



FINANCE, ASSETS, INVESTMENT AND RECOVERY COMMITTEE

6 MARCH 2024

REPORT TITLE:	UK Shared Prosperity Fund update
REPORT OF:	Leigh Nicholson, Interim Director of Place
REPORT OF FOR:	INFORMATION ONLY
WARDS:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the projects for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) since the last report to the Finance, Assets Investment and Recovery committee on 13 September 2023.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was launched in April 2022 and provides £2.6 billion in funding for local investment by 31 March 2025. It is the government's replacement for the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF).
- 1.2 The Fund supports the ambitions of the Levelling Up White Paper and aims to build pride in place and increase life chances across the country.
- 1.3 The council has been allocated exactly £1,000,000 through the UKSPF.
- 1.4 An annual funding profile providing a breakdown of the funding for the three financial years has been developed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for Brentwood. The breakdown is as follows:

Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Allocation	£51,262	£102,524	£846,214

- 1.5 After consultation with a wide range of community stakeholders as per the UKSPF guidance, the council prioritised the following interventions in its UKSPF Investment Plan:
- a. **E1:** Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs;

b. **E6:** Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities;

c. **E10:** Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together;

d. **E23:** Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.

1.6 The council has budgeted its £1m UKSPF funding between the interventions as follows:

	Capital 22/23	Revenue 22/23	Capital 23/24	Revenue 23/24	Capital 24/25	Revenue 24/25	Totals
E1	£1,640	£13,121	£4,265	£25,263	£54,157	£189,553	£288,000
E6	£1,641	£13,122	£4,265	£25,261	£54,158	£189,552	£288,000
E10	£1,642	£13,120	£4,265	£25,262	£54,158	£189,552	£288,000
E23	£0	£4,923	£0	£9,843	£0	£81,234	£96,000
Admin (4% of UKSPF)		£2,050		£4,100		£33,850	£40,000

1.7 On 8 February 2023, members of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development (PRED) committee delegated authority to the Strategic Directors, in consultation with the Chair of PRED Committee (now the Finance, Assets, Investment and Recovery Committee), to distribute UKSPF funding in line with the council's submitted Investment Plan.

1.8 UKSPF can be used flexibly to support interventions via:

- a. grant to public or private organisations;
- b. commissioning third party organisations;
- c. procurement of service provision;
- d. in-house provision.

1.9 Current UKSPF Year 2 projects are shown below:

Intervention	Projects	Status	Method of Award
E1 Improvements to town centres and high streets	Ingatestone High Street accessibility report	Completed	Commissioned
	New seating for Crown Street	Completed	Commissioned
	Shop improvement grant scheme	In progress	Grant
E6 Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities	Big Smile Collective - Youth Art Factory: Teaching creative and craft skills whilst supporting young people aged 11-17 to explore opportunities available to them in the local community	Completed	Grant
	Creative Hub at King George's Playing Fields: Local artist, Charlotte Robinson, will create a new hub at King George's Playing Fields to provide a unique opportunity for creative collaboration, including visual arts, music groups and young makers	Completed	Grant
	Hutton and Shenfield Choral Society Christmas Concert: A Christmas concert at The Brentwood Centre featuring amateur and professional musicians and dancers	Completed	Grant
	Brentwood Youth Centre Refurb: Volunteer It Yourself will work with challenging young people aged 14-24, who are NEET (not in employment, education or training) or at risk of NEET, to develop new vocational trade skills by working alongside professional trades people to renovate the Brentwood Youth Centre (formerly known as The Hermit)	Completed	Grant
E10 Local sports facilities, tournaments, teams & leagues	Try a Tri: Tri Sport Essex hosted a fun intro to Triathlon and Multi-sport events on 2 July, giving local residents the chance to "have a go" in a friendly and inclusive	Completed	Grant

	environment at The Brentwood Centre		
	Wheelchair Rugby League: The Brentwood Eels will supply, field and maintain a Wheelchair Rugby League (WRL) team based at The Brentwood Centre. This will be the only WRL team to be active in Essex.	Completed	Grant
	Improved toilet facilities for disabled bowlers and visitors: Brentwood Bowling Club will upgrade its toilet facilities to provide dedicated disabled toilets and improve the standard of the current toilets	In progress	Grant
	Weekly football sessions for newly-arrived Afghan and Ukrainian refugee girls in Brentwood: Afghanistan and Central Asian Association will hold 32 weekly football sessions for up to 30 Afghan or Ukrainian girls (aged 11-16) at The Brentwood Centre and host 8 tournaments, held monthly	In progress	Grant
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Start-up business support scheme to be delivered in partnership with Rochford District Council	In progress	Competitive tender

