

Report title: Getting Building Fund Funding Decisions Report	
Report to: Accountability Board	
Report author: Leslie Rickerby, SELEP Capital Programme Officer	
Meeting date: 12 January 2024	For: Decision
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SELEP Partner Authority affected: Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend	
Confidential Appendix: This report has a confidential appendix which is not for publication as it includes exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.	

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is for the Accountability Board (the Board) to consider the award of Getting Building Fund (GBF) funding to the following projects:
 - 1.1.1. Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend;
 - 1.1.2. Mercury Rising 2, Colchester;
 - 1.1.3. Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre;
 - 1.1.4. Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2;
 - 1.1.5. The Victoria Centre, Southend.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. **Agree** the award of £370,000 GBF to Kent County Council for the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend project which has been assessed as offering High value for money with a High certainty of achieving this, subject to receipt of Government approval of project inclusion within the GBF programme, and agree that the GBF funding can be retained against the project for a maximum period of 12 months to 31 January 2025.
 - 2.1.2. **Agree** the award of £500,000 GBF to Essex County Council for the Mercury Rising 2 project which has been assessed as offering High value for money with a High certainty of achieving this, subject to receipt of Government approval of project inclusion within the GBF programme, and agree that the GBF funding can be retained against the project for a maximum period of 12 months to 31 January 2025.

- 2.1.3. **Agree** the award of £300,000 GBF to Medway Council for the Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre project which has been assessed as offering High value for money with a Medium/High certainty of achieving this, subject to receipt of Government approval of project inclusion within the GBF programme, and agree that the GBF funding can be retained against the project for a maximum period of 12 months to 31 January 2025.
- 2.1.4. **Agree** the award of £300,000 GBF to Kent County Council for the Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 project which has been assessed as offering High value for money with a Medium/High certainty of achieving this, subject to receipt of Government approval of project inclusion within the GBF programme, and agree that the GBF funding can be retained against the project for a maximum period of 12 months to 31 January 2025.
- 2.1.5. **Agree** the award of £579,232 GBF to Southend-on-Sea City Council for The Victoria Centre project which has been assessed as offering High value for money with a Medium/High certainty of achieving this, subject to receipt of Government approval of project inclusion within the GBF programme, and agree that the GBF funding can be retained against the project for a maximum period of 12 months to 31 January 2025.

3. Background

- 3.1. The primary purpose of the GBF funding was to help to support economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, there was an expectation from Central Government that supported projects would be subject to short delivery programmes and that delivery of project benefits would also be realised in the short-term.
- 3.2. In January 2023, the Board took the decision to remove the Swan Modular Housing Factory project from the GBF programme requiring the return of the full £4.53m GBF allocation awarded to the project.
- 3.3. The GBF prioritised project pipeline agreed by the Strategic Board in October 2022 supported the partial reallocation of the returned funding. However, the pipeline has now been exhausted and Essex County Council (as Accountable Body for SELEP) continues to hold £2.049m of the returned GBF funding.
- 3.4. In July 2023, the Strategic Board agreed a process for developing a new prioritised project pipeline to support the reallocation of this funding and an open call for projects was launched.
- 3.5. Projects were required to meet the following criteria to ensure that reallocation of the funding remained in line with the Government vision and to ensure that full spend of the GBF funding is achieved at the earliest opportunity.
 - 3.5.1. Projects must support the activities outlined in the SELEP Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy.
 - 3.5.2. Projects must demonstrate that they are shovel ready and that they are subject to a short delivery programme, with full spend of the GBF funding to be achieved within 12 months of receipt of funding approval from the Board.

- 3.5.3. There should be no barriers to delivery, such as outstanding permissions or consents. Any remaining barriers to delivery will render the project ineligible for receipt of GBF funding.
 - 3.5.4. Projects must demonstrate a robust need for investment with particular reference to the challenges created as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - 3.5.5. Project Business Cases must demonstrate High value for money or compliance with one of the exemptions outlined within the SELEP Assurance Framework.
 - 3.5.6. Projects must demonstrate that a full funding package is in place to support delivery.
 - 3.5.7. Business Cases must demonstrate that consideration has been given to the impact of high inflation and interest rates on forecast costs.
- 3.6. A total of 24 applications were initially submitted for consideration. Each Federated Board undertook a local prioritisation process to consider project fit with both the GBF criteria agreed by the Strategic Board and with local economic priorities. Following the conclusion of this process, 15 projects were put forward for consideration by the Investment Panel who agreed a new GBF prioritised project pipeline at their meeting on 1 December 2023. The currently available GBF funding (£2,049,232) is sufficient to fully support the first four projects on the pipeline and to provide the majority of the funding sought by the fifth project.
- 3.7. As the GBF programme officially ended on 31 March 2022, and in light of concerns raised by Government with regard to the pace of GBF spend following SELEP's 2022/23 Annual Performance Review, it is important to ensure that the available GBF funding is reallocated to alternative projects at the earliest opportunity. It is imperative that these projects are genuinely shovel ready and in a position to spend the GBF funding within 12 months of funding award.
- 3.8. Additionally, Government approval will need to be secured for the inclusion of any new projects in the GBF programme. It has been confirmed by Government officials that all projects which did not feature on the original long list submission to Government at the outset of the GBF programme will require ministerial approval. This requirement applies to all projects considered in this report. Efforts have been made to engage Government officials at the earliest opportunity to ensure that these approvals do not delay the award and release of funding to prioritised projects.

