



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Cabinet**

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

**Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration – S. Brennan**

#### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 – 26 – Approval of Neath Port Talbot programme and delivery model**

#### **Purpose of the Report:**

To seek Members approval on the recommendation to approve the Neath Port Talbot UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) 2025 – 26 Transition Year programme and delivery model.

#### **Executive Summary:**

The UKSPF 2025 – 26 Transition Year will support UK Government Mission delivery with a specific focus on economic growth across the three priority areas of Communities & Place, Supporting Local Business and People & Skills.

The UKSPF 2025 – 26 aims to support activities from April 2025 to March 2026, including the continuation of some existing UKSPF activity where appropriate.

This report seeks Members approval on:

- The recommendation to approve the Neath Port Talbot UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme and delivery model.
- The recommendation that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Finance, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member(s) to approve Council led Anchor projects and any projects submitted under Neath Port Talbot UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 – 26 open calls with regular reporting to Cabinet.

**Background:**

The UKSPF 2025 – 26 aims to support activities from April 2025 to March 2026, including continuation of some existing UKSPF activity where appropriate.

The UKSPF is a mix of revenue and capital funding, with a greater percentage allocated to capital than the previous UKSPF programme.

The Neath Port Talbot UKSPF allocation from April 2025 to March 2025 is:

Allocation	£14,958,780
Administration top slice @ 4%	£598,351
Budget for project activity	£14,360,429

*N.B. UK Government proposed a 40% reduction to the current financial year allocation, however UK Government wanted to ensure that the most deprived areas received a lower percentage cut than other areas. As a result, and after agreement with Welsh Government, in Wales Neath Port Talbot (along with Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, RCT) received a 25% reduction leading to the other 18 Local Authorities in Wales receiving a slightly higher 42% reduction.*

The UKSPF 2025 – 26 Transition Year will support UK Government Mission delivery with a specific focus on economic growth across the three priority areas of:

- Communities & Place;
- Supporting Local Business; and
- People & Skills.

Each priority has associated Themes and Sub Themes as indicated below:

<b>UKSPF Priority: Communities &amp; Place</b>	
<b>Theme 1:</b>	Healthy, safe and inclusive communities
<b>Sub-themes:</b>	Improve Health and wellbeing; Reduce crime and the fear of crime; Bringing communities together; Tackling homelessness.
<b>Theme 2:</b>	Thriving Places
<b>Sub-themes:</b>	Development of the visitor economy; High streets and town centres improvements.

<b>UKSPF Priority: Supporting Local Business</b>	
<b>Theme 1:</b>	Support for Business
<b>Sub-themes:</b>	Advice and support to business; Enterprise culture and start-up support; Business sites and premises.

<b>UKSPF Priority: People &amp; Skills</b>	
<b>Theme 1:</b>	Employability
<b>Sub-themes:</b>	Supporting people to progress towards and into employment; Support for young people who are or at risk of being NEET.
<b>Theme 2:</b>	Skills
<b>Sub-themes:</b>	Essential skills (incl. numeracy, literacy, ESOL and digital); Employment related skills.

The UKSPF 2025 – 26 Transition Year is not a continuation or extension of the current UKSPF 2022 – 25 programme, as all 2022 – 25 allocations need to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, and any underspend to be returned to MHCLG (UKG).

### **UKSPF delivery model**

The four Local Authorities in South West Wales have agreed the following delivery model principles to maximise the limited timescale available:

- Extension of Anchor Project activity including Third Party Grant Schemes for businesses and communities that can deliver to shorter timescales;
- Capital schemes that are ready to go (planning in place etc)
- Limited general open call to enable a small number of additional projects to be supported that are aligned with regional and local strategies – if sufficient funds are available;
- Project activity to cease well in advance of March 2026 to allow project and programme closure.

