Cabinets (via this report for EDC) and the Westmorland and Furness Shadow Authority which is scheduled for 22 July. Following this, work will begin to put in place the mechanisms to identify and secure delivery partners to drive implementation. Government guidance suggests this will can be done via a combination of commissioning, procurement and in house provision. It is currently envisaged that for the most part a commissioning approach will be adopted; this will be confirmed within the final investment plans.

3.5 Inspiring Eden Delivery Programme Progress Update

3.5.1 The key updates on the Inspiring Eden Delivery Programme are as follows:

- **Business Support** – Business support continues with a range of offers to meet the current and emerging needs of businesses with a particular focus on free memberships for business networks and targeted support for new start businesses. A further Eden Business Breakfast event is being planned for September to follow up on the successful event held in May.
- **Sites and Premises** – Work is well underway to assess the viability of developing a strategic employment site around junction 41 of the M6. An initial report will be received by the end of July for review and for forming the basis of the next phase.
- **Rural Economy** – The roll out of the Inspiring Eden Farmers Support and Advisory Service is underway with initial focus on providing 1-1 assistance to local farmers and holding a workshop on planning farm succession and retirement and Defra’s Lump Sum exit scheme.
- **Visitor Economy** – The Eden Tourism Network continues to support local visitor economy in addressing issues around recruitment and developing and promoting the local offer.
- **Skills and Employment** – The Inspiring Eden Apprenticeship scheme continues to be utilised by local business to help develop the local workforce. The Inspiring Eden Youth Hub is going from strength to strength in supporting local vulnerable young people back into training and employment with current push around agriculture.
- **Town Centres** – Work continues with a range of local partners to develop local initiatives to support the recovery of all of our local town centres. This includes a number of new markets across the district, improvements to buildings including, for example, the Moot Hall in Appleby and scoping an Inspiring Eden Hub in New Square Penrith.
- **Creative Industries** – Work is underway to drive a range of arts and culture activities across the district to unlock the full potential of local business and communities. The Shakespeare Globe performances across

the district were well received and the next steps regarding workshops in local schools and with local businesses are being planned for the autumn.

- **Connectivity** – Work is underway across all areas to consider connectivity issues as the basis for developing and driving forward a range of projects with a particular focus on improving car parking provision, cycling, walking and access to broadband.
- **Circular Economy** – The roll out of the Green Eden Businesses continues with grants being offered to local businesses to assess their carbon footprints as the basis for developing and delivering actions plans.
- **A66 Dualling** – Work continues to ensure that this strategic investment benefits the local economy and communities.
- **Management** – Work is underway to put in place the necessary governance and management arrangements to support and drive delivery. Joint working as part of the Westmorland and Furness geography are well advanced.

4 Policy Framework

4.1 The Council has four corporate priorities which are:

- Sustainable;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Connected; and
- Creative

4.2 Inspiring Eden will help drive and support the delivery of all four corporate priorities. In particular it will:

- Support key sectors including a focus on the visitor economy and knowledge based industries;
- Drive investment into key infrastructure to improve physical and digital infrastructure;
- Focus on rural areas to provide targeted support and unlock potential and optimise our natural capital;
- Generate better employment and training opportunities to improve prosperity for all;
- Drive economic recovery to enable businesses and communities to thrive;
- Champion the decarbonisation agenda with a focus on the circular economy; and
- Contribute to spatial planning and place shaping to improve local towns as vibrant community hubs.

5 Consultation

5.1 The Portfolio Holder for Economies and Enterprise has been consulted on this report and Cabinet have received regular updates on the Inspiring Eden Programme. All relevant external stakeholders will be consulted on the initial draft of all Inspiring Eden documents before final approval and publication.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial and Resources

- 6.1.1 Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the Council's stated priorities, as set out in its Council Plan 2019-2023 as agreed at Council on 7 November 2019.
- 6.1.2 There are no new proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources. Inspiring Eden will progress within current budgets, the ARG funds and £780k investment budget agreed by Council in November.
- 6.1.3 Following the process set out in 3.4 will unlock £1.9m UKSPF for Eden.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 The provision of functions set out in this report shall be provided in accordance with relevant legal requirements including those that impact on equality and diversity and taking account of the legal duties that the Council has towards staff, residents and local businesses.

6.3 Human Resources

- 6.3.1 Inspiring Eden will provide the basis for driving service delivery with the newly restructured economic development team and contribute towards the One Eden initiative.

6.4 Environmental

- 6.4.1 Overall Inspiring Eden will have a significant positive impact on the environment as it is underpinned by an ambition to drive decarbonisation within the economy and extending sound environmental practice in the rural sector.

6.5 Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	The Council is committed to ensuring it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty in order to provide equality of opportunity through access to services for all and delivering services which meet the needs other Council's customers. Inspiring Eden will underpin the Council's approach to supporting equality and diversity in the local community by promoting and driving economic prosperity for all.
Health, Social Environmental and Economic Impact	The Corporate Plan promotes the well-being of future generations, and the post pandemic recovery of our communities. There will be positive implications from the low carbon initiatives outlined in Inspiring Eden and benefits from on-going economic opportunities that seek to promote the growth of quality jobs as part of agenda of rebalancing the economy.
Crime and Disorder	Healthy, connected, prosperous communities will reduce the scope for crime and disorder. Inspiring

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
	Eden will promote and drive economic opportunities that seek to promote the growth of quality jobs and places which in turn should have a positive impact of crime and disorder.
Children and Safeguarding	The Council will work with other agencies to promote the well-being and safety of children and vulnerable adults. Inspiring Eden will include improving economic prosperity and outcomes for future generations which will ultimately help improve the quality of life for all including children.

6.6 Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Lack of support from local and strategic partners	Inspiring Eden gains little traction and has limited impact	Engage partners in development and delivery of Inspiring Eden.
Loss of focus due to local government review in Cumbria	Inspiring Eden gains little traction and has limited impact	Put in place Inspiring Eden and restructured Economic Development team to help shape and drive delivery. Ensure effective coordination of UKSPF with BBC and SLDC.

7 Other Options Considered

- 7.1 The alternatives to the proposal in this report was to either do nothing (which is consider not a viable option in the current economic climate) or produce a traditional economic strategy which can take a number or years to bring forward. It is considered that in the current economic climate that an agile and flexible approach provided by Inspiring Eden is essential to support the local economy through a period of significant change resulting from the pandemic and Brexit as well and the future changes in local government across Cumbria.

8 Reasons for the Decision/Recommendation

- 8.1 To put in place an effective economic development policy and delivery framework that will drive the implementation of the Council's Corporate Plan and One Eden initiative in supporting local businesses within the current difficult economic climate and sustaining and developing this support through the local government review process.

Tracking Information

Governance Check	Date Considered
Chief Finance Officer (or Deputy)	11 July 2022
Monitoring Officer (or Deputy)	11 July 2022
Relevant Assistant Director	07 July 2022

Background Papers:

Appendices: **None**

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