

Shared Prosperity Fund – Investment Plan

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Portfolio: Stronger Economy, Better Lives and Finance & Resources

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

To access South Norfolk's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation, an investment plan must be submitted setting out measurable outcomes that reflect local needs and opportunities. This report proposes Governance arrangements to ensure expenditure meets the requirements of the funding and requests delegations to finalise and submit an investment plan within the required timescales.

Recommendations:

Cabinet to:

- 1** Approve the principal areas of investment as set out within this report.
- 2** Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, for the sign off and submission of a three-year investment plan to meet the requirements of the UKSPF.
- 3** Delegate to the Director of Place to finalise the initial and ongoing Governance arrangements for the UKSPF.

- 4 Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, to make any non-substantive changes to the investment plan as required the Department of Levelling up Housing & Communities and to sign the contract and accept the terms of the UKSPF, subject to appropriate legal advice.
- 5 Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, for the commitment and expenditure of the Council's allocation of UKSPF in line with the investment plan.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The UKSPF replaces European Structural Funds and is central to the Government's Levelling Up agenda. 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. South Norfolk Council has been allocated £1,570,485, subject to the receipt of a compliant investment plan.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the Council focuses on three principal interventions, one in each investment priority which build upon existing work streams. If approved, this approach will maximise the impact of the funding and better secure the delivery of outcomes within the required timeframe.
 - 1.2.1 Communities and Place – Pride in Place work programme
 - 1.2.2 Support for local business – Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor work programme
 - 1.2.3 People and Skills – Skills work programme to address the barriers to businesses taking on apprentices, work placements and developing a council led training offer.
- 1.3 The deadline for submission of the Council's investment plan is 1 August 22; the Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities will then undertake an assessment and provide feedback as required.
- 1.4 The first wave of approved investment plans are expected to be announced in October 2022.

2. Background

- 2.1 The UKSPF supports the UK Government's wider commitments to level up by delivering on the following objectives:
 - 2.1.1 Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging.

- 2.1.2 Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.
- 2.1.3 Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.
- 2.1.4 Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.
- 2.2 The UKSPF prospectus contains information on interventions, outputs and indicators and the process for accessing allocations. Funding is being distributed directly to local authorities to address local need through three investment priorities; communities and place, support for local businesses and people and skills. South Norfolk Council has been allocated a total of £1,570,485 over the three-year period to 31 March 2025.
- 2.3 A national skills programme, Multiply, aims to help transform the lives of adults across the UK, by improving their functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses. For Norfolk, this will be delivered via Norfolk County Council.
- 2.4 Details of the priorities which all local authorities are expected to deliver are as follows:
- 2.5 Communities and place - the objectives of this investment priority are:
 - 2.5.1 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 amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.
 - 2.5.2 Building resilient, safe and healthy neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention.
- 2.6 Supporting local business - the objectives of this investment priority are:
 - 2.6.1 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.
 - 2.6.2 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.
 - 2.6.3 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.
- 2.7 People and skills - the objectives of this investment priority are:

- 2.7.1 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.
 - 2.7.2 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.
 - 2.7.3 Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support, including access to basic skills.
 - 2.7.4 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.
- 2.8 The Fund focuses on communities and place and supporting local business interventions in 2022-23 and 2023-24. This complements existing residual employment and skills funding from the European Social Fund. People and skills interventions can only be selected for 2024-25 unless continuing existing EU funded programmes delivered through voluntary and community organisations.
- 2.9 To access their allocation, each authority has been asked to submit an investment plan setting out measurable outcomes that reflect local needs and opportunities. The deadline for investment plans to be submitted is August 2022.
- 2.10 To access these funds the Council is expected to work with local partners to develop the investment plan to ensure that Fund investments complement other activities in the area and meet collective objectives.

