

Subject:	UK Shared Prosperity Funding 2025-26	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	5 th March 2025
Report of:	Economic Development Officer / Head of Housing & Regeneration	Portfolio Holder:	Lead Member for Economic Development
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required: Yes	Attached:	Yes
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required: No	Attached:	No
Contact Officer:	Megan Eastwood	Telephone:	01706 252568
Email:	meganeastwood@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

Recommendations

1. Full Council to authorise the acceptance of £857,874 UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) from the shadow Lancashire Combined County Authority.
2. Full Council to accept the proposed 25-26 investment plan and note the progress of 23-25 UKSPF funded projects.
3. Full Council to authorise the Head of Legal and Governance in conjunction with the Director of Resources to enter into necessary agreements to deliver the investment plan.
4. Full Council to delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development and Director of Resources to implement the investment plan and in conjunction with the lead member for Economic Development & Regeneration, make any required further minor amendments to the investment plan.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In December 2022 Rosendale Borough Council approved an investment plan for the use of £2.5m of allocated UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF). This report provides an update on delivery of that plan and the outcomes achieved. In addition, a further allocation has been issued for 2025/26. As a result of the agreed Devolution proposal for Lancashire and the creation of the Lancashire Combined County Authority (LCCA), this allocation has been directly 'passport'ed to the council from the shadow LCCA.
- 1.2 The LCCA have allocated £857,874 to Rosendale Borough Council for 2025/26 and requires Full Council acceptance in accordance with financial procedure rules. As a result of this reduced allocation, revisions to existing activities are necessary and this report requests Full Council to approve the proposed investment plan.
- 1.3 Blackpool Council will be acting as Local Lead Authority for UK SPF in Lancashire, and Rosendale Borough Council will report directly to them.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a government funding initiative designed to replace the EU Structural Funds following Brexit. It aims to reduce regional economic disparities and support local communities across the UK by investing in three key areas:

- Community and Place – Improving town centres, community spaces, and local culture.
- Supporting Local Businesses – Encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, and business growth.
- People and Skills – Enhancing job opportunities, training, and employability programs.

2.2 During this first allocation from January 2023 and March 2025, funding has contributed to the delivery of the following projects:

- Whitaker Park Improvements
- Victoria Park Improvements
- Haslingden Market
- Waterfoot Town Square
- Waterfoot Arts Scheme
- Shop refurbishment in Waterfoot
- Establishment of town centre teams
- Rossendale Works Employability Project
- Allocations to Pride Groups
- East Lancashire Chamber Low Carbon Grant Funding
- The Bridge - digital ecosystem development
- Hub development pilot - skills package for Rossendale Businesses

2.3 It was announced by the Labour Government that the UK SPF project would be extended by one year to March 2026, allocating £857,874. However, the current projects must be completed by their original deadline.

3. PROPOSED INVESTMENT PLAN 2025/26

3.1 For the financial year 2025-26, Rossendale Borough Council has been allocated £857,874 from the UKSPF. This represents a significant reduction in comparison to the 2024-25 budget, which stood at £1.681 million. Additionally, the budget for 2024-25 benefitted from a small amount of underspend from the previous year, bringing the total available funding to £1.73 million.

3.2 The proposed allocation for 2025-26 is 50% lower than in previous years, meaning that funding must be streamlined to ensure that priority projects can still be delivered effectively. Also this is only a one year allocation so there is neither time nor flexibility to deliver new major projects. Given this reduction in value and time constraints, careful consideration must be given to the allocation of resources to maximise impact.

3.3 The investment plan for 2025-26 must include both capital and revenue projects, ensuring a balanced approach that supports both long-term infrastructure improvements and short-term operational needs. The Council will need to assess how best to distribute the reduced funding while maintaining strategic alignment with local economic development priorities.

3.4 The overarching principles of the investment is to continue projects where staff resource is allocated, such as the town centre teams and Rossendale Works and securing the completion or enhancement of current projects.

3.5 The proposed allocation of funding for 2025/26 is in the table below.

Programmes	Project Theme	Revenue	Capital	Total
Staff resources	Town Centre Management	131,380		
	Management	8,494		
Completion of Projects	Green Streets		150,000	
	The Bridge	31,000		
	Pride	20,000		
	Rosendale Works	115,000		
	Waterfoot	15,000		
	Haslingden		140,000	
	3G Pitch		220,000	
Extend Coverage	Whitworth Town Centre Improvements	15,000		
	Helmshore Conservation Area	6,000		
	Crawshawbooth Conservation Area	6,000		
	Total	347,874	510,000	857,874

4. Governance

4.1 The Economic Development Department will be the overall day to day lead on the UK SPF programme. They will be responsible for reporting to Blackpool Council.

4.2 An internal officer group will meet monthly, with will include project leads and the legal and finance teams. This group will report internally to the Council's Programme Board who will monitor finance and risk.

5. RISKS

5.1 The principal risk is that the Lead Local Authority for the UK SPF allocation is Blackpool Council as the parent authority for UK SPF in Lancashire. Blackpool Council, through its Programme Monitoring Office (PMO), will lead on the coordination of the administration of the UKSPF Programme on behalf of the LCCA.

5.2 Clarity is being sought on Blackpool Council's payment and reporting schedules to better understand or risks related to cash flow.

6. FINANCE

6.1 It is expected that the Council will be required to submit quarterly monitoring reports to Blackpool showing expenditure.

6.2 All expenditure for the will projects must be within the 2025/26 SPF budget envelope and all expenditure must be in line with the terms of the grant

7. LEGAL

7.1 Due to the value of the funding, Full Council is required to approve acceptance with delegations to officers to sign all relevant funding agreements in line with the Council's Constitution.

7.2 There are no other legal implications arising directly from this report but further reports will be presented as and when required to seek the necessary authorisations.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The works undertaken by the UK Shared Prosperity Funding will support the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan.

8.2 Any equality implications related to the project will be given consideration in a relevant and proportionate manner for the individual projects.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

The UKSPF investment for 25-26 will continue the momentum gained through the first 3 years of the programme, leading to attractive and thriving town centres, enhanced leisure opportunities and support local businesses. This will help us achieve our economic and leisure aspirations.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers included