

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 17 March 2025

**Report Title**

UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

**Report Author(s)**

Michael Holmes, Policy and Strategy Officer  
michael.holmes@rotherham.gov.uk

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-wide

**Report Summary**

The report sets out proposals and recommendations for use of Rotherham's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) £3.28 million allocation in 2025/26. A transitional year allocation, this builds upon the £7.2m of UKSPF that the borough received over three years from April 2022 to March 2025 and precedes the integrated settlement due to be in place for South Yorkshire from April 2026.

**Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Endorse the projects for submission to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority for award of UKSPF for 2025/26 as follows:
  - a) Local Business Support
    - i) £945,256 for sub-regional business support supporting three strands of Launchpad (start-up support), Productivity and Low Carbon.
    - ii) £390,000 (£270,000 capital) for shop unit grants and market improvements.
    - iii) £137,667 for social value to increase opportunities for local businesses and ensure delivery against commitments.

- b) People and Skills
  - i) £444,985 for a skills programme incorporating Ambition (children and young people), Core Skills (community-delivered basic skills training) and Advance (support to progress in work).
  - ii) £275,000 for Children’s Capital of Culture to extend the traineeship programme.
  
- c) Communities and Place
  - i) £200,000 for Children’s Capital of Culture, to provide additional capacity during the festival year, supporting ongoing programme development and delivery, as well as marketing and design costs.
  - ii) £255,000 for Events, delivering a wide-ranging programme of events and festivals in the town centre.
  - iii) £359,549 for community-based support, including ongoing delivery of local advice sessions and engagement events through Open Arms Rotherham, and further funding for Reaching Out (£30,000) - strengthening connections with Rotherham’s diverse communities.
  - iv) £86,000 (capital) for Active Lives, providing match funding to enable delivery of a multi-use games area.

2. Agrees to delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to determine revised and final allocations for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This is to include provision for other eligible actions within the use of the fund should it not be possible to achieve full spend of the grant through the allocations above.

**List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 Financial summary
- Appendix 2 Project details
- Appendix 3 Equality screening (form A)
- Appendix 4 Equality assessment (form B)
- Appendix 5 Climate impact assessment

**Background Papers**

August 2023 Cabinet report: UK Shared Prosperity Fund years two and three

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **UK Shared Prosperity Fund – 2025/26 transitional funding**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 UKSPF is a government-funded programme channelled through South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), introduced as the successor fund to the European Structural Funds.
- 1.2 Rotherham received £7.2m of UKSPF over three years from April 2022 to March 2025, comprising £5.6m revenue and £1.6m capital (including £400,000 specifically for rural areas). This was allocated across the following three themes or 'investment priorities':
  - Supporting Local Business
  - People and Skills
  - Communities and Place
- 1.3 For 2025/26, the government is providing a further year of 'transitional' UKSPF funding, but with a reduced allocation compared to 2024/25. UKSPF activity must broadly align with the government's five national missions. From 2026/27, it is anticipated that SYMCA will receive an integrated settlement, which could incorporate further UKSPF allocations alongside other funding streams.
- 1.4 Rotherham's share of the SYMCA allocation for 2025/26 is £3.28 million, with £2.86 million revenue and £420,000 capital, a total reduction of £1.28m compared to 2024/25. This report sets out proposals for use of the funding.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 For this transitional year of funding, the proposed approach is to:
  - maintain delivery of key business support and skills projects prior to the introduction of an integrated settlement from 2026/27.
  - continue to support community-based projects across Rotherham, including events and Open Arms one-stop-shop advice sessions.
  - provide ongoing support for Children's Capital of Culture during this festival year.
  - fund other projects that reflect current priorities for Rotherham, including initiatives to rejuvenate the town centre.
- 2.2 There is no match funding requirement for UKSPF, but the outlined approach will complement budget investments that seek to create an inclusive economy and support residents with the high cost of living.
- 2.3 Projects will support Rotherham businesses to start up and grow, enable people to develop their skills and achieve their aspirations, improve the town centre offer and increase footfall, and provide local help and advice in the communities where it is most needed.

- 2.4 Consideration has also been given to the deliverability of projects, bearing in mind that this is a one-year allocation. Most of the projects are therefore continuations from the current programme.
- 2.5 A summary of the proposals for each theme is set out below, with a more detailed breakdown included at Appendix 2 and an overall financial summary provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.6 **Supporting Local Business**  
Three projects operating across South Yorkshire - Launchpad, Productivity, and Low Carbon - will:
- help entrepreneurs to test and develop their business ideas.
  - offer wide-ranging support to boost business productivity.
  - support businesses to transition to the low carbon economy.
- 2.7 A new 'shop units grants' programme will be available for businesses to improve shop units in the town centre and on other local high streets. Also in the town centre, additional resources will be provided to improve trading conditions in the market during the ongoing redevelopment.
- 2.8 Finally in this theme, further funding is proposed to promote the social value agenda in Rotherham, working with local businesses to help them access opportunities, and ensuring social value commitments are delivered.
- 2.9 **People and Skills**  
It is proposed that the Ambition and Advance projects are maintained in 2025/26 as part of sub-regional skills programmes. Ambition will continue to address the multiple social, emotional and health barriers to learning and employment faced by some young people in Rotherham. Advance provides in-work help for those looking to advance or change their careers.
- 2.10 These projects complement the Employment Solutions project, which will be funded via the Council from April 2025. In addition, there is a proposed contribution to a local Core Skills programme. This is intended to build on the success of the community-focused elements of the Multiply numeracy skills programme, as well as ensuring strong links with the new economic inactivity trailblazer, known locally as Pathways to Work.
- 2.11 The proposals also include traineeships for a further cohort of young people as part of Children's Capital of Culture.
- 2.12 **Communities and place**  
Building on the extensive community-based programme of activity delivered through the current UKSPF programme, this theme will see ongoing delivery of support and advice sessions in neighbourhoods across Rotherham, with targeted help for residents who are financially excluded or isolated.
- 2.13 Further developmental work with local volunteers and groups will help to sustain activity, which will also include a series of community engagement sessions taking place in every ward.