3. Current position/findings

- 3.1 Details of the funding allocations per annum, suggested revenue/capital split (pending negotiation) is included with the table below which includes 4% permissible administration fee in the overall allocation.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
SNC Total	£190,593	£381,186	£998,706	£1,570,485
SNC Admin fee	£7,624	£15,247	£39,948	£62,819

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Revenue:	£163,910	£316,385	£749,017	£1,283,321
Capital	£19,059	£49,554	£199,741	£224,345

- 3.2 Although funding can be backdated to 1 April 2022, careful financial planning will be required to guard against any annual underspends which will be removed from the allocation.
- 3.3 Supporting Local Economic Growth is a value for money report compiled by the National Audit Office. It examines government expenditure in order to form a judgement on whether value for money has been achieved and makes recommendations to public bodies on how to improve public services. The report assesses the effectiveness of a variety of schemes to assess whether they achieved a positive impact on employment.
- 3.4 The recommendations in the report have been considered in developing the programmes outlined below to maximise the impact of the UKSPF in South Norfolk.
- 3.5 The UKSPF prospectus includes guidance on who should be represented on the local partnership group for the development and delivery of this fund. To align with the expectation of the investment plan the proposed board for South Norfolk is included as Annex 1.

4. **Proposed Action**

- 4.1 It is proposed that three primary programmes are supported. Full details of proposals will be finalised in time for the investment plan to be submitted and are subject to change following negotiations with DLUHC:
- 4.2 **Programme 1: Pride in Place.** This project fits into the communities and place investment priority, directly linking to intervention E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. This programme is an opportunity for the Council to reconfigure and effectively resource a work programme which will re-shape how best to deploy a more holistic suite of services across our Parish and Town Councils.
- 4.3 Funding will be utilised to recruit a programme team led by a Relationship Manager, working closely with Town and Parish councils to create, manage and enable effective two-way communication between tiers of local Government.
- 4.4 The Councils and officer teams worked closely through COVID with in excess of 40 Mutual Aid Groups, many of who were existing or developed at pace in response to the pandemic. These groups, often established by or affiliated with the local town or parish council proved to be an invaluable part of the areas COVID response machinery, enabling the deployment of local and key resources in the community to solve local issues of 1,500 cases of improved access to food, 4,000 medications and prescriptions delivered and 250 incidences of telephone befriending. The Council have continued to harness this key assets, developing

and augmenting community enthusiasm to sustainably support local residents and help to prevent the need for longer term support or crises interventions. With minimal investment of less than £20k of Containing Outbreak Management Funds, these groups have gone from strength to strength, typifying the community spirit a Pride in Place programme will seek to develop. But, there are areas of our district who are not well served by community groups.

- 4.5 The Pride in Place Programme will seek to build on the phenomenal success and work with areas to set up or further support this incredible local knowledge and capacity to ensure that communities are best placed to help each other and provide local solutions to local problems, potentially as wide ranging as social support, important civic engagement, local infrastructure or important work to improve the local environment or environmental behaviours, offering support, investment and access to funding.
- 4.6 The work programme will proactively identify opportunities arising from the Government's Levelling Up Agenda and work closely with district and county councillors to ensure strong awareness of services delivered and to feed local information back into organisational and council thinking.
- 4.7 Community assets are at the centre of place and how people feel about, relate to, and take pride in their local area. The Council have the mechanism to work with the community to ensure that key aspects of local community infrastructure development and maintenance are brought forward at pace. South Norfolk has in place a flagship scheme which, working alongside Town and Parish Councils, enables local communities to access finance as an interest free loan to bring forward key infrastructure projects and ideas to reality, with the loan secured against future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income based on planned development. This is in addition to the pooling and joint use and allocation to CIL by 4 local authorities across the Greater Norwich area via the Greater Norwich Growth Board, developing strategic infrastructure assets and projects to enable and develop local communities.
- 4.8 This approach to the design and delivery of new service model will be sought to be expanded to other communities within the district footprint, with significant opportunity due to the development at scale and the possible access, use and enhancement of CIL and other community infrastructure products. The Pride in Place programme will assist with the generation of more pipeline opportunities, working closely with local and strategic partners to bring more integrated service offers to existing and growing communities in our districts.
- 4.9 It is proposed, the capital funding available will be utilised to expand and enhance the *Community Infrastructure Funding* offer, bringing forward delivery of key pieces of infrastructure avoiding the need to wait until developers pay their CIL contributions. In some instances, this could include providing match funding to Town and Parish Councils for key pieces of infrastructure.
- 4.10 Measurable outputs for this programme include:
 - 4.10.1 Number of organisations receiving financial and non-financial support.

