- Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities)

Guidance

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus

Published 13 April 2022

Contents

This publication is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus

This Prospectus provides information to local authorities and other partners across the United Kingdom on:

Part 1

- The aims of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- What to use the funding for
- The funding places will receive
- How to deliver the Fund
- The investment plan process

Part 2

- The Fund's parameters
- How we will pay each place or project
- How we will work with each place to measure impact

It builds on pre-launch guidance published in February 2022.

For further information, you can contact us on any of the content of this guidance or via the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities area team for your place.

Important dates

- Fund launch: 13 April 2022
- Investment plan submissions window: 30 June 2022 to 1 August 2022
- First payments expected to lead local authorities: from October 2022
- Funding period: April 2022 to March 2025

Further information including a more detailed timeline is included in section 10.

Ministerial foreword

This government’s central mission to level up the whole of the United Kingdom is about many things.

It is about levelling up opportunity and prosperity and overcoming deep-seated geographical inequalities that have held us back for too long.

It is also, fundamentally, about levelling up people’s pride in the places they love and seeing that reflected back in empowered local leaders and communities, a stronger social fabric and better life chances.

This is our vision and ambition for the new £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which succeeds the old EU structural funds. This money will go straight to local places right across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to invest in three local priorities; communities and place, support for local businesses and people and skills.

All places have their challenges, with affluence and deprivation often coexisting. In recognition of this, the UKSPF amounts to a predictable, long-term funding stream which local leaders are free to use as they see fit to unleash their unique potential. They can focus on what works best for their communities, including in new and innovative combinations, unshackled by previous EU restrictions.

This is a new approach to investment and the empowerment of local communities that I am confident will make a real difference on the ground and change lives. The next step is for each place to work with the private sector, civil society and others, as well as the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to develop a plan. This should set out how they will target their funding on local priorities, against measurable goals. Once this is in place they can unlock three years of UKSPF investment.

I am excited to see the creative, ambitious choices that communities make as they level up and take charge of their destinies. And I look forward to working with leaders and communities right across the UK to ensure they succeed.

Part 1

1. Introduction

1.1 What is the UK Shared Prosperity Fund?

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF or the Fund) is a central pillar of the UK government’s ambitious 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. It will help places right across the country deliver enhanced outcomes and recognises that even the most affluent parts of the UK contain pockets of deprivation and need support.

It seizes the opportunities of leaving the European Union, by investing in domestic priorities and targeting funding where it is needed most: building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training, supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances. It will reduce the levels of bureaucracy and funding spent on administration when compared with EU funds. It will enable truly local decision making and better target the priorities of places within the UK. It will lead to visible, tangible improvements to the places where people work and live, alongside investment in human capital, giving communities up and down the UK more reasons to be proud of their area.

Places will be empowered to identify and build on their own strengths and needs at a local level, focused on pride in place and increasing life chances. Local places will be able to use the Fund to complement funding such as the Levelling Up Fund, and mainstream employment and skills provision to maximise impact and simplify delivery.

The Fund's interventions will be planned and delivered by councils and mayoral authorities across England, Scotland and Wales – 'lead local authorities', working closely with local partners and the Scottish and Welsh governments.

In Scotland and Wales we want to use existing strategic geographies and local authorities to draw on the insight and expertise of local partners, including businesses, the voluntary sector and Members of Parliament to target interventions where most appropriate.

In Northern Ireland, UK government will have oversight of the Fund. We want to work closely with local partners to design a Northern Ireland investment plan. We will refine the plan in consultation with stakeholders in a way that reflects the needs of Northern Ireland's economy and society. This group could include representatives from Northern Ireland Executive Departments, local authorities, businesses and the community and voluntary sector.

2. What to use funding for

2.1 The aims of the Fund

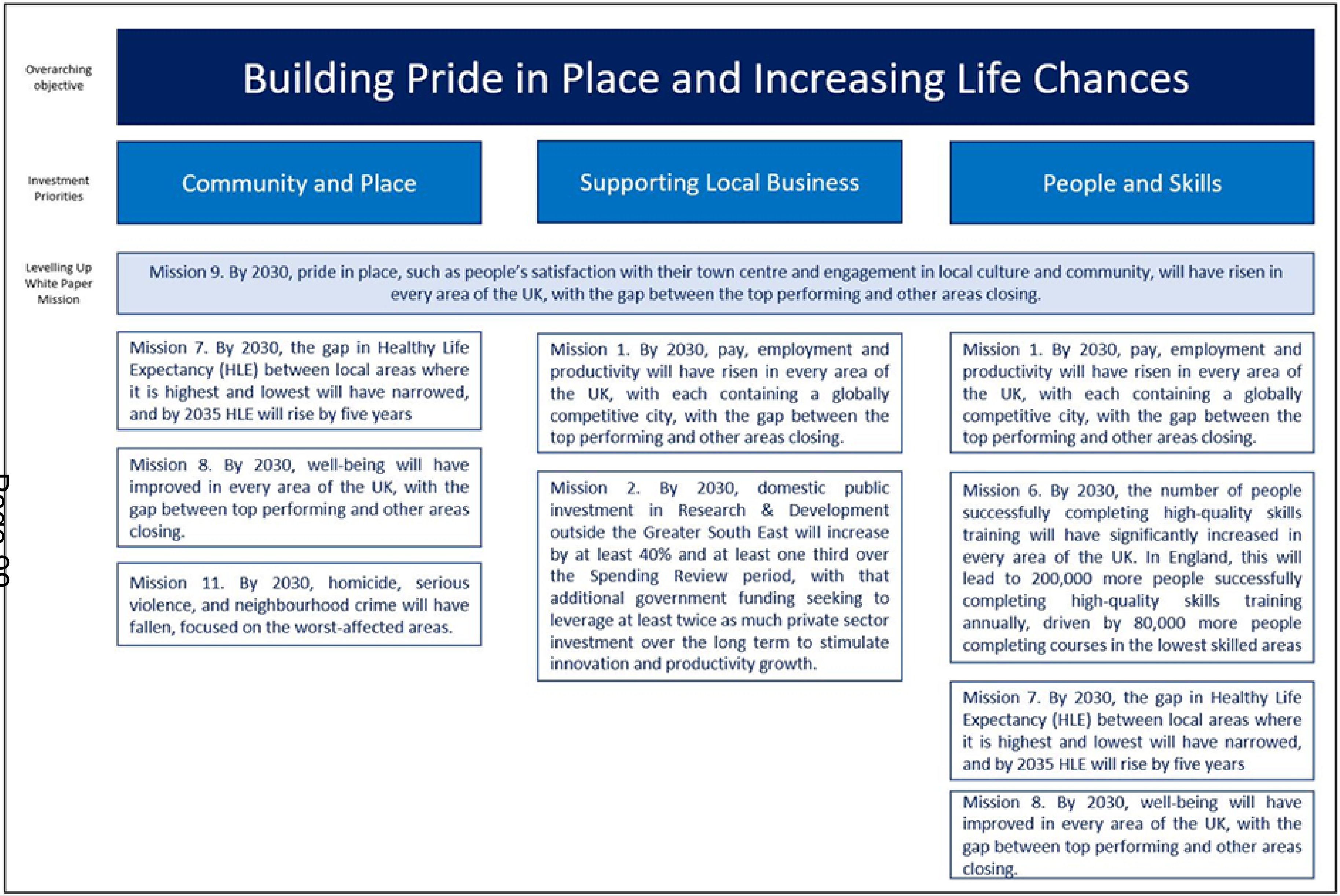
The UKSPF will support the UK government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the levelling up objectives:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with Levelling Up White Paper missions, particularly: 'By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.'

Alongside economic pull and push factors, people's lives are shaped by the social and physical fabric of their communities. The local mix of social and physical capital gives local areas their unique character and shapes where people choose to live, work and invest. Recognising the acute challenges town centres and communities have faced during the pandemic, this Fund will improve the places people live in, and support individuals and businesses. It will drive noticeable improvements that matter to local communities, foster local pride in place and increase life chances including health outcomes.

Underneath the overarching aim of building pride in place and increasing life chances, there are three UKSPF investment priorities: communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills. There are detailed objectives associated with each of these priorities which are aligned to the relevant Levelling Up White Paper mission.



UKSPF Investment Priorities and the Levelling Up Missions

Description: this picture shows the three investment priorities of UKSPF and how they relate to 7 of the 12 Levelling Up White Paper missions.

Overarching objective = Building pride in place and increasing life chances

All 3 investment priorities:

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

relate to Levelling Up White Paper Mission 9: By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

The Community and Place investment priority relates to:

Mission 9. By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Mission 7. By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years

Mission 8. By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

Mission 11. By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.

The Supporting Local Business investment priority relates to:

Mission 9. By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Mission 1. By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Mission 2. By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.

The People and Skills investment priority relates to:

Mission 9. By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Mission 1. By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Mission 6. By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

Mission 7. By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.

Mission 8. By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

The UKSPF forms part of a suite of complementary levelling up funding. It builds on the competitive Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund through long term, stable funding, allocated to all places. Its mix of revenue and capital funding can be used to support a wide range of interventions to build pride in place and improve life chances. These can complement Levelling Up Fund capital projects, strategic Freeport investments or community-level Community Ownership Fund projects, as well as existing employment and skills provision.

