

**Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 11th  
September 2025**

**New Forest District Council UK Shared Prosperity Fund  
(UKSPF) Programme 2022 – 2025 Summary Report**

Purpose	For information
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report summarises the New Forest District Council’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) programmes from 2022 to 2025. It outlines the principles of both funds, provides an overview of the projects delivered, confirms outputs and outcomes, and highlights lessons learned that have shaped the 2025–2026 delivery programme.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>That the panel:</b> <b>1. note the success of the New Forest District Council UKSP and REPF Programmes 2022 – 2025.</b> <b>2. consider the lessons learnt from the 2022 – 2025 programmes.</b>
Reasons for recommendations	Applying lessons learned will help future government-funded programmes run more smoothly and efficiently, delivering broad economic, social and environmental benefits.
Wards	All
Portfolio Holders	Councillor Derek Tipp – Planning and Economy
Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter – Strategic Director of Place, Operations and Sustainability
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## **Introduction and background**

1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) were launched in April 2022 and September 2022 respectively.
2. Both funds were seen as a critical delivery mechanism by the previous Government to replace EU funding with a view to reducing inequalities and supporting communities and businesses.

## **New Forest District Council UKSPF Programme**

3. The previous government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in April 2022 as part of its Levelling Up agenda. It provided £2.6 billion of funding intended to reduce inequalities between communities. New Forest District Council received an allocation of £1 million to cover the financial years 2022 – 2025. The council's investment plan was approved by [Cabinet on 29 July 2022](#).
4. Central to the investment plan was setting out how the funding would be spent to support the government's three national investment priorities associated with:
  - a. Communities and Places
  - b. Supporting Local Business
  - c. People and Skills

## **New Forest District Council REPF Programme**

5. New Forest District Council's allocation was £540,115 (capital) to cover the period 2023 – 2025. The core priorities of the REPF were to: -
  - support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams.

- support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy.
6. In March 2023, Cabinet approved a proposal to split the allocation of this funding with 60% towards business support projects and 40% towards community infrastructure projects. The mechanism for allocating business support was agreed at that time, with the community grant allocation process confirmed by [Cabinet in December 2023](#).

### **Overview of schemes delivered**

7. As highlighted above, across the two funds the council received just over £1.5m to support community projects and businesses across the district up to March 2025. 19 projects were awarded UKSPF funding and information relating to these projects can be found on the Council's [website](#).
8. Most UKSPF funding was directed toward improving communities and places to maximise impact and projects delivered included:
  - Town centre improvement at Totton, including making the War Memorial more accessible and new noticeboards
  - Providing new electric vehicles points in Lyndhurst
  - Working with local businesses to support organisations to provide support to business start-ups and established businesses.
  - Improving beach shelters at Hordle Cliff, Barton Cliffs and Milford Promenade
9. Appendix 1 summarises the positive social, economic, and environmental impacts of the projects and shows how they align with the council's Corporate Plan.
10. REPF funding disseminated through grant programmes was heavily subscribed to, resulting in 12 business grant awards and 10 community grant awards. Whilst grants covered a range of capital investments a common theme that emerged for businesses and community organisations was regeneration of buildings making them more energy efficient through installation of renewable energy technology.
11. Appendix 2 of the report sets out 22 projects awarded grant funding including the name of the successful organisation, the allocation of REPF funding and an update on their delivery status.

## **Value for Money**

12. Through the UKSPF, the council has supported job creation, and boosted productivity by funding business support and skills development programmes. Community initiatives, such as town centre improvements, enhanced cultural infrastructure and public realm improvements have helped strengthen local sense of place and social cohesion.
13. The REPF has focused on improving infrastructure in rural areas, helping small businesses grow and diversify. Community projects have aimed to cut energy use by upgrading buildings, installing renewable energy systems, helping groups operate more sustainably whilst also reducing operating costs. Both funds support national goals including boosting economic growth, reducing barriers to opportunities and protecting the environment. Together, they offer a targeted and cost-effective way to support a wide range of local communities.

## **Lessons learned**

14. Both the UKSPF and REPF programmes have delivered significant benefits to New Forest communities, residents, and businesses. However, there are important lessons that will improve future project delivery.
15. Operationally the number of projects that made up the 2022 – 2025 UKSP programme made it complex to manage and reporting back to Government was extremely time consuming. For 2025–2026, fewer projects and a simpler reporting process have been introduced to free up officer time to support the businesses to secure greater positive outcomes.
16. Monitoring and reporting have been simplified by limiting each project to a maximum of four outputs and outcomes. This change allows officers to focus more effectively on delivering results, while still meeting Government requirements.
17. Projects for 2025–2026 have been broadened to benefit more people across the New Forest. For example, the Apprenticeship Hub now supports both learners and businesses by identifying skills gaps and connecting candidates to opportunities through partners like local colleges and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
18. The inclusion of scale-up and innovation support in the 2022–2025 programme from the outset could have helped to further support local economic growth and long-term sustainability. Early-stage support is especially valuable for small and medium size enterprises

(SMEs) and start-ups, helping them overcome barriers, adopt new technologies, and build resilience. By embedding this support from the start of the 2025–2026 programme, the council is encouraging entrepreneurship, cross-sector collaboration, and productivity gains that benefit the wider community.

19. The 2025–2026 programme takes a joined-up approach by bringing different projects together to make sure their results are consistent, and more people benefit, which leads to better social and economic outcomes. For example, the Skills Action Plan is now linked with the business support offer, ensuring that growth and innovation support is informed by local labour market data and skills needs.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

20. The UKSPF and REPF programmes as delivered in the New Forest have supported all three of the Council’s Corporate Plan priorities. This is because the government’s main focus areas of Community and Place, Business Support and People and Skills match well with the wide range of projects delivered. This approach continues into the 2025 – 2026 programme.

### **Options appraisal**

21. Not applicable.

### **Consultation undertaken**

22. Consultation has taken place with officers leading the delivery of the 2022 – 2025 UKSPF and REPF programmes. It is this information that has formed the basis of lessons learned that has been fed into the 2025 – 2026 programmes and further future projects.

### **Financial and resource implications**

23. The outcomes of this paper, including lessons learnt, are expected to have a positive impact on NFDC resources in the future through the streamlining of future projects and programmes, reducing the demand on officers time.

### **Legal implications**

24. There are no legal implications related to the content of this paper.

### **Risk assessment**

25. There is no requirement for a formal risk assessment as part of this report.

## **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

26. Lessons learned from the 2022–2025 UKSPF programme are helping shape a simpler and more efficient approach for 2025–2026. Stronger partnership working and joined-up services will also help reduce environmental impact.

## **Equalities implications**

24. This report doesn't raise any new equality issues. However, the council must follow the Equality Act 2010, which means making sure it avoids discrimination, promotes equal opportunities, and encourages good relationships between people with and without protected characteristics. For the UKSPF and REPF, the council had to meet these duties throughout the programme, making sure funded projects didn't unintentionally exclude or disadvantage anyone based on things like age, disability, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

## **Crime and disorder implications**

27. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the recommendations.

## **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

28. There are no implications arising from the recommendations.

## **New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications**

29. There are no direct implications as a result of this paper related to the wider locations listed above.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix one – **New Forest District Council UKSPF 2022 – 2025 Project overview**  
Appendix two – **New Forest District Council REPF 2022 – 2025 Project overview**

### **Background Papers:**

N/A