

Westmorland and Furness Shadow Authority Cabinet Meeting

Date: 22 July 2022

Title: UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Report from: Councillor Jonathan Brook, Leader of the Council
Report Author: Interim Head of Paid Service
Wards: All
Key Decision: No

1.0 Purpose/Summary of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the emerging interventions that will form the basis of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) investment plans that are being developed by Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland Councils which will be inherited by Westmorland and Furness Council
- 1.2 To put in place the necessary delegations for Westmorland and Furness Council to consent to the final investment plans prior to submission as specified in the prospectus for the fund.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Authority Cabinet:-

(1) Note the proposed interventions for inclusion in UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plans being developed by Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland Councils as detailed in section 3.6 of this report; and

(2) Delegate authority to the Interim Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council to give consent on behalf of Westmorland and Furness Shadow Authority to the final UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plans and to the submission of those plans to DLUHC by 1 August 2022.

3.0 Background and Proposals

- 3.1 The UKSPF is a central pillar of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion in grant funding to local authorities to achieve the aims of:

- Boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging;
 - Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest;
 - Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost;
 - Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.
- 3.2 The fund has been allocated to district, Unitary Authorities and Combined Authorities in England, with around £8m collectively for Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland Councils as set out section on in 6.1 below.
- 3.3 The process to unlock the funding allocations requires authorities to submit investment plans for central government approval. More information about the aims of the fund, the sectors and interventions it seeks to target and the required process is given in the prospectus for UKSPF which is attached as a background document.
- 3.4 Whilst Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland Councils are lead authorities for UKSPF and will submit separate investment plans, the prospectus makes specific reference to Local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria. It states that consent of Westmorland and Furness Council in shadow form is needed for the investment plans to be submitted and that plans should include some joint elements notably delivery arrangements, which will aid transition post vesting day, when the district level investment plans will be merged into plans for the new Council.
- 3.5 To this end, the three Councils have been working closely on the their investment plans and have commissioned a single consultant, Hatch, to coordinate their development and bring together the outcomes of Expressions of Interest process that Eden separately and Barrow and South Lakeland jointly, have carried out. A single Local Partnership Group of key stakeholders as required in the prospectus has been established across the Westmorland and Furness geography.
- 3.6 The Government guidance (set out in Interventions List for England in the background papers) sets out 41 interventions across three themes that can be chosen to form the basis of the investment plans. From assessing their alignment with current strategic objectives and informed by the Expression of Interest process, the three Councils have provisionally identified the following suite of 15 interventions as being most appropriate and impactful:
- 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.
- 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.
- E19: Increasing investment in research and development at the local level. Investment to support the diffusion of innovation knowledge and activities. Support the commercialisation of ideas, encouraging collaboration and accelerating the path to market so that more ideas translate into industrial and commercial practices.
- 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.

3.7 These interventions are subject to refinement and change including through consultation with the Local Partnership Group. Once finalised this suite of interventions will underpin the investment plan and under which projects and programmes will be subsequently aligned and developed. The final investment plans will be submitted by the Councils on or before the deadline of 1 August 2022. The timescale for the submission of the investment plans does not allow for the Shadow Authority Cabinet to consider the final of version of the plans before the deadline, hence the need to put the appropriate delegation for consent by the Shadow Authority in place. It is recommended that

this delegation should be to the Leader and the Interim Head of Paid Service.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 As set out in 3.5, a Local Partnership Group comprised of key stakeholders has been established with its first meeting on 7 July 2022. Stakeholders include elected members from Westmorland and Furness Shadow Authority and the district Councils and representatives from the business, rural, sustainability, community and voluntary and education and skills sector. This will be the key mechanism for wider consultation and engagement on the production of the investment plans and their future delivery.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The investment plans would be non-compliant without the consent of the Shadow Authority.

6.0 Implications

Financial, Resources and Procurement

- 6.1. The allocations made to the three Councils is set out below.

Allocations	Barrow	Eden	SLDC	Total
Programme Management (4%)	£99,101	£79,608	£153,824	£332,533
Available for Interventions	£2,378,427	£1,910,595	£3,691,768	£7,980,790
Total Allocation	£2,477,528	£1,990,203	£3,845,592	£8,313,323

- 6.2 The guidance allows for 4% of the allocations to be top-sliced for programme management which has been taken into account. The spend profile for the remaining 96% is 12%, in the remainder of 2022/23, 23% in 2023/24 and 61% in 2024/25.
- 6.3 It is anticipated that spend from the 2022/23 allocations will start in the autumn following approval of the investment plans. The majority of the expenditure will therefore fall within the tenure of Westmorland and Furness Council.

Human Resources

- 6.4 There are no human resource implications.

Legal

- 6.5 Any legal implications relating to UKSPF currently lie with the three district level Councils as lead authorities. Any legal implications identified by the districts will be consolidated prior to plans being combined post vesting.

- 6.6 The prospectus from central government outlines that local authorities must detail within their investment plan how the proposed interventions will be delivered within the UK Subsidy Control regime. It is expected that the Government will publish further specific guidance on subsidy control and UKSPF in the summer; this is awaited at the time of writing this report. Each sovereign council will assess its own respective position in respect of subsidy control compliance.

Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment

- 6.7 Have you completed Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment? No.
- 6.8 This is because a Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment is not necessary at this stage.
- 6.9 Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis? No.

Equality and Diversity

- 6.10 This because an Equality Impact Assessment is not necessary at this stage.

Contact Officers

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Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus	UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Interventions List	Interventions list for England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Interventions, Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs	Interventions, Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs – England (publishing.service.gov.uk)