As we simplify the funding landscape, we will consider further opportunities to integrate funding with the UKSPF, including alignment with additional rural funding from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England.

2.2 Using the Fund to meet local needs

All places across the UK (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/delivery-geographies) will receive a conditional allocation from the UKSPF.

To access their allocation, each place will be asked to set out measurable outcomes that reflect local needs and opportunities. These should inform the interventions they wish to deliver. Places will be able to choose from investment across three investment priorities of communities and place, local business and people and skills.

Within the context of the Fund's aims, each place will have flexibility to invest across a range of activities that represent the right solutions to improve local pride in place, increase life chances, to help spread and create opportunity, and a sense of community and belonging. The balance of priorities should reflect local need and opportunity. It should build on existing national provision to create the optimal mix of support for each place. This flexible approach represents a key shift from the previous EU system.

These interventions will be set out in an investment plan submitted to the UK government for approval. The investment plan process is described in section 6.

In the plans, places will select outputs and outcomes relevant to each UKSPF investment priority. This will allow lead local authorities, local partners, the UK government, and the devolved administrations to monitor progress.

The UK government recognises that the circumstances in which the Fund will operate differ by nation. Within the context of the Fund's overall objectives, we have worked with the local government associations, the Scottish and Welsh governments and departments across the Northern Ireland Executive to inform and develop the most appropriate mix of interventions for each nation.

See a list of the interventions and indicative outputs and outcomes for each investment priority. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-interventions-outputs-and-indicators)

2.3 Communities and place

The communities and place investment priority will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.

Investment Priority: Communities and Place

Objectives

Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and access to amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.

Building resilient, healthy and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built and natural environment innovative approaches to crime prevention.

Nation specific interventions

For example: 'Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects'

Outputs

For example: 'Number of facilities supported/created'

Outcomes

For example: 'Increased users of facilities/amenities'

Aligned with the Levelling Up White Paper Missions to ***Build pride in place and increase life chances***

Communities and place – objectives, outputs and outcomes

Description: this picture shows the communities and place investment priority, its objectives, outputs and outcomes, and how they link together to contribute to the fund's overarching objective. A chain of arrows shows the logic flow.

1. Investment priority = Communities and place

2. Objectives

- Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and access to amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.
- Building resilient, healthy and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built and natural environment innovative approaches to crime prevention.

3. Nation specific interventions: For example: ‘Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects’

4. Outputs: For example ‘Number of facilities supported/created’

5. Outcomes: For example: ‘Increased users of facilities/amenities’

6. Aligned with the Levelling Up White Paper Missions to ‘Build pride in place and increase life chances’

Alongside the ‘pride in place’ overarching mission, the Levelling Up White Paper sets out three further missions that should guide interventions for this investment priority:

- By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
- By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas (with a UKSPF focus on neighbourhood crime)
- By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.

These missions, and the wider commitment to Levelling Up, have informed the objectives of this investment priority. See a list of interventions for this investment priority and indicative output and outcome indicators. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-interventions-outputs-and-indicators)

Places are encouraged to review the interventions and identify activities that would support these objectives in their area, including any interventions that are best delivered at a larger scale in collaboration with other places, or more locally. The following evidence, resources and case studies are designed to help with this.

Case Study: Community-led Sustainable Transport Solutions – Swansea, Wales

This £129,000 UK Community Renewal Fund project will strengthen sustainable transport and active travel such as car and bike-share schemes, community transport, localised delivery services, lift-sharing and support for active travel. It aims to address social isolation, promote community cohesion, enable better access to services and employment, improve health and wellbeing, and support net zero goals.

Case Study: Zero Carbon Cultural Regeneration – Inverness, Scotland

This £19 million Levelling Up Fund project combines three complementary culture-led projects that will drive the environmental, cultural and economic regeneration of Inverness. Located along deprived riverside areas in the heart of the city, they will provide transformational opportunities for residents and visitors. The projects combine culture, regeneration and renewable energy, to deliver economic benefits to local businesses and help meet zero-carbon targets.

Case Study: SMART Tottenham Project, Haringey, London – England

£500,000 from Haringey's Future High Streets Fund award focuses on reducing crime and supporting retail on Tottenham High Road. Funding an increased level of CCTV in the high street, it aims to generate behavioural change and discourage antisocial behaviour, tackling crime and making the area safer.

Case Study: The Nile and Villiers Community-Led Project – Sunderland, England

£4.7 million from the Levelling Up Fund will be invested to redevelop a brownfield site and derelict buildings into new homes, workshop/commercial space, and a revitalised historic building. These developments will catalyse the regeneration of Sunniside, one of the city centre's most deprived areas, characterised by poor-quality housing, high crime rates, derelict industry and hostels for vulnerable adults. It will create a popular, organic and residential community, changing perceptions of the area and city centre living.

Evidence and resources

The communities and place investment priority covers a wide range of local interventions, including public realm projects, community-led initiatives, and cultural and heritage projects. Analysis of approved round one Levelling Up Fund bids suggests communities and place interventions can offer good value for money. While the evidence around cause and effect of public realm and community-based interventions is limited, evaluators note they can create better places to live and do business, deliver important wider social outcomes and generate positive placemaking amenity benefits.

The What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (WWLEG) have a ‘Place’ focused policy design toolkit and evidence reviews available for area-based initiatives, public realm, sports and culture, and estate renewal interventions, amongst others, that may help inform local decisions around investment in this investment priority. It is important to note that the centre’s focus is on the extent to which those policies show evidence of impact on economic outcomes, as opposed to outcomes that measure progress towards the broader ‘pride in place’ focus of UKSPF.

One of the aims of UKSPF is to contribute to a better evidence base for communities and place interventions. Where evidence is more limited, we will work with lead authorities to robustly evaluate a sample of interventions at the local level to inform the design of future funding schemes that the UK government may wish to develop.

Places are also encouraged to consider bespoke interventions that meet the unique needs of their community and place. Lead local authorities will need to provide further detail on these – including a Theory of Change, Logical Framework or Logic Chain – in their investment plan to access their UKSPF funding.

Working with other places is strongly encouraged in the delivery of Fund interventions where it meets the needs of their place, and achieves value for money or better outcomes for local people or businesses. This includes working with places in different parts of the UK.

2.4 Supporting local business

The supporting local business investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.

Investment Priority: Supporting Local Business

Objectives

Creating jobs and boosting community cohesion, through investments that build on existing industries and institutions, and range from support for starting businesses to visible improvements to local retail, hospitality and leisure sector facilities.

Promoting networking and collaboration, through interventions that bring together businesses and partners within and across sectors to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and stimulate innovation and growth.

Increasing private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities, through targeted support for small and medium-sized businesses to undertake new-to-firm innovation, adopt productivity-enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques, and start or grow their exports.

Nation specific interventions

For example: 'Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems'

Outputs

For example: 'Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready'

Outcomes

For example: 'Number of new businesses created'

Aligned with the Levelling Up White Paper Missions to ***Build pride in place and increase life chances***

Supporting local business – objectives, outputs and outcomes

Description: this picture shows the supporting local business investment priority, its objectives, outputs and outcomes, and how they link together to contribute to the fund's overarching objective. A chain of arrows shows the logic flow.

1. Investment priority = Supporting local business

2. Objectives

- Creating jobs and boosting community cohesion, through investments that build on existing industries and institutions, and range from support for starting businesses to visible improvements to local retail, hospitality and leisure sector facilities.
- Promoting networking and collaboration, through interventions that bring together businesses and partners within and across sectors to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and stimulate innovation and growth.
- Increasing private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities, through targeted support for small and medium-sized businesses to undertake new-to-firm innovation, adopt productivity-enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques, and start or grow their exports.

3. Nation specific interventions: For example: 'Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems'

4. Outputs: For example: 'Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready'

5. Outcomes: For example: 'Number of new businesses created'

6. Aligned with the Levelling Up White Paper Missions to 'Build pride in place and increase life chances'

Alongside the 'pride in place' overarching mission, the Levelling Up White Paper sets out two further missions that should guide interventions for this investment priority:

- By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
- By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth (with a UKSPF focus on helping businesses to access innovation support).

These missions, and the wider commitment to Levelling Up, have informed the objectives of this investment priority. See a list of the interventions for this investment priority and indicative output and outcome indicators. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-interventions-outputs-and-indicators)

Places are encouraged to review the interventions and identify activities that would support these objectives in their area, including any interventions that are best delivered at a larger scale in collaboration with other places, or more locally. Places should also consider segmenting their business population, focusing on specific interventions that will best meet local business need. This can be informed by early engagement with local business representatives. The following evidence, resources and case studies are designed to help with this.

Case Study: Tees Valley Business Challenge, England

This £826,000 Community Renewal Fund project is designed to accelerate Small and Medium Enterprises' development of market-led solutions to innovation challenges and supply chain opportunities relevant to local economic priorities. It will strengthen innovation maturity in the Tees Valley economy, building resilience for post-Covid economic recovery and unlocking growth potential.

