

## BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**TITLE: UK Shared Prosperity Funding – Communities and Place**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>13 December 2023</b>
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	<b>Regeneration and Culture</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Public or Private</b>	<b>Public</b>

### **Purpose of report**

- To update Cabinet on progress made with securing UK Shared Prosperity Funding via South Yorkshire Combined Authority for Years Two and Three (FY 2023 – 25)
- To secure approval for receipt of the funding allocation from UKSPF under the 'Communities and Place' theme for the benefit of Barnsley residents and businesses for Year Two of the fund (FY 2023 – 24)
- To secure approval for the Service Director, Regeneration and Culture to bid for funds for Year Three (FY 2024 – 25) under this theme

### **Council Plan priority**

This work aligns with the Council's Growing Barnsley and Sustainable Barnsley priorities. It also aligns to our inclusive economy work – creating More and Better Jobs, developing thriving urban centres (town centre and principal towns) and supporting businesses to start up, grown and invest in the borough.

### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:-

1. Note the progress made with securing UKSPF funds for the borough, the SY UKSPF Investment Plan and the process for approval of further funds;
2. Note the proposals submitted and being delivered using Year Two of Communities and Place theme funding of 0.624M; and
3. Delegate authority to the Service Director Regeneration and Culture to bid for and receive Year Three UKSPF funds for Communities and Place, Supporting Business, People and Skills themes to SYMCA in order to maximise all further funding opportunities for the borough with future updates to be brought into Cabinet in a timely manner.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

- 1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a three-year funding programme which runs from 2022 – 25 and is part of national government’s mission to level up the whole of the United Kingdom. The fund has been designed to level up opportunity and prosperity and overcoming deep-seated geographical inequalities. It also aims to level up people’s pride in their places, empower local leaders and communities, support businesses to grow, develop a stronger social fabric and better life chances.
- 1.2 It is a £2.6 billion fund (across all of the UK) which succeeds the previous EU Structural and Investment funds and looks to invest in three local priorities; ‘communities and place’, ‘support for local businesses’ and ‘people & skills’.

### **Delivery Geography and Fund Administration**

- 1.3 South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority was identified as the ‘delivery geography’ for UKSPF which meant that the Investment Plan for the fund had to be developed at a South Yorkshire level. SYMCA will administer UKSPF for South Yorkshire’s four local authority areas.
- 1.4 The South Yorkshire UKSPF allocation totalled £46.2m; comprising £7.3m Multiply and £38.9m “Core” UKSPF. This does not include Rural Shared Prosperity Funding.
- 1.5 Barnsley has been reassured by SYMCA that it will receive benefit from the “Core” SPF to the value of £7.2M but this could increase if Barnsley were to respond to calls for commissioned work from SYMCA.

### **South Yorkshire Investment Plan**

- 1.6 SYMCA was required to submit a UKSPF Investment plan for the region to enable the funding to be approved by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The Combined Authority team worked closely with Place-Leaders, Business Support Officers and Employment and Skills Officers from each of the four constituent authorities to produce and submit the Investment Plan in early August 2022. The SY Investment plan was approved by government just before Christmas 2022.
- 1.7 In line with the SPF investment priorities, and co-designed in a collaborative development process between the Mayoral Combined Authority, the four local councils in the region and wider stakeholders, seven critical local themes form the basis of the Plan. These informed and streamlined the selected interventions:

#### **Places and Communities**

Supporting communities to address cost of living and pandemic recovery  
Promoting the cultural and visitor economy

## **Supporting Local Businesses**

Providing a broad and inclusive 'total business support' offer  
Stimulating enterprise and growth  
Accelerating R&D and innovation

## **People and Skills**

Building pathways to participation and accessing the benefits of being economically active  
Promoting a skills-driven green economy

Each priority area has an allocation in the Investment plan as well as an identified proportion for revenue and capital spend.

Please note that People and Skills investment only applies for Year Three (24 – 25) of the programme. so will be the subject of a separate report to come forward to Cabinet in Q4 of this financial year.

The Investment Plan did not include details of the Multiply (numeracy development) Programme which required a separate submission from SYMCA to government to have the funds approved.

