



Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee – 6 October 2025

Director Lead: Matt Lamb, Director - Planning & Growth

Lead Officer: Neil Cuttall, Business Manager - Economic Growth & Visitor Economy
Sarah Husselbee, Economic Development Grants & Programmes Manager

Report Summary	
Report Title	Delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund (2022 to 2026)
Purpose of Report	To update the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee on the delivery, progress and future of the UK Shared (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) programme.
Recommendations	<p>That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) the updates regarding the local approach to UKSPF/REPF programme delivery and the achievements to date, as detailed throughout this report; andb) the opportunities presented in relation to potential future UKSPF/REPF investment, noting the current uncertainty of programme funding, beyond March 2026, as detailed throughout this report. <p>The delivery of UKSPF and REPF is an identified activity outlined within the Community Plan, linking back to several key economic and regeneration related objectives.</p>

1.0 Background

Programme Background

- 1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was first announced by the UK Government in July 2022, seeking to replace former EU structural funds over a three-year period, until March 2025. The programme aims to invest 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.
- 1.2 Administered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the £2.6bn programme provided a pre-determined allocation of funding to each local authority, with a total award of £3.29m to Newark and Sherwood between 2022 and 2025. Funding comprised both capital and revenue grant, with an original requirement to spend programme investment by no later than 31 March 2025.

- 1.3 Shortly after the announcement of the UKSPF scheme, the UK Government launched the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), through the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The REPF is referred to as a 'capital top-up' to UKSPF, designed to support selected areas across England to tackle the unique rurality related challenges, such as access to opportunity, social isolation, connectivity and rural economic growth. Both the REPF and UKSPF are monitored and reported in a combined approach, however the REPF provided capital grants only, designed for the specific purpose of supporting 'rural' organisations. REPF also commenced one year later (April 2023), providing two financial years of funding, until March 2025.
- 1.4 Across the UKSPF and REPF scheme, investment was designed to sit within three themes of 'communities and place, people and skills and supporting local businesses', with an overarching programme objective of 'increasing life chances and improving pride in place.' To draw down the funds, all areas were required to submit high level investment plans to MHCLG in 2022, demonstrating how local priorities would deliver against each of these three programme investment themes. This included identifying a number of priority 'interventions' for local delivery, selected from the UK Government's programme prospectus. Appendix A provides details of the priority interventions identified and delivered locally, shown as 'E numbers', against the associated investment theme.
- 1.5 Whilst the Council is considered the Accountable Body for the fund, the development of delivery plans followed consultation with community partners to determine local priorities for investment. This included engagement with the local Community Partnership Board, the Employment and Skills Board, Nottinghamshire Economic Growth working groups, as well as additional targeted engagement with rural partners such as Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire (RCAN), National Farmers Union (NFU) and Community Land Association (CLA), for the purpose of REPF.
- 1.6 In October 2024 and March 2025, the UK Government announced a one-year extension to both the UKSPF and REPF programmes for the delivery year 2025/2026, whilst longer-term funding plans are considered. As a result, several minor amendments were made to the fund prospectus in order to reflect the latest Government missions, and alignment to new sub themes and reporting metrics, however the principle aim and purpose of the fund, remains as known previously.
- 1.7 In accordance with the 2022 East Midlands Devolution Deal, the Council no longer acts as the Accountable Body for the 2025/2026 UKSPF/REPF allocation. Instead, a regional UKSPF sum of £25m has been allocated to the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) to administer for the 2025/2026 financial year. It should also be recognised that overall, the UKSPF scheme was reduced nationally in value by 40%, therefore this award reflects a lower figure than the collective sum of regional funding received to date. EMCCA since agreed to adopt a 'matrix' approach to delivery throughout 2025/2026, passporting the majority of their 12-month UKSPF budget to local authorities, with a proportion of funding set aside to facilitate regional commissioning. EMCCA's response provides each place with the ability to continue to invest flexibly in their interventions across the three priorities of Communities and Place, People and Skills and Supporting Local Businesses.

- 1.8 The approach adopted, resulted in a funding allocation for Newark and Sherwood of £1.6m for the financial year 2025/2026, with a requirement to spend by 31 March 2026. A summary of all UKSPF/REPF received to date (by MHCLG directly and through EMCCA), is provided below in Table 1.

Table 1. Newark and Sherwood UKSPF/REPF allocations 2022 to 2026

Scheme	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	Total
UKSPF	£399,360	£798,720	£2,092,646	£1,345,487	£4,636,212
REPF	n/a	£445,708	£445,708	£267,369	£1,158,785

Local Delivery

- 1.9 It is at the discretion of each local authority to decide the most appropriate route to programme delivery and uses of funds to achieve the programme objectives. In developing original local plans, support was sought from key partners and community stakeholders, to inform priorities, as well as potential routes to delivery. This resulted in a decision to adopt a hybrid delivery approach, including interventions through in-house teams, commissioning and procurement, as well as various grant funding opportunities for local organisations. A summary of all projects delivered through the UKSPF/REPF programme from April 2022 to March 2026, is provided in **Appendix A** of this report.
- 1.10 Officers continue to work closely with key partners and neighbouring authorities to identify and drive forward potential collaborative opportunities throughout programme delivery. In particular, the council participated in the joint commissioning of UKSPF initiatives, where it was determined to demonstrate best value for money for local people, and economics of scale. This was most applicable to the business support investment strand, where a specialist advice service was procured across Nottinghamshire, as well as opportunities relating to employment support for economically inactive residents.
- 1.11 Throughout the lifetime of the programme, Officers have identified, monitored and reported on a variety of outputs and outcomes, to demonstrate the results of scheme delivery. Overall, local achievements exceed targets set out within the original investment plan, helping to demonstrate value for money in terms of local impact vs investment. The specific quantitative metrics used to monitor progress are selected based on the requirements of UK Government's prospectus, however further qualitative data has been collated locally and is in the process of being gathered still, to strengthen the understanding of investment, and to inform future strategy and decision making. Over 40 different indicators are reported back to Government, with examples of local achievements demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Example UKSPF/REPF Outputs and Outcomes in Newark and Sherwood (to March 2025)

- 314 businesses supported
- 91 jobs safeguarded
- 24 jobs created
- 28 businesses decarbonisation plans developed

- 63 businesses with improved sustainability
- 85 businesses with improved productivity
- 6 new businesses created
- 266 residents gaining life skills
- 42 economically inactive residents newly in job searching
- 162 residents completing training courses or obtaining qualifications
- 653 residents volunteering
- Over 3000 trees planted
- 120 community events delivered
- 15 community facilities created or improved

Learning, Challenges and Opportunities

- 1.12 In addition to monitoring the progress of scheme delivery, programme evaluation is key to informing future strategy, understanding local trends, lessons learned and opportunities for future investment.
- 1.13 Learning and performance to date highlights the positive impact of collaboration across local authority boundaries, particularly where best value for money can be obtained, and where service provision needs are consistent across multiple neighbouring areas. Conversely, through UKSPF, the Council has also delivered flexible, place-based initiatives on a local scale, tailored to individual community needs within the district. Examples include the successful delivery of job clubs in areas of the district facing higher levels of economic inactivity, or courses tailored to specific skills gaps demonstrated within certain communities or wards. This includes bespoke routes to engagement, utilising existing partnerships and networks to maximise scheme participation, and in turn impact for local people. Similarly, business support schemes were designed based on the needs of nearby growing sectors, many of which can be considered unique to Newark and Sherwood. This highlights the importance of ensuring local flexibility within the design of any future, or comparable programme's delivery, particularly where the investment aims to engage to local businesses, residents and communities.
- 1.14 In addition to providing programme grant funding to a number of local organisations, the council has supported the community and voluntary sector to implement projects and accelerate their delivery within the required timescales. Throughout delivery, many local community organisations have demonstrated significant ambition and willingness to deliver, but, at times, required further capacity, experience and knowledge, in order to successfully implement projects through to completion. This can be considered a potential area of need, where additional support may be required to help the capacity of the sector in driving forwards funding bids, preparing schemes, and to aid delivery.
- 1.15 The council has successfully defrayed all UKSPF and REPF expenditure to March 2025, and is on track to spend the remainder of funds allocated for the current financial year. Linked to the challenge described above, it should however be noted that this achievement required close monitoring and auditing of spend, to ensure any potential underspends were addressed and rediverted into additional schemes, as soon as possible, in order to maximise local investment opportunities. Similarly, as a short-term funding stream with restrictive spend deadlines, certain projects were not able

to be supported through programme investment, with deliverability at times, overriding the strategic importance of potential schemes, or limiting long-term planning. It is positive to report that these challenges are recognised by the UK Government, and it is hoped to be reflected in future programme delivery, or replacement schemes.