## **Neath Port Talbot Council UKPSF 2025 – 26 delivery model**

To ensure a strategic approach to delivery with a smooth transition and delivery at pace to commence from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, it is recommended that a similar approach to the 2022 – 2025 UKPSF programme is adopted, with a regional strategic approach and local determination and delivery. The following delivery model is proposed:

Five Council led Anchor projects to deliver key Council priorities which are:

- **Community**
- **Place**
- **Business**
- **Employability**
- **Skills**

The Community, Business and Place Anchor Projects will include Third Party Grant Schemes to award funding to public, private, community and third sector organisations.

Neath Port Talbot Council will manage and administer all Third Party Grant Schemes, and funding will be awarded via a competitive bid process with an agreed assessment and scoring criteria, adopting the same award sign off levels in line with the current programme.

The Third Party Grant Schemes will be streamlined to avoid duplication. The Third Sector will be able to apply for funding, but Neath Port Talbot Council will manage and administer the Community Third Party Grant Scheme via the Strategic Funding Programmes Office.

## **Governance:**

The Strategic Funding Programmes Office will continue as the Programme Management Office for the UKSPF programme in Neath Port Talbot;

Neath Port Talbot Cabinet will retain the decision making role;

Neath Port Talbot Council will manage all Third Party Grant Schemes;

Neath Port Talbot UKSPF Programme Board will continue the internal governance role and will provide the assessment and recommendation role for the Anchor projects;

Neath Port Talbot Local Economic Partnership (LEP) will continue as the local stakeholder engagement role in line with the UKSPF Prospectus with Welsh Government and UK Government as partners; MP and MS engagement will continue via liaison meetings.

## **Next steps:**

Council led Anchor Projects to be finalised, then reviewed and assessed by Neath Port Talbot UKSPF Programme Board.

Following approval of the Council led Anchor projects, the Strategic Funding Programmes Office will issue Service Level Agreements to the Anchor projects to allow project delivery to commence or continuation of existing Anchor projects.

Council led and managed Third Party Grant Schemes to be launched.

Planned delivery to commence 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

## **Financial Impacts:**

No implications. Funding for the UKSPF programmes is via the overall grant provided to the Council detailed above.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

A first stage impact assessment (enclosed at Appendix 1) has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required.

## **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

The nature of the UKSPF will have a positive impact on the valley communities and is aligned to the Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan, Neath Port Talbot Economic Recovery Plan and the Wellbeing Assessments.

## **Workforce Impacts:**

The Strategic Funding Programmes Office will manage the Fund at the local level.

All UKSPF Anchor projects will need to ensure appropriate resource is included in the application for funding.

## **Legal Impacts:**

Any procurement activities will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Swansea Council, as Lead Local Authority (LLA) for the South West Wales region will enter in to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UK government regarding the administration and delivery of the UKSPF including the release of the funding allocations for the region.

Each partner local authority will enter into a Service Level Agreement with Swansea Council to ensure compliance with the MoU and to receive their funding allocation.

### **Risk Management Impacts:**

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

The UKSPF application form requires applicants to develop a risk register which will be managed as part of the project plan. Due diligence checks including Subsidy Control assessments will be carried out.

The Strategic Funding Programmes Office will programme manage the UKSPF in Neath Port Talbot to ensure compliant and effective delivery.

### **Consultation:**

This item has not been subject to external consultation.

A UKSPF engagement plan is in development to ensure regular engagement with local, regional and national stakeholders including PSB, NPT Local Economic Partnership.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that, having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment screening:

- Members agree the recommendation to approve the Neath Port Talbot UKSPF programme and delivery model.
- Members agree the recommendation that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Finance, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member(s) to approve Council led Anchor projects and



any projects submitted under Neath Port Talbot UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 – 26 open calls with regular reporting to Cabinet.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To enable Neath Port Talbot Council to implement the UKSPF delivery plan.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – IIA

**List of Background Papers:**

None.

**Officer Contact:**

Name: Lisa Willis

Designation: Strategic Funding Programmes Manager

Email: l.willis@npt.gov.uk