Case Study: Barrow in Furness Town Centre, England

This £16 million Levelling Up Fund project will deliver a package of schemes to modernise and diversify the market hall and its offer, create of a new arrival point and improve in links to the main retail area. Accessibility improvements will connect the town areas, together with investment in sustainable travel infrastructure, combining to boost business start-ups and the local economy.

Evidence and resources

The What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (WWLEG) have found that business advice interventions had a positive impact on at least one firm outcome in a little over half of the schemes evaluated. The Business Productivity Review call for evidence provides a summary of studies examining the impact of business support activities[footnote 1].

The Office of National Statistics has conducted research that found a 1% increase in management score was associated with a corresponding 10% increase in productivity[footnote 2]. Further research has also found that firms that invest in R&D have 13% higher productivity than those who do not[footnote 3]. Social returns from R&D investment, are typically 2 to 3 times larger than private returns[footnote 4].

The What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth have a 'Business' focused policy design toolkit and evidence reviews available for access to finance, apprenticeships, business advice and innovation interventions, amongst others, that may help inform local decisions around investment in this investment priority and, if you decide to invest, the policy design questions that you should ask yourself to maximise local growth impacts. Note that local growth impacts are the focus of the WWLEG, and we know much less about the impact of these types of interventions on delivering pride in place or social outcomes. The OECD (https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/industry-and-services/oecd-studies-on-smes-and-entrepreneurship_20780990) and Enterprise Research Centre (https://www.enterpriseresearch.ac.uk/) are also useful resources that local places should consider.

One of the aims of UKSPF is to contribute to a better evidence base for supporting local business support interventions. Where evidence is more limited, we will work with lead authorities to robustly evaluate a sample of interventions at the local level to inform the design of future funding schemes that the UK government may wish to develop.

Places are also encouraged to consider bespoke interventions that meet the unique needs of their community and place. Lead local authorities will need to provide further detail on these – including a Theory of Change, Logical Framework or Logic Chain – in their investment plan to access their funding.

Working with other places is strongly encouraged in the delivery of Fund interventions where it meets the needs of their place and achieves value for money or better outcomes for local people or businesses. This includes working with places in different parts of the UK.

2.5 People and skills

Through the people and skills investment priority, places can use their funding to help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.

Investment Priority: People and Skills

Objectives

Boosting core skills and support adults to progress in work, by targeting adults with no or low level qualifications and skills in maths, and upskill the working population, yielding personal and societal economic impact, and by encouraging innovative approaches to reducing adult learning barriers (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland only. In England, this is delivered through the Department for Education's Multiply programme).

Reducing levels of economic inactivity through investment in bespoke intensive life and employment support tailored to local need. Investment should facilitate the join-up of mainstream provision and local services within an area for participants, through the use of one-to-one keyworker support, improving employment outcomes for specific cohorts who face labour market barriers.

Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support including access to basic skills.

Supporting local areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work, and supplement local adult skills provision e.g. by providing additional volumes; delivering provision through wider range of routes or enabling more intensive/innovative provision, both qualification based and non-qualification based. This should be supplementary to provision available through national employment and skills programmes.

Nation specific interventions

For example: 'Employment support for economically inactive people'

Outputs

For example: 'Number of people supported to engage in job-searching'

Outcomes

For example: 'Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support'

Aligned with the Levelling Up White Paper Missions to *Build pride in place and increase life chances*

People and skills – objectives, outputs and outcomes

Description: this picture shows the people and skills investment priority, its objectives, outputs and outcomes, and how they link together to contribute to the fund's overarching objective. A chain of arrows shows the logic flow.

1. Investment priority = People and skills

2. Objectives

- Boosting core skills and support adults to progress in work, by targeting adults with no or low level qualifications and skills in maths, and upskill the working population, yielding personal and societal economic impact, and by encouraging innovative approaches to reducing adult learning barriers (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland only. In England, this is delivered through the Department for Education's Multiply programme).
- Reducing levels of economic inactivity through investment in bespoke intensive life and employment support tailored to local need. Investment should facilitate the join-up of mainstream provision and local services within an area for participants, through the use of one-to-one keyworker support, improving employment outcomes for specific cohorts who face labour market barriers.
- Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support including access to basic skills.
- Supporting local areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work, and supplement local adult skills provision e.g. by providing additional volumes; delivering provision through wider range of routes or enabling more intensive/innovative provision, both qualification based and non-qualification based. This should be supplementary to provision available through national employment and skills programmes.

3. Nation specific interventions: For example: 'Employment support for economically inactive people'

4. Outputs: For example: 'Number of people supported to engage in job-searching'

5. Outcomes: For example: 'Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support'

6. Aligned with the Levelling Up White Paper Missions to 'Build pride in place and increase life chances'

Alongside the 'pride in place' overarching mission, the Levelling Up White Paper sets out four further missions that should guide interventions for this investment priority:

- By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
- By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
- By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

- By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.

These missions, and the wider commitment to Levelling Up, have informed the objectives of this investment priority. UKSPF offers places the option to fund local people and skills support that will complement, not duplicate, mainstream provision.

This investment priority has two primary elements, employment support for economically inactive people (benefit and non-benefit claimants) [footnote 5] and funding skills provision to provide people with the skills needed to progress in life and work, including supporting local areas to fund local skills needs. Multiply will include these cohorts but with a specific focus on numeracy. It will be targeted at those aged 19 and over who have not previously attained a GCSE Grade 4/C, SCQF Level 5 or higher maths qualification or equivalent.

See a list of the interventions for this investment priority and indicative output and outcome indicators. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-interventions-outputs-and-indicators)

For Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, see information on Multiply (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/multiply-in-scotland-wales-and-northern-ireland). Each place in England should read the Multiply prospectus (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multiply-funding-available-to-improve-numeracy-skills) published by the Department for Education. They should take account of the aims, objectives and priorities of Multiply when developing local plans for people and skills interventions.

In England, places will be able to select people and skills interventions from 2024-2025 onwards, or earlier where they meet the voluntary sector considerations outlined here (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-interventions-outputs-and-indicators).

In recognition of their specific circumstances, places in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be able to select interventions from the people and skills investment priority from 2022-2023.

Places are encouraged to review the interventions and identify activities that would support these objectives in their area, including any interventions that are best delivered at a larger scale in collaboration with other places, or more locally. The following evidence, resources and case studies are designed to help with this.

Case Study: BE BEST – Ards and North Down, Northern Ireland

This £511,000 Community Renewal Fund project offers a menu of training opportunities, including access to basic skills, employability support, mentoring and work placements. Investing in people helps them to secure new and better jobs, and local businesses to meet workforce needs. Leadership, management and entrepreneurship support is also available for businesses which encourages cross sectoral community initiatives, increasing the local skills base for employers, address local business and innovation needs through digital collaboration.

Case Study: 50+ employment support, Greater Manchester, England

As part of its devolution deal, Greater Manchester is working with DWP and the Centre for Ageing Better to pilot localised support to bring inactive people between 50 and State Pension age back into work.

Its co-creation and prototyping phase was carried out from July 2020 to January 2022. It identified a series of feasible approaches including employment support; personal budgets; meaningful, paid work placements; self-guided support to identify transferable skills and explore career options with optional coaching (Reach); and a person-centred approach to commissioning employment support. Two of these approaches, Reach and person-centred procurement, will be piloted in a second phase of work.

Case Study: Individual Placement and Support (IPS) to people with common mental and/or physical health conditions – West Midlands, South Yorkshire and North Wales

IPS is a well evidenced initiative for individuals with severe mental illness that provides intensive, individual support to help people find suitable employment and in-work support. DWP has been testing whether it could also work embedded in primary healthcare teams and supporting individuals with more common conditions. This integrates employment specialists within healthcare teams with referrals made by healthcare professionals. 30% of participants are expected to find a job as a result. The trials have forged stronger relationships between local government and the healthcare system, and given healthcare professionals confidence to have employment related conversations with patients. It continues to be delivered to around 3,500 individuals in the West Midlands, South Yorkshire and North Wales.

Evidence and resources

A report examining the 2007-13 England European Social Fund programme found that increasing the quantity and range of support available to participants helped them to find employment and gain qualifications[footnote 6]. It provides insight into the added value of using a keyworker model, bringing together a range of local services, to support economically inactive people move towards employment. A study examining the economic returns to publicly funded vocational qualifications in England found these generate strong returns[footnote 7].

The What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (WWLEG) found that employment training programmes had a positive impact on wages and employment in around half of evaluations reviewed. They also noted that in-firm or on-the-job programmes tend to be particularly effective and involving employers in the design of courses, and ensuring activities mirror actual jobs are further ways to drive effectiveness.

WWLEG have a ‘People’ focused policy design toolkit and evidence reviews available for apprenticeships and employment training, amongst others, that may help inform local decisions around investment in this investment priority and, if you decide to invest, the policy design questions that you should ask yourself to maximise local growth impacts. European Social Fund project case studies also provide an overview of the types of support currently available. Note that local growth impacts are the focus of the WWLEG, and that people and skills interventions will also have important social outcomes.

One of the aims of UKSPF is to contribute to a better evidence base for pride in place interventions. Where evidence is more limited, we will work with lead authorities to robustly evaluate a sample of interventions at the local level to inform the design of future funding schemes that the UK Government may wish to develop. Places are also encouraged to consider bespoke interventions that meet the unique needs of their community and place. Lead local authorities will need to provide further detail on these – including a Theory of Change, Logical Framework or Logic Chain – in their investment plan to access their funding.

