



## Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

11<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – 2025/26 Delivery Plan

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### Report by:

Leader of the Council

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### Officer Contact:

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### Purpose

To provide Cabinet with an update on the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and to seek Cabinet approval of the UKSPF 2025/26 delivery plan.

### Options

1. To accept the recommendations as set out within this report
2. To make amendments to the recommendations set out within this report
3. To not accept the recommendations within this report

### Preferred option and reasons

Option 1 is the preferred option, to ensure that Chelmsford City Council maximises the impact of its UKSPF allocation for 2025/26.

## Recommendations

1. To note the contents of this report.
  2. To approve the proposed delivery plan for the Council's UKSPF 2025/26 allocation.
  3. To delegate authority to the Director of Sustainable Communities, to take any necessary actions and decisions required to finalise Chelmsford's Delivery Plan and its effective implementation.
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### 1. Background

- 1.1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was launched in April 2022 and formed part of the previous UK Government's Levelling Up agenda.
- 1.2. The overarching aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances. Underneath this aim there are three investment priorities: communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills.
- 1.3. Chelmsford City Council was allocated over £1.1 million across a three year period to deliver these objectives, with the following annual breakdown.
  - 2022/23 - £142,389
  - 2023/24 - £284,777
  - 2024/25 - £746,117
- 1.4. Local Authorities were given the responsibility for developing an Investment Plan for approval by UK Government, and for the delivery of the fund therefore after. Chelmsford City Council's Investment Plan was approved by Cabinet in July 2022 and endorsed by the One Chelmsford Board.
- 1.5. As part of the UK Government's Autumn Budget 2024, it was confirmed that UKSPF will continue at a reduced level during 2025/26 to allow places to continue investing in local growth in advance of a wider funding reform from April 2026.

### 2. Delivering against the 2022/23 – 2024/25 Investment Plan

- 2.1 Over the initial three years of the programme, the UKSPF monies has enabled Chelmsford to implement a variety of impactful projects. Reporting for the latter half of year 3 (2024/25) is still to take place, but to date, UKSPF has contributed to, amongst other things:

- **Voluntary Organisation Support:** Enhanced the Discretionary Fund Grant element of the Community Funding Scheme, providing 39 revenue grants of up to £10,000 to voluntary and charity organisations.
- **Community Support:** Supported the launch of a Social Supermarket, offering discounted groceries to those Chelmsford residents who are most in need. The Social Supermarket now has over 200 members and is serving between 60-70 members a week. UKSPF also funded the Holiday Hunger project in Melbourne in both 2023 and 2024, providing over 1000 hot meals to school aged children.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Contributed towards the Active Health referral programme to achieve wider health outcomes. A sample of 111 patients demonstrated a reduction in unscheduled GP/hospital visits from 1.68 to 0.73 per person when comparing the 6 months prior to Active Health compared with the 6 months post Active Health. UKSPF also supported Sport for Confidence to provide over 500 sessions aiding individuals with physical or learning difficulties to have access to and participate in leisure activities.
- **Reducing Health Inequality:** Contributed to the development of the Mid Essex Thriving Places Index (TPI) and supported the launch of the Health Inequalities Grant, providing grant funding to eight community organisations to support projects that address disparities in health outcomes.
- **Improving Safety:** Developed the Chelmsford Retail Against Crime Partnership, to ensure a better co-ordinated approach to tackling retail crime in partnership across Chelmsford. Over 125 retailers have signed up to use a new DISC management system. UKSPF also enhanced the Safe Spaces Scheme, which has seen over 50 businesses sign up to the scheme.
- **Youth Engagement:** Supported the delivery of the Skills Festival in 2023 and 2024. The event saw an annual attendance of over 1,000 year 8 students from eight secondary schools, and 50+ businesses, encouraging students to explore career opportunities.
- **Economic Collaboration:** Supported the North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) partnership to deliver a business support programme, through which 322 Chelmsford businesses have received non-financial support, 109 jobs have been safeguarded, and 22 jobs have been created. Local business support programmes have also benefited from UKSPF including the Carbon Literacy Programme, Lean2Green scheme, Digital support and the Get Better in Chelmsford programme.
- **Feasibility Studies:** Contributed towards a number of feasibility studies including the East Chelmsford Cycle Connections feasibility study and a study data mapping the creative sector and exploring strategies to support this sector.

### 3. 2025/26 UKSPF

3.1 Following on from the announcement in the UK Government's Autumn Budget 2024, the Government confirmed in December 2024 that Chelmsford City Council has been allocated £383,835 UKSPF funding for 2025/26.

3.2 The funding is a mix of revenue and capital funding, with a requirement to spend a minimum of £70,868 on capital expenditure.

3.3 The funding can be used to support investment in activities from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, including the continuation of existing activity where appropriate.

3.4 There are some key changes to the 2025/26 UKSPF programme, namely:

- The amount allocated is significantly reduced from Chelmsford City Council's year three allocation – with the Government adjusting allocations to prioritise areas with the highest levels of deprivation.
- There is a change in core capital and revenue split – the total allocation for 2025/26 contains a higher proportion of capital compared to previous years.
- The three key priorities; communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills, remain, but the interventions that sit underneath these have been remapped to align with the current Government's missions.
- There is no requirement to submit an Investment Plan to Government for approval for the 2025/26 funding. Instead, Lead Authorities are asked to update on their plans for 2025/26 through routine reporting, which is signed off by the Council's S151 officer.

