**UK Shared Prosperity (and Rural Fund)**

**Shropshire Update**

**No. 1**

**12 January 2023**

**Background**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a government-allocated fund to be managed by local authorities in partnership with local stakeholders and which is intended to reduce inequalities between communities, as part of the Government’s wider “levelling up” agenda.

Government released details of the UKSPF prospectus and funding allocations on 13 April 2022 ([UKSPF prospectus](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fuk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus&data=04%7C01%7Cgary.spence%40shropshire.gov.uk%7C879f88884d35416c25d808da1e0653b2%7Cb6c13011372d438bbc8267e4c7966e89%7C0%7C0%7C637855309765885490%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=tbagu%2FjncS9CYfuyI1M5gUdSAEqg5pq0HGJeKyTuwyk%3D&reserved=0)). The overarching objective of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances. The programme includes 3 investment priorities:

• Community and Place

• Supporting Local Business; and

• People and Skills

The Shropshire allocation was set at £12,255,281 for the period Oct 22 to Apr 2025, comprises £10,845,217 through the main fund and £1,410,064 through DfE ‘Multiply’ funding (Multiply funding will be subject to a separate update note).

Shropshire ranked 7th on the list of unitary authorities in terms of the size of allocation.

A separate allocation for a Rural England Prosperity Fund was announced by DEFRA in September 2022, which supplements UKSPF funding for rural local authority areas. Through this, DEFRA indicatively allocated Shropshire £2,589,503 for the period, Apr 23 to Mar 25.

All funding allocations were subject to local authorities submitting investment plans for the respective funds. Shropshire Council worked with a broad range of partners through advisory groups covering each of the three UKSPF priorities and submitted its proposals for the three funds within the advertised submission windows in the second half of 2022.

*For further information, please refer to the general UKSPF briefing paper and UKSPF Investment Plans, available on the Shropshire Council website.*

**Progress since submission of Investment Plan**

**Main UKSPF Fund**

Government announced the support of Shropshire’s Investment Plan in early December 22 as part of a general sign off for all Investment Plans. This sign off was delayed by three to four months and therefore activity in 22/23 will be greatly reduced to what was initially planned but it is expected that underspend will be carried over into 23/24.

22/23 activity only covers the Community & Place and Supporting Local Business priorities.

The advisory groups met in early January to discuss process for supporting activity in 22/23 and post April 23. It was agreed that activity in 22/23 would be limited to supporting the following:

* A feasibility fund to support the development of activity that could potentially be delivered through UKSPF.
* Targeted business support activities.

It was also agreed that a general call window to seek proposals for post April 23 activity will be launched in February 23, which will be open to all qualifying applicants. The call specification will be issued shortly.

**Rural Fund**

Shropshire Council submitted the Rural Fund addendum to its main UKSPF Investment Plan in November. It is anticipated that DEFRA will sign off the addendums in January.

Shropshire Council will provide more information on how the Rural Fund will be utilised following further communication from DEFRA.

**For further information**

All relevant information will be provided on the following dedicated webpage: <https://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/12-4-million-awarded-to-shropshire-council-to-support-local-economy/>

Please email any specific questions that you might have to (tbc).