



Funded by
UK Government

**Sunderland
City Council**

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

**Sunderland UKSPF Investment Plan –
Executive Summary**

Updated January 2024

POWERED BY
**LEVELLING
— UP —**

1. Introduction

The Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Prospectus was issued in April 2022 setting out detailed information on the objectives of the Fund, the types of projects it can support and the expected outputs and outcomes to be achieved.

Sunderland City Council (the Council) was designated as a lead authority by the UK Government. As a lead authority, the Council is responsible for the development, management and monitoring of Sunderland's UKSPF Investment for the period April 2022 to March 2025.

This document summarises the investment priorities and proposals set out in the Sunderland's Investment Plan submitted to Government in July 2022 and approved in December 2022.

We look forward to continuing to work with key local partners and delivery organisations to maximise the benefits of the fund for Sunderland's residents, businesses and communities.

2. What is the Shared Prosperity Fund?

The UKSPF will invest in economic growth and regeneration in the regions of the United Kingdom (UK), replacing the previous European Structural and Investment Funds which included the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund. The UKSPF began to fund projects during 2022/23 and will continue to support activities through to the end of March 2025.

To help realise the aims of Levelling Up, Government has stated that the UKSPF should invest in priorities which achieve the following objectives:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards
- Spread opportunities and improve public services
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging
- Empower local leaders and communities

Opportunities for Sunderland

£16.4m¹

Total UKSPF funding allocated to Sunderland, including the Multiply adult numeracy programme, to be invested over three years from 2022/23 to 2024/25, supporting projects across three Investment Priorities.



Communities and Place



Supporting Local Business



People and Skills

¹ Including £14.9m Core UKSPF grant plus £1.5m for the Multiply programme which will improve adult numeracy skills.

3. How will the UKSPF support our ambitions for Sunderland?

The [Sunderland City Plan](#) (2023-2035) provides the blueprint for all partners and communities to work together, to address the economic and social challenges that Sunderland faces so that the city and its people can achieve their full potential. Sunderland's UKSPF investment priorities are closely aligned to the City Plan.

City Plan ambitions include ensuring:

- The city and its residents have the resilience to mitigate ongoing challenges, including the cost-of living crisis, and emerge in a healthy and sustainable position
- Sunderland offers the opportunities that families and individuals need to achieve their ambitions
- Families are resilient and resourceful to respond to challenges and achieve the best possible outcomes for their children
- Health and wellbeing outcomes are significantly improved
- Sunderland City Centre will drive city-wide transformational economic growth with Riverside Sunderland demonstrating clearly our investment ambition
- Residents' skills and qualifications enable them to secure good jobs matching the needs of employers in the city's key sectors, and
- Sunderland will play its role in tackling the global challenge of climate change, working together across the city to be carbon neutral by 2040.

In working to deliver on these ambitions, the City Plan is focused on a bold and ambitious vision to **create a connected, international city with opportunities for all**.

To achieve this, the City Plan has three themes:

- Sunderland will be a **Dynamic Smart City** with more and better jobs, a lower carbon economy, a great choice of housing and a stronger city centre. It will be a leading digital city, deploying smart and sustainable technologies for the benefit of all.
- it will be a **Healthy Smart City** with equitable opportunities and the best life chances for children, where people will live healthier, independent lives for longer. It will be a clean and attractive city with great transport links and low carbon and active travel opportunities, and
- it will be a **Vibrant Smart City** with more resilient people feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods and businesses benefitting from a safe and secure environment. There will be a range of opportunities for people to participate in their communities, cultural events and activities and residents will feel proud of the city and the place where they live.

Our analysis of Sunderland's local challenges for the UKSPF Investment Plan has involved an in-depth review of the local evidence base and a strategic review of City Plan commitments against UKSPF investment priorities and interventions. This has enabled us to identify UKSPF priorities that align most closely to the City Plan and that can deliver the most benefits for the city's residents, businesses, and communities.