3.5 Work has taken place to develop a delivery plan for the 2025/26 UKSPF funding, involving collaboration with internal officers and external stakeholders and partners. As in previous years, the guidance states that the funding does not need to cover each of the three key priority areas, and subsequent themes and subthemes, but instead should seek to address local challenges and opportunities.

3.6 Chelmsford City Council's proposed delivery plan for the 2025/26 UKSPF funding can be seen in appendix 1. The initiatives and activities included within the plan include a mixture of a continuation of existing projects and the inclusion of new projects. The projects included not only align with the aims of the UKSPF programme, but also address key priority areas for Chelmsford and support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

3.7 The 2025/26 UKSPF proposed delivery plan will also be presented to the One Chelmsford Board in March. The One Chelmsford Board supported the development of and endorsed of the initial 2022/23 – 2024/25 UKSPF

Investment Plan and have continued to oversee and monitor progress against this.

#### 4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The UKSPF programme was launched in April 2022 and allocated £1,173,283 to Chelmsford to deliver against the investment priorities set out by Government.
- 4.2 The fund has enabled Chelmsford City Council to implement a variety of impactful projects, with strong outcomes.
- 4.3 The UK Government has announced that a further year of UKSPF funding will be available. Chelmsford City Council has been allocated £383,835 for 2025/26.
- 4.4 The delivery programme set out in Appendix 1 proposes how the 2025/26 funding could be utilised. The proposed programme builds on the foundation of previous years UKSPF, aiming to further enhance community wellbeing, support local business and foster a vibrant, inclusive city.

#### List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – UKSPF 2025/26 Proposed Delivery Plan

#### Background papers:

UKSPF Prospectus - [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/UK_Shared_Prosperty_Fund_prospectus.pdf)

UKSPF Allocations - [UKSPF 2025-26 allocations - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/UKSPF_2025-26_allocations.pdf)

UKSPF Technical note - [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Technical note - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/UK_Shared_Prosperty_Fund_2025-26_Technical_note.pdf)

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#### Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: The UKSPF programme 2025/26 provides Chelmsford City Council with £383,835 to spend on initiatives and activities which support build pride in place and improving life opportunities. To access the funding, Chelmsford City Council will need to sign a funding agreement and adhere to Government guidelines on spending and reporting.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: Climate change and environmental impacts will be fully considered as part of all related UKSPF interventions.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: A number of the projects identified within the developing Investment Plan contribute towards achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030.

Personnel: Delivery of the UKSPF programme and its related interventions will continue to require significant staff resources from the Economic Development Team, as well as other Council departments such as Legal, Procurement, Accountancy, Cultural, Leisure and Heritage, Public Health and Protection and Safer Communities.

Risk Management: There is an ongoing need for robust programme management to ensure that the key initiatives and activities contained within the Investment Plan are delivered.

Equality and Diversity: The UKSPF programme aims to create stronger communities and increase life chances across the country. The delivery of the UKSPF will have a positive impact in this area.

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

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### Consultees:

- Chief Executive
- Director of Sustainable Communities
- Director of Public Places
- Director of Connected Chelmsford
- The Economic Development Team
- Chelmsford City Culture Services Manager
- Public Protection Manager
- Leisure and Heritage Services Manager
- Public Health Practitioner

- NEEB Programme Manager
- ECC

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Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Our Chelmsford Our Plan - [Our Chelmsford, Our Plan](#)

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**Appendix 1 – Proposed 2025/26 Year 4 UKSPF Delivery Programme**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub Theme</b>	<b>Activity / Project</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
Communities and Place	Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities	Healthy: Improve health and wellbeing	Active Health Co-ordinator	£30,000
			Sport for Confidence	£15,000
			Holiday Hunger Project (Melfest)	£10,000
			On Your Team (mental health support)	£10,000
			Greener Chelmsford Grant	£20,000*
		Safe: Reduce crime and the fear of crime	Make Space for Girls	£30,868**
		Inclusive: Bringing communities together	Support for voluntary organisations	£20,000
	Theatre outreach work		£30,000*	
	Thriving Places	Development of the visitor economy	Chelmsford for You Campaigns	£10,000
			Place promotion	£10,000
High Street and town centre improvements		-	-	
<b>Total Communities and Place</b>				<b>£185,000</b>
Supporting Local Business	Support for Business	Advice and support to business	Chelmsford business support programme	£30,000
			North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) Strategic Partnership Work	£31,297 (10% of UKSPF revenue allocation)
			Market Review / business support for market traders	£40,000
		Enterprise culture and start up support	-	-
		Business sites and premises	Creative workspaces	£30,000
<b>Total Supporting Local Business</b>				<b>£131,297</b>
People and Skills	Employability	Supporting people to progress towards and into employment	Essex County Council ECL Inclusive Employment grant scheme	£25,000
			Reducing the disability employment gap	£41,670
		Support for young people who are at risk of being NEET	-	-
	Skills	Essential Skills	-	-
		Employment related skills	-	-
<b>Total People and Skills</b>				<b>£67,538</b>



\* Capital expenditure

\*\* part revenue (£10,000), part capital expenditure (£20,868)

<b>Total</b>	<b>£383,835</b>
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>£70,868</b>