



Cabinet

Tuesday, 11 March 2025

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme 2025/26

Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor A Brennan

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report to Cabinet follows previous reports in February 2023, October 2023 and most recently February 2024, about the allocation of UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funding (UKSPF and REPF). This report seeks Cabinet's endorsement of proposals for the recently announced further year of funding (2025/26).
- 1.2. Rushcliffe's allocation of UKSPF is £1,051,399 for the financial year 2025/26. It is a mix of capital (£460,644) and revenue (£590,755) funding. As previously 4% (£42,055) of this can be used for management and administration of the funding. Therefore, the figure available to allocate is £1,009,344.
- 1.3. In addition to UKSPF in 2025/26, we are waiting for Government to confirm whether the Council will be receiving another round of REPF, which has previously been capital only funding. Proposed plans for REPF are not included in this report but will be consulted on, as appropriate, upon confirmation of the REPF funding position. The Economic Growth Team is currently working in preparation to deliver the proposals as efficiently as possible, pending the approval of these proposals.
- 1.4. This report sets out plans for the Council's direct delivery and commissioning of the UKSPF allocation for 2025/26, as well as reflecting on what has been achieved in 2024/25.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) recognises UKSPF activity delivered in 2024/25;
- b) endorses the proposals for UKSPF in 2025/26;
- c) delegates sign-off of refinements to proposals for 2024/25 to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and S151 Officer, with both revenue and capital implications reported in future financial reports to Cabinet and the MTFs to Full Council;

- d) supports the proposals as outlined in the report for UKSPF grant pots; and
- e) delegates sign off of grant awards and reallocation of grant funding between priorities (Business Support and Communities and Place) for UKSPF and REPF to the S151 Officer and Director – Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, following officer recommendations based on assessment of applications and moderation.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

It is important to have a clear framework and principles for UKSPF and REPF (if applicable) activity to be delivered in 2025/26 and for this to be endorsed by Cabinet. However, it may be necessary to make adjustments to ensure that funds are allocated where they can have the most impact and to be able to respond to opportunities as they may arise throughout the year. In the interest of not slowing delivery and risk of not spending the full allocation, it is appropriate for authority to approve any changes to proposals to be delegated to the Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer.

4. Supporting Information

Delivery in Year 3 (2024/25)

- 4.1. As outlined in the report to Cabinet in February 2024, the UKSPF and REPF funding was allocated via direct commissioning by the Council and grants for community groups and businesses. In Year 3, the allocation of UKSPF and REPF was:
 - UKSPF – £1,635,250
 - REPF – £447,145
 - Total – £ 2,082,395
- 4.2. An overview of some projects delivered across UKSPF and REPF, including the outputs and outcomes delivered by them can be found in Appendix A. This is not an exhaustive list; it is just a sample of some projects to show the range of projects and outputs and outcomes being delivered. Some headlines from delivery in 2024/25 so far are:
 - 18 grants to community organisations
 - 266 households given energy efficiency advice
 - 8 facilities improved
 - 17 supporting business grants awarded
 - 31 high street grants awarded
 - 350 businesses supported (delivered from start of the contract in September 2023)
 - 55 training courses for local residents delivered
 - Launch of Start South Notts employment and skills website

- 4.3. As Councillors will see, a wide range of projects have been delivered across the Borough. Collectively these have achieved a good spread of outputs and outcomes benefitting both local communities and businesses.

Funding available for Year 4 (2025/26) and proposals for spend

- 4.4. As the East Midlands Mayoral County Combined Authority (EMCCA) is now established, the allocation of UKSPF has been awarded to them from Government. EMCCA is now the lead local authority and will be responsible for reporting to Government. For previous allocations of UKSPF in areas where a mayoral combined authority existed, the funding was allocated to them rather than individual local authorities.
- 4.5. At the EMCCA Board on 10 February 2025, it was confirmed that UKSPF would be allocated to districts and city councils in the area. In the papers, EMCCA confirmed its intention to use a portion of the funding to deliver initiatives around inward investment, tourism and business support across the region, while working with districts to enable them to focus on local provision. Rushcliffe has a confirmed allocation of £1,051,335 to be spent in 2025/26:

| UKSPF total | Capital allocation | Revenue allocation |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| £1,051,335 | £460,644 | £590,755 |