4. Retention of GBF funding beyond 31 March 2022

- 4.1. 31 March 2022 marked the official end of the GBF programme. Clearly, if the Board awards GBF funding to any project outlined in this report, the project spend will extend beyond March 2022, with all projects expected to complete GBF spend in 2024/25.
- 4.2. In July 2021, the Board agreed SELEP's position on the retention of GBF funding against projects beyond 31 March 2022. The Board agreed that GBF funding could be retained against projects subject to certain criteria and conditions being satisfied. The criteria and conditions were applied to requests for retention of GBF funding beyond March 2022 received between July 2021 and May 2022.
- 4.3. Subsequently in May 2022, following a review of all projects which had received approval for retention of their GBF funding beyond March 2022, the Board agreed that all projects forecasting GBF spend beyond March 2022 must meet the following requirements:

- 4.3.1. All GBF funding must be spent within 12 months of the official end of the GBF programme, with full spend required by 31 March 2023.
- 4.3.2. All planning requirements must be met by 15 July 2022.
- 4.3.3. All other (non-planning) required consents and approvals must be received by 15 July 2022.
- 4.3.4. Contractual commitments must be in place with the construction contractor by 30 September 2022.
- 4.3.5. Any changes to total project cost (prior to construction contract award) and forecast benefits must be reported to the SELEP Secretariat to enable ongoing monitoring of the value for money offered by the project.
- 4.3.6. Ongoing reporting to the SELEP Secretariat on progress towards project delivery including provision of updated delivery milestones and notification of any changes to the funding sources identified to support project delivery must be provided.
- 4.4. These requirements were introduced as a mechanism for ensuring timely completion of the GBF programme and were not, at the time, intended to represent a new approach to determining whether funding could be retained beyond 31 March 2022. However, given the time that has passed, it was considered prudent to assess the projects against the updated requirements agreed in May 2022, rather than using the original criteria and conditions agreed in July 2021.
- 4.5. Whilst the projects detailed in this report have been identified through a new funding round, it was considered important to apply the same overarching conditions as, ultimately, the conditions are seeking to ensure timely spend of the GBF funding which was a key driver of the new funding round. However, given the timescales involved and that the dates originally agreed in May 2022 have now passed, alternative dates have been applied to some of the conditions as follows:
 - 4.5.1. All GBF funding must be spent within 12 months of award, with full spend required by 31 January 2025.
 - 4.5.2. All planning requirements must be met by 1 December 2023 (the date of the Investment Panel meeting) to demonstrate that the project is genuinely shovel ready.
 - 4.5.3. All other (non-planning) required consents and approvals must also be confirmed by 1 December 2023.
- 4.6. An alternative date for securing contractual commitments has not been applied but progress towards entering into construction contracts will be monitored. Expected dates of contractual commitment are set out in Appendix H. Whilst outstanding procurement does present a risk, the projects have otherwise all been assessed as being shovel ready.
- 4.7. Appendix H contains information to demonstrate how the five projects under consideration for receipt of GBF funding meet these requirements for retention of GBF funding against each project beyond 31 March 2022.
- 5. Projects considered under Value for Money Exemption 1 as set out in the SELEP Assurance Framework**

- 5.1. There is a requirement within the SELEP Assurance Framework for all projects to demonstrate a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of at least 2:1 if funding is to be secured. However, there are two exemptions to this requirement that are set out within the Assurance Framework which can be applied. All five projects to be considered for receipt of GBF funding at this time applied Value for Money Exemption 1.
- 5.2. If projects are to be considered for investment under Value for Money Exemption 1, all five of the following criteria must be met:
- 5.2.1. the project has a Benefit Cost Ratio greater than 1.5:1, or the project benefits are notoriously difficult to appraise in monetary terms; and
 - 5.2.2. the funding sought from SELEP Ltd is less than £2m; and
 - 5.2.3. to conduct further quantified and monetised economic appraisal would be disproportionate to the capital funding ask; and
 - 5.2.4. there is an overwhelming strategic case (with minimal risk in the other cases of the Business Case); and
 - 5.2.5. there are qualitative benefits which, if monetised, would most likely increase the Benefit Cost Ratio above 2:1.
- 5.3. Compliance with the above criteria has been considered by the ITE as part of their assessment and the projects have all been assessed as offering either High or Medium/High value for money.

6. Project Details

6.1. Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend

- 6.1.1. The project aims to create a flexible workspace by refurbishing a large unoccupied retail unit in the St George's Centre, in order to meet the growing needs of small businesses and third sector organisations within Gravesend. The project forms part of a wider vision for revitalising Gravesend Town Centre and economic development in Gravesend.
- 6.1.2. The Tech Hub is designed to act as a focal point for modern, connected and designed workspace that provides a blend of membership-style co-working options and flexible small offices. Currently, a workspace of this nature does not exist in Gravesend Town Centre and this is limiting development and growth in the local economy.
- 6.1.3. Table 1 provides an overview of the project, with more detailed information presented in Appendix A.

Table 1: Overview of the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend Project

GBF Allocation:	£370,000
Total Project Cost:	Confidential - Detailed in Appendix I
Main Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,050 sqft (779 sqm) of commercial floorspace • In excess of 60 businesses supported • 39 jobs supported
Additional Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated micro business collaboration and expansion • Improved built environment within St George's Centre and Gravesend Town Centre • Increased town centre footfall
Key Milestones:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of Construction Works - March 2024 • Completion of Works - September 2024 • Opening - October 2024

- 6.1.4. The funding package for the project is provided in the Confidential Appendix I.
- 6.1.5. The project underwent an Independent Technical Evaluator (ITE) assessment which concluded that the project shows strong strategic alignment with SELEP/GBF priorities with a well-developed Business Case offering a clear explanation as to why the scheme could not be delivered without GBF investment.
- 6.1.6. A major risk to the project is the need to identify an operator for the site but engagement with potential operators has already commenced and at least three operators have expressed an interest in taking on the space, which provides some assurance that an operator will be in place in an agreeable timescale. Delivery of the project can be completed within 12 months of funding award as required and there is clear additionality being offered by the inclusion of GBF funding as, without investment from SELEP, it is unlikely that the project will proceed in the short to medium term.
- 6.1.7. Information has been provided to demonstrate how the project meets the requirements agreed by the Board in May 2022 for all projects retaining their respective GBF allocations beyond 31 March 2022. This information is set out in Appendix H.

6.2. Mercury Rising 2

- 6.2.1. The project proposes to create a second-floor extension to the Mercury Theatre in Colchester to provide additional rehearsal and multi-use space, as well as the acquisition of LED theatrical lighting and digital recording equipment.
- 6.2.2. This space will also host activities as part of a programme offering business advice and mentoring to local creative start-up businesses and freelancers and will also provide a new 'home' for Stage Text, a D/deaf led charity providing access to the arts for D/deaf and hard of hearing people who are moving to the Mercury Theatre from London to create their new national headquarters.
- 6.2.3. Table 2 provides an overview of the project, with more detailed information presented in Appendix B.