## **Funding Release and Delivery:**

- 1.8 **Partnership Group:** SYMCA was also required to put in place a Partnership Group of representatives of the business, education and community sectors from across the region to bring an advisory perspective on how the funds would be allocated across the four authorities.
- 1.9 **Approvals:** Since submitting the Investment Plan, SYMCA have also put in place an approvals process for Local Authorities to access the funding. This involves a two-stage assurance process, whereby LAs submit an application for key elements of the funding. The stages are as follows:
- Application is reviewed by SYMCA Lead Officers and feedback given.
  - A subsequent revised version is then given a final review by an Internal Programme Board at SYMCA.

Once approved by the Internal Programme Board, a letter of confirmation of the funding is released to the Local Authority.

- 1.10 Local authorities are required to bid for each year of funding separately and following a review of the bid will receive an annual approval of the use of the funds – this condition is imposed by DLUHC with SYMCA managing the approvals process.

## **Funding Updates**

- 1.11 At its meeting held on 22 March 2023, Cabinet noted the progress made at that stage in securing UKSPF funds for the borough, the SY UKSPF Investment Plan and the process for approval of further funds; and
- 1.12 Delegated authority to Service Director Regeneration and Culture to bid for and receive all future UKSPF funds for 'Multiply', Rural UKSPF',

'Communities and Place', 'Supporting Business' and 'People & Skills' themes to SYMCA in order to maximize all further funding opportunities for the borough with future updates to be brought into Cabinet.

- 1.13 Year One delivery of all projects has taken place and a full report on all activities will be shared with Elected Members at a future date.
- 1.14 Year One funding for Communities and Place focussed on the delivery of a range of programmes delivered across a range of Council business units and services that would make a positive impact on communities aligned to Barnsley 2030 and the UKSPF investment Plan. These included:

**Cost of living Crisis grants:** Grant funding which funded community and voluntary based organisations and BMBC in-house operational services such as the family centres, to deliver tangible initiatives to benefit Barnsley communities and help them survive the cost-of-living crisis. This activity aligned to the SPF intervention for 'Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including measures to improve energy efficiency and combat fuel poverty and climate change'.

**Enhancing Barnsley Libraries:** to refurbish much of our library assets to reflect the modern standards on display at The Lightbox. BMBC was already investing in this programme but the SPF enabled us to go further faster in realising this vision. In this first year, we improved Roundhouse (Athersley) and Hoyland libraries.

**Culture at the Heart of Communities:** to deliver a number of key participatory arts programme in Barnsley town centre as well as our principal towns to build cultural participation and engagement, strengthen our links with local cultural providers and ultimately support urban centre economies as well as the health and wellbeing of the population.

The cultural and library improvement activities were aligned to the following SPF interventions:

- Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people. This included funding for capital spend and running/revenue costs.
- Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer.
- Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.

**Green Space Improvements:** This activity delivered capital works to achieve park improvements and contributed to our 'Ten Thousand Trees' planting programme aimed at enhancing biodiversity. These proposals are aligned to the SPF intervention for 'Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.'

## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This proposal focusses on Year Two (2023 – 24) funding for Communities and Place.

## 2.2 Year Two Programme:

Barnsley's programme to build community wealth and grow our local economies is made up of four key project strands, as follows:

### a) Culture at the Heart of Communities:

Our emerging new Cultural Strategy will seek to ensure that cultural activities are delivered at the heart of communities. We will achieve this by delivering an events programme both in Barnsley town centre as well as our principal towns. Where we are making improvements to our library stock, we will align our programme of cultural activities to tie into this asset improvement programme. Through this approach we will build cultural participation and engagement, strengthen our links with local cultural providers, and ultimately support urban centre economies. This will be achieved through subcontracting local cultural organisations, investing in local micro-enterprises who make up the Barnsley cultural sector. Year 2 will be a continuation of this approach from Year 1, building upon what works and further expanding activity across the Borough.

### b) Welcome to Barnsley:

This project will develop a robust, targeted and coherent Visitor Economy offer for Barnsley.

- The intervention will co-ordinate the existing Visitor Economy sector within the Borough and with partners across South Yorkshire to develop targeted marketing campaigns promoting the Barnsley offer regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Initiate the development of an appropriate Platform to support the delivery of the visitor economy in the Borough.
- A Visitor Economy Business advisor resource will be identified and provided through the Enterprising Barnsley team to aid tourism business across the Borough.
- A Local Visitor Economy Forum will be strengthened with broad representation from a range of stakeholders from this sector across the borough, linked to an emerging Visitor Economy strategy.
- The project will be managed by an appropriate staff resource, along with supporting revenue budgets, to work within the Barnsley MBC Culture and Visitor Economy team, thereby maximising the benefits of working with colleagues within the CVE team and with other teams in the Council such as Economic Development, Enterprising Barnsley and Planning.