- 4.6. As the table shows, there is an approximate 60/40 split between revenue and capital respectively; however, there is the option to convert revenue funding to capital if required. Previously, local authorities (LA's) submitted an Investment Plan to Government outlining their proposed projects and spend across the range of UKPSF interventions. For Year 4, this Investment Plan will be submitted to EMCCA (as the lead local authority), who is asking LA's to review their existing projects and proposed spend, as well as forecast outputs and outcomes.
- 4.7. There are a few updates to the UKSPF for 2025-26. The existing interventions have been mapped into Mission-led themes across the three priority areas: Communities and Place; Support for Local Business; and People and Skills. Five themes and 12 sub themes have replaced the previous interventions, as set out in the table below. All interventions and activity previously eligible for UKSPF funding in 2022-25 remain eligible in 2025-26.

| Priorities & Sub Themes | | |
|---|---|---|
| Communities & Place | Supporting Business | People & Skills |
| <p>Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy – Improve health & wellbeing • Safe – Reduce crime and the fear of crime • Inclusive – Bringing communities together, tackling homelessness <p>Thriving Places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the visitor economy • High streets and town centre improvements | <p>Support for Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice & support to businesses • Enterprise culture and start up support • Business sites & premises | <p>Employability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting people to progress towards and into employment • Support for young people who are at risk of being NEET <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential skills (including numeracy, literacy, ESOL & digital) • Employment related skills |

4.8. Previously, Government advised that funding can be moved between themes as plans develop and up to the value of 30% of the total allocation can be moved before approval from Government is required. However, the Council are waiting for confirmation from EMCCA on whether the previous guidelines still stand or if there will be changes.

4.9. When considering projects for inclusion in Year 4 of UKSPF, it is important to ensure these are deliverable as all spend needs to be complete by the end of March 2026. With no guarantee of future funding and with a smaller total funding amount than previous years, there is an increased pressure on the Council to allocate resources to projects with the greatest impact which can be delivered within timescales. The proposed projects for 2025/26 are:

| Theme | Proposed Projects | Proposed allocation |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Community & Place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bridgford Play areas • Delivery of work deferred from 2024/25 UKSPF programme e.g. Compton Acres watercourse and Sir Julien Cahn Pavilion • Active travel in Bingham • Rushcliffe Country Park - gate access and footpath improvements • Enhanced events • Community grant pot (including community wellbeing grant pot) • Tourism - brochure/website/social media/Welcome to Rushcliffe signage • West Bridgford masterplan | £645,000 |
| Supporting Business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business grant pot (including high street shop front pot) • Business support | £325,000 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to RBC commercial units including energy efficiency | |
| People Skills & | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of Transform Your Future programme of employment and skills support | £40,000 |
| Total | | £1,010,000 |
| UKSPF available | | £1,009,344 |
| Difference | | +£656 |

4.10. Our proposed allocations across the three themes for Year 4 are:

- Communities and Place - £645,000
- Business Support - £325,000
- People and Skills - £40,000

4.11. Cabinet will note that the above total is an over allocation of £656. This is a very small amount and allows for flexibility in the event of delayed delivery and/or underspend of any projects.

4.12. The above list of projects aims to achieve a balance of delivery across the Borough with a wide range of outputs and outcomes. As already referred to in the report, the above list is subject to change if it becomes apparent that: these are undeliverable within the required timeframes; if alternative funding applied for is awarded; or if alternative priorities are identified. Approval for any changes will be sought from the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and S151 Officer, as set out in the recommendations.

4.13. In addition to the above list of projects, there are the certain initiatives which will be procured and managed by EMCCA, including business support and inward investment:

- Start Up Programme - £850k
- Regional Workshop Delivery - £200k
- Scale up programme - £500k
- Export programme - £500k
- Visitor Economy Activity - £400k

Any business support activity commissioned by the Council will therefore consider this wider offer and ensure that there is no duplication.

Grant pot

4.14. The proposal above includes the allocation of £200k for a grant pot for communities and £200k for businesses so £400k of the total allocation. The intention is to launch this, subject to Cabinet approval, on 12 March 2025.