- 2.14 Alongside this, continued funding for Reaching Out will further strengthen the Council's mechanisms for engaging with under-represented or seldom heard groups. This will help to ensure that plans and projects are informed by and effectively reach all of Rotherham's diverse communities.
- 2.15 The theme also includes additional support for delivery of Children's Capital of Culture, as well as for an extensive events programme in the town centre.
- 2.16 Finally, a capital allocation for Active Lives will provide match funding to the Football Foundation's Playzones programme, enabling the creation of a new multi-use games area.
- 2.17 **Project and programme management**  
Following endorsement of the overall programme by Cabinet, it is proposed that the final and revised allocations for individual projects are approved by the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council. This includes use of the unallocated capital funding of £62,500 and unallocated revenue funding of £127,143.
- 2.18 It is intended that projects will be submitted to SYMCA (as the accountable body for the funding) for final approval as a package of projects within a single application (other than projects that are part of South Yorkshire wide programmes). This will enable the Council to have a single contract with SYMCA for the delivery of local projects, streamlining administrative processes and allowing project delivery to commence as quickly as possible.
- 2.19 It is anticipated that there will be no ongoing revenue implications for the Council arising from the proposed programme of activity. As part of the expected transition to an integrated settlement from 2026/27, SYMCA require project applications to describe how they will manage closedown of activity after March 2026 or shift to alternative funding streams.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 The preferred option is the programme of activity set out above, which is deliverable within the one-year window, retains key projects from the current programme, and reflects the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 An alternative option would be to develop and commission an entirely new programme for 2025/26. This would risk losing the infrastructure that has been established to deliver effective activity across the three themes. It would also pose significant risks for developing and delivering an impactful programme within the limited timescales.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Discussions have been held with relevant services and partners to develop the proposed programme.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 Outline project proposals have already been developed. Subject to Cabinet's endorsement, detailed proposals will be brought forward imminently for approval in line with the delegation in this report.
- 5.2 Ongoing coordination and oversight of Rotherham's UKSPF programme will continue to be carried out by Assistant Chief Executive's directorate, working with project leads across the Council and colleagues in Finance.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 The report sets out the proposed allocation of UKSPF to revenue and capital projects. The planned investments should not result in any additional ongoing costs for the Council. If any additional costs are incurred, these should be managed within the existing service budget allocations and mitigations identified to ensure this does not result in an overspend position.
- 6.2 Any expenditure with 3<sup>rd</sup> party suppliers for the supply of goods, works or services arising from the project proposals indicated in this report will be subject to the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and the relevant procurement legislation (Public Contract Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023).

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The proposed projects are consistent with the requirements of the UKSPF programme, and it will be necessary for the Council to comply with the funding agreements in respect of the programme. Where necessary, the funding to be provided to the projects referred to in the report will need to comply with the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 Due to the nature of funding arrangements, HR will provide advice in relation to the most appropriate contractual and recruitment options for any new fixed term posts required in line with internal processes.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 UKSPF will have a positive impact for children and young people with £126,149 allocated to the Ambition project, providing targeted support to young people who face barriers to accessing education and skills provision. In addition, the £475,000 allocated to the Children's Capital of Culture will extend the successful traineeship programme and provide additional capacity to ensure successful delivery of Children's Capital of Culture in 2025.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 An Equalities Screening (Form A) and Equalities Assessment (Form B) have been undertaken. Both are appended to this report.

- 10.2 The assessment shows that several projects are specifically focused on breaking down barriers to inclusion and offering opportunities to disadvantaged groups.
- 10.3 There is also a proposal (Reaching Out) to further strengthen the mechanisms by which the Council reaches out across its diverse communities.
- 10.4 Whilst some projects do monitor the extent to which people with protected characteristics access and benefit from the support provided, this is not comprehensive across the programme. Where relevant and practical, the requirement to collect, analyse and act upon equality-related information will be built into projects' monitoring requirements.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 Activity that could contribute towards an increase in emissions includes the delivery of events, which could see an increase in journeys via private transport and a consequent increase in emissions. Events are not all concentrated in the town centre, with many taking place in local communities, which should reduce travel. The town centre is accessible by public transport for many people. Residents living in and around the town centre may be able to walk (or cycle) to events unless they have restricted mobility.
- 11.2 The Low Carbon project provides grants to businesses to enable them to reduce their energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions.
- 11.3 The social value proposal has the potential to decrease emissions by increasing local spend and encouraging local supply through anchor organisations' procurement activity.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1. Key partners have been consulted in the development of Rotherham's UKSPF programme and are involved in delivery.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 Active management of the programme through quarterly monitoring and returns provided to SYMCA will enable any over and under commitments to be identified and adjustments made to the programme to ensure full spend and outcomes from the grant.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

Fiona Boden, Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence,  
Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	03/03/25
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	28/02/25
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	28/02/25

*Report Author:* Michael Holmes, Policy and Strategy Officer  
[michael.holmes@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:michael.holmes@rotherham.gov.uk)

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).