

Corporate Policy Committee

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| Date of Meeting: | 6 October 2022 |
| Report Title: | UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Investment Plan Update |
| Report of: | Jayne Traverse, Executive Director – Place |
| Report Reference No: | CP/49/22-23 |
| Ward(s) Affected: | All wards |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Corporate Policy Committee on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), including an outline of anticipated governance and project selection arrangements.
- 1.2. The UKSPF is an external funding resource and part of the government's Levelling Up programme. The Cheshire East allocation of the fund will contribute to the Council's priority outcomes as defined in the Corporate Plan 2021-2025:
 - 1.2.1. **OPEN:** Interventions to be taken forward utilising UKSPF have been agreed with support and advice from many stakeholder organisations and endorsed by a newly formed Local Partnership Group. That group will continue to play a role in guiding the projects selected to be taken forward utilising the fund.
 - 1.2.2. **FAIR:** UKSPF is a component of the Levelling Up agenda so is focussed on levelling up inequalities, supporting the Council's ambitions to promote fairness and opportunity for all and to create inclusive and resilient communities.
 - 1.2.3. **GREEN:** Several UKSPF funded interventions will support our priorities to protect and enhance our environment and tackle the climate emergency.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) as launched in April 2022 is intended to supersede the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) for the years 2022-23 to 2024-25.
- 2.2. Under the UKSPF, Cheshire East has a confirmed £1,563,749 allocation for the Multiply Adult Numeracy Programme and an anticipated core UKSPF allocation of £11,585,762 conditional on the development of an Investment Plan by the Council and the approval of that plan by DLUHC.
- 2.3. On 20 July 2022, following recommendations from Corporate Policy Committee, Council considered a report on the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).
- 2.4. Council noted that the Chief Executive, S151 Officer and Leader were required to approve the Investment Plan to allow its submission to DLUHC on 1st August.
- 2.5. Council also delegated authority to the Executive Director - Place to manage the fund programme, taking all necessary actions in the interests of maximising the impacts of the fund aligned to the fund parameters and local priorities and aligned to the core UK SPF Investment Plan.
- 2.6. The core UKSPF Investment Plan was duly developed informed by local stakeholder engagement and a new Local Partnership Group and was approved by the Chief Executive, S151 Officer and Executive Director - Place, and, as required by DLUHC, the Leader of the Council, and submitted to meet the government's deadline.
- 2.7. As the Investment Plan was at an early stage of development at the time Council met in July, it was not possible to give any details of the Investment Plan content or proposed governance arrangements for the fund.
- 2.8. This report has therefore been prepared to share more detail on the content of the Investment Plan as submitted to DLUHC and to outline current thinking on proposed fund management arrangements, including project selection processes in the interests of openness and transparency.
- 2.9. Additionally, on 3rd September the government launched a new Rural England Prosperity Fund (Rural Fund) as a top up to the UKSPF for eligible local authorities. Cheshire East is eligible and will receive up to an additional £827,627, subject to the preparation, submission and approval of an addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Corporate Policy Committee:

- 3.1.1 Note the overview of the Cheshire East core UKSPF Investment Plan as submitted to the Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities on 1st August 2022, set out in the body of the report and Appendix A.
- 3.1.2 As Accountable Body, agree the Terms of Reference of the new Cheshire East Shared Prosperity Fund Local Partnership Group set out at Appendix B.
- 3.1.3 Note the proposed governance arrangements and proposed project selection processes for the UKSPF.
- 3.1.4 Delegate authority to the Executive Director – Place to:
 - 3.1.4.1 Submit a completed Rural Fund addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan for Cheshire East after consultation with the Cheshire East Members on the UKSPF Local Partnership Group;
 - 3.1.4.2 Make any amendments to the addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan as required by government in order to release the funding or as required during the plan period to enable the effective spend of the fund;
 - 3.1.4.3 Accept the Rural Fund allocation for Cheshire East and approve a Supplementary Capital Estimate of up to £827,627 and to allocate the funding as set out within the Cheshire East UKSPF Investment Plan addendum;
 - 3.1.4.4 Manage the Cheshire East Rural Fund 2023-25 programme, taking all necessary actions in the interests of maximising the impacts of the fund aligned to the fund parameters and local priorities, and aligned to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan.