4.15. It is intended that the grant pots will be delivered in the same way as previous years:

| Communities and Place grants | Business support grants |
|--|---|
| <p>Larger grant pot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered via a call for projects (13 March to 30 April) • Grants between £5k and £40k • Projects can be applied for under any of the Government themes and sub themes • 30% match funding desirable but this can be in kind (e.g. volunteer time) • Mix of capital and revenue projects | <p>Larger grant pot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered via a call for projects (13 March to 30 April) • Target investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tourism and visitor economy ○ low carbon and energy efficiency ○ supporting growing businesses • £1k to £40k • Match requirement 60% from the business and 40% from UKSPF • Capital and revenue projects |
| <p>Community wellbeing funding grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First come first served grant pot – open from 1 April 2024 • Projects from £1k to £5k | <p>High street grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First come first served – open from 1 April 2024 • Funding for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shop front and premises improvements (including accessibility) ○ Digital – social media, website etc. ○ low carbon and energy efficiency • Capital and revenue projects • £1k to £5k • 30% match requirement from the business and 70% from UKSPF |
| Allocation - £200k (approx. £30k of this for the community wellbeing funding) | Allocation - £200k (approx. £50k of this for the high street grant pot) |

4.16. As noted it is not clear at this stage if any REPF will be allocated. If REPF is made available this will be used to increase grant pot allocations for communities and businesses. REPF is capital funding only and covers the whole of the Borough excluding West Bridgford.

Governance

4.17. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and S151 Officer, will be required to sign off any changes to the above proposals, including new projects or changes of allocations, as well as receiving updates on projects supported.

4.18. Rushcliffe's Strategic Growth Board acts as the Partnership Board, which was required to be established for the purposes of UKSPF. This Board usually meets quarterly, and it is proposed that at each Board meeting an update on UKSPF/REPF (if relevant) continues to be provided to Councillors.

4.19. Officers from the Economic Growth Team will meet regularly with identified project leads to ensure delivery remains on track and any issues are identified early. Regular reports are provided to the Executive Management Team.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. An alternative option is that the Council allocates more funding into the grant pots for community groups and businesses to access. However, it is anticipated that the grant allocation will enable delivery of a range of projects across the Borough as it has done in the current financial year.
- 5.2. In addition, a wider range of smaller projects could be supported; however, this will be more resource intensive and with requirements for monitoring delivery of grant funded projects, this would become unmanageable. Alternatively, the allocation could remain more open for projects to be identified throughout the year. As outlined, projects need to be deliverable as funding must be spent by the end of March 2026 and this would pose a bigger risk to delivery.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1. Projects can be subject to delays, for example, when dealing with third party contractors. For UKSPF projects funding can be lost if work is not completed within the financial year. To mitigate this risk the Council will look to re-appropriate funds to other projects that meet the UKSPF criteria. The financial position for all of the 2024/25 projects will be reported in the Q4 2024/25 Financial Outturn report
- 6.2. There is a risk that outputs and outcomes are not achieved in line with the Investment Plan submitted to EMCCA. Officers will be reporting to EMCCA on a regular basis as part of the requirements of the scheme and therefore any issues will be identified and addressed as early as possible.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

- 7.1.1 UKSPF and REPF are both funding awarded by Government to be allocated and spent by the Council. When deciding on projects, the Council has been mindful of not committing itself to on-going revenue and capital costs.
- 7.1.2 The MTFS and Capital Programme will be amended accordingly and reported through the usual governance and reporting procedures.
- 7.1.3 The final UKSPF allocations for 2024/25 will be reported in the Q4 year-end Financial Outturn report to Cabinet. Due to timing issues on the delivery of some projects there have been reallocations e.g. Edwalton Community Hall and Compton Acres watercourse ensuring the resources are maximised within the financial year.

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

7.3. Equalities Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the UKSPF programme. In addition, all grant applicants will be asked to complete Equality Impact Assessments as part of their application.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

7.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no biodiversity net gain implications associated with this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| The Environment | Interventions within UKSPF activity for 2024/25 include a focus on decarbonisation, in line with the Council's work to make Rushcliffe net zero by 2050. |
| Quality of Life | The UKSPF's focus is on supporting Government's Levelling Up ambitions and particularly pride in place. The funding offers the opportunity for the Council and other organisations to deliver new activities to support and enhance our residents' quality of life. |
| Efficient Services | No contributions to this corporate priority identified. |
| Sustainable Growth | Objectives of the fund include supporting local businesses and people and skills, this funding will allow the Council and partners to deliver local interventions that meet the needs of our businesses and community. |

9. Recommendation

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Business and Growth, following officer recommendations based on assessment and moderation.

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| For more information contact: | Catherine Evans Head of Economic Growth and Property 0115 914 8552 cevans@rushcliffe.gov.uk |
| Background papers available for Inspection: | Report to Cabinet in July 2022 Report to Cabinet in January 2023 Report to Growth and Development Scrutiny Committee in January 2025 Report to cabinet in February 2023 Report to Cabinet in October 2023 |
| List of appendices: | Appendix A |