

Barrow Borough Council
Executive Committee
Wednesday, 27 July 2022
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan

Report from: Director of People & Place
Report Author: Head of Regeneration & Planning Policy
and Policy & Engagement Officer
Wards: (All Wards);

1.0 Summary and Conclusions

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update on progress made in producing the final version of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan for Barrow, and the work completed to date with Eden and South Lakeland District Councils which will be delivered by Westmorland and Furness Council following vesting day.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that Executive Committee:

- (i) Note the evidence base and draft intervention list attached at Appendix 1**
- (ii) Delegate to the Director of People and Place in consultation with the Chair of Executive Committee authority to finalise the UKSPF Investment Plan including the consideration of comments from the Westmorland and Furness Local Partnership Group.**
- (iii) Delegate to the Director of People and Place in consultation with the Chair of Executive Committee the authority to submit the Investment Plan to Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 1 August 2022**
- (iv) Delegate to the Director of People and Place in consultation with the Chair of Executive Committee the authority to agree a business case development process to accept specific projects into the Investment Plan.**

- (v) **Record appreciation of the work that partners and officers have contributed within short timeframes to develop an evidence-based approach to priority setting for the UKSPF Investment Plan.**

3.0 Background and Proposals

Shared Prosperity Fund

- 3.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is part of the UK government's 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, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition.
- 3.2 The Fund was launched on 13th April 2022 and £2,477,528 has been allocated to Barrow Borough Council, with around £8.3m collectively for Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland District Councils.
- 3.3 Investment Plans should be submitted to government by 1 August 2022 setting out how this funding will be spent. The Fund has 3 investment priorities around which Investment Plans should be based:
- Community and Place
 - Supporting Local Business
 - People and Skills
- 3.4 Agreement was given by this committee on 25 May 2022 to receive a completed Investment Plan on 27 July 2022. Due to the timeframe and the added complexity of agreeing across the 3 districts that a single Local Partnership Group would be established, the Investment Plan is still being prepared for a deadline of 1 August submission to DLUHC. Therefore, this report and the appendices sets out the high level detail and the process used with stakeholders to inform the prioritisation of interventions and allocations.
- 3.5 Officers have been working at pace to capture a list of concepts/ projects that are suitable for an SPF bid by engaging with the relevant partner organisations to invite concepts and facilitate discussion at 3 focus groups sessions held in June 2022. The draft Evidence Base Report at Appendix 1 builds on this and sets out:
- An introduction to UKSPF
 - Review of the policy context around UKSPF and the Boroughs's progress towards levelling up
 - Review of existing ESIF activities
 - Evidence of need and opportunities across each UKSPF priority theme and their implications for Barrow in Furness's SPF Investment Plan
 - Emerging implications for Barrow in Furness's UKSPF Investment Plan

The collaborative approach taken by the 3 District Councils and partners in ensuring the investment priorities for the future are aligned and complementary for the area as a whole should be noted. This has been evident through the workshops across the investment priorities and attendance at the Local Partnership Group.

- 3.6 Whilst Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland District 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 investment plans will be merged into plans for the new Council.
- 3.7 To this end, the three districts have been working closely on their Investment Plans and have each commissioned consultant, Hatch Ltd, to coordinate plan development and bring together the analysis of the concept submissions 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.
- 3.8 The Barrow UKSPF high level priorities were considered and endorsed by the Westmorland and Furness Shadow Executive on 22 July 2022. The Local Partnership Group has been established and has met twice to consider the proposed interventions and the evidence base and offered strategic advice on whether these were robust and provided the platform for strong decision making for catalytic change in the Borough using UKSPF.
- 3.9 The government guidance (see background papers) sets out 41 interventions across the 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 concepts submitted as part of the stakeholder engagement sessions, the three districts have provisionally identified the following suite of 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
 - 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
 - E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change
 - E14: Relevant Feasibility Studies

- 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
- E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy
- E33: Employment support for economically inactive people
- E37: Tailored support to help people in employment

3.10 A provisional allocation of spend across the three priorities is as follows:

- Communities and Place – 45% - £1,114,881
- Supporting Local Businesses – 35% - £867,135
- People and Skills –20%- £198,202

4.0 Consultation

4.1 A Focus Group was held for each theme in June 2022 jointly for the 3 districts authorities which brought together over 90 stakeholders.

4.2 A Local Partnership Group comprising of stakeholders has been established and met twice on 7th and 19th July 2022. Stakeholders include elected members from Westmorland and Furness Council and the district Councils and representatives from the business, tourism, sustainability, community, voluntary and education and skills sectors. 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 Do not submit an Investment Plan to meet the timescale required, UKSPF funds will not be paid to the Council.

6.0 Contribution to Council Plan Priorities

6.1 This funding stream supports all priorities of the Barrow Council Plan, as it will support cross cutting investment across the borough supporting disadvantaged residents and creating a vibrant, safe and welcoming place where people want to live and supporting the economy to thrive.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial, Resources and Procurement

7.1.1 The funding period for UKSPF is April 2022 to March 2025 with payments expected to lead authorities by October 2022.

7.1.2 The successful delivery of the UKSPF Investment Plan would require resources, Barrow BC are keen to build on the programme management arrangements in place for Town Deal with Cumbria County Council. UKSPF includes a 4% administration fee in 2022/23 which would be used to support programme management and due to capacity issues external assessment of potential interventions. Discussions are ongoing with South Lakeland District Council and possibly Eden District Councils to procure further external support collectively to support aligned processes.

7.1.3 The allocations made to the three districts is as follows:

Allocations	Barrow	Eden	SLDC	Total
Total Allocation	£ 2,477,528	£ 1,990,203	£ 3,845,592	£ 8,313,323
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

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 Any legal implications relating to UKSPF currently lie with the three district Councils as lead authorities.

7.2.2 Upon our UKSPF Investment Plan being accepted the Council will be required to enter into a grant funding agreement with the Government, the content and implications of which are unknown at this stage. Advice will be required prior to entering into such an agreement. Delegated authority was granted on 25 May 2022 to enter into any central government funding agreements and also local agreements to individual organisations in receipt of the funding from UKSPF.

7.3 Local Government Reorganisation

7.3.1 If successful the Shared Prosperity Fund work would need to be incorporated into the Council Plan of the Westmorland & Furness unitary authority.

7.3.2 A prioritised list of recovery activities will need to be fed into the LGR Policy Workstream in order that the post-covid needs of the Borough's communities are considered in the setting of Council priorities for the new Westmorland & Furness Council.

7.4 Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on UKSPF and the outcomes are attached at Appendix 2. This is in line with the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/2024. There are no negative impacts to

report. It is hoped that projects funded through UKSPF will have a positive impact especially age and disability through the focus on improving life chances with an emphasis on tackling socio-economic disadvantage.

Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Investment Plan not submitted to timescale	Funding not released	Ensure Investment Plan submitted in collaboration with partners to deadline required

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Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix 1 – Evidence Report detailing Draft Intervention List and Stakeholder Engagement

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus