

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet, 11 March 2025

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Funding – 2025-26

Accountable member:

Cllr Rowena Hay, Leader, Cheltenham Borough Council

Accountable officer:

Helen Mole, Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment

Ward(s) affected:

N/A

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

To update Cabinet on the allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (“UKSPF”) for 2025-26 and seek approval for the approach to the delivery of UKSPF projects along with the necessary delegations.

Recommendations: That Cabinet:

- 1. Notes that the council has been awarded UKSPF funding of £385,390 for 2025-26;**
 - 2. Approves acceptance of the UKSPF funding, noting the reporting requirements and delivery arrangements imposed by the Funder;**
 - 3. Notes the decision by Cllr Rowena Hay, leader Cheltenham Borough Council, to allocate £102,848 of the funding to enter into two contracts to continue the delivery of Cheltenham Growth Hub;**
 - 4. Delegates authority to Councillor Rowena Hay, Leader of Cheltenham Borough Council, in consultation with the UKSPF assessment panel and Cabinet members, to allocate funding for delivery of projects in line with UKSPF criteria and corporate plan priorities.**
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1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

As detailed throughout the report.

Signed off by: Paul Jones, Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

The UKSPF imposes significant reporting, monitoring and delivery obligations on the Council. The Council should therefore ensure that such obligations are considered for any spending under this funding. Where the Council uses the funding to procure goods, works and/or services, the Council's Contract Rules and the Procurement Act 2023 (for matters procured after 24th February 2025) will need to be considered.

Subsidy control must also be considered for this matter – there may be implications for any grant, service or loan approved under this scheme.

One Legal will be able to advise on procurement, subsidy control and any other considerations for this matter, and can provide appropriate grant and other agreements to aid the Council in complying with its obligations under its own grant agreement with the Funder.

Signed off by: One Legal, legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

No environmental and climate change implications are identified at this stage, these will be assessed once projects are selected.

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Making Cheltenham the Cyber Capital of the UK
- Working with residents, communities and businesses to help make Cheltenham #netzero by 2030
- Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity
- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

An equality impact assessment is included at Appendix 2.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

Regular monitoring and reporting will be carried out with project leads, in addition to six-monthly reviews via the Government reporting system, Delta. There will be ongoing financial monitoring with the Finance Business Partner.

2 Background

2.1 In the Autumn budget, the Government announced one more year of UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) with the stated aim of providing a 'smooth transition from the existing UKSPF programme to a new, future funding framework'. It was announced in December 2024 that in April 2025, Cheltenham Borough Council will receive an allocation of £385,390, being £71,155 capital and £314,235 revenue funding. Of this, the council may retain 4% for administration, totalling £15,415.60. This funding may only be spent on activities taking place between 1/4/25 and 31/3/26.

2.2 Authorities have the flexibility to spend funds within the [UKSPF priorities](#). The broad priorities and themes are set out below:

Priorities

- Communities and Place
- Supporting Local Business
- People and Skills

Themes

- Healthy, safe and inclusive communities
- Thriving places
- Support for business
- Employability
- Skills

2.3 For Cheltenham, projects will also need to align with the [Cheltenham Corporate Plan](#).

2.4 A decision was published on 11 February to continue funding the Cheltenham Growth Hub utilising £102,848 of the 2025-26 UKSPF allocation to ensure continuity of service. The Growth Hub provides business support to start-up and existing businesses in the Cheltenham area, linked with the countywide service and utilising the national Growth Hub branding. The decision notice is linked in the Background Information section of this report.

2.5 With the allocation of £102,848 to the Growth Hub, plus the £15,415.60

administration allowance, this leaves a balance of £267,126.40 to allocate to projects which meet the stated objectives.

2.6 There are strict timescales in place for spend of the UKSPF allocation with MHCLG stating that all projects must be delivered by 31 March 2026. To effectively deliver within this timeframe, it is recommended that authority is delegated for allocation of funding to Cllr Rowena Hay, leader Cheltenham Borough Council, in consultation with Cabinet members and the UKSPF assessment panel.

2.7 Projects will be assessed against a framework which will include reference to UKSPF outputs and outcomes and the objectives of the Cheltenham Corporate Plan. This will ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved for the town within the criteria specified.

3 Reasons for recommendations

3.1 Delegating authority for the decisions on allocation of funding will reduce delays caused by process and will ensure that projects can commence as soon as funding is in place, thereby minimising the risk of under-performance or non-delivery.

4 Alternative options considered

4.1 The council could choose not to accept the funding, but this is not recommended as this allocation will enable the delivery of projects and services which will benefit the town.

4.2 Members could choose to request that decisions on funding are brought back to Cabinet, but this would lead to delays in project start date and could jeopardise delivery within the timeframes permitted. Any funding which is not spent by 31 March 2026 would have to be given back to the government.

5 Consultation and feedback

5.1 Engagement with Cabinet members, review of the existing projects delivered via UKSPF.

6 Key risks

6.1 If Cabinet opt not to delegate authority for decisions on funding, there is a risk of lower performance of funded projects due to the delay in commencement of these.

6.2 Once funding is allocated, the key risks and progress with delivery will be monitored for each project. MHCLG require six-monthly reports setting out progress with spend and delivery of outputs and outcomes.

Report author:

Helen Mole, Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Background information:

[Decision to continue delivery of Growth Hub business support - February 2025](#)

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
	If Cabinet opt not to delegate authority for decisions on funding, then there is a risk of lower performance of funded projects due to the lack of time to deliver these.	Cabinet	3	1	4	Reduce	Ensure early allocation of funding and early start date for projects	Helen Mole	ASAP
	If project managers don't deliver the outputs and outcomes of their projects, then there will be issues with reporting to MHCLG.	Helen Mole	2	2	4	Accept	Ensure ongoing management and monitoring of projects	Helen Mole	Ongoing 2025-26

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Helen Mole	Service Area: Place Marketing and Inward Investment
Title: Head of place marketing and inward investment	Date of assessment: February 2025
Signature: 	

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Other

If other, please specify: Decision

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Accept 2025-26 UKSPF Funding and delegate authority for spend.

Is this new or existing?

New or proposed

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:	UKSPF Funding will be utilised to deliver projects which benefit the people of Cheltenham.
Objectives:	Objectives will be set for each project in line with the UKSPF priorities and the Cheltenham Corporate Plan .
Outcomes:	Outcomes will be set for each project in line with the UKSPF priorities and the Cheltenham Corporate Plan .

Benefits:	The benefits will vary depending on the projects which are selected. Each successful project will be required to carry out its own EqIA.

e. What are the expected impacts?

Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.

No

Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?

Unsure

Please provide an explanation for your answer:

Further assessment will be carried out once projects are selected.