Table 2: Overview of the Mercury Rising 2 Project

GBF Allocation:	£500,000
Total Project Cost:	£669,875
Main Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 135sqm of professional standard rehearsal and meeting space • 240 creative businesses supported • 8 jobs facilitated
Additional Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased national profile for the county as a supportive environment for the creative industries. • Increased business support (focused on start-ups and freelancers). • Increased competitiveness of the Mercury Theatre and wider creative industries in Essex.
Key Milestones:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor Commences Work on Site - May 2024 • Works Complete - July 2024 • Install Lighting & Digital Equipment - August 2024 • Opening - September 2024

6.2.4. Table 3 below shows the full breakdown of the funding package for the project.

Table 3: Mercury Rising 2 Project - Funding Breakdown

Funding Source	Amount (£)	2023/24	2024/25
Getting Building Fund	£500,000	-	£500,000
Colchester Mercury Theatre Ltd Reserves	£169,875	£100,000	£69,875
Total Project Value	£669,875	£100,000	£569,875

- 6.2.5. The project underwent an ITE assessment which concluded that the project shows very strong strategic alignment with SELEP/GBF priorities across a range of areas, including accessibility, business support and job creation and that there are no major barriers to delivery.
- 6.2.6. Key potential risks identified on the project include possible procurement delays with a knock-on effect on the delivery timeframe, tender returns proposing higher than expected costs, and a need to maintain Business Continuity and to minimise disruption during the construction period.
- 6.2.7. Overall, the project represents a very strong strategic alignment and delivery of the project can be completed within 12 months of funding award as required. Furthermore, planning consent was granted on 17 November 2023 to allow the additional works at the Mercury Theatre. There is additionality in that, without investment from SELEP, it is unlikely that the project will proceed and therefore all benefits associated with the project could be attributable to the GBF funding.
- 6.2.8. Information has been provided to demonstrate how the project meets the requirements agreed by the Board in May 2022 for all projects retaining their

respective GBF allocations beyond 31 March 2022. This information is set out in Appendix H.

6.3. Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre

- 6.3.1. The project plans to create a new, flexible, SME-focused employment Innovation Hub alongside provision of business support services on the first floor of the Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham town centre. The workspace will deliver increased employment opportunities and a dedicated workspace to allow local businesses to develop and sustain growth, while also supporting the diversification and viability of Chatham town centre.
- 6.3.2. Table 4 provides an overview of the project, with more detailed information presented in Appendix C.

Table 4: Overview of the Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre Project

GBF Allocation:	£300,000
Total Project Cost:	Confidential - Detailed in Appendix I
Main Benefits (attributed to the GBF funding):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 681 sqm of Commercial Space • 92 Net FTE Jobs Created in the first year of operation (and up to 234 jobs over three years).
Additional Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of indirect jobs, including mentors, trainers, administrative staff and support personnel. • Upskilling and reskilling of local workforce, aligning them with demands of emerging industries. • Entrepreneurship growth via establishment of new businesses/fostering innovation. • Increased footfall and community engagement with the Hub.
Key Milestones:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Mobilisation - January 2024 • Construction Start - March 2024 • Completion - July 2024 • Innovation Hub Operational - September 2024

- 6.3.3. In view of the proposed funding structure for this project, it is imperative that any realised benefits are not double counted. Medway Council has already provided written confirmation that if GBF Funding is awarded, there will be no double-counting of benefits between the Future High Streets Fund and GBF.
- 6.3.4. The funding package for the project is provided in the Confidential Appendix I.
- 6.3.5. The project underwent an ITE assessment which concluded that the project shows strong strategic alignment with SELEP/GBF priorities in terms of facilitating skills development, business growth and job creation. However, the total GBF requested is only a small proportion of the overall project cost indicating that certain benefits would likely be delivered even without the additional GBF funding and this is acknowledged by Medway Council.

- 6.3.6. As this project is in receipt of Future High Streets Fund funding which must be spent by March 2024, project delivery will continue if GBF funding is not awarded. However, without the GBF funding, the scope of the project may need review and there is a likelihood that there will be a reduction in quality which may impact upon the ability of the Hub to attract innovative businesses.
- 6.3.7. Key potential risks identified on the project include management of the design and ensuring it is developed in line with the fixed budget for the project to manage expectations around scope, meeting the 12 month spend and delivery timescale, inflationary concerns and the risk of construction delays associated with item lead-in times.
- 6.3.8. These risks have been partially mitigated as an operator has already been secured with commercial terms agreed in principle, vacant possession of the existing retail units has been secured, planning permission is not required for the change of use, there is clear additionality with a substantive increase in workspace being created and key target outcomes are likely to be achieved within 12 months of the Innovation Hub becoming operational.
- 6.3.9. Information has been provided to demonstrate how the project meets the requirements agreed by the Board in May 2022 for all projects retaining their respective GBF allocations beyond 31 March 2022. This information is set out in Appendix H.

6.4. **Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2**

- 6.4.1. The project aims to address the changing needs and demand for business spaces following the Covid-19 pandemic via the provision of 'grow on' space to support businesses in Maidstone House in Maidstone town centre. This workspace will help to create stronger networking and collaboration opportunities for businesses and will assist the wider regeneration of Maidstone Town Centre.
- 6.4.2. Table 5 provides an overview of the project, with more detailed information presented in Appendix D.