Working closely with partners at a South Yorkshire and Yorkshire level, the project will engage with partners to identify what other key interventions are required to maximise the visitor economy in the Borough and enable growth of existing businesses.

This will enable Barnsley to address some key challenges:

- The Borough is underperforming in terms of its visitor economy, despite a very strong culture, heritage and landscape offer.

- Research demonstrates that the Visitor Economy of its neighbours and comparators Rotherham and Doncaster generate a much higher benefit for the local economy.
- When compared to its neighbours Barnsley only has half the tourism day visits that Rotherham (2m per annum when compared to 4m) secures for instance, and less than a third of Doncaster (7m), despite the fact that the Borough's culture/heritage and landscape tourism offers are very strong. This is limiting the growth of existing tourism businesses in the Borough, and the potential employment opportunities.
- There is no significant resource coordinating the Visitor Economy offer in the Borough.
- Engagement with the local tourism sector, through the Borough's Visitor Economy Forum, has revealed a set of major challenges in the post pandemic environment, facing a cost of living crisis including a lack of cohesion, no single narrative for the Visitor Economy sector in the borough, little capacity to draw opportunities together, and real concerns about skills gap and difficulties in recruitment

### **c) Enhancing Barnsley Libraries:**

Our ambition is to replicate the success of our flagship Lightbox development within our stock of 14 district libraries which Barnsley has retained despite years of austerity. To help us achieve this aim, we wish to refurbish much of our library assets to reflect the modern standards on display at The Lightbox. BMBC is investing in this programme but the SPF will enable us to go further faster in realizing this vision. Year 2 will be a continuation of our library refurbishment with improvement anticipated for Worsbrough and Royston district libraries.

### **d) Pride of Place Grants Programme:**

We aim to launch a high-profile grant programme for small-scale capital improvements and for key projects and place improvements to build participation, support volunteering and build pride in place.

We see this as a key opportunity to reach a wider audience for SPF and raise the profile of this work and the opportunities it represents for communities. This is something that can complement our existing investments in communities such as our highly effective area governance model and our principal towns programme. We do not wish this to be too restrictive and would therefore anticipate we would welcome bids that could meet the following SPF interventions:

- Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including capital spend and running costs.
- Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding. This could cover capital spend and running costs.
- Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.
- Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer.

- Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities
- Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.
- Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups

The proposed balance between capital and revenue grant is presented in the tables in 'Financial and Risk' section below and summarized in the attached Appendix A.

### 3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

#### 3.1 Financial and Risk

- 3.1.1 Consultation on the Financial Implications included in this report have taken place with representatives of the Service Director (Section 151 Officer) Finance.
- 3.1.2 Delivery of the projects has already commenced 'at risk' with the approval of the S151 Officer.
- 3.1.3 SYMCA have advised that, based on our current track record of delivery, they are happy for BMBC to bid for Year Three (24 – 25) funding now under this theme and issue a funding contract that runs to the end of March 2025 – this will include a break clause at 31 March 2024. The break clause is needed because we will need to evidence delivery of agreed outputs in 2023 – 24 before being permitted to draw down funds for 2024 – 25.
- 3.1.4 Per the report recommendations, approval is sought to accept the £0.624m in UKSPF funding. The funding will be utilized for the purposes detailed in Section 2 of this report and summarized in the table below:

#### **Shared Prosperity Fund: Overview of Spend 2023/24**

<b>Proposed Revenue Spend</b>	<b>23/24</b>		
	<b>Q3 £m</b>	<b>Q4 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
Culture at the Heart – Town Centre and Principal Towns	0.050	0.050	<b>0.100</b>
Welcome to Barnsley	0.050	0.066	<b>0.116</b>
<b>Pride of Place grants (revenue)</b>	0.147	-	<b>0.147</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.247</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.363</b>

<b>Proposed Capital Spend</b>	<b>23/24</b>		
<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>Q3 £m</b>	<b>Q4 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
Libraries- Worsbrough and Royston	0.124	0.067	<b>0.191</b>
Pride of Place (small capital grants)	0.070	-	<b>0.070</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.194</b>	<b>0.067</b>	<b>0.261</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0.441</b>	<b>0.183</b>	<b>0.624</b>