4 Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Council is committed to being open and transparent. As the Investment Plan was at an early stage of development at the time Committee met in July, it was not possible to give details of the Investment Plan content or proposed governance arrangements. This report sets out further detail on the Investment Plan in the interests of transparency.
- 4.2 Authority was delegated to the Executive Director Place to take all necessary actions relating to the UKSPF in July 2022 to enable effective management of the fund. Actions required for effective fund management will include but may not be restricted to: approving clear processes for project selection; approving arrangements for fund governance including liaison with the Local Partnership Group and other stakeholders; ensuring appropriate monitoring of outputs, outcomes and budget spend; ensuring appropriate reports on progress are given to elected members.

- 4.3 The proposed project selection and governance arrangements are being shared for transparency and openness within this report. Performance against the Investment Plan will be included in future Directorate Annual Performance Reviews and report to Economy and Growth Committee.
- 4.4 The Rural Fund had not been announced when authority was delegated to officers to enable effective management of the core UKSPF. Authority is therefore sought for similar delegations to enable the Rural Fund to be managed alongside the core UKSPF programme.

5 Other Options Considered

- 5.1 Progressing with managing the UKSPF without providing an update for Corporate Policy Committee was considered but does not provide a level of full transparency aligned to the Council's core value of openness.

6 Background

6.1 Context

- 6.1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is intended to supersede European Union (EU) structural funding, specifically the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). It is not a direct replacement for these funds and has been designed to provide more freedom to spend aligned to local opportunities and challenges within the broad parameters of the fund.
- 6.1.2 In April 2022 the UK government conditionally allocated up to £13,121,309 from the UKSPF spread over the three years 2022-23 to 2024-25 for Cheshire East, naming Cheshire East Council as the lead authority for the fund within the borough. Of this overall allocation, £1,535,547 was ringfenced for the Multiply Adult Numeracy Programme, with £11,585,762 to be spent on interventions aligned to one or more of three specified investment priorities: Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business, and People and Skills.
- 6.1.3 These allocations were conditional on submission of Investment Plans for approval by the government. In the case of the Multiply Investment Plan this required approval by the Department for Education (DFE) with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) responsible for approval of the core UKSPF Investment Plan. The timescales given for development of the required Investment Plans was limited, and particularly in the case of the core UKSPF Investment Plan, required input from many local stakeholders and partner organisations and the establishment of a new Local Partnership Group (LPG).
- 6.1.4 Corporate Policy Committee were appraised of the requirement to develop Investment Plans on 14th July 2022 and at that time only the Investment

Plan for the Multiply element of the fund had been developed, with the core UKSPF Investment Plan still at a very early stage.

6.2 Update

- 6.2.1 Throughout June and July 2022 Council officers engaged with several local partner and stakeholder organisations in an effort to identify priority local issues and opportunities aligned to the objectives of the UKSPF. This included, consideration of existing local strategies, creating an online proforma for submission of views, consideration of submitted emails, and running workshops on 28 June and 18 July including breakout sessions to discuss the 3 investment priorities.
- 6.2.2 Concurrently, local organisations and representative stakeholders, including MPs, were, as required by the UKSPF prospectus, invited to join a Cheshire East SPF Local Partnership Group (LPG). The purpose of the LPG is not just to support development on the core UKSPF Investment Plan, but also to provide advice on strategic fit and deliverability throughout the lifetime of the fund. The Terms of Reference of that group are set out at Appendix B .
- 6.2.3 Membership is drawn from public sector, private sector and civil society organisations as required by government. Elected member representatives from Cheshire East Council on the Local Partnership Group include the Leader and Deputy Leader and Council Committee Chairs in respect of Economy and Growth, Environment and Communities, Children and Families and Adults and Health. All five local Members of Parliament and representatives from 11 Town Councils, have also been invited to be members of the Local Partnership Group. Neighbouring authority representatives have also been confirmed from Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Councils.
- 6.2.4 The LPG also includes local businesses and the business support sector, representatives from the LEP, the Integrated Care System and Crewe Town Board as well as members representing the voluntary, community, faith, social enterprise, and civil society sector, members representing rural and environmental considerations, the Police and Crime commissioners' office, public health, DWP, local education and skills providers and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- 6.2.5 After consideration of stakeholder's views, an Investment Plan was developed for the core UKSPF discussed and supported at the inaugural meeting of the LPG. This was subsequently approved by the Chief Executive, S151 Officer, Executive Director- Place and Leader of the Council, and submitted to DLUHC on 1st August 2022.
- 6.2.6 Whilst this Investment Plan may be subject to clarifications and amendments and is not therefore necessarily in its final form, an overview of how the allocation is proposed to be split between various investment priorities is set out in Appendix B.

