



West
Northamptonshire
Council

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

12th July 2022

**Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration
and Growth: Councillor Daniel Lister**

Report Title	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – UKSPF Stage 1 Report

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update Cabinet Members of West Northamptonshire Council's progress to draw down the allocation of £5.4m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the required next steps to finalise and submit the Investment Plan.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF or the Fund) is a central pillar of the UK government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025 and replaces ESIF funding.
- 1.3. West Northamptonshire Council has been allocated £5,426,224.00 for a three-year period up until March 2025. This fund is flexible and can be used for both revenue and capital, with minimum requirements of capital funding for each financial year.
- 1.4. There are three investment priorities, which align with the Levelling Up Missions: Communities and Place; Supporting Local Business; People and Skills.
- 1.5. West Northamptonshire Council must develop and submit an Investment Plan outlining which of the 41 recommended interventions will be allocated funding by 1st August 2022.
- 1.6. West Northamptonshire Council must engage with the community, including stakeholders and Members of Parliament to input into the development of the Investment Plan. This has been done, including inviting all West Northamptonshire Councillors to input into an online consultation.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet/Committee:
 - a) Note the progress of developing the WNC UKSPF Investment Plan, including data analysis, review of feedback from the Member engagement, focus group workshops and online survey consultations, provided as an appendix to this report
 - b) Note that an Investment Plan to secure this funding must be developed, including which interventions will be funded per annum
 - c) Note that under existing delegated powers, officers will submit the UKSPF Investment Plan by 1st August 2022 to the DLUHC and update Cabinet in September

4. Reason for Recommendations

- a) To ensure West Northamptonshire benefits from this grant funding to enhance the community, boost the economy and support local residents and businesses.

- b) To maintain ongoing economic growth within the area, particular with the impending loss of EU funding and the need to utilise UKSPF to deliver positive economic development within the community.
- c) To enable the Council to submit the UKSPF Investment Plan by 1st August 2022.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 In order to effectively engage with Members, the community and stakeholders and analyse the necessary data, review existing strategies and develop our UKSPF Investment Plan, West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has procured the services of a consultant, Hatch Ltd.
- 5.2 The approach that WNC has developed with Hatch to create the UKSPF Investment Plan has followed four broad stages which are:
 - Information Review
 - Member, community and stakeholder Engagement
 - Identifying Interventions
 - Investment Plan Drafting and Finalisation
- 5.3 The first stage included an information review, which has recently been completed. This has involved the preparation of a Stage 1 Report (appended to this paper) which brings together the following:
 - An introduction to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
 - A review of the policy context around UKSPF and West Northamptonshire's progress towards levelling up
 - A review of existing European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) activities
 - Evidence of need and opportunities across each UKSPF priority theme and their implications for West Northamptonshire's UKSPF Investment Plan
 - Emerging implications for West Northamptonshire's UKSPF Investment Plan
- 5.4 The second stage of developing the WNC UKSPF Investment Plan has involved a Member, community and stakeholder engagement workshops, One to one consultations with the four local Members of Parliament: Andrea Leadsom; Andrew Lewer; Chris Heaton-Harris; and with SEMLEP. Further one to one's will be scheduled for July.
- 5.5 Three thematic workshops centred around the key investment priorities were held towards the end of June. The workshops were facilitated by Hatch and allowed a discussion of the needs and opportunities for West Northamptonshire, potential interventions and critical success factors for the investment plan.
- 5.6 There were 33 delegates at the Communities & Place workshop, 28 delegates at the Supporting Local Business workshop and 31 delegates at the People and Skills workshop.
- 5.7 A call-out form has been sent to partners and stakeholders to allow them to input on the key priorities of interventions and the needs of West Northamptonshire. The survey asked for views on the needs and opportunities for the area, potential interventions and project ideas. This was

sent to all WNC Councillors and included in an all-staff email so that internal services could input and share with further partners.