- 3.1.5 A funding confirmation letter has now been received from SYMCA awarding these funds.
- 3.1.6 It is important to note that there is no requirement for any financial contribution from the Council to progress the recommendations outlined in this report.
- 3.1.7 BMBC Finance Officers will continue to work closely with Services to ensure spend remains within the available funding allocation and in compliance with funder eligibility requirements.
- 3.1.8 Appendix A provides a summary of the financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**Risk:**

- 3.1.9 The key risk is that the funds need to be spent by end March 2024 - approval to spend is expected from SYMCA in November 2023. The Pride of Place grants will therefore be promoted and awarded at risk in November and December. The Culture team have initiated procurement processes for the commissioning of the events work in the Nov/Dec period as well in order to manage this risk.
- 3.1.10 With regards to Libraries, the funds can also be spent on retrospective projects carried out in the 2022 – 23 Financial Year. Some expenditure therefore will be attributed to the already-commenced capital project at Worsbrough library. This leaving Royston to be completed over the remainder of this financial year.
- 3.1.11 The risk of these funds not being approved by SYMCA is low., Delivery is therefore continuing 'at risk' with approval of S151 Officer. SYMCA have already viewed and commented on our Year One delivery and our Year Two work and are satisfied that all our projects in line with, and support, the priorities of the fund. They always agreed the management of the fund to LAs would be relatively light-touch and are satisfied that we will deliver the relevant outputs and outcomes based on Year One performance



### 3.2 Legal

3.2.1 There are no legal implications for this report, other than those implied by acceptance of first tranche of funding for Year One: Communities and Place theme.

3.2.2 Legal will undertake a review of the Funding agreement when it arrives and advise on any issues to be managed through the delivery of the programme and ancillary internal governance matters that may arise.

3.2.3 To implement the proposals set forth in paragraph 2 of this report compliantly, the service will work with legal to ensure that the provisions of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 in relation to the grant schemes detailed at paragraph 2.2 above are complied with.

### 3.3 Equality

3.3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed on the Pride of Place Grants scheme by Officers.

3.3.2 EIAs will be completed when the final design of further elements of the culture programme and Welcome to Barnsley are in more detailed form.

3.3.3 Other smaller-scale projects will complete EIAs in advance of commissioning and project design.

### 3.4 Sustainability

3.4.1 Decision-making wheel completed for the overall UKSPF programme:



3.4.2 The main sustainability impacts under this theme will relate to the social impacts from cultural engagement and Pride of Place programmes.

### **3.5 Employee**

3.5.1 There are no employee implications in this report, apart from the proposed appointment of a project manager for the 'Welcome to Barnsley' project. This will be picked up with our HR team.

### **3.6 Communications**

3.6.1 An engagement plan has been developed for the Pride of Place grants scheme by the Public Health and Communities team, modelled on previous grants schemes administered by them previously. This will involve issuing an open call to the community and voluntary sector in the borough inviting applications to enable the grant to be discharged and spent in this financial year. The grants issued and the accruing benefits to Barnsley communities and residents will be the subject of an ongoing communications campaign in November through to April. A successful bid for Year Three funding which is underway will also ensure timely promotion of the scheme in a second round in Q4 of 2023 – 24.

3.6.2 The cultural projects (including Libraries refurbishments) will have individual communications plans attached to them and be embedded in our town centre and principal towns marketing and communication planning.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 A number of consultation events took place digitally and across South Yorkshire with partners from the private, public and comm/voluntary sectors in summer 2022 to feed into the SY Investment Plan.

4.3 Consultation has also taken place with Officers from the Culture team, Libraries service and Stronger Communities team to inform the programme offers.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 No alternative options were considered. The UKSPF funding is crucial for the continuation of the stronger communities and cultural services offered by the Council and our aim is to maximise the impact and benefit for the borough from the fund.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The UKSPF represents a key funding stream which will enable the Council to build pride of place in our communities.

## **7. GLOSSARY**

7.1 UKSPF – UK Shared Prosperity Fund

7.2 DLUCH – Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

## 8. LIST OF APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix A: Financial Implications

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 SY Investment Plan submitted to DLUCH, July 2022

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email [governance@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:governance@barnsley.gov.uk) so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## 10. REPORT SIGN OFF

<b>Financial consultation &amp; sign off</b>	<i>Mark Bell 23 October 2023</i>
<b>Legal consultation &amp; sign off</b>	<i>Pamela Nsofor 19.10.2023</i>

**Report Author:** Kathy McArdle

**Post:** Service Director, Regeneration and Culture

**Date:** 25 October 2023