- 4.10.2 Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved.
 - 4.10.3 Number of people attending training sessions.
 - 4.10.4 Number of facilities supported/created.
 - 4.10.5 Amount of green or blue space created or improved
- 4.11 Indicative outcomes for this programme include:
- 4.11.1 Number of new or improved community facilities as a result of support.
 - 4.11.2 Improved engagement numbers.
 - 4.11.3 Increased users of facilities/amenities.
 - 4.11.4 Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project.
 - 4.11.5 Improved perception of facilities/amenities.
- 4.12 **Programme 2: Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor.** This project fits into the supporting local business investment priority and links closely with intervention E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks. This programme will encourage research, development and innovation to increase the pace and quality of economic growth by resourcing and supporting strong clusters including agri-food and life sciences, manufacturing and engineering, and energy and clean technology.
- 4.13 The Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor initiative is a public-private partnership set to drive high value economic and social growth by creating the right opportunities, environment and ambition visibility needed for our highest potential technology assets to flourish through supporting strong clusters. More information can be found on <https://www.techcorridor.co.uk/>
- 4.14 UKSPF will be utilised to recruit a programme team, led by a Programme Manager leading on the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor Partnership for South Norfolk, bringing together business and political leaders with a shared ambition to create a top-tier destination for technology businesses, talent and investors.
- 4.15 The programme will fast track the delivery of the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor ambitions including links to the Oxford Cambridge Arc. Working with relevant partners to identify key opportunities to work with partners to facilitate the delivery of low carbon energy projects to power employment land e.g. biomass, solar or alternative energy sources within our districts.
- 4.16 Funding will be available for feasibility studies and planning tools such as Local Development Orders to open up and safeguard employment sites close to and connected to local work forces and public/ sustainable modes of transport.
- 4.17 Cluster group support will be based on the expanding existing networks such as New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering (NAAME). This cluster group is currently funded from NALEP to provide a Project Manager. The cluster, which is free to join, provides the opportunity to network with likeminded senior leaders in the sector to; share and solve challenges; build awareness of the local supply chain; tailor introductions to suit sector needs; explore new market opportunities and ultimately share best practice. Recent outcomes include the

launch of £7.4m Productivity East a 'state-of-the-art' regional hub for engineering and technology and the delivery of a new HR forum in collaboration with Make UK which supports cluster members with workforce challenges and opportunities.

- 4.18 The Norfolk and Suffolk Food Innovation cluster was established in to provide innovation support to food and drink organisations and their supply chains. Membership is free to join, and benefits include access to research and development collaborations with academics on the Norwich Research Park, 1 to 1 workshops and support, space at trade events and access to training and professional development courses.
- 4.19 Measureable outputs for this programme include:
- 4.19.1 Number and m² of commercial buildings developed or improved.
 - 4.19.2 Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready.
 - 4.19.3 Number of businesses receiving financial and non-financial support.
- 4.20 Indicative outcomes for this programme include:
- 4.20.1 Jobs created/safeguarded.
 - 4.20.2 Number of new businesses created.
 - 4.20.3 Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes.
 - 4.20.4 Increased number of businesses engaged in new markets.
 - 4.20.5 Number of businesses with improved productivity.
 - 4.20.6 Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm.
- 4.21 **Programme 3: Addressing the barriers to businesses offering placements and taking on apprentices.** This project fits into the people and skills investment priority, therefore funding is only available from 2024/25. The proposal links closely with intervention E38: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. The overarching opportunity is to create higher levels of high skilled employment, attract inward investment into the UK and tackling unemployment while maintaining equality of opportunity and inclusive growth.
- 4.22 The programme recognises the positive impact on employment through apprenticeship programmes as highlighted by the National Audit Office and understands the barriers to businesses offering placements and apprenticeships.
- 4.23 The focus will be on addressing localised skills shortages to support key clusters including life science which is experiencing a surge in investment post-pandemic. UKSPF will be utilised to provide specialist support to businesses through a flexi-apprenticeship model. Those supported will be employed through the Council, with placements in local SMEs reducing the risk for both the business and employee.
- 4.24 Funding will be available to provide bespoke training and support to meet local demands such as transitioning to low carbon technologies and servicing key supply chains e.g. the Vattenfall led vanguard and Boreas projects largest wind farm in the world.