- 5.8 There will be some further engagement with other local authorities, particularly those neighbouring West Northamptonshire, to discuss potential interventions and projects that could be delivered in collaborate, to combine funds and deliver economies of scale.
- 5.9 Following on from the first two stages, Hatch will combine all of the data and information around the needs and opportunities for West Northamptonshire, with a scoring process to inform which interventions should be included in the investment plan.
- 5.10 As part of this stage, Identifying Interventions, there will be further meetings with internal WNC staff and Councillors at meetings such as ELT and EPB, along with the establishment of a new Partnership Board of external stakeholders to review the evidence and shortlist of interventions.
- 5.11 The final phase is focused on the drafting and finalisation of the investment plan in time for submission ahead of 1st August 2022.

6. Key findings from the Stage 1 Report (appended) have been broken down for each investment priority, as follows

- In a comparison of how West Northamptonshire performs against the Levelling Up Missions for the Communities and Place Priority, it showed that there have been improvements across all wellbeing indicators, except for an increase in anxiety. The wellbeing in West Northamptonshire is above average in comparison nationally.
- The area performs particularly poorly in terms of issues associated with Crime.
- Issues around healthy life expectancy and pride in place are also considered to be a priority.
- In a comparison of how West Northamptonshire performs against the Levelling Up Missions for the Supporting Local Business Priority, the area performs well against the majority of indicators which relate to the Levelling Up Missions.
- There is high business density with rapid growth in recent years and a strong rate of net business births.
- West Northamptonshire has received a significant proportion of Innovate UK funding relative to its share of the business base across Northamptonshire.
- In a comparison of how West Northamptonshire performs against the Levelling Up Missions for the People and Skills Priority, key priorities for the area include issues around pay, unemployment and skills/training.
- There is a relatively high unemployment rate, with relatively low numbers of people with advanced qualifications or in training.

6.1 Prevalent interventions

6.2 At the point of writing the Cabinet Report, which does not include the results of the consultation, are as follows.

6.2.1 Communities and Place:

- E7: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area
- E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places
- E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups
- E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.

6.2.2 **Supporting Local Business:**

- E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services, to take advantage of the growing global opportunity.
- E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.

6.2.3 **People and Skills:**

- E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses.
- E38: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licenses relevant to local area needs and high-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that cannot be met through mainstream funding.

7. **Issues and Choices**

- 7.1 To note the requirement to develop and submit an Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to develop pride in place and deliver specific interventions within West Northamptonshire, identified based on detailed analysis and engagement with stakeholders within the community.
- 7.2 To not develop and submit an Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would result in a loss of major potential investment into the area, which would be used to support the community and place, business support and people and skills.

8. **Implications (including financial implications)**

8.1 **Resources and Financial**

- 8.1.1 There are no resource or financial implications arising from this proposal.
- 8.1.2 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply Fund are 100% grant funding, meaning there is no financial risk to West Northamptonshire Council.

8.2 **Legal**

8.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this proposal.

8.3 **Risk**

8.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

8.3.2 There is a risk to West Northamptonshire Council's reputation and the economic recovery/growth to not submit the Investment Plans to secure this funding.

8.4 **Consultation**

8.4.1 In order to successfully assess impact, deliverability and strategic fit when analysing the interventions to address using the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, WNC has procured a consultant to support the development of the Investment Plan. Consultation will include with stakeholders, partners and internal/external services. This includes local MPs, WNC Councillors, Town Councils, and both public and private sector organisations, including the third sector.

8.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

8.5.1 N/A

8.6 **Climate Impact**

8.6.1 Where proposals for projects which align with the interventions set out in the UKSPF Investment Plan have a climate impact, the council will ensure the provider will undertake the relevant Environmental Impact Assessments.

8.7 **Community Impact**

8.7.1 This proposal will result in a positive impact on the whole West Northamptonshire community, including the quality of the place, resulting in economic growth and delivery of priorities set out within WNC's vision.

8.8 **Communications**

8.8.1 Communications will be developed to inform and engage stakeholders to raise wider awareness of the opportunities the UKSPF & Multiply funds create for partners, employers and residents once the Investment Plans have been approved by Government.

9. **Background Papers**

9.1 June Cabinet Report – UK Shared Prosperity Fund & Multiply Funding