

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO CABINET**

17th March 2026

Report Title: UK Shared Prosperity Update

Submitted by: Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolios: One Council, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To update Cabinet on the successful report on the Newcastle under Lyme UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- 1. Acknowledges the content of the report.**
- 2. Notes that the funding for the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) ceases in March 2026 and that no further funding has been made available by MHCLG for future projects.**
- 3. Receives further updates if any subsequent funding programme beyond March 2026 is announced.**

Reasons

It is appropriate that the Cabinet receives the feedback from MHCLG assessment on the UKSPF programme in Newcastle under Lyme. The Fund has previously been reported to Cabinet and Cabinet noted that further update reports would be made.

1. **Background**

1.1 The Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in April 2022 inviting Council's to submit Investment Plans to meet three investment priorities:

- Community and place
- Supporting Local Business; and
- People and Skills

1.2 In 2025, the Government agreed an interim extension of funding, but the funding was based on 60% of the previous year's allocation.

1.3 In 2025 MHCLG commenced an evaluation the UKSPF programme. This evaluation included 34 place level case studies across the UK focusing of specific localities. These aimed to understand local delivery and impacts, and to generate robust evidence on how effective combinations of UKSPF-supported interventions (and other publicly funded projects) within a locality work together to enhance community pride, life chances and other government missions, including local economic growth. Newcastle-under-Lyme (NUL) was selected as a place level case study as it offered an opportunity to examine implementation of UKSPF in a small local authority, with a relatively low per capita UKSPF funding, but which had previously received of a high level of EU Structural Funds such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

2. **Issues**

2.1 The highlights reported to Cabinet in its UKSPF Update Report in October 2025 were reflected in the MHCLG report. The evaluation report listed out the following as key enablers to support effective delivery:-

- The development of strong relationships during the delivery of the commissioned interventions
- New collaborative relationships with academic institutions
- Engagement with local organisations
- The UKSPF's flexible and adaptive approach

2.2 The evaluation report further listed out the challenges faced to deliver the programme which were successfully overcome:-

- The uncertainty associated with the transition from ERDF funding to UKSPF funding

- The identification of suitable locations for capital spend (homelessness hub for example) and procurement processes
- Securing resident 'buy-in' for capital projects

2.3 The project oversight, governance, data collection and monitoring of the overall programme was considered to be fit for purpose and acceptable.

3.0 UKSPF Impact Evaluation

3.1 Evaluation Overview

The MHCLG Evaluation review looked at the three main themes and objectives of the UKSPF programme and found that the outcomes delivered by Newcastle under Lyme were satisfactory or 'contribution claim supported' as noted in the body of the report. The key outcomes were as follows:-

Communities and Place

- Improved facilities
- Increased footfall and usage of key locations / town centres
- Increased volunteering

Supporting Local Businesses

- Local business births increased
- Increased innovation and productivity
- Increased job creation

People and Skills

- Addressing economic inactivity
- Improved confidence in labour market participation

3.2 Economic Evaluation

3.2.1 A Value for Money assessment was undertaken as part of the assessment which was conducted using the National Audit Office's 4E's framework which focused on the economy, efficiency, effectiveness and the equity of the

programme. Of the twelve measures ten were reported as having High – Strong Evidence whilst two had Adequate evidence.

- 3.2.2 The report concluded that the UKSPF investment in Newcastle under Lyme demonstrated a high level of value for money. The interventions were well-targeted to the most appropriate beneficiary groups and areas, and the outcomes achieved were highly relevant to the local needs.

4. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 4.1 As lead authority for the disbursement and accountability of UKSPF monies, the Council is required to complete monitoring returns and financial statements and engage with this evaluation.

5. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 5.1 The Fund seeks to invest in community, business and people. Part of the development of the Investment Plan sought investment to improve any inequalities within our communities. The evaluation report highlighted the UKSPF investment was effectively managed and delivered, providing high value for money in terms of equity

6. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 6.1 As previously reported Newcastle's allocation for 2025/26 is £1,582,136 this includes the capital allocation of £292,112 and revenue allocation of £1,290,024. Project spend is projected to meet these allocations.

7. **Major Risks**

- 7.1 The Shared Prosperity Fund is a significant opportunity to support our local community without the effective commissioning of services in line with the Investment Plan and Government priorities there is a risk of the locality missing this funding opportunity. Without a follow on investment by Government the success of the programme will be lost.

8. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

- 8.1 The fund seeks to support the delivery of projects to support economic growth and sustainable development.



9. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council x

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

One Digital Council x

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.

One Sustainable Council x

We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle

- 9.1 The UKSPF funding allocated for Newcastle delivered against all three objectives, as set out in this report.

10. Key Decision Information

- 10.1 This is not a key decision as this report is an update.

11. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

- 11.1 19th July 2022, Cabinet report
14th October 2025, Cabinet report

12. List of Appendices

12.1 UKSPF Place-Level Evaluation, Newcastle under Lyme – Final Report, November 2025

13. Background Papers

13.1 Information on the fund is available at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>