Working with other places is strongly encouraged in the delivery of Fund interventions where it meets the needs of the place, and achieves value for money or better outcomes for local people. In particular, we strongly encourage lead local authorities to work with other places (such as neighbouring district, county or unitary authorities) to agree and commission people and skills activity over larger geographies. This includes working with places in different parts of the UK.

2.6 Other policies or plans to take into account

Interventions supported by UKSPF will need to consider other local and national policies and priorities – including those of the Scottish and Welsh governments and departments across the Northern Ireland Executive where relevant. These include:

- Investment made under this Fund should demonstrate the extent of contribution to net zero and nature recovery (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy) objectives, including the UK’s legal commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, wider environmental considerations, such as resilience to natural hazards and the 25 Year Environment Plan (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan/25-year-environment-plan-our-targets-at-a-glance) commitments, and any specific commitments in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.
- To support green growth, places should also consider how projects can work with the natural environment to achieve project objectives, and – at a minimum – consider the project’s impact on our natural assets and nature. For further information on how to take these considerations into account, see the Enabling a Natural Capital Approach (ENCA) resources (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/enabling-a-natural-capital-approach-enca).

Each place in Scotland and Wales should involve the Scottish and Welsh governments, and the Offices of the Secretary of State for Scotland and Wales, respectively, to identify links to relevant national policies and priorities that should be considered in the preparation of investment plans. The UK government will work with partners to also consider the strategies and funding of the Northern Ireland Executive.

As a minimum, this should include:

- the Northern Ireland Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework 2021
- the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, or
- the Welsh Framework for Regional Investment

Public bodies are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty in all their decision-making and should ensure that they meet these obligations when taking decisions on UKSPF.

Each place should take account of the wider funding landscape, and in particular, complementary interventions at UK, national or local level. This will ensure that funding is effectively targeted and delivered efficiently. As a minimum, lead local authorities (and Northern Ireland partners) should consider alignment with:

- The Levelling Up Fund (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-round-2-prospectus/levelling-up-fund-round-2-prospectus) which has now launched a second round competition.
- The Community Ownership Fund which will launch a further round in the spring (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-levelling-up-and-community-investments#the-community-ownership-fund).
- Freeports (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/freeports) where relevant.
- Other digital infrastructure delivery plans as part of Project Gigabit. For digital infrastructure/connectivity interventions supporting community facilities, this investment should deliver gigabit-capable infrastructure and be aligned with the procurements and other intervention types delivered by that programme.
- National employment support provided through Jobcentre Plus, its contracted providers or equivalents in Northern Ireland. Local authorities should work with local Department for Work and Pensions representatives to build an understanding of this provision[footnote 8].
- Existing adult skills provision in each nation, which should not be displaced or duplicated.
- European structural fund provision, which continues until 2023 in some areas.
- Funding for rural areas where relevant.
- Other funding sources from the devolved administrations.

We would strongly encourage lead local authorities to engage widely with local partners – including current deliverers of EU structural fund interventions and managing authorities, arms-length bodies of government, neighbouring local authorities, voluntary and community representatives, civil society organisations higher and further education and business representative and strategic bodies. This will ensure that local investment plans complement and do not duplicate other provision and that interventions are delivered at the appropriate scale.

3. Funding places will receive

3.1 Funding for each place

Every place in the UK has been allocated a share of the UKSPF, with even the smallest places receiving at least £1 million. This recognises that even the most affluent parts of the UK contain pockets of deprivation and need support. It will help people access opportunity in places in need, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities, and support people who are economically inactive or have skills needs that cannot be meet through mainstream provision.

As set out at Spending Review 2021, the Fund is worth £2.6 billion over the period to 2024-25. The Fund will ramp up to £1.5 billion in 2024-25, including Multiply.

Funding is confirmed for three financial years – £400 million for 2022-23, £700 million for 2023-24 and £1.5 billion for 2024-25, providing predictable baseline local growth funding.

Allocations for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are available here, including Multiply allocations. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/ukspf-allocations) £179 million will be managed centrally by the Department for Education for a UK-wide digital platform for adult numeracy, as well as a programme of evaluation.

The local split of capital and revenue for the Fund in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland is as follows:

Year	Core UKSPF: revenue	Core UKSPF: capital	Local multiply: revenue
2022-23	89.6%	10.4%	100%
2023-24	87.5%	12.5%	100%
2024-25	82.1%	17.9%	100%

The local split of capital and revenue for the Fund in England is as follows:

Year	Core UKSPF: revenue	Core UKSPF: capital	Local multiply: revenue

2022-23	90%	10%	100%
2023-24	87%	13%	100%
2024-25	80%	20%	100%

Each place's allocation will comprise both revenue and capital funding. Lead local authorities should set out their preferred mix of funding in their investment plan. Note - each place must identify a minimum percentage of capital funding, each year in line with the overall split of revenue and capital at UKSPF level set out in the above tables.

3.2 How we decided the allocations

We have made allocations to each nation to ensure a real-terms match of EU structural funds.

For England, we have adopted a blended approach to allocate funding to each place. This ensures that all places get an allocation that allows for significant continuity with EU structural funds:

- within the continuity model that maintains EU structural fund distributions, 70% is allocated on a per capita basis, within each region based on Local Authority population size
- 30% of the allocation uses the same needs-based index previously used to identify UK Community Renewal Fund priority places, namely:
  - Productivity
  - Household income
  - Skills
  - Productivity -Places with lower population density

For Scotland, taking into account the remote nature of parts of the country and the special needs of the Highlands and Islands, we have adapted this approach in consultation with local stakeholders:

- 60% of funding is allocated on a per capita basis across Scotland.
- 30% of the allocation uses the same needs-based index previously used to identify UK Community Renewal Fund priority places.
- 10% are allocated using the lower population density measure contained within the UK Community Renewal Fund, recognising the higher cost of delivering services in rural areas and the unique rurality of some Scottish authorities and island communities.

For Wales, we have adapted our allocation approach following engagement with partners to the following:

- 40% of funding is allocated on a per capita basis across Wales.
- 30% of the allocation uses the same needs-based index previously used to identify UK Community Renewal Fund priority places.
- 30% are allocated using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

For Northern Ireland, recognising the different role local authorities play there compared to England, Scotland and Wales, we are not allocating below the Northern Ireland level. Further detail on the delivery approach in Northern Ireland is set out below.

A methodological note (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-allocations-methodology) that sets this out in more detail is available. The full model will be published in May 2022.

4. How the Fund will be delivered

4.1 Overview

The UKSPF is establishing new relationships between the UK government, devolved administrations, local government and local partners across the UK. We are putting people that know their places best, front and centre in shaping decisions.

Working to a UK-wide framework published by the UK government, local partners will influence the Fund through development and delivery of an investment plan for each place. This represents a fundamental shift in responsibility compared with the European structural funds that the Fund succeeds.

The Fund will operate UK-wide and use the financial assistance powers in the UK Internal Market Act 2020 to deliver funding to places across the UK.

In addition to the devolved administrations' existing powers, this allows the UK government to complement and strengthen the support given to local people, businesses and communities in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, as well as England. We have worked with each of the devolved administrations to develop interventions that follow the fund's principles of local autonomy while recognising the different policy and funding landscapes of each nation.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will oversee the Fund at UK level, working with other departments and in particular when bespoke interventions are proposed.

The Department for Education will lead delivery of the Multiply element of the Fund in England, a UK-wide digital platform for adult numeracy, as well as a programme of evaluation, including randomised control trials, to build the evidence of what works. It will work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, lead local authorities and the devolved administrations on Multiply delivery in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It will play a key role in relation to wider skills interventions, working with local partners.

Local areas will also be expected to work closely with Department for Work and Pensions or devolved administrations where relevant in the planning and delivery of employment interventions to ensure alignment with mainstream employment provision.

4.2 The role of lead local authorities

In England, Scotland and Wales, local government is being given responsibility for developing an investment plan for approval by the UK government, and for delivery of the Fund thereafter. This recognises that pride in place and increasing life chances can be best achieved by delivery close to local people and businesses; by authorities that understand each place’s unique local context and identity, and with established governance.

Lead local authorities will receive an area’s allocation to manage, including assessing and approving applications, processing payments and day-to-day monitoring.

Where the Fund operates over a strategic geography (for example, places in Scotland and Wales or the mayoral combined authorities), all allocations will be aggregated at the strategic geography level, including the 4% for administration. The lead authority for the strategic geography will have overall accountability for the funding and how the Fund operates. Where specific local authorities within the strategic geography take lead responsibility for a particular UKSPF intervention or policy for the wider geography, lead authorities can allocate a proportion of their administration budget to them.

Individual local authorities or other public bodies within the strategic geography may take lead responsibility for a particular UKSPF intervention or policy, either delivered locally or for the wider geography, where this reflects the right approach to local needs. While the lead local authority would retain overall responsibility, they can allocate a proportion of their administration budget to individual authorities or bodies in these circumstances.