Table 5: Overview of the Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 Project

GBF Allocation:	£300,000
Total Project Cost:	£300,000 (note: Maidstone Borough Council funded Phase 1 of the project)
Main Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,115 sqm of commercial space • Up to 86 jobs supported • 30 construction jobs created
Additional Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre by increasing job opportunities, available day time spend and footfall. • Potential to act as a catalyst for further investment in the town centre. • Increased networking and collaboration opportunities to strengthen the innovation ecosystem in the region by promoting collaboration, networking, and complementary business support.
Key Milestones:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of Construction Works - June 2024 • Completion of Construction Works - September 2024

6.4.3. Table 6 below shows the full breakdown of the funding package for the project.

Table 6: Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 Centre - Funding Breakdown

Funding Source	Amount (£)	2023/24	2024/25
Getting Building Fund	£300,000	£50,000	£250,000

6.4.4. The project underwent an ITE assessment which concluded that the project shows reasonable strategic alignment with SELEP/GBF priorities in terms of facilitating business growth and job creation and that there are no major barriers to delivery.

6.4.5. The main project risks pertain to the capital costs potentially exceeding the budget due to factors such as construction market disinterest in tendering for the contract or the price being higher than anticipated leading to a need to secure additional funding. This risk will be mitigated through adopting a design and build procurement route which offers the best balance between cost, programme and quality certainty. Additionally, there is a risk that demand for the new office accommodation falls below expectation, however, this is not expected as evidence of demand for workspace within the town centre has been provided.

6.4.6. Maidstone Borough Council has self-funded Phase 1 of the works within Maidstone House and seek the GBF Funding to cover works to the 4th floor to create additional grow-on business space as market research undertaken indicates a demand for additional workspace. If GBF funding is not awarded, delivery of the project is likely to be delayed by at least 5 years.

6.4.7. Information has been provided to demonstrate how the project meets the requirements agreed by the Board in May 2022 for all projects retaining their respective GBF allocations beyond 31 March 2022. This information is set out in Appendix H.

6.5. The Victoria Centre, Southend

6.5.1. This project aims to facilitate the refurbishment of a terrace of six empty units to ‘white box’ standard on the first floor of the Victoria Shopping Centre in Southend-on-Sea. Following the re-fit, the units will then be let out to new and local businesses for commercial purposes on turnover based rent, with Southend-on-Sea City Council acting as the landlord. The primary project impacts will therefore be to help new businesses become established within the city centre, revitalise the shopping centre and increase local employment levels.

6.5.2. Southend-on-Sea City Council has contributed £550,000 to the wider project to resurface the roof above the units as there had been a degree of water leakage into the units below. These works have already been completed.

6.5.3. Table 7 provides an overview of the project, with more detailed information presented in Appendix E.

Table 7: Overview of The Victoria Centre Project

GBF Initially Requested:	£600,000
GBF Allocation Available:	£579,232
Total Project Cost:	£600,000
Main Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 279sqm commercial space/6 Commercial Units back into use. • 25 jobs generated - 11 of which are direct and 14 are indirect.
Additional Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased footfall and community engagement with the centre. • Higher spend in existing businesses in the Victoria Centre. • Support for new and early stage businesses. • Increased surveillance of spaces that may be prone to crime and antisocial behaviour.
Key Milestones:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works Commence - June 2024 • Works Complete - December 2024 • Units Open for Trade - January 2025

6.5.4. Table 8 below shows the current breakdown of the funding package for the project.

Table 8: The Victoria Centre Project - Funding Breakdown

Funding Source	Amount (£)	2023/24	2024/25
Getting Building Fund	£579,232	-	£579,232
Southend-on-Sea Capital Programme	£20,768	-	£20,768
Total Project Value	£600,000	-	£600,000

- 6.5.5. As a result of the project's position on the prioritised project pipeline, there is insufficient funding available to fully fund this project with GBF as initially requested by Southend-on-Sea City Council. In view of this, Southend-on-Sea City Council has reprioritised their 2024/25 capital programme to allocate a balance of c. £20,000 to the project.
- 6.5.6. The project underwent an ITE assessment which concluded that the project shows strong strategic alignment with SELEP/GBF priorities in terms of stimulating business growth and job creation, assuming sufficient tenant demand to fill the units following the refurbishment.
- 6.5.7. The primary risks identified on the project relate to unit demand, works slippage and potential costs increases, although likelihood is considered to be low.
- 6.5.8. Delivery of this project can be completed within 12 months of funding award as required and initial work has already been undertaken to update the units with the resurfacing of the roof. Although there is a slight concern that benefit realisation is reliant on there being enough tenant demand to fill the empty units once refurbished, this is not seen as a significant barrier. The project cannot be delivered in the short to medium term without GBF funding due to financial pressures and therefore all benefits forecast can be considered as applicable to the GBF funding, demonstrating additionality.
- 6.5.9. Information has been provided to demonstrate how the project meets the requirements agreed by the Board in May 2022 for all projects retaining their respective GBF allocations beyond 31 March 2022. This information is set out in Appendix H.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1. As detailed in Section 3 of this report, the award of any additional GBF funding to any of the projects outlined in this report is contingent upon receipt of Government approval for projects to be added to the GBF Programme.
- 7.2. Following the agreement of the GBF prioritised project pipeline by the Investment Panel in December 2023, efforts were made to submit all required Change Requests to Government at the earliest opportunity, with a view to securing this approval prior to the Board meeting.
- 7.3. After the approval of the award of GBF funding to the prioritised projects by both the Board and Government, this will need to be formalised through the completion of Variation Agreements between the relevant Upper Tier Local Authorities, SELEP Ltd and Essex County Council (as Accountable Body for SELEP). These agreements, which facilitate the addition

of the projects to the GBF Service Level Agreement, can only be progressed following receipt of both Board and Government approval.

- 7.4. No funding will be issued to local partners until the relevant Variation Agreements have been finalised.
- 7.5. Post 2023/24, the relevant Upper Tier Local Authorities will need to ensure that compliant reporting measures are in place to provide relevant updates on delivery and spend of the GBF funding to Government throughout 2024/25. In addition, should any of the projects be unable to complete their GBF spend by 31 January 2025 as agreed by the Board, there is an expectation that the relevant Upper Tier Local Authority will engage with Government directly with regard to any extension required.