- 1.10 Two new UKSPF projects have launched since the last update to FAIR on 13 September 2023, the UKSPF Shop Improvement Grant and the Get Set Grow business support scheme.
- 1.11 The UKSPF Shop Improvement Grant scheme was launched on 19 January 2024 to provide funding for high street businesses in Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone to make repairs and refurbishments to the exterior of their premises. £30k of UKSPF E1 funding has been ringfenced for this scheme. Businesses can apply for maximum grant of £2k. To date, nine grants have been distributed, with other applications in the pipeline awaiting further supporting documentation.
- 1.12 The GET SET GROW business support scheme was jointly commissioned with Rochford District Council to maximise our UKSPF spend. A total of 23 businesses from Brentwood have joined one of the peer support cohorts created:

- Start-ups
- Growing businesses
- Innovative businesses
- Female entrepreneurs

- 1.13 GET SET GROW will culminate in The Big Pitch. Ten businesses who took part in one of the GET SET GROW cohorts, including seven from Brentwood, will deliver a 5-minute “Dragon’s Den” pitch at an event on 5 March 2024 at The Launchpad in Rochford. The pitches will demonstrate how the business would spend a **theoretical** £10,000 investment. A panel of independent judges will select the top three pitches, with the winners receiving additional one-to-one expert business support.
- 1.14 Looking ahead to UKSPF Year 3, the council will be distributing up to £388,668 through an E6 and E10 grant scheme for projects to be delivered from April 2024 to March 2025. Expressions of interest (EOI) for Year 3 projects opened on 11 December 2023, resulting in 67 EOIs. An officer panel recommended 37 projects to progress to the full application stage, which closed on 19 February 2024. An independent judging panel will make final decisions by 15 March 2024.
- 1.15 Year 3 E23 spend will be informed by the outputs and outcomes of the GET SET GROW scheme, which may be extended for another year. Feedback from BEST Growth Hub on current business support needs across Essex will also factor into the types of projects commissioned.
- 1.16 A list of Year 3 E1 high street improvements for Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone will be compiled in consultation with key stakeholders, including relevant ward members. It is expected that Essex Highways will need to undertake any capital works.
- 1.17 Year 3 E10 projects include the Strawberry Sports Festival which will be held on 9 June from 12-6pm at King George’s Playing Fields. Local sports groups will be able to bid for micro grants of £250 to run have-a-go activities at the event. Up to £10k has been ringfenced for the festival.
- 1.18 Other Year 3 E6 projects are being considered, including refurbishment of the heritage boards outside of Town Hall. More details will be included in the next UKSPF update.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The council is working closely with a range of stakeholders when choosing priorities for UKSPF spend.
- 2.2 A more detailed report with the spend-to-date and project updates for UKSPF Year2 (2023/24) will be shared at the first FAIR meeting of 2024/25.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Lead local authorities will be asked to return any underspends at the end of each financial year.

3.2 The UKSPF guidance sets out that 4% of the fund can be used for administration. To ensure that projects are delivered on time and that data is collected to report back to DLUHC every quarter, a council officer has been seconded to monitor and evaluate the UKSPF scheme.

4.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

4.1 Government has indicated that lead authorities must create a Local Partnership Group 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. This group is advisory and not a decision-making body. It meets every quarter.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Tim Willis, Director – Resources & Section 151 Officer
Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

5.1 The Fund has been allocated to cover the cost of projects that deliver local benefits. The Investment Plan has identified the council's strategic priorities for the Fund, along with expected outputs and outcomes.

5.2 In addition to the £1m UKSPF allocation, a further one-off allocation of £20k will be provided from DLUHC for consultancy support.

5.3 The Council will be able to use up to 4% of our UKSPF allocation to undertake necessary fund administration, such as project assessment, contracting, monitoring and evaluation and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

6.0 LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Claire Mayhew, Acting Joint Director – People & Governance & Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email 01277 312500 / claire.mayhew@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

6.1 All spend associated with the Fund must be compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and follow the Council's procedures.

7.0 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Laurie Edmonds, Corporate Manager – Economic Development Tel & Email 01277 312500 / laurie.edmonds@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

7.1 The economic implications are included within this report. The Fund provides investment for projects that help to deliver economic growth.

8.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager - Communities, Leisure and Health

Tel & Email 01277 312500 /kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk

8.1 Equality implications will be considered as individual work streams are developed.

9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Name & Title: Henry Muss, Sustainability & Climate Officer

Tel & Email 01277 312500 /henry.muss@brentwood.gov.uk

9.1 There are no specific Environmental issues that the setting of the priorities have created at present

REPORT AUTHOR:

Name: Laurie Edmonds

Title: Corporate Manager – Economic Development

Phone: 01277 312500

Email: laurie.edmonds@brentwood.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

UK Shared Prosperity Fund guidance:

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

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Finance, Assets, Investment and Recovery	13 September 2023
Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee	8 February 2023
Community, Environment and Enforcement Committee	19 December 2022
Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee	13 July 2022