Lead local authorities can determine, with partners, the most appropriate scale for each intervention – for example, regional, local or through collaboration with other places or bodies to deliver specific interventions. This can include working with places in different parts of the UK. This should consider value for money, effectiveness and current arrangements.

Lead local authorities for each area will have flexibility over how they deliver the Fund. They may wish to use a mix of competitions for grant funding (which is the default approach set out in Cabinet Office Grants Standards (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grants-standards)), procurement, commissioning or deliver some activity through in-house teams. For example, some community level interventions may require a commissioning or in-house approach, recognising that competitions for grant may create barriers to participation in left behind communities.

Lead local authorities should also design their project selection and contracting processes so they have mechanisms to recover funding where beneficiaries do not comply with fund parameters, UK law or any local requirements.

We will ask each lead local authority to notify us of any current or emerging operational or financial risks, or issues, and any contingency measures put in place. This will be requested in each place's investment plan and in each report thereafter. This will help us determine the level of support we may provide, and/or enhanced monitoring that we may require. This may also result in reduced delegation of the fund in the affected area.

In Northern Ireland, the UK government will work with local partners to design a Northern Ireland investment plan. This plan will be used by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who will have oversight of delivery. This reflects the distinct and different role local government plays in Northern Ireland.

4.3 Collaboration with other places

Each place has a range of economic and societal relationships with other places across the UK, including their neighbours and places with common needs and opportunities.

We expect a separate investment plan for each delivery geography (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/delivery-geographies) (whether this is a strategic geography, or a single district council area). However, working with other places is strongly encouraged in the delivery of Fund interventions where it meets the needs of their place, and achieves value for money or better outcomes for local people or businesses. This could take the form of national or regional interventions, or projects that deliver across places either side of national boundaries in the UK with strong economic and social ties.

Delivering interventions at the national or regional scale might be beneficial when seeking to deliver larger, strategic projects, when economies of scale exist that would result in higher value for money or better outcomes for local people and businesses, or where it would reduce the burden or complexity of commissioning. It could also involve places at opposite ends of the UK with similar thematic needs working together on common interventions to achieve scale. Or, more local collaboration between councils and their neighbours.

In particular, we strongly encourage lead local authorities to work with other authorities (district, county or unitary councils where relevant) to agree and commission people and skills activity, or business support activity over a larger scale representative of the full local labour market or business base. Lead local authorities will be asked to set out their approach in their investment plan.

In addition, where the Fund is operating over a strategic geography, lead local authorities must engage with their constituent authorities and other local partners to ensure that the needs of places within the strategic geography can be effectively addressed.

4.4 Delivery arrangements across the UK

4.4.1 England

In England, the Fund will primarily operate over the strategic geographies of the Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA), and district councils or unitary authorities elsewhere. These are the lead local authorities for UKSPF purposes. See Delivery geographies (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/delivery-geographies).

Outside of MCAs and the GLA, Multiply will be delivered at the upper-tier or unitary level in England. Multiply local authorities in England (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1068822/Multiply_Investment_Prospectus.pdf) should set out plans for delivery of adult numeracy support in a separate plan submitted to the Department for Education.

Lead local authorities for either Multiply or core UKSPF should work closely together to ensure that each element of the Fund works coherently, achieves good value and is as aligned as possible. Lead local authorities should take account of the Adult Education Budget and remaining European Social Fund investments, which operate at larger geographies and engage with relevant employment and skills bodies and stakeholders, including Jobcentre Plus and Skills Advisory Panels, even where the decision is taken not to deliver interventions at the strategic scale.

Unitarisation

Since publication of the pre-launch guidance, Parliament has agreed legislation to restructure local government in North Yorkshire, Somerset and Cumbria. This means we need to update the delivery arrangements for these areas.

In each of North Yorkshire and Somerset, a single new unitary council will – from 1 April 2023 – replace all the principal councils in these areas. Before then, North Yorkshire and Somerset county councils will be ‘continuing authorities’; these councils will have the right to sign off all new district council investment, including UKSPF. As a result, we now require a county-wide plan for each of North Yorkshire and Somerset. The county councils and district councils are expected to work closely to target interventions according to local need, and in particular ensure that communities and place investments reach all parts of the county areas.

In Cumbria, two new unitary councils will – from 1 April 2023 – replace all the principal councils in these areas. Consent of these two new unitary authorities – Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council, even in shadow form, will be needed for new district council investment, including UKSPF. As they will only exist in shadow form until April 2023, individual plans for each of Cumbria’s district council areas are still needed. We expect close collaboration between districts leading investment plans and the shadow unitary councils. This should include some joint elements of each district plan, notably delivery arrangements, and consent by the shadow unitary authorities prior to submission. From 1 April 2023 the district areas are abolished. At this point, we expect the relevant district investment plans to be merged into plans for each new council area.

The Devolution Mission

The Levelling Up White Paper sets out a devolution mission for England: By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

We expect delivery responsibility for the Fund to align with these deals in due course. To provide funding and delivery certainty for all local partners, the delivery arrangements set out in this prospectus will continue until March 2025

In the meantime, each district or unitary council is expected to produce and deliver a standalone investment plan for its place. As noted above, working with other places is strongly encouraged in the delivery of Fund interventions where it meets the needs of their place, and achieves value for money or better outcomes for local people or businesses. This can include working across wider county or other geographies. Any such plans should be identified in the place's local investment plan.

In particular, we strongly encourage lead local authorities to work with other district, county or unitary authorities to agree and commission people and skills activity or business support where relevant.

4.4.2 Scotland and Wales

The partnerships that deliver City and Growth Deals in Scotland and Wales are strong examples of collaboration. Supported by the UK government and devolved administrations, the deals have empowered local leaders and partners to come together to drive growth and productivity across their region.

Devolved administrations have also established, or are in the process of establishing, complementary structures to promote partnership working over strategic geographies. These include Corporate Joint Committees in Wales and Regional Economic Partnerships in Scotland. The UK government wants to build on this approach and promote existing partnership working across both Scotland and Wales.

Local authorities across each strategic geography have been invited to collaborate in developing investment plans and delivering the Fund. This builds on the strong support for a regional approach from local partners and the Scottish and Welsh governments.

In Scotland, we support delivery through Regional Economic Partnerships where this is the preference of local areas. These regional geographies build on the successful City and Regional Growth Deal partnerships.

We intend to work with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government to facilitate collaborative work across these Regional Economic Partnership geographies. This recognises that the final composition of some partnerships is still to be determined, and that some authorities want to cooperate with partners in multiple directions. Under such arrangements, the lead local authority for each partnership will submit a single investment plan.

In Wales, we support delivery across the four regional strategic geographies which are co-terminous with strategic geographies covering City and Growth Deal areas. We want to work with the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association to support work across the four existing geographies and develop comprehensive accountable arrangements to administer the Fund in time for submission of each place's investment plan.

4.4.3 Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will manage delivery at Northern Ireland scale.

To do this effectively we want to work with local partners to design an investment plan. We will refine the plan in consultation with stakeholders in a way that reflects the needs of Northern Ireland's economy and society. This group could include representatives from Northern Ireland Executive Departments, local authorities, businesses and the voluntary sector. This will forge new ways of working and opportunities across Northern Ireland.

The development of the single Northern Ireland investment plan and its delivery will create roles for partners across each of Northern Ireland's City and Growth Deal geographies. It will maximise local intelligence, insight and knowledge, in recognition of the opportunities and challenges unique to Northern Ireland and the distinct and different role local authorities play there.

In order to support the delivery of interventions at their most appropriate level, we anticipate that there will be a varied approach to market in Northern Ireland. For example, it could involve local project selection across City and Growth deal areas or interventions might be delivered at a Northern Ireland wide level. The approach to delivery will be guided by the final version of the UKSPF plan for Northern Ireland.

4.5 Supporting lead local authorities to deliver

Preparing the investment plan

We are making £20,000 available per lead local authority or £40,000 for each Mayoral Combined Authority and the Greater London Authority in England to undertake initial preparatory work for the Fund, including developing their local investment plan for submission in the summer.

In Scotland and Wales, the lead local authority for each strategic geography will receive £40,000. This reflects the extra work required to establish new delivery and governance arrangements in these areas.

This funding is in addition to each place's allocation, and will be paid on sign-off of each place's plan.

Day-to-day Fund administration

We know that local government will require support to administer the Fund. Each lead local authority in England, Scotland and Wales will be able to use up to 4% of their allocation by default to undertake necessary Fund administration, such as project assessment, contracting, monitoring and evaluation and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

Setting up the Fund may need a larger administration budget in the first year than in later years. This is acceptable so long as the percentage is not exceeded overall.

Larger authorities, and those with bigger Fund allocations will not require a full 4%. In these cases, a smaller amount can be used, with the balance being used to support Fund interventions.

By exception, smaller local authorities, those with smaller Fund allocations or strategic geographies in Scotland and Wales may need to use more than 4% of their allocation to successfully administer the Fund. Where this applies, the lead local authority must set out a case for a higher percentage in their investment plan. This request will be assessed and where approved monitored, to ensure that the benefits of a higher administrative budget are being secured.

Longer-term capability support

We are also exploring the need for additional capability support for local government and other partners to maximise the opportunities that the Fund affords.