8. Financial Implications (Accountable Body comments)

- 8.1. The Accountable Body is currently holding the £2.049m of GBF funding that is requested to be reallocated to Projects within this report.
- 8.2. Essex County Council, as the Accountable Body, is responsible for ensuring that the GBF funding is utilised in accordance with the conditions set out by Government for use of the Grant.
- 8.3. GBF is allocated through a grant determination from MHCLG (now renamed the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) via section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003; this is subject to the following condition:

The grant may be used only for the purposes that a capital receipt may be used for, in accordance with regulations made under section 11 of the Local Government Act 2003.

- 8.4. The grant conditions do not impose an end date for use of the funding, albeit that it was the expectation of Government that all funding was defrayed by 31 March 2022.
- 8.5. SELEP have discussed the proposed approach regarding the retention of GBF funding beyond March 2022 with Government and it was confirmed that no additional governance or approvals would be required from Government in this respect, however, approval is required from Government to allocate funding to Projects that are not included on the original GBF project list.
- 8.6. All GBF will be transferred to the sponsoring authority under the terms of a Funding Agreement or SLA.
- 8.7. The Agreements set out the circumstances under which funding may have to be repaid should it not be utilised in line with the conditions of the grant or in accordance with the Decisions of the Board.
- 8.8. Should the Board approve the award of GBF as per the recommendations of this report at 2.1.1 and 2.2.1, a variation agreement will be put in place to the existing GBF service level agreement (SLA) in place between the Accountable Body, SELEP Ltd and the lead authority.
- 8.9. The Accountable Body will not transfer GBF awarded by the Board until the variation agreement is complete.
- 8.10. Following the anticipated closure of SELEP in March 2024, it is expected that Accountability for delivery of the GBF Projects within the agreed timelines will be transferred under a revised

agreement to the respective upper tier local authority that is in receipt of the funding alongside responsibility for reporting to and agreeing any further changes with Government. These arrangements are not expected to confer any additional risk on the recipient Authority, nor impact on the delivery of the proposed GBF Projects.

9. Legal Implications (Accountable Body comments)

9.1. The terms set out in the grant conditions between the Accountable Body and Central Government for the Getting Building Fund will set out how the GBF is to be administered and used. If the recommendation to award funding to the projects is approved, a variation agreement will be put into place between the Accountable Body, SELEP Ltd and the lead authority.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when a public sector body makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:

10.1.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act.

10.1.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

10.1.3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

10.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

10.3. In the course of the development of the project business case, the delivery of the Project and the ongoing commitment to equality and diversity, the promoting local authority will ensure that any equality implications are considered as part of their decision making process and where possible identify mitigating factors where an impact against any of the protected characteristics has been identified.

11. List of Appendices

11.1. Appendix A - Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend Background Information

11.2. Appendix B - Mercury Rising 2 Background Information

11.3. Appendix C - Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre Background Information

11.4. Appendix D - Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 Background Information

11.5. Appendix E - The Victoria Centre, Southend Background Information

11.6. Appendix F - Prioritised GBF Project Pipeline

11.7. Appendix G - Report of the Independent Technical Evaluator (as attached to Agenda Item 7)

11.8. Appendix H - Compliance with conditions for GBF spend beyond 31 March 2022

11.9. Appendix I - Confidential Appendix

(Any request for background papers listed here should be made to the person named at the top of the report who will be able to help with any enquiries)

Role	Date
Accountable Body sign off Michael Neumann (on behalf of Nicole Wood, S151 Officer, Essex County Council)	05/01/2024

Appendix A: Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend GBF Project Background Information

Name of Project	Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend
Upper Tier Local Authority	Kent County Council
Getting Building Fund (GBF) Allocation	£370,000 (subject to Board decision)
Project Description	<p>The project aims to create a flexible workspace by refurbishing a large unoccupied retail unit in the St George's Centre, in order to meet the growing needs of small businesses and third sector organisations within Gravesend. The project forms part of a wider vision for revitalising Gravesend town centre and economic development in Gravesham.</p> <p>The Tech Hub is designed to act as a focal point for modern, connected and design-led workspace that provides a blend of membership-style co-working options and flexible small offices. Currently, a workspace of this nature does not exist in Gravesend town centre and this is limiting development and growth in the local economy.</p> <p>Specifically, the Tech Hub project will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrofitting of a large town centre retail unit. • Cost-effective, flexible, design-led and connected business workspaces across two floors. This has capacity to provide for 60 businesses. • At least two bookable meeting spaces for businesses and organisations. • Dedicated spaces for media production and other niche creative uses (prospectively). • New superfast broadband connectivity. • Potential for education and training providers, youth services, Job Centre, council suppliers (social value led) and other community organisations to deliver services and events within the Hub.
Project Benefits	<p>Major project benefits will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 7,050 sqft (779 sqm) of commercial floorspace ○ In excess of 60 businesses supported ○ 39 jobs supported

- Enterprise development and business support:
 - Attraction and support of SMEs, especially within the Tech sector (though not limited)
 - Increased business and worker productivity
 - Expanding collaboration between businesses within a collaborative setting
 - Meeting business needs and identifying specific requirements for business support interventions across the wider region.

- High Street Revitalisation
 - Re-use of a large, flagship vacant retail unit and diversification of uses within the St George's Centre to encourage new lets of other vacant space within the centre.
 - Increased footfall and economic activity within the wider Town Centre, leading to further diversification and investment, and potentially increasing the demand for associated uses/commercial space within the Town.
 - 'Catalytic' contribution to regeneration of the St George's Centre and surrounding area, by supporting the viability of subsequent schemes.
 - Business services relating to digital adoption and other productivity-enhancing services will be more visible and accessible to other businesses within the concentrated town centre location, helping to drive faster rates of adoption and improved productivity within the wider economy.