4.25 Measureable outputs for this programme include:

4.25.1 Number of people retraining.

4.25.2 Number of people in employment engaging with the skills system.

4.26 Indicative outputs for this programme include:

4.26.1 Number of people in education/training

4.26.2 Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support

4.26.3 Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education and training

5. Issues and Risks

- 5.1 **Resource Implications** – UKSPF provides revenue funding to ensure programmes are adequately resourced. The Council’s allocation also includes a 4% administration allowance to cover costs incurred through the administration of the fund.
- 5.2 **Legal Implications** – Appropriate UK government logos and reference to UKSPF must be prominently displayed on all websites and printed materials relating to funded activity. A plaque of significant size must also be installed at a location readily visible to the public, bearing the appropriate UK government logos, project name and standardised text.
- 5.3 **Equality Implications** – It is a requirement for all decision making to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 5.4 **Environmental Impact** – A requirement of the funding is for projects to support green growth, working with the natural environment to achieve the UK’s legal commitment to cur greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and improve resilience to natural hazards.
- 5.5 **Crime and Disorder** – Within the communities and place investment priority, and therefore the Pride in Place programme, there is an objective to build resilient, healthy and safe neighbourhoods. The programme focusses on investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built and natural environment, utilising innovative approaches to crime prevention.
- 5.6 **Risks** – A risk register will be developed on approval of the Investment Plan and maintained throughout programme delivery.
- 5.7 The investment plan covers three full years of funding from April 22 – March 25, however any expenditure incurred prior to approval of the investment is done so at risk. An investment plan which does not meet the requirements will result in ongoing negotiations, which could impact on the Council’s ability to fully spend the 2022/23 allocation.

- 5.8 Financial uncertainty – Section 3.1 highlights the Council’s allocation in each of the three years from 2022 – 2025. The allocation must be spent in the appropriate financial year. Any underspend will be lost and the following year’s allocation will be penalised by the same amount.
- 5.9 Programmes are reliant on recruiting suitably qualified and experienced personnel to deliver. Current challenges with recruitment may result in an underspend or lead to an escalation of costs if positions cannot be filled as expected.
- 5.10 The programme is reliant on working closely with external stakeholders. There is a reputational risk associated with poor stakeholder engagement leading to disengagement and possible bad press.

6. Recommendations

Cabinet to:

- 6.1 Approve the principal areas of investment as set out within this report.
- 6.2 Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, for the sign off and submission of a three-year investment plan to meet the requirements of the UKSPF.
- 6.3 Delegate to the Director of Place to finalise the initial and ongoing Governance arrangements for the UKSPF.
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- 6.5 Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, for the commitment and expenditure of the Council’s allocation of UKSPF in line with the investment plan.

Annex 1 South Norfolk and Broadland SPF Board

Name	Title	Organisation
Phil Courtier	SNC & BDC	Director Place (joint chair)
George Denton	SNC & BDC	Assistant Director Economic Growth (vice chair)
Roz Bird	CEO	AIP LLP Norwich Research Park (R&D / educational provider)
Nova Fairbank	CEO (incoming)	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Martin Colbourne	Deputy CEO	City College Norwich
Denise Saadvandi	Head of Service and Designated Safeguarding Lead (Multiply lead)	Norfolk County Council
Steve Earl	Managing Director	Panel Graphic Ltd
Cllr. Lisa Neal	Portfolio Holder for Stronger Economy	South Norfolk Council representing South Norfolk community
Cllr. Jo Coplestone	Portfolio Holder Economic Development	Broadland District Council representing Broadland community
Stuart Durrell	District Partnership Manager	Department Work and Pensions
Hon. Jerome Mayhew	MP	Broadland
Hon. Richard Bacon	MP	South Norfolk
Hon. George Freeman	MP	Mid Norfolk
Hon. Chloe Smith	MP	Norwich North
Hon. Clive Lewis	MP	Norwich South

Background papers

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Prospectus](#)

[Multiply Investment Prospectus](#)

[Supporting local economic growth \(nao.org.uk\)](http://nao.org.uk)