- 6.2.7 The Multiply Investment Plan for the UKSPF allocation ringfenced for the Multiply Adult Numeracy Programme, originally submitted to the DFE on 27th June 2022, has been the subject of clarifications and minor alterations during August 2022, and was signed off by DFE on 23rd August with a minor increase in the Cheshire East allocation to £1,563,749.
- 6.2.8 Whilst it is not anticipated that the core UKSPF Investment Plan will be finalised and signed off by DLUHC until October at the earliest, there is a requirement to spend a proportion of the allocation within the current financial year. To enable this to happen in a planned and managed way officers are working to establish appropriate governance arrangements, resource key roles, establish project selection processes, and to identify interventions and projects for delivery in 22/23.
- 6.2.9 On 20 July 2022 Council delegated authority to the Executive Director - Place to manage the Cheshire East UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2022-25 programme, taking all necessary actions in the interests of maximising the impacts of the fund aligned to the fund parameters and local priorities and aligned to the core UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan. For information and transparency the emerging intentions around fund management are set out in the remainder of this section.
- 6.2.10 Having submitted the core UKSPF Investment Plan to the UK Government, a new 'Rural Fund' was announced on 3rd September. The Rural Fund is a top-up to the UKSPF and is available to eligible local authorities in England for the two years 23/24 and 24/25. An indicative allocation of an additional £827,627 capital for Cheshire East has been made across these two years for eligible projects in rural areas.
- 6.2.11 The Rural Fund will succeed EU funding from LEADER and the Growth Programme which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England. It will support activities that specifically address the particular challenges rural areas face and is complementary to funding used to support rural areas under the existing allocation for UKSPF and should not replace funding plans for rural areas already made under the UKSPF.
- 6.2.12 To access the allocation under the Rural Fund, additional information will need to be submitted as an addendum to the Cheshire East UKSPF Investment Plan. It is currently assumed that it will be possible to adapt emerging arrangements for the management of the core UKSPF to address this additional element. Further detail on the Rural Fund is expected through September and there will be engagement sessions with local authorities and local partners to support the Rural Fund process.