To help us understand this need better, we are asking lead local authorities to answer specific questions on the experience and capability of their teams, as part of their investment plan.

We will explore working with experienced local authorities, government and sectoral partners in developing peer networks that can help share good practice. Lead local authorities interested in leading networks may use part of their admin allocation to support this work.

5. Who should be involved in the Fund

5.1 Local partnership groups

Throughout the UK, access to local insight and expertise is essential for each place to identify and address need and opportunity, and respond with the right solutions for each place. Comprehensive and balanced local partnerships will be a core component of how the Fund is administered locally.

Lead local authorities (or the UK government in collaboration with Northern Ireland partners) are tasked with working with a diverse range of local and regional stakeholders, civil society organisations, employer bodies responsible for identifying local skills plans, and businesses or business representative groups to achieve Fund outcomes in their areas.

Local partners should support lead local authorities for each place to develop an investment plan. Once plans are approved, partners should be asked to provide advice on strategic fit and deliverability – taking care to avoid conflicts of interest. This will ensure that Fund investments complement other activities in the area and meets Fund and local objectives.

The local partnership will be convened by the lead local authority (or UK government in collaboration with Northern Ireland partners). In circumstances where a place already has a group that could be used, then the group can be designated for this Fund’s purposes, taking care to ensure that the panel is fully representative and that its terms of reference meet the Fund’s needs.

The list below is a guide for the types of groups that should be represented on the local partnership groups. The precise composition will be for each place to determine, based on their needs:

- Representatives from the lead local authority (this may also include neighbouring authorities or constituent authorities where relevant and to maximise alignment)
- Local businesses and investors (large employers and small and medium sized employers)
- Business support providers or representatives, including sectoral representatives relevant to the place (for example – cluster bodies, tourism organisations)
- Local partnership boards and strategic bodies where relevant (for example, Local Enterprise Partnerships or Local Skills Improvement Partnerships in England, City and Growth Deal partners in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)
- Regional representatives of arms-length bodies of government where appropriate
- Prominent local community & faith organisations
- Voluntary, sector social enterprise and civil society organisations, including Third Sector Interface Groups in Scotland
- Rural representatives unless there are no rural communities within the area
- Education and skills providers – for example higher education institutions and further education colleges, adult learning providers
- Employment experts and providers – for example Jobcentre Plus representatives and employment related service providers
- Nature, environmental or associated representatives
- Public health representatives
- Police and crime representatives (such as Police and Crime Commissioners where relevant)
- Officials of devolved administrations or their agencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Members of Parliament where appropriate (explained in section 5.2 below)

Representatives of the UK government may also attend and can provide access to specific expertise where this is needed.

5.2 The role of Members of Parliament in the Fund

Members of the UK Parliament play an important role in representing the views of their constituents, working collaboratively with local authorities and other local partners to work for the good of local places. They should be closely engaged in the design and delivery of the Fund. In most cases, all MPs in the area should be invited to join the local partnership group.

Where an authority or strategic geography is so large that this is impractical (in places like London and Northern Ireland), lead local authorities should invite all MPs for the place to a convened MP engagement group, and ensure their views are represented on the local partnership group.

They should provide an advisory role to lead local authorities, reviewing the investment plan prior to submission to UK government for sign-off. Each plan will need to detail the MPs involved in the local partnership group and whether each are supportive of the final plan submitted to the UK government for consideration.

We expect lead local authorities to demonstrate that they have actively reached out to MPs and other partners. The investment plan needs to demonstrate local consensus for the plan. If it does not, ministers reserve the right to defer sign off until broad consensus is secured. Failure of one or more MPs to agree would not prevent consideration of the investment plan.

Lead local authorities are also encouraged to engage proactively and constructively with MPs on a periodic basis, post investment plan sign-off – including through a regular reviews and meetings of the partnership group in its delivery phase.

Members of the Scottish Parliament, Members of the Senedd and Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly should also be engaged where relevant.

5.3 The role of the devolved administrations

Recognising that levelling up is a programme for the whole of the United Kingdom, the UKSPF will be delivered UK-wide, using our powers in the UK Internal Market Act. It is a priority of the Fund to deliver effective investment to all parts of the UK, to maximise benefits for citizens and the economy.

We know we share these goals with the devolved administrations and have engaged with each government on the design and delivery of this Fund ahead of publication. Our engagement and collaboration will not end here. Throughout the lifetime of UKSPF we want local places to work with the grain of devolved administrations' activity and deliver better outcomes for communities across the UK in partnership with them. This should mean plans are designed mindful of ensuring better value for money, avoidance of duplication so we can deliver our shared objectives.

To enable this, the devolved administrations will take on a number of roles and responsibilities in the Fund. The Scottish and Welsh governments and the Northern Ireland Executive have been invited to be part of a UK wide ministerial forum that will support delivery of the Fund. In Scotland and Wales we want each government to work with their strategic geographies on the development of investment plans and to attend all local partnership groups in a full way.

5.4 The role of the UK government

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will be accountable for the overall implementation of the fund, working in partnership with a range of UK government departments.

The Department for Education will sign off Multiply investment plans in England.

Where relevant, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will seek advice from the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education on the implementation of the people and skills investment priority, and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for the supporting local business investment priority.

6. How to write an investment plan

6.1 Investment plans

In order to access UKSPF funding, lead local authorities are being asked to complete an investment plan, setting out how they intend to use and deliver the funding. UKSPF has been designed to empower local leaders and communities to deliver locally-identified priorities and the investment plan process has been designed with this in mind.

Lead local authorities will be asked to develop their investment plan in conjunction with local stakeholders. Places should establish or designate a local partnership group to consult when developing their investment plan. Plans will then need to be agreed by both the lead local authority and by UK government to unlock the allocations.

In Scotland and Wales, we want each strategic geography to involve the Scottish and Welsh governments, and the Offices of the Secretary of State for Scotland and Wales respectively, in the preparation of their investment plans.

In Northern Ireland, the UK government will work with local partners to design a Northern Ireland investment plan. This plan will be used by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who will have oversight of delivery; this reflects the distinct and different role local government plays in Northern Ireland.

6.2 Investment plan questions

The investment plans will feature three broad stages:

1. Local context: an opportunity for places to set out their local evidence of opportunities and challenges through the lens of the three investment priorities for UKSPF.

2. Selection of outcomes and interventions: where places will identify the outcomes they wish to target based on local context, and the interventions they wish to prioritise, under each investment priority, from the menu of options. These should be clearly linked to local opportunities and challenges.

3. Delivery: this will represent the most detailed stage of the investment plans and is broken down into the following:

a. Approach to delivery and governance: where places outline the structures and processes that will support the delivery of their chosen interventions. We will also expect places to set out the engagement they have undertaken as part of the development of their Plan, including their engagement with MPs.

In this section we will also ask places to set out how they intend to collaborate with other places in the delivery of specific interventions – for example with neighbouring places, or with places across the UK with common needs or challenges.

b. Expenditure and deliverables: detailing what places want to deliver with their investment plan, including the spend profile for the three years of the fund as well as outputs and outcomes figures, and where places have already identified specific projects they wish to fund under each of the investment priorities.

As part of these spend and indicator profiles, lead local authorities will be asked to detail their intended budgets at priority and intervention level. UK government will use this information as part of the assessment and as initial performance management, along with additional performance management information set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (or Grant Funding Agreement in Northern Ireland).

Please note – expenditure profiles must be accurate and deliverable. Each place must set out a minimum amount of capital funding to invest each year in their investment plan, which will be monitored. Where small authorities have smaller overall allocations we will consider requests for flexibility. We reserve the right to withhold or delay payment from 2023-24 onwards where this does not occur.

c. Capability and resource: to allow places to outline the resource they have to manage and work on UKSPF, as well as their capability and previous experience of delivering similar funds.

6.3 Delivering innovative provision

While we have developed a broad set of interventions, to allow places flexibility, we recognise that there will be instances where our menu of options does not meet specific local challenges or priorities that have been identified. To mitigate against this, places will be allowed to select 'bespoke' interventions that do not feature in our menu of options. Places will need to provide evidence to support their bespoke intervention, including a logic chain or theory of change and demonstrate where they align with UKSPF investment priorities.

6.4 How to submit your local investment plan

A pre-registration form (https://forms.office.com/r/X6x0cBDWxU) will need to be completed before accessing the investment plan platform. This form will require the name and email address of the person intending to submit the investment plan on each place's behalf, as well as an alternative's email address.

Once this form has been completed you will receive a:

- link to the online platform to submit your investment plan, and a
- link to allow you to upload the supporting documentation we require as part of the investment plan process.

We have also published the investment plan questions (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus) that can be referred to offline.

Investment plans should be submitted via the online platform during the submission window. The submission window opens on 30 June 2022 and closes on 1 August 2022. This is designed to enable places that are ready, to submit for assessment sooner. It also recognises that places in Scotland and Wales, or places where local elections have been held, may need longer to submit their plans. In Northern Ireland we will work directly with partners to prepare an investment plan.

6.5 How we will agree your plan

We expect the content of each investment plan to be coherent and broadly supported by relevant partners. The interventions, outputs and outcomes set out in the investment plan must be deliverable. We will require lead local authorities to set out how they will deliver a successful programme and provide a complete and accurate expenditure and deliverables profile.

