

Appendix 2: Town Deal and UKSPF Overview

i) Town Deal – *Reconnecting Runcorn*

The *Reconnecting Runcorn* programme is a Government allocation of £23.6 million running initially to March 2026 (now extended to March 2028) for the redevelopment/connectivity of the Old Town area of Runcorn. Funding is drawn down based on a spending profile or forecast and monitoring reports are issued in May and September.

1. Elite House – Runcorn Station Quarter Enterprise Hub

The Council has entered into pre construction service agreement with F Parkinson through a design and build procurement route.

They will be responsible for developing a RIBA Stage 3 coordinated design and providing cost certainty during RIBA Stage 4 as they carry out early supply chain engagement. Discussions with interested operator are ongoing. Additional funding is currently being sourced via the Combined Authority and the Ineos Energy from Waste grant, to make the building energy efficient using rooftop solar.

2. Unlock Runcorn – Landscaping, Visitor Centre and Canal Boat Trip experience

Runcorn Locks Restoration Society have taken delivery of the first boat Aethel. A public launch event was held in July with the first paying trips taking place in September. This also saw the unveiling of the Duke Street art project. Connections have been made with Norton Priory to discuss the possibility of trips incorporating the museum. Delivery of the second boat is expected imminently and work is now underway for the next phase of the project – the visitor centre & landscaping.

3. Brindley Theatre Enhancements – extended café, library and outdoor performance area

The Brindley extension started on site August 2024, with the new drainage in place, including large attenuation tank built, foundation for extension put down, steelwork up and new floors put in. Roof of extension made, and staircases installed and internal metal sections progressing the fit out. The building is now water tight and completion is expected spring 2026.

4. Creative & Digital Skills Centre

Hazlehurst Arts Collective is now well established at 71a High Street, offering a varied and successful programme of events and workshops. 18 artists have taken up residence. The digital and IT hub in the Camden buildings is currently in design.

The youth centre, also part of the Creative and Digital Skill centre, started September 2024, with the new build now well advanced including all external facades, and most steelwork in the wintergarden in place. Steel work on the wintergarden has now progressed up to roof level, whilst the

new built has seen internal walls plastered and services first and second fittings done.

5. Town Centre New Homes – High Street

The over 55s apartment block under construction at High Street now has all doors and windows in, and external brickwork is going up.

6. Health & Education Hub

The Health Hub started work on site April 2025, after the library vacated to temporary location. The steelwork for the mezzanine is up, following installation of drainage. Joisted floor of mezzanine and plywood fitted, all internal partitions in metal sections made and plaster boarding started, steel staircase installed, and all services work started. It is anticipated works will be completed by the end of 2025.

7. High Street Connectivity

Following a project creating a range of heritage stories, a booklet has been published. The street art has been completed and a celebration event was held in July 2025.

Public realm works on High Street will be progressed towards the end of the programme.

8. Town Centre New Homes – Rutland Street

The Community Land Trust are in the process of commissioning capacity support for the design stage of this scheme.

The Programmes Office team is responsible for the reports to Government on the progress of projects and spend; meets regularly with Government reps to discuss the funding, provides secretariat support for the Board, and manages the communication and publicity for the programme.

ii) UKSPF

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is part of the government's funding agenda and offers significant support for places across the UK.

This is the fourth and final year of the funding programme. The Programmes Office team is responsible for the monitoring of the various strands of the funding, collating evidence of all expenditure and completing quarterly claims which are subject to internal audit and verification by the combined authority.

Funding issued in April 2025 covers the following strands:

Place Based Business Support – Offering support & advice to existing local businesses and new startups.

Ways to Work - An employment support programme for hard to reach adults, providing coaching training and job search assistance.

Visitor Economy – Aiming to showcase the Borough's assets for both residents and visitors.

Cultural Delivery – Offering support to local creative industries to deliver cultural activity for the community.

Widnes Town Centre – capital and revenue funding to kickstart some of the Widnes Strategic Framework projects.