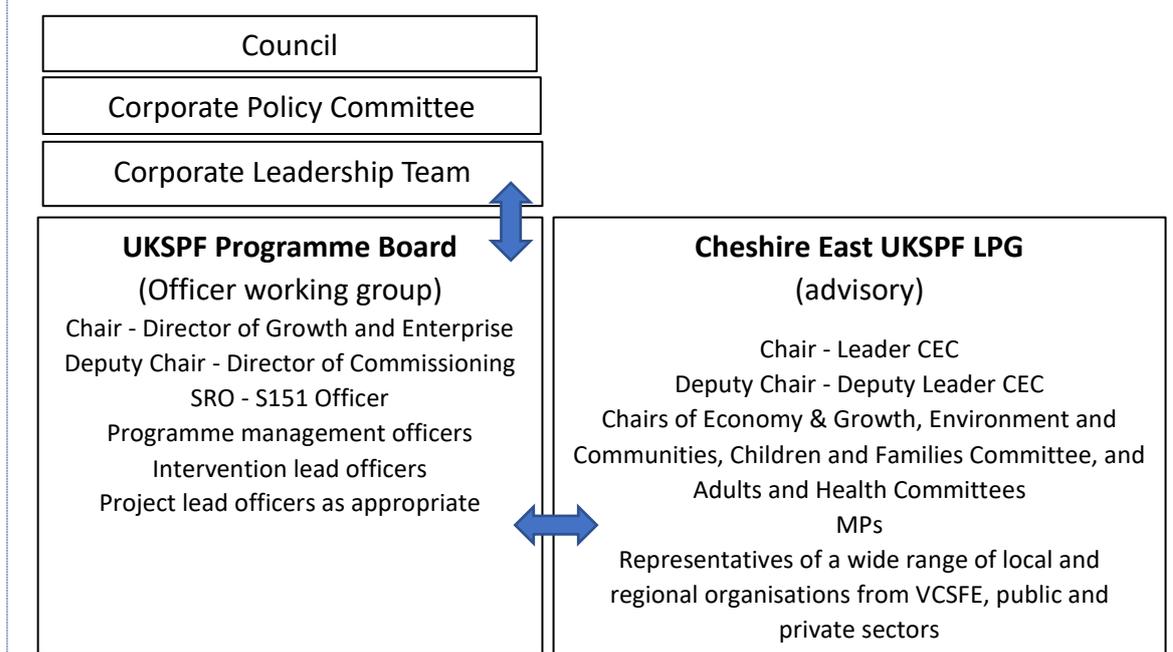
6.3 Fund Governance

- 6.3.1 **Local Partnership Group** The role of the LPG is specified in broad terms in the UKSPF Prospectus and must play a key role in the governance of the

fund moving forward. As set out in the Terms of Reference for the group at Appendix B, the LPG has been formed as an advisory group to the Council as lead authority for the SPF, to support the Council in achieving the outcomes of the UK SPF. The key responsibilities of the group will be to support the finalisation of the Investment Plan if required, and critically, to provide ongoing oversight on strategic fit throughout the lifetime of the plan, ensuring that the fund complements other activities both within the borough and the sub region. The LPG is not intended to be a decision making body, but it is currently anticipated that proposed projects would be fed through this group to check for strategic fit and complementarity, being careful to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

- 6.3.2 **UKSPF Programme Board** In addition to the LPG, a cross directorate council officer working group was established to project manage the development of the core UKSPF Investment Plan. This collaborative cross directorate working group enabled sharing of knowledge and workload during the intense Investment Plan drafting period. The core UKSPF Investment Plan submitted to DLUHC sets out that it is envisaged a similar officer group will be taken as a UKSPF Programme Board overseeing the core UKSPF work programme. It is anticipated that this officer Board will be chaired by a senior manager from Place Directorate with a senior manager from People Directorate as deputy. It is also envisaged that the Board would be attended by the S151 Officer, Programme Manager, lead officers for each intervention type, and as projects are established, by individual project managers as appropriate. The Programme Board would have oversight of both Council projects and any projects or workstreams to be delivered via third parties.
- 6.3.3 It is envisaged that the UKSPF Programme Board would focus primarily on monitoring: performance; budget; risks and mitigation; deliverables (outputs and outcomes) and stakeholder benefits. Again, it is not envisaged that this Board would be a decision making body but would be involved in an advisory capacity in the selection of any projects to be directly commissioned by the Council.
- 6.3.4 A diagrammatic overview of the current anticipated interrelationship between these groups is shown in Figure 1. The Executive Director of Place may refine and adapt these relationships and group structures as appropriate to ensure effective management of the UKSPF, utilising the delegation granted by Council on 20 July 2022.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic overview of UKSPF Governance



6.4 Project Selection Processes

- 6.4.1 Although the core UKSPF Investment Plan did not have to name specific projects to be delivered using the funding, the Council was asked to consider if it wished to name any specific projects within the Investment Plan.
- 6.4.2 As a general rule the Investment Plan did not seek to set out specific projects. As an exception to this general approach, three projects were specifically put forward in the Investment Plan. These were two active travel projects (Flag Lane, Crewe and Black Lane, Macclesfield) and match funding for the Macclesfield Town Centre Public Realm Levelling Up Fund bid. These projects were specifically identified for two specific reasons.
- 6.4.3 In the case of the active travel projects these were identified as capital projects which could deliver necessary capital spend in the first year of the fund, both already incurring capital spend, both facing a shortfall in funding, and both due to deliver outcomes aligned to the fund objectives.
- 6.4.4 In the case of the Macclesfield public realm project the Investment Plan identifies that SPF would be used to take existing match funding up to the 10% suggested by the government for LUF bids. With no other identified source for this match funding, this was included to increase the chances of the Macclesfield LUF bid success. Again the objectives of the LUF Bid clearly align to the UKSPF objectives and intended outputs and outcomes and offer scope to generate very significant match funding. The Investment Plan was clear that in the event the LUF bid is not successful, the SPF allocation would not remain ringfenced for that project but would be made available for other potential town centre projects.