We will lead an assessment of the three areas in the investment plan:

- Local context – including challenges and opportunities
- Selection of outcomes, outputs and proposed interventions
- Delivery

If bespoke interventions are included, i.e. those not in our menu of options, we will expect to see a clear explanation of the theory of change or logic chain and justification for the intervention proposed before approving the intervention, as well as how the intervention will be monitored and evaluated.

There are a number of areas that require complete and accurate information to be submitted for assessment. Where this is not provided, we will ask for further information and/or resubmission, for example:

- Limited justification for selecting bespoke interventions
- Failure to enter sufficient rationale in text boxes as required
- An inaccurate or incomplete expenditure and deliverables profile – please read the guidance on the first tab to ensure successful completion
- Failure to outline your delivery plan, including governance and resources structures as well as delivery design and management of specific delivery elements, e.g. subsidy control/State Aid

Plans will need to be agreed by the lead local authority and UK government to enable sign off. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will lead the government assessment process and will engage relevant departments as needed.

Where a plan cannot be signed off first time, we will provide feedback to the lead local authority and work iteratively to secure sign off.

Part 2

7. The Fund's parameters

The Fund is designed to be flexible and responsive to local circumstances, extending to flexibility on how fund interventions are designed and delivered. Nevertheless, lead local authorities, and local partners should consider the following fund parameters when drafting investment plans and designing interventions:

7.1 Who can the Fund support?

The Fund is intended to help communities across the country, support people living or working in the UK, citizens with permission to work here, and help businesses operating in the UK. Any organisation with legal status[footnote 9] can receive funding to deliver a UKSPF intervention, including arms-length bodies of government where appropriate.

Working with international partners may be appropriate where it represents a suitable way of meeting local needs.

7.2 When can Fund investment start?

The Fund can support investment in interventions that start from 1 April 2022 where they fit with the relevant interventions toolkit and all Fund requirements set out in this Prospectus.

Any such interventions will be at risk prior to sign off of local investment plans. Lead local authorities may choose to focus on specific interventions from the toolkit, where there is a clear need, and an established delivery approach to minimise risk.

Lead local authorities can also incur administrative and preparatory costs from 1 April 2022. This is subject to provisions on the use of the Fund for administration, set out at section 4.5, and all other Fund requirements set out in this Prospectus, including but not limited to branding and publicity, and reporting.

Funding is confirmed for three financial years – 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 providing a predictable baseline element of local growth funding. All interventions should end by March 2025, or have a break clause allowing for closure by March 2025 if required (for example, yearly renewable funding).

7.3 How can we fund interventions?

The Fund can be used flexibly to support interventions via:

- grant to public or private organisations

- commissioning third party organisations
- procurement of service provision
- in-house provision

All places should take account of the Cabinet Office Grants Standards (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grants-standards) when deciding which option best fits their circumstances. Lead local authorities should note that competitions for projects is the default approach for selecting recipients of public grants.

Lead local authorities should also design their project selection and contracting processes so they have mechanisms to recover funding where beneficiaries do not comply with fund parameters, UK law or any local requirements.

Loans to organisations or businesses may also be appropriate in limited circumstances. However, loan funding requires specific expertise and will be subject to close scrutiny. Any intervention must not simply duplicate other UK government funding, including the £1.6 billion announced at Spending Review 2021 for the next generation of UK investment funds delivered by the British Business Bank.

7.4 Maximising other funding sources

Match funding will not be required to unlock an area's allocation. This provides flexibility, reduces bureaucracy and empowers lead local authorities to tailor their approach to local circumstances.

The sourcing of match funding/leverage will not be a factor in the assessment of each place's investment plan.

Although match funding is not required and will not form part of the investment plan assessment criteria, in **England, Scotland and Wales**, all lead local authorities are strongly encouraged to consider match funding from the private, public and third sectors and leverage options when selecting communities and place and supporting local business interventions to fund. This will maximise the value for money and impact of the Fund.

Information in respect of any known or anticipated match funding or leveraged funding should be provided in the investment plan if available at the time of submission, and should be considered when designing interventions and agreeing Fund outputs and outcomes. We will expect lead local authorities to provide regular updates on the match funding/leverage they have achieved throughout the lifetime of the Fund as part of their reporting responsibilities.

In **Northern Ireland**, project applicants and delivery partners will be asked to state if they have match funding as part of their application. This will be considered as part of the value for money assessment of interventions and as part of State Aid assessment.

7.5 Are there any limits on funding?

7.5.1 The following costs should not be included in a UKSPF intervention:

- paid for lobbying, entertaining, petitioning or challenging decisions, which means using the Fund to lobby (via an external firm or in-house staff) in order to undertake activities intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, government or political activity including the receipt of UKSPF funding; or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action
- payments for activities of a party political or exclusively religious nature
- VAT reclaimable from HMRC
- gifts, or payments for gifts or donations
- statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties
- payments for works or activities which the lead local authority, project deliverer, end beneficiary, or any member of their partnership has a statutory duty to undertake, or that are fully funded by other sources
- contingencies and contingent liabilities
- dividends
- bad debts, costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors, or winding up a company
- expenses in respect of litigation, unfair dismissal or other compensation
- costs incurred by individuals in setting up and contributing towards private pension schemes

7.5.2 Apportioning costs

For projects funded by more than one Funder or more than one local UKSPF allocation, it is expected that costs will normally be apportioned on a percentage basis in line with funding contributions.

Where costs are to be apportioned, the method of apportionment should be clear and transparent and agreed by the lead local authority (or the UK government with delivery partners in Northern Ireland).

7.6 Complying with UK law

7.6.1 Subsidy control and State Aid

In the investment plan, lead local authorities will be asked to detail how their proposed interventions will be delivered within the subsidy control regime and their capacity and capability to manage subsidy (and State Aid in the case of interventions affecting Northern Ireland).

For England, Scotland and Wales, we will publish further guidance on subsidy control and UKSPF in the summer. This will assist lead local authorities in carrying out their delegated delivery role.

For Northern Ireland, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will oversee Fund delivery, including responsibility for assessing and monitoring State Aid and subsidy control for individual interventions. This will be done in collaboration with local partners as appropriate.

7.6.2 Public procurement

For England, Scotland and Wales, all spend associated with the Fund must be assessed by the lead local authority in advance to ensure that proposed investment is compliant with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 where relevant and follows local constitution and grant rules, processes and procedures as and where relevant.

For Northern Ireland interventions, all spend associated with the Fund must comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 where relevant. This will be assessed by us prior to approval and subject to monitoring after approval, in collaboration with relevant organisations as appropriate.

7.7 Branding and publicity

Lead local authorities and project deliverers must ensure that the appropriate UK government logos are used prominently in all communications materials and public facing documents relating to funded activity – including print and publications, through to digital and electronic materials.

The following logos must also be used when communicating in English and Welsh respectively:

LEVELLING UP

FFYNIANT
BRO

Alongside use of the appropriate UK government logos, lead local authorities and project deliverers must also ensure that websites and printed materials include a clear and prominent reference to the funding from the UKSPF. This includes any preparatory activity linked to the Fund.

We will require project deliverers to install a plaque of significant size at a location readily visible to the public, bearing the appropriate UK government logos, project name and standardised text. Plaques should be bilingual in English and Welsh in Wales.

Co-branding is only permitted with lead local authorities (or any strategic geography branding) or funders.

Further detail on branding and publicity requirements will be published in the summer.

8. How we will pay places and projects

The Fund will operate UK-wide and use the financial assistance powers in the UK Internal Market Act 2020 to deliver funding to places across the UK.

In addition to devolved administrations’ existing powers, this allows the UK government to complement and strengthen the support given to local people, businesses and communities in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, as well as England.

8.1 England, Scotland and Wales

We will pay each lead local authority in England, Scotland and Wales annually in advance. In 2022-23, funding will be paid once the local investment plan has been signed off. In 2023-24 and 2024-25, we will pay at the start of the financial year. Lead local authorities will receive a grant determination letter and Memorandum of Understanding setting out Fund requirements and obligations. Lead local authorities will be asked to return any underspends at the end of each financial year.

Lead local authorities in Scotland and Wales will receive a Multiply allocation as part of their annual payment. We will require separate reporting and monitoring for this amount.

We expect Fund investment and outputs to be achieved in line with each place’s investment plan, on time and in-year. We reserve the right to withhold or delay payment and alter payment cycles from 2023-24 onwards where there are performance or other issues with delivery.

8.2 Northern Ireland

It is our intention to support delivery and we propose to pay direct project deliverers (including Multiply deliverers) in Northern Ireland in advance, on a six monthly cycle. This may be paid via a grant funding agreement or an agreed alternative approach, depending on a number of factors including the status of the delivery body. This will be guided by the agreed investment plan for Northern Ireland. Each project deliverer will receive a clear statement of Fund requirements and obligations.

We expect Fund investment and outputs to be achieved in line with each intervention’s agreed application and spend and output profile. Here, we also reserve the right to withhold or delay payment and alter payment cycles where there are performance or other issues with delivery.

We set out in section 9 how we will measure performance.