4. Our investment priorities and approach

The UKSPF in Sunderland will be focused on supporting the clear, established priorities set out in the City Plan. The City Plan is focused on our people and our communities, to deliver:

 <p>A DYNAMIC SMART CITY</p>	 <p>A HEALTHY SMART CITY</p>	 <p>A VIBRANT SMART CITY</p>
<p>A lower carbon city with greater digital connectivity for all</p>	<p>Reduced health inequalities enabling more people to live healthier longer lives</p>	<p>More resilient people</p>
<p>More and better jobs</p>	<p>Access to equitable opportunities and life chances</p>	<p>More people feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods</p>
<p>More local people with better qualifications & skills</p>	<p>People enjoying independent lives</p>	<p>More residents participating in their communities</p>
<p>A stronger city centre with more businesses, housing & cultural opportunities</p>	<p>Great transport links with low carbon and active travel opportunities for all</p>	<p>More people visiting Sunderland and more residents informing & participating in cultural events, programmes & activities</p>
<p>More and better housing</p>	<p>A cleaner and more attractive city and neighbourhood</p>	

Our approach to the UKSPF will be guided by the following investment principles:

- Focusing on our priorities, so we make a visible difference for businesses, places, and residents.
- Investing alongside existing funds and programmes (e.g. Neighbourhood Fund, Adult Education Budget, National Lottery Community Fund), adding value, maximising benefits, and achieving the best possible impact.
- Collaborating with partners to address key opportunities and challenges facing the wider North East region (e.g. business innovation, net zero transition).
- Maximising the impact of UKSPF supported activities and projects for businesses, residents, and communities.
- Investing in long-term growth opportunities as well as addressing current challenges (e.g. cost of living).

We will allocate UKSPF resources to **seven objectives** across **three investment priorities**, aligned with Government guidance, City Plan priorities, and addressing the key issues, challenges and opportunities identified in our research and stakeholder consultations.



Investment Priority 1: Communities and Place

Challenges and opportunities in Sunderland

- Tackling deep-rooted levels of deprivation and social exclusion.
- The need to strengthen voluntary and community sector capacity and infrastructure, and to ensure the sector is better resourced and more resilient in the future.
- Improving health outcomes for the city's residents and reducing health inequalities.
- Creating a stronger more vibrant cultural and heritage ecosystem, and enabling the sector to thrive, and widen participation in creative activities.
- The need to reinvigorate and repurpose Sunderland city centre and local town centres.
- Addressing digital inclusion and data poverty, widening access to digital and 5G infrastructure and improving digital skills and capabilities among individuals, communities and business.
- Developing Sunderland's low carbon ambitions.
- Supporting businesses, community organisations and residents to improve energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty.
- Addressing community safety issues through targeted improvements and innovative approaches to crime prevention and anti-social behaviour.
- Improving employment, skills, education, and enterprise opportunities for all.

Objectives	Examples of Indicative Activities
<p>OBJECTIVE 1</p> <p>City Centre and Town Centre vibrancy improvements and investment in Arts, Culture, Heritage and Creative Industries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Smaller scale capital works delivering new/improved commercial buildings, rehabilitated land, low carbon energy infrastructure or decarbonisation proposals. ▪ Delivery of outreach, engagement and participatory programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries. ▪ Programmes and projects to promote the growth and diversity of Sunderland's cultural, creative and heritage offer. ▪ Projects that enhance the public realm or create accessibility improvements. ▪ Development, restoration or refurbishment of local, natural, cultural and heritage assets and sites. ▪ Funding for maker spaces, exhibitions, artist support programmes and cultural, heritage and creative events. ▪ Activities to widen participation in arts, culture and heritage for underrepresented groups.
<p>OBJECTIVE 2</p> <p>Building VCS capacity and capabilities, to tackle health inequalities and to address anti-social behaviour and crime, including support to young people and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building VCS capacity and capabilities through a package of infrastructure support measures, including training programmes to support VCS and community group leaders. ▪ Social prescribing opportunities. ▪ Partnership activities to reduce the incidence of recorded crime, first-time offending, young people re-offending and anti-social behaviour. ▪ Activities that promote the active use of streets and public spaces throughout the daytime and evening. ▪ Support for community space for civil society and community groups to use.