Key project dates are as follows:

Project Milestones	Task	Description	Timescale
	Operator Selection	Operator confirmed & Heads of Terms agreed	December 2023
	RIBA Stage 4 Design & Works Package	Designs and work packages completed	December 2023 - February 2024

	Capital Works to Vacant Unit	Refurbishment of vacant unit	March - September 2024
	Completion of Works	Finalisation and completion	September 2024
	Opening	Tech Hub Flexible Workspace opens	October 2024
Project Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery constraints are limited. • There are no site constraints that have been identified and there is no requirement for planning consent or change of use, beyond any consents required for shopfront/advertisement. • There is a need to identify an operator for the site but engagement with potential operators has already commenced and at least 3 operators have expressed an interest in taking on the space. 		
Additionality	Without investment from SELEP, it is unlikely that the project will proceed in the short to medium term and therefore the GBF funding will support realisation of all stated benefits.		
Link to Project webpage	TBC		

Appendix B: Mercury Rising 2

GBF Project Background Information

Name of Project	Mercury Rising 2
Upper Tier Local Authority	Essex County Council
Getting Building Fund (GBF) Allocation	£500,000 (subject to Board decision)
Project Description	<p>The project will create a second-floor extension to the Mercury Theatre in Colchester to provide additional rehearsal and multi-use space.</p> <p>This space will also host activities as part of a programme offering business advice and mentoring to local creative start-up businesses and freelancers and will also provide a new ‘home’ for Stage Text, a D/deaf led charity providing access to the arts for D/deaf and hard of hearing people who are moving to the Mercury Theatre from London to create their new national headquarters.</p> <p>In addition, the project will acquire LED theatrical lighting and digital recording equipment to further reduce the carbon footprint and digital equipment to allow for the delivery of live streaming and to record performances, events and conferences.</p>
Project Benefits	<p>Major project benefits will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 135sqm of professional standard rehearsal and meeting space ○ 240 creative businesses supported ○ 8 Jobs Created • Improved quality of professional and non-professional theatre productions, events and conferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Audience Attendance: 105,000 (annually) – 315,000 over three years ○ Livestream audiences - 69,000 over three years. ○ Significant reduction in utility costs for the Mercury Theatre ○ Reduction in carbon footprint of the Mercury Theatre

Project Milestones	Key project dates are as follows:			
	Milestone		Due Date	
	Complete and issue construction tender		January 2024	
	Adjust final detailed design (as required)		January 2024	
	Approve contractor		March 2024	
	Complete and issue Lighting and Digital Tender/Technical specification		March 2024	
	Approve Lighting/Digital Supplier		April 2024	
	Contractor commences work on site		May 2024	
	Works complete		July 2024	
	Install Lighting and Digital Equipment		August 2024	
	Fit Out		August 2024	
	Spaces open – project complete		September 2024	
Funding Package	The funding package is as follows:			
	Funding Source	Amount (£)	2023/24	2024/25
	Getting Building Fund	£500,000	-	£500,000
	Colchester Mercury Theatre Ltd Reserves	£169,875	£100,000	£69,875
Total Project Value	£669,875	£100,000	£569,875	
Project Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery constraints are limited. • Planning consent was granted on 17 November 2023 to allow the additional works at the Mercury Theatre. 			
Additionality	Without investment from SELEP, it is unlikely that the project will proceed and therefore all benefits associated with the project could be attributable to the GBF funding.			
Link to Project webpage	TBC			

Appendix C: Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre

GBF Project Background Information

Name of Project	Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre
Upper Tier Local Authority	Medway Council
Getting Building Fund (GBF) Allocation	£300,000 (subject to Board decision)
Project Description	<p>The project will create a new flexible, SME-focused employment workspace with business support services on the first floor of the Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham town centre. The workspace will deliver increased employment opportunities and a dedicated workspace to allow local businesses to develop and sustain growth, while also supporting the diversification and viability of Chatham town centre.</p> <p>The GBF investment will support the delivery of an existing project to diversify the Pentagon Centre through the delivery of an Innovation Hub, for which Medway Council was granted Future High Streets Fund in 2020. The proposed Innovation Hub is being delivered alongside a Healthy Living Centre, also partly funded by the Future High Streets Fund, which will integrate community services in a visible, highly accessible location.</p>
Project Benefits	<p>Major project benefits will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outputs/Outcomes (attributable to the GBF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 681 sqm of commercial space ○ 92 Net FTE Jobs created in the first year of operation (and up to 234 jobs over three years). • Upskilling and reskilling of local workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Through workshops, training programmes, and collaborative projects, the hub will contribute to the upskilling and reskilling of the local workforce, aligning them with the demands of emerging industries. • Entrepreneurship growth via establishment of new businesses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The support and resources provided by the Innovation Hub will lead to the establishment of new businesses through 1 to 1 expert advice, fostering innovation, and contributing to a vibrant entrepreneurial culture. A dedicated business advisor will be located onsite, providing support to any Medway business or resident seeking advice. ● Increased footfall and community engagement with the Hub <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By hosting events, workshops, and meetups, the Hub will encourage community interaction, knowledge sharing, and the cultivation of lasting relationships. ○ The Innovation Hub's positive impact on businesses, footfall, and the local economy will translate into increased spending, further revitalising the area. 												
<p>Project Milestones</p>	<p>Key project dates are as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="416 880 1332 1240"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="416 880 970 958">Task</th> <th data-bbox="970 880 1332 958">Timescale</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="416 958 970 1021">Procurement of principal contractor</td> <td data-bbox="970 958 1332 1021">Early 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="416 1021 970 1077">Start on site</td> <td data-bbox="970 1021 1332 1077">March 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="416 1077 970 1133">Construction works complete</td> <td data-bbox="970 1077 1332 1133">June 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="416 1133 970 1189">Handover</td> <td data-bbox="970 1133 1332 1189">July 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="416 1189 970 1240">Innovation Hub becomes operational</td> <td data-bbox="970 1189 1332 1240">September 2024</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Task	Timescale	Procurement of principal contractor	Early 2024	Start on site	March 2024	Construction works complete	June 2024	Handover	July 2024	Innovation Hub becomes operational	September 2024
Task	Timescale												
Procurement of principal contractor	Early 2024												
Start on site	March 2024												
Construction works complete	June 2024												
Handover	July 2024												
Innovation Hub becomes operational	September 2024												
<p>Project Constraints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delivery constraints are limited with no major risks identified within the control of the delivery partners in relation to the project and contract delivery. ● Future High Streets Fund funding has been secured but at a lower level than originally sought. Cost savings have been made where possible and Medway Council have committed funding through PWLB borrowing. The greatest risk to delivery is attached to the requirement to secure the GBF funding requested. ● Commercial parties are unable to invest the capital required to establish SME workspace in Medway due to market failures. However, operational risk has been mitigated through the completion of a competitive procurement process with commercial terms having been agreed with a preferred operator (a ten-year lease including rent-free period and breaks). ● Vacant possession of the existing retail units has been secured. 												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permission is not required for the change of use.
Additionality	The award of GBF funding will support the expansion of the project to provide approximately 1,331sqm of workspace compared to original proposals submitted to the Future High Streets Fund which only planned for 490sqm of workspace. Without GBF funding, the scope and quality of the project would need to be reduced, impacting on the benefits.
Link to Project webpage	TBC