6.4.5 Aside from these three projects, the Investment Plan did not seek to specify individual projects to be funded. The Council was however required to set out its thinking on how projects might be selected. Three different mechanisms for project selection were anticipated in the Investment Plan. The three anticipated methods of project selection are set out below, although these may need to be altered or refined if required by government or to ensure effective fund management including effective management of the Rural Fund element of the UKSPF.

i. Projects to be delivered by CEC or directly commissioned by CEC

It is envisaged that some projects, to be delivered by in house staff or by direct commissioning by CEC would be recommended for funding by the internal UKSPF Programme Board comprising CEC officers. This Board would not be decision making so it is anticipated that all projects put forward would need to be formally agreed by the Executive Director-Place. Consideration is being given to how projects and interventions put forward for selection under this method may be proposed in a standardised format and objectively assessed. It is envisaged that regard would be given to a range of factors such as fit with Investment Plan priorities, outputs and outcomes, value for money and ability to attract match funding, and deliverability within relevant financial year. It is anticipated that projects selected via this route would be regularly reported to the Local Partnership Group to enable that group to provide advice on strategic fit.

ii. Grant schemes

The Investment Plan sets out that it is envisaged a proportion of the allocation will be made available via grant schemes. This includes grant funding to be made available to support voluntary sector and community projects. It is envisaged that any grants would not be automatically awarded but would be subject to application and assessment against pre-defined criteria. Existing mechanisms such as the Cheshire East Crowd grant platform are likely to be used for at least some of the funding although new grants and grant award mechanisms may also be established during the lifetime of the Investment Plan. Any new grant schemes used would be subject to normal approval mechanisms.

iii. Competitively selected projects delivered by third parties

It is envisaged that in addition to the above, as the lead authority, CEC will issue 'call outs' for projects under specific intervention categories. It is anticipated that third party organisations will be invited to submit proposals for projects via a standard proforma to enable objective comparison against pre-determined criteria. It is envisaged that CEC Members would be notified of any such call outs. Any project proposals submitted via this route would then be assessed against the pre-determined criteria. It is envisaged that an independent externally appointed resource would be appointed to ensure objectivity and

appropriate expertise. It is envisaged that projects selected via this route would also be reported to the Local Partnership Group to enable members to input any views on strategic fit and deliverability. The final decision on selected projects will rest with the Executive Director-Place, seeking input from other officers as required.

- 6.5 The above proposals for both governance and project selection processes is shared with Committee in the interests of transparency. Such arrangements will be further developed and refined by officers and may therefore be subject to refinement before being finalised.

7 Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1 The UKSPF Prospectus is quite prescriptive about the sectors of the community that needed to be involved in the newly established SPF Local Partnership Group. An even wider group of stakeholders within Cheshire East were engaged in the development of the Investment Plan as set out in 6.2.1-6.2.3.
- 7.2 An overview of the draft Investment Plan was shared with the new Local Partnership Group on 28th July 2022 and received overwhelming support. Local MPs were asked specifically to confirm their support for the Investment Plan, again as required by the UKSPF Prospectus. Four of the five MPs whose constituencies are within or partially within the borough have confirmed support and none have raised any objections to the Investment Plan.
- 7.3 Local rural partners must be consulted in order to deliver the Rural Fund. The fund prospectus also suggests local authorities work with the UKSPF local partnership group to develop proposals for the Rural Fund element of UKSPF and advises engagement with MPs. In addition, Cheshire East also has access to a Rural Strategy Group, an advisory group drawn from representative rural organisations and businesses to provide guidance and support to Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Councils on the long-term physical, social and economic development of the rural area.