- 1.16 Local projects were carefully selected for funding based on the long-term sustainability of investment following initial, or 'one off' funding awards through UKSPF/REPF. Examples include grants to support capacity, deliver a short-term capital scheme, or pilot activity to then become self-sustaining. In these cases, significant ongoing investment is not required, however inevitably, several schemes, due to their nature, would not be considered viable, without a level of continued subsidy. Examples of this include programmes to support economically inactive residents, or capital funding for large scale improvements to community and voluntary premises.
- 1.17 With the above in mind, it should be noted that further programme delivery beyond the 2025/2026 financial year, remains unconfirmed by the UK Government at this stage. It is anticipated that any potential future funding may be presented in the form of a replacement or revised scheme, rather than an extension to existing arrangements, due to the current year being described as a transition, or continuity year. Should future funding be confirmed, it is recommended that investment plans are developed as soon as possible, to enable the prompt mobilisation of schemes from April 2026, and to limit gaps in service delivery. During this period of funding uncertainty, Officers will continue to work closely with EMCCA and neighbouring authorities to identify collaborative opportunities and routes to future programme delivery, as well as potential alternative investment sources, which may become available.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

- 2.1 It is recommended that PPIC note:
- The updates regarding the local approach to UKSPF/REPF programme delivery and the achievements to date, as detailed throughout this report.
 - The opportunities presented in relation to potential future UKSPF/REPF investment, noting the current uncertainty of programme funding, beyond March 2026, as detailed throughout this report.
- 2.2 The delivery of UKSPF and REPF is an identified activity outlined within the Community Plan, linking back to several key economic and regeneration related objectives.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN25-26/343)

- 3.1 As outlined in paragraph 1.8, the Council has received a total of £5,794,997 in grant funding—comprising £4,636,212 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and £1,158,785 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), allocated by MHCLG up to 2024/25 and EMCCA for 2025/26.
- 3.2 All grant funding received up to 31 March 2025 has been fully utilised. During this period, the UKSPF allocation was split 70% revenue and 30% capital.
- 3.3 The report confirms the expectation that the 2025/26 allocation will also be fully spent, with the funding split 56% revenue and 44% capital for that year. REPF in all cases is 100% Capital.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- REPF Prospectus [Rural England Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK](#)
- UKSPF Prospectus [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK](#)
- 18 February 2025 Cabinet Report; UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26
- 10 June 2025 Cabinet Report; UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Grants 2025-2026

Appendix A - UKSPF/REPF Local Priority Interventions and Projects (2022 - 2026)