Appendix D: Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 GBF Project Background Information

Name of Project	Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2
Upper Tier Local Authority	Kent County Council
Getting Building Fund (GBF) Allocation	£300,000 (subject to Board decision)
Project Description	<p>The project will address the changing needs and demand for business spaces with the creation of ‘grow on’ space to support businesses at Maidstone House in Maidstone town centre. This workspace will help to create stronger networking and collaboration opportunities for businesses and will assist the wider regeneration of Maidstone Town Centre.</p> <p>Additionally, the redevelopment of Maidstone House Floor 4 will assist in bringing new footfall to Maidstone Town Centre and supports the Council’s emerging new Town Centre Strategy and Delivery Plan to be adopted in 2024 and adopted Economic Development Strategy (2021).</p> <p>Maidstone House is owned on a long leasehold by Maidstone Borough Council. The Borough Council has already committed £200,000 to bring forward Phase 1 of the wider project (high quality grow on business space on the 2nd floor of Maidstone House).</p>
Project Benefits	<p>Major project benefits will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outputs/Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1,115 sqm of commercial space ○ 86 Gross FTE jobs supported ○ 30 construction jobs created • Creation of stronger networking and collaboration opportunities to strengthen the innovation ecosystem in the region by promoting collaboration, networking, and complementary business support. • Increase the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre by increasing job opportunities, available day time spend and footfall. • Potential to act as a catalyst for further investment in the town centre.

Project Milestones	Key project dates are as follows:			
	Task	Description	Timescale	
	Initial surveys	Initial survey work on space and M&E	January/ March 2024	
	Planning and detailed design	Detailed design work and space planning	March 2024	
	Contractors consulted and appointed	Short tender process with suitably experienced contractors	March 2024	
	Pre-start Meetings	Site set up	May/June 2024	
	Start of construction works	Commence construction	June 2024	
	Marketing and leases agreed for new tenants	Marketing will commence during build time, with aim for lettings to be agreed and legals instructed	June 2024	
Completion of construction works	Finalisation of construction	September 2024		
Funding Package	The funding package for the project is as follows:			
	Funding Source	Amount (£)	2023/24	2024/25
	Getting Building Fund	£300,000	£50,000	£250,000
Project Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery constraints are limited with no major risks identified. • Maidstone Borough Council own the long leasehold of the building and has confirmed that there are no constraints in respect of ownership, rights over the site or any consents required. • The only identified constraint to the project would be if GBF funding is not awarded, as this would delay the project for at least 5 years, as there is no identified funding within the Council's budget to complete the works. 			

Additionality	As above, without GBF funding the project will not be delivered for a further 5 years, and therefore the GBF funding accelerates the realisation of all project benefits.
Link to Project webpage	TBC

Appendix E: The Victoria Centre, Southend GBF Project Background Information

Name of Project	The Victoria Centre, Southend
Upper Tier Local Authority	Southend-on-Sea City Council
Getting Building Fund (GBF) Allocation	£579,232 (subject to Board decision)
Project Description	<p>The project will refurbish a terrace of six empty units to ‘white box’ standard on the first floor of the Victoria Shopping Centre in Southend-on-Sea, which is owned by Southend-on-Sea City Council. Following the re-fit, the units will be let out to new and local businesses on turnover based rent, with Southend-on-Sea City Council acting as the landlord. The primary project impacts will therefore be to help new businesses become established within the city centre, revitalise the shopping centre and increase local employment levels.</p> <p>Southend-on-Sea City Council has already resurfaced the roof above the units at a cost of £550,000 to address issues with water leaking into the units in question.</p>
Project Benefits	<p>Major project benefits will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 279sqm commercial space/6 Commercial Units back into use. ○ 25 jobs created - 11 of which are direct and 14 are indirect. • Increased footfall and community engagement with the centre which will stimulate spend for existing businesses in the Victoria Centre. • Supporting new and early-stage business ventures on a lower risk basis could support them to find alternative, permanent space in the city if successful. • Increased surveillance of spaces that may be prone to crime and antisocial behaviour. • A diversified and increased income stream for the Council.

Project Milestones	Key project dates are as follows:			
	Task	Description	Timescale	
	Tender Specification	Finalise tender specification for the works	February 2024	
	Procurement	Procurement of contractor and appointment of contractor	March - May 2024	
	Construction	Refurbish six units to 'white box' standard.	June - December 2024	
	Marketing	Marketing of the units to secure tenants.	Start - June 2024	
	Refurbished Units Open	Units open for trade in the Victoria Centre	January 2025	
Funding Package	The funding package is as follows:			
	Funding Source	Amount (£)	2023/24	2024/25
	Getting Building Fund	£579,232	-	£579,232
	Southend-on-Sea City Council Capital Programme	£20,768	-	£20,768
	Total Project Value	£600,000	-	£600,000
	As a result of the project's position on the prioritised pipeline, there is insufficient funding available to fully fund this project with GBF as initially requested by Southend-on-Sea City Council. The remaining £20,768 will be financed by Southend-on-Sea City Council's own capital programme.			
Project Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit realisation is reliant on tenant demand to occupy the empty units once refurbished. • Southend-on-Sea City Council can provide all necessary consents for the development and there is not a need for any planning permission as all works are internal. 			
Additionality	If GBF funding is not awarded, it will not be possible for the project to proceed in the short to medium term. Investment from the private sector will not be forthcoming as the required works and associated costs to ensure the units are fit for purpose are beyond what the usual occupier would contribute. As the project cannot be delivered in the short to medium term without GBF funding all benefits forecast can be considered as applicable to the GBF funding.			