8 Implications

8.1 Legal

- 8.1.1 The Terms of Reference have been developed following government guidance. The Committee is being asked to agree the content as accountable body for the UKSPF.
- 8.1.2 In July 2022 Full Council delegated authority to the Executive Director Place to take all necessary actions in relation to the scheme. The proposals are being presented to Committee for noting as is appropriate in the interests of transparency and openness.
- 8.1.3 The decisions associated with the UKSPF are treated as Supplementary

Capital and Revenue Estimates as this funding will support an increase in the Council's approved budget. The government announcement to add a Rural Fund and associated timescales for submission of an IP has resulted in a further recommendation to enable officers to approve the IP for the Rural Fund after consultation with those Members on the Local Partnership Group, and to further delegate authority to the relevant Officers to make any necessary amendments to the IP for the Rural Fund and accept the funds once allocated.

8.2 Finance

- 8.2.1 Funding is confirmed for three financial years – 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 providing a predictable baseline element of funding subject to approval of the core UKSPF Investment Plan by DLUHC. The overall allocation by year is specified by the government. The Investment Plan as submitted sought to allocate the funding in a way that is realistic and achievable noting that underspends need to be repaid to government each year and there may not be the same flexibilities and freedoms with this funding as there are with other government funds.
- 8.2.2 The expected split of revenue to capital and the split over the 3 year period will be confirmed once the IPs are agreed by government, with the Multiply Investment Plan now confirmed by DFE but the core UKSPF Investment Plan yet to be considered by DLUHC.
- 8.2.3 Consideration will need to be given to capacity within the Council when considering the most appropriate means of delivering the Investment Plan to ensure optimal drawdown and delivery of outcomes within the funding window. Additional roles for the delivery of project outcomes are permissible and would sit outside of the allocation for management of the fund.
- 8.2.4 A proportion of the allocation is by default available to undertake necessary UKSPF administration, such as financial monitoring, procurement support, legal advice, project assessment, contracting and ongoing fund monitoring and evaluation as explained in more detail in 8.5.
- 8.2.5 At Council on 20 July 2022, authority was delegated to the Executive Director Adults, Health and Integration to accept the Multiply funding allocation for Cheshire East and approve a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of up to £1,535,547, and to allocate that funding as set out within the Local Investment Plan over the years 2022-23 to 2024-25; and authority was also delegated to the Executive Director Place to accept the core UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for Cheshire East and approve a Supplementary Revenue/Capital Estimate of up to £11,585,762, (split to be confirmed on approval of the Investment Plan) and to allocate the funding as set out within the Local Investment Plan over the years 2022-23 to 2024-25.

8.2.6 By the delegated authority provided by Council and in accordance with the Constitution, and as necessary when the core Investment Plan is approved by DLUHC, Officer Decision Records will be completed by the Executive Director Adults, Health and Integration and the Executive Director Place with regard to the approval of respective supplementary revenue and capital expenditure budgets, as fully funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund grants, for in-year spending in 2022/23, reflecting final grant allocations including the split between revenue and capital funds. With regard to expenditure plans for future years, the required budgets and projects will need to be included in the updating of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2023-27 including for the recently announced Rural Fund allocation of £827,627 for 2023/24-2024/25. The MTFS should capture all SPF-related expenditure as well as income, including management and delivery of the programme.

8.3 Policy

8.3.1 The Intervention types selected in the core UKSPF Investment Plan align to Council priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan and other strategic policy documentation. An overview of the broad alignment between interventions and corporate policy is included in Appendix C.

8.4 Equality

8.4.1 The Investment Plans do not have an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at this stage. It is envisaged that equality impacts will be a consideration at project selection stage, with individual EIA developed for specific projects as appropriate.

8.5 Human Resources

8.5.1 The new UKSPF will generate additional fund administration and project management requirements which cannot be covered by existing staff. With regard to fund administration, the UKSPF will generate specific new requirements around project assessment, fund governance, data gathering, monitoring of outputs and outcomes, and reporting and performance management regimes etc. Each lead local authority can use up to 4% of their allocation by default to undertake necessary fund administration. In the case of Cheshire 4% of the core UKSPF allocation for Cheshire East broadly equates to two fund administration posts and it is proposed to create a new Programme Manager post (Grade 12) as well as a Senior Support Officer (Grade 10) to be responsible for the general management and administration tasks required associated with the fund.