<p>other hard to reach groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project opportunities for residents, including young people, to engage with and participate in their communities, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An expanded and diversified range of volunteering activities ○ Community Hubs ○ Events, cultural programmes and other creative activities.
<p>OBJECTIVE 3</p> <p>Delivering a smart city for all and supporting climate change initiatives in our communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Digital support and infrastructure investment in key community facilities to tackle digital inclusion, data poverty and drive improvements in digital skills. ▪ Enabling a digitally connected city and extending the Smart City programme to improve local infrastructure, capacity, accessibility, and skills. ▪ Community led activities to promote climate change mitigation measures, raise awareness of local sustainability issues, and explore neighbourhood and business led challenges. ▪ Initiatives to enable more local people to participate in the local digital economy and realise a sustainable career.
<p>OBJECTIVE 4</p> <p>Responding to the cost of living crisis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targeted programmes and projects to provide additional support to address the cost-of-living challenge. ▪ Community-based energy efficiency measures to tackle fuel poverty, improve energy efficiency and support the city's Low Carbon priorities. ▪ Programmes/campaigns to encourage take-up of energy efficiency measures for homes, including water pumps and increased insulation. ▪ Investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and amenities, such as community infrastructure, local green space and community-led projects.

Benefits and outcomes

<p>Who will benefit?</p> <p>Deprived communities and places, supporting residents, households, businesses, and VCSE organisations to capitalise on local economic opportunities and address challenges, strengthening communities and building prosperity and pride in place.</p>	<p>What difference will the UKSPF make?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boost vibrancy, footfall and spending in town centres and high streets, and improve quality of place ▪ Grow the local culture and tourism sector, attracting spending and creating jobs in local communities ▪ Deliver inclusive growth ▪ Build capacity in communities to address local issues and increase social action ▪ Reduce energy usage, carbon emissions and support the net zero transition
--	---



Investment Priority 2: Supporting Local Business

Challenges and opportunities in Sunderland

- Continuing to diversify the economic base.
- Promoting a start-up culture and closing the enterprise gap
- Improving business survival rates by creating a stronger local enterprise ecosystem
- Ensuring that all population groups have access to the best advice, support and resources to start up a business

Objectives

Examples of Indicative Activities

OBJECTIVE 1

Boosting local enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation, and transitioning towards a net-zero low carbon economy

- Local interventions to address low levels of enterprise activity, including start-up and social enterprise development.
- Supporting established enterprises with recovery, resilience and growth after the Covid-19 pandemic, including focus on innovative solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges, such as low carbon, climate mitigation and adaptation, digital adoption and exclusion, health and ageing.
- Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and connecting businesses to wider support on, for example, innovation, trade, exporting, skills and productivity.
- Support for new activities, including information, guidance, specialist support and access to financial assistance.
- Raising awareness of enterprise as a viable alternative economic activity across the wider population, and especially among graduates and younger people.
- Forming local peer-to-peer networking/support and learning to improve sharing of best practice.
- Sector focused initiatives focused on innovation, skills, productivity and growth.
- Activities that build on Sunderland's 'Social Enterprise City' status and the ambitions of the Community Wealth Building Strategy, including exploring alternative service delivery models and future market opportunities that will emerge for the VCSE sector.
- Training schemes for local people looking to set up a new co-operative business.
- Development of evidence-based regional entrepreneurial support, led by entrepreneurs, risk capital providers, corporates, academia and government.
- Grants to bid for, secure and hold a conference for a leading sector locally.
- Research and development grants for local organisations to support with process, service, and product development and commercialisation.
- Grants to encourage and support partnership working between organisations locally and regionally.
- Funding to support the development of sector clusters and high growth ecosystems.
- Funding to establish new local business accelerator/growth programmes.
- Funding to support local business growth offers.
- Funding for net zero initiatives for local business.

Benefits and outcomes

Who will benefit?

Businesses with potential to innovate and grow in our key sectors, firms with growth and scale-up potential, and start-ups, social enterprises

What difference will the UKSPF make?

- Boost private sector R&D investment and innovation activity
- Improve long-run productivity
- Enhance economic resilience by supporting businesses to diversify into new markets, supply chains, and geographies
- Grow the business base, including existing businesses, start-ups, and social enterprise, creating new jobs and increasing prosperity
- Improve energy efficiency for SMEs, reduce carbon emissions and support the net zero transition



Investment Priority 3: People and Skills

Challenges and opportunities in Sunderland

- High levels of economic inactivity and unemployment, especially among young people, reducing overall workforce productivity and economic prosperity.
- In-work poverty and deprivation, due to more low wage, low skilled, insecure work in the area.
- Low skills and qualification levels in the workforce, including lack of basic and technical skills, limiting opportunities for people to progress into better paid, higher skilled, more secure work.
- Growing recruitment and skills shortages for businesses across many sectors, as the labour market struggles to recover from the pandemic and more people leave the full-time workforce.
- Changing nature of jobs and employers' skills requirements, driven by growing use of digital technologies