Communities and Place Local Priority Interventions and Projects	
E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sherwood Avenue Park Re-Development - direct delivery (24-25) Footfall Camera Installation - direct delivery (22-24) 'Shaping Sherwood's Revival' scheme contribution - direct delivery (24-26) 	
E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sherwood Community Tree Nursery - grant to Sherwood Forest Trust (UKSPF/REPF 23-25) 	
E4: Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest Corner feasibility - direct delivery (UKSPF 22-23) 	
E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Mary's Remembrance Gardens Lighting Scheme - direct delivery (UKSPF 24-25) 	
E6: Support of local, arts, cultural and heritage projects.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newark Creates programme - direct delivery (UKSPF 23-25) St Marys 'Re-awakening' project - grant to St Marys PCC (UKSPF 24-25) Festival Equipment - grant to Southwell Music Festival (REPF 25-26) * 	
E7: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Travel feasibility - commissioning and procurement (UKSPF 23-24) Trent Vale Trail improvements and creation - grant to Friends of TVT (UKSPF/REPF 22-25) Balderton Village Trail creation - grant to Balderton Parish Council (UKSPF 24-25) 	
E8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Heart of Newark contribution- direct delivery (UKSPF 24-25) 	
E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adventure Guides project - grant to YMCA (UKSPF 22-23) Door 2 Door scheme - grant to Newark and Sherwood CVS (UKSPF 22-23) Premier League Primary Stars project - grant to Nottingham Forest Community Trust (UKSPF 23-25) Cost of Living Community Voucher project - direct delivery (UKSPF 22-23) NSDC Community Development Grant Scheme contribution - direct delivery (UKSPF 24-25) Site improvements - capital grant to Feel Good Gardens CIC (REPF 25-26) * 	
E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site improvements - Grant to Rainworth and Blidworth Boxing Club (REPF 24-25) Elston Sports Pavillion creation - Grant to Elston Parish Council (REPF 24-25) Site improvements - Capital grant to Newark R&M Cricket Club (UKSPF/REPF 24-25) Site improvements - Capital grant to Balderton Cricket Club (REPF 25-26) * Site improvements - Capital grant to Farnsfield Cricket Club (REPF 25-26) * Site improvements - Capital grant to Southwell Brincliffe Hockey Club (REPF 25-26) * Site improvements - Capital grant to Caythorpe Cricket Club (REPF 25-26) * Site improvements - Capital Grant to Bilsthorpe Welfare and Blidworth Bengals (REPF 25-26) * 	
E11: Building community capacity through investment in community facilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boughton Community Hub creation - direct delivery (UKSPF/REPF 23-25) Site expansion and improvements - grant to the 'The Shed' Collingham (REPF 24-25) 	

E14: Funding to support relevant community feasibility studies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Shaping Sherwood’s Revival’ feasibility - commissioning/procurement (UKSPF 22-25) • Community Based Assets feasibility - commissioning/procurement (UKSPF 23-24) • Bilsthorpe Community Facility feasibility - grant to Bilsthorpe Parish Council (UKSPF 24-26)

Supporting Local Businesses
E19: Increasing investment in research and development at the local level. Investment to support the diffusion of innovation knowledge and activities. Support the commercialisation of ideas, encouraging collaboration and accelerating the path to market so that more ideas translate into industrial and commercial practices.
E21: Funding for the development and support of appropriate innovation infrastructure at the local level.
E24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, ‘incubators’ and ‘accelerators’ for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.
E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy.
E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Accelerator Programme’ - commissioned to East Midlands Chamber (UKSPF 23-25) • Small Business De-carbonisation and Sustainability scheme - grants of up to £5k per business (UKSPF 24-25)
E22: Investing in enterprise infrastructure and employment/innovation site development projects. This can help to unlock site development projects which will support growth in places.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 Stodman Street scheme contribution - direct delivery (UKSPF 23-25) • St Marks Place feasibility study - commissioning/procurement (UKSPF 23-24)
E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Start-up Scale-up’ project - grant to NBV Enterprise Solutions (UKSPF 23-25) • Business Advisory Service - SLA with Nottinghamshire County Council (UKSPF 23-26) • Small Business Growth and Productivity Scheme - grants up to £10k per business (UKSPF 22-26)
E1.1 Capital grant funding for small scale investment in small and micro enterprises in rural areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Business Grant scheme - capital grants between £10k and £50k (REPF 23-26)

People and Skills
E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Re-New’ project - grant to Inspire Learning (UKSPF 23-26) • ‘Grow’ project - grant to Framework Housing Association (UKSPF 23-26)
E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘BoostING’ project- grant to Lincoln College (UKSPF 23-26)
E38: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs and high-value

qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that cannot be met through mainstream funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Young Persons Practical Skills Development programme' - grant to Volunteer It Yourself CIC (22-25)
E35: Support for volunteering and enrichment activities to support individuals that are economically inactive or at risk of, or considered NEET aged 11+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative education project - NSDC direct delivery (UKSPF 24-26) • 'Golden Thread' project - grant to Newark and Sherwood CVS (UKSPF 24-26)

**awarded on an 'in-principle' basis, subject to due-diligence checks.*