8.5.2 It has been identified as a risk that year 1 delivery may be threatened if critical administrative posts cannot be advertised and filled swiftly to enable effective management of the fund from the outset. A key next step is therefore to advertise for the two new core UKSPF administrative posts and to recruit as soon as is possible. It is proposed that these temporary posts be positioned within the Economic Development Service and reserves

already identified for that service used to appoint to these positions as soon as possible, with funds to be recouped from the SPF once the funding is received. A specific Job Description for a Multiply Grade 9 Manager has also been created and is also to go out to advert as soon as possible.

8.5.3 It has also been identified that there will be a need to appoint external expertise to appraise projects pre-selection an objective and transparent manner. It is proposed to procure this type of expert support such that the Council has appointed ready for the first round of project selection, again funded from Economic Development Service budgets/reserves and recouped from the fund once funding is received.

8.5.4 In addition to these fund administration roles, to deliver individual projects will also require project management capacity. Whether project delivery falls to CEC or third parties it will necessarily in all to ensure that any project management roles including monitoring or outputs and outcomes are built into project delivery costs on an intervention by intervention basis.

8.6 Risk Management

8.6.1 There is a risk that the core UKSPF Investment Plan does not gain approval from DLUHC and the Council is unable to proceed with the plan and accept the funding. The delegations granted on 20 July 2022 by Council will be utilised to enable officers to make amendments to the Investment Plan swiftly if required by DLUHC to do so.

8.6.2 There is also a clear risk that any delay in approval of the core UKSPF by DLUHC will increase the challenges of spending in accordance with the Investment Plan timetable, particularly the first year's allocation. To mitigate this, officers are working ahead of the approval to plan out work programmes in anticipation of receipt of funds in the autumn.

8.6.3 A detailed risk register will be developed and reviewed regularly as a key aspect of governance controls once individual projects are selected for delivery utilising this fund.

8.7 Rural Communities

8.7.1 Projects to be selected for progression utilising the core fund are not restricted to urban areas. Some intervention types included in the submitted Investment Plan are not geographically specific and would support residents in all areas. There is therefore scope for this core UKSPF funding to support rural communities as it may support urban communities, the extent of impact in different localities depending on the variety of projects selected. The Rural Action Plan considered by Economy and Growth Committee on 13th September identified a range of issues and opportunities that relate rural area. The 'top-up' Rural Fund will help address further needs and challenges facing rural areas.

8.8 Children and Young People/Cared for Children

8.8.1 Some interventions specified with the Investment Plans will likely be directed towards young people and cared for children, under the People and Skills investment priority. It is also possible that additional projects focused on these groups are supported under other categories of interventions such as via community grants.

8.9 Public Health

8.9.1 There is clear potential for projects funded using the UKSPF to support residents to live healthier lifestyles. Projects could bring positive health outcomes via a variety of routes, for example, funding might be used to support projects to increase accessibility to open spaces, to help deliver active travel schemes, to support community run social and wellbeing projects, and to provide support into employment which increases life expectancy.

8.10 Climate Change

8.10.1 There is additionally clear scope for this fund to support projects which will further the Council's environmental and sustainability priorities. Intervention types within the core UKSPF Investment Plan include for example funding for type E7 Interventions (Support for active travel enhancements), and type E13 Interventions (Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, & combat fuel poverty & climate change.) There will also be opportunities to tackle the climate change emergency through a range of other intervention types on a project by project basis.

| Access to Information | |
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| Contact Officer: | Jo Wise Development and Regeneration Delivery Manager Jo.wise@cheshireeast.gov.uk 07870 391694 |
| Appendices: | Appendix A – Terms of Reference of the Cheshire East Local Partnership Group Appendix B – Summary of the core UKSPF Investment Plan as submitted for approval to DLUHC Appendix C – Overview of broad alignment of Intervention Types with Corporate Policy. |
| Background Papers: | SPF Prospectus and supporting documents - UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Report to Corporate Policy Committee 14 July 2022 |