Link to Project webpage	TBC
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Appendix F: GBF Prioritised Project Pipeline

Project Name	Federated Area	GBF Ask	Cumulative Total
Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend	KMEP	£370,000	£370,000
Mercury Rising 2	SEB	£500,000	£870,000
Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre	KMEP	£300,000	£1,170,000
Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2	KMEP	£300,000	£1,470,000
The Victoria Centre, Southend	OSE	£600,000	£2,070,000
Basildon Boom	OSE	£300,000	£2,370,000
Camber Sands Welcome Centre	TES	£691,973	£3,061,973
High Street Pop Up Parks, Southend	OSE	£276,045	£3,338,018
Flightpath Phase 3	SEB	£500,000	£3,838,018
Enabling 5G in Dover and East Kent	KMEP	£465,000	£4,303,018
No Use Empty (Residential), Southend	OSE	£1,000,000	£5,303,018
Renewable Heating Systems for the Creative Media Centre, Hastings	TES	£253,000	£5,556,018
No Use Empty (Commercial), South Essex	OSE	£1,100,000	£6,656,018
Tunbridge Wells Town Hall co-working space	KMEP	£400,000	£7,056,018
A249 Bearsted Road Highway Improvement Scheme	KMEP	£500,000	£7,556,018

Appendix H: Compliance with conditions for GBF spend beyond 31 March 2022

Name of Project	Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority	Kent County Council
Provision of a clear delivery plan with specific delivery milestones and completion date to be agreed by the Board	<p>Key project dates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design - January/February 2024 • Start of Construction Works - March 2024 • Completion of Works - September 2024 • Opening - October 2024
Confirmation that all funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place and provision of a GBF spend profile	<p>All funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place, subject to award of the GBF funding allocation.</p> <p>It is expected that the GBF funding will be spent in full before the end of January 2025.</p>
Written confirmation that all planning requirements were met by 1 December 2023.	The Business Case states that there is no requirement for planning consent, beyond any consents that could be required for changes to the shopfront. Advertisement Consent would not have an impact on the deliverability of the project.
Written confirmation that all other (non-planning) consents and approvals were received by 1 December 2023.	No other consents or approvals are required.
Status of contractual commitments with contractor	A clear procurement plan has been outlined within the Business Case, with work expected to commence onsite in March 2024.

Name of Project	Mercury Rising 2
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority	Essex County Council
Provision of a clear delivery plan with specific delivery milestones and completion date to be agreed by the Board	<p>Key project dates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor Commences Work on Site - May 2024 • Works Complete - July 2024 • Install Lighting & Digital Equipment - August 2024 • Opening - September 2024
Confirmation that all funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place and provision of a GBF spend profile	<p>All funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place, subject to award of the GBF funding allocation.</p> <p>It is expected that the GBF funding will be spent in full before the end of January 2025.</p>
Written confirmation that all planning requirements were met by 1 December 2023.	Notification has been received that planning consent for the proposed works was granted on 17 November 2023.
Written confirmation that all other (non-planning) consents and approvals were received by 1 December 2023.	No other consents or approvals are required.
Status of contractual commitments with contractor	Procurement of a contractor will be through a design and build model, with Colchester City Council acting as advisers during the procurement process. Procurement is expected to commence in January 2024, with a contractor appointed in March 2024.

Name of Project	Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority	Medway Council
Provision of a clear delivery plan with specific delivery milestones and completion date to be agreed by the Board	<p>Key project dates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Mobilisation - January 2024 • Construction Start - March 2024 • Completion - July 2024 • Innovation Hub Operational - September 2024
Confirmation that all funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place and provision of a GBF spend profile	<p>All funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place, subject to award of the GBF funding allocation.</p> <p>It is expected that the GBF funding will be spent in full before the end of January 2025.</p>
Written confirmation that all planning requirements were met by 1 December 2023.	The Business Case states that planning permission is not required for the change of use of the site.
Written confirmation that all other (non-planning) consents and approvals were received by 1 December 2023.	No other consents or approvals are required.
Status of contractual commitments with contractor	Procurement of the contractor will be managed through an Open Tender process. It is expected that the contractor will commence work onsite in March 2024.

Name of Project	Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority	Kent County Council
Provision of a clear delivery plan with specific delivery milestones and completion date to be agreed by the Board	<p>Key project dates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of Construction Works - June 2024 • Completion of Construction Works - September 2024
Confirmation that all funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place and provision of a GBF spend profile	<p>Delivery of the project will be fully funded through the GBF and therefore is dependent upon award of the GBF funding.</p> <p>It is expected that the GBF funding will be spent in full before the end of January 2025.</p>
Written confirmation that all planning requirements were met by 1 December 2023.	Planning consent is not required.
Written confirmation that all other (non-planning) consents and approvals were received by 1 December 2023.	No other consents or approvals are required.
Status of contractual commitments with contractor	Procurement of a contractor will be through a design and build model, with the contractor expected to be appointed in May 2024.

Name of Project	The Victoria Centre, Southend
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority	Southend-on-Sea City Council
Provision of a clear delivery plan with specific delivery milestones and completion date to be agreed by the Board	<p>Key project dates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works Commence - June 2024 • Works Complete - December 2024 • Units Open for Trade - January 2025
Confirmation that all funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place and provision of a GBF spend profile	<p>All funding sources identified to enable delivery of the project are in place, subject to award of the GBF funding allocation.</p> <p>It is expected that the GBF funding will be spent in full before the end of January 2025.</p>
Written confirmation that all planning requirements were met by 1 December 2023.	Planning consent is not required.
Written confirmation that all other (non-planning) consents and approvals were received by 1 December 2023.	No other consents or approvals are required.
Status of contractual commitments with contractor	Procurement will be undertaken using a framework of pre-approved contractors. Procurement of the contractor is expected to take place between March and May 2024, with the start of construction works planned for June 2024.