9. How we will measure performance

9.1 Performance management overview

9.1.1 England, Scotland and Wales

Lead local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales will be asked to report data to us to ensure that allocations are being spent to agreed timescales and milestones, including achievement of outputs and outcomes at the project level. We will also ask local authorities to report individual project outputs and outcomes at UK Parliament constituency level.

The milestones, expectations and timescales will be set out in a Memorandum of Understanding with each lead local authority. There will be a formal reporting request every six months, with qualitative updates on a more frequent basis also required.

Prior to each annual payment, lead local authorities will also be asked to complete a report. Depending on timings of the first payment, for the second annual payment, lead local authorities may be asked to submit a report earlier than six months after the first report is submitted.

Lead local authorities who are unable to meet milestones will be supported by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities officials to ensure delivery gets back on track. If lead local authorities wish to make changes to their planned activity this can be reviewed.

We will ask each lead local authority to notify us of any current or emerging operational or financial risks, or issues, and any contingency measures put in place. This will be requested in each place's investment plan and in each report thereafter. This will help us determine the level of support we may provide, and/or enhanced monitoring that we may require. This may also result in reduced delegation, reduced payment periods or withholding of funds in the affected area.

Lead local authorities will also be expected to report on technical delivery aspects such as fraud and risk.

Further detailed information, including, the reporting format and process, will be set out in detailed guidance in the summer.

9.1.2 Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, individual projects will be performance managed by officials from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Specific requirements will be set out in a grant funding agreement, or alternative approaches depending on circumstances. We will measure whether funding is spent to agreed timescales and milestones, including achievement of outputs and outcomes. There will be a formal reporting request to manage every six months, with informal updates also required.

Project deliverers in Northern Ireland who are unable to meet milestones will be supported by government officials to ensure delivery gets back on track. If project deliverers wish to make changes to their planned activity this can be reviewed with us.

Project deliverers in Northern Ireland will also be expected to report or adhere to technical delivery aspects and legal requirements such as branding, risk and State Aid or subsidy control.

Further detailed information, including, the reporting format and process, will be set out in detailed guidance in the summer.

9.2 How we will monitor and evaluate the Fund at UK-level

The Fund will be evaluated based on a theory of change aligned with the objectives of the Levelling Up White Paper (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom), its theory of change[footnote 10] and the resulting outcomes that the government wants to achieve across the Levelling Up agenda. Lead local authorities will need to refer to these outcomes and indicators in their investment plan.

We are developing a national approach to evaluation, including a scoping study in partnership with the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth. The evaluation methodology cannot be fully specified until we have received investment plans and understood the range of activities to be funded. This may include pooling or synthesising data from several different areas.

The national evaluation will evaluate the Fund as a whole through two related lenses:

- **Fund-level process evaluation/s** to demonstrate accountability and understand what worked well, what did not, and why, in the design and delivery of the Fund. Performance indicators from lead local authorities or project deliverers will contribute to the programme-level process evaluation. In addition, places may be required to cooperate with process evaluation activity undertaken by or on behalf of us.
- **Exploring the feasibility of causal impact evaluation**. How to evaluate value for money delivered by the Fund will also be considered. Places may be required to cooperate with impact, or value for money evaluation activity (including data collection) undertaken by or on behalf of us.

We will work closely with other departments to evaluate UKSPF, including the Department for Education for Multiply interventions.

We will publish further details on our evaluation approaches for the Fund (including the overarching Fund-level evaluation) once the investment plans have been reviewed.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation requirements for local places

Theories of change

Any bespoke interventions proposed by lead local authorities will need to be supported by their own Theory of Change, Logical Framework or Logic Chain in their investment plans. This should be based on numeric evidence where possible.

Monitoring

We expect all lead local authorities to, at minimum, monitor spend, outputs and outcomes against agreed indicators and submit this information to us to assist with programme-level evaluation. This needs to include relevant metrics from the Levelling Up White Paper. Further information about indicators can be found in section 9.4.

Locally-led process evaluations

All lead local authorities are advised to carry out process evaluation/s of each project they fund to demonstrate the effectiveness of delivery of the interventions pursued. This can help contribute towards local accountability and provide learning on what worked in terms of delivery.

Locally-led causal impact evaluations

To build the evidence base on what works for local pride interventions, lead authorities are also strongly encouraged to conduct their own causal quantitative impact evaluations for certain projects, where feasible.

This should be proportionate to their allocations and investment plans. For example, the opportunities to undertake causal impact evaluations are expected to be greater for larger allocations. Moreover, a lead local authority may prioritise causal impact evaluations on particular projects, if impact evaluations on some other projects are unlikely to provide meaningful results.

We value quality over the quantity of impact evaluation, including attempts to define causality or contribution. Where an increase in the proportion of local budget beyond the 4% allocated for administration and evaluation could lead to a significant improvement in quality and ability to learn lessons, this case should be set out in the investment plan.

UK government led causal impact evaluations

We also intend to use the UKSPF to build the evidence base on what works for local pride, life chances, and local growth interventions, by robustly evaluating a number of those interventions delivered through the Fund (using experimental or quasi-experimental methods, if appropriate) to determine their effectiveness. These evaluations will also feed into the evaluation of the fund as a whole.

We will determine which interventions will be evaluated at which level and using which methods, after reviewing the local investment plans. In order to evaluate different types of intervention, places may be required to cooperate with evaluation activity undertaken by or on behalf of us (through, for example, providing specified data). We may make specific asks of places in what they collect, to allow us to look across a range of areas or types of intervention. As well as before and after outcome data, lead local authorities should also expect to be asked for other data that helps us to do this. Likely asks could include project location data (e.g., postcodes) and unique identifiers for people or business (e.g., National Insurance numbers or Company Registration Numbers) to allow us to identify matched control groups. Areas should have this in mind when developing their investment plans and make preparation for the collection, storage and (controlled) sharing of such data.

We may also ask you to consider staggering interventions to allow us to exploit differences in timing of roll out to learn more about impacts.

UK government-led causal impact evaluations will not duplicate any locally led ones.

9.4 Fund indicators

Each place, and each intervention across the UK must use common indicators, as set out for each intervention to measure outputs, outcomes and impacts. This ensures that we can compare similar interventions in different places, and undertake and synthesise evaluation activities.

It also means that places will be able to work together more easily, and organisations delivering in multiple places will be able to deliver their interventions more efficiently.

See the Indicative Fund indicators that are set out for each intervention (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-interventions-outputs-and-indicators). These should be used by lead local authorities as a guide when drafting local investment plans.

Final indicator definitions will be confirmed in the summer, prior to the submission date of the investment plans, when further guidance will be published on GOV.UK.

10. Next steps and important dates

Drawing on the information set out in this Prospectus, each lead local authority (or the UK government working with local partners in Northern Ireland) is encouraged to work with a diverse range of local stakeholders, appropriate groups and organisations to develop their investment plan.

A timeline of key dates is included below for information, please note that some of these dates are indicative and may be subject to change.

When	Activity
2 February 2022	Pre-launch guidance
13 April 2022	Fund launch

When	Activity
April – May 2022	Engagement sessions with local authorities and other local partners to support the investment plan process
April – June/ July 2022	Lead local authorities (and UK government in Northern Ireland) work with stakeholders to develop local investment plans Contacts for each lead local authority sign up to access the investment plan portal (https://forms.office.com/r/X6x0cBDWxU). Investment plan portal logins issued.
Summer 2022	Further guidance published including guidance on monitoring benefits and evaluation, assurance, subsidy control, branding and publicity. Application processes and templates for Northern Ireland will be published – these may be used by lead local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales where desired.
30 June 2022	Investment plan window opens
1 August 2022	Investment plan window closes
July – September 2022	Indicative investment plan assessment period for UK government
October 2022 onwards	Anticipated date for first investment plans to be approved
October 2022 onwards	Anticipated first payment to be made to lead local authorities
March 2025	Three year funding period ends

1. Business productivity review: call for evidence (https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/business-productivity-review-call-for-evidence).

2. ONS (2018) Management practices and productivity in British production and services industries.
3. Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2014) Innovation Report 2014: Innovation, Research and Growth.
4. Science and innovation: rates of return to investment (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/science-and-innovation-rates-of-return-to-investment).
5. Economic inactivity refers to those without a job who have not sought work in the last four weeks and/or are not available to start work in the next two weeks, although in practice many people who are inactive will have been so for a long time. For UKSPF people and skills investments the term includes people not in work who are on and off benefits, with the exception of Universal Credit, Jobseekers Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance claimants who are in the all work related requirements legal conditionality groups (i.e. Light Touch and Intensive Work Search).
6. England ESF Programme 2007–2013: Evidence synthesis (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518935/rr920-england-esf-programme-2007-2013-evidence-synthesis.pdf).
7. Measuring the net present value of further education in England 2018 to 2019 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measuring-the-net-present-value-of-further-education-in-england-2018-to-2019).
8. Lead local authorities in Scotland should work with the Scottish Government on employment provision for the long term unemployed and people with a disability which is devolved to the Scottish Government.
9. This may include local authorities, public sector organisations, higher and further education institutions, private sector companies, voluntary organisations and registered charities.
10. See pages xv-xix for summary and chapters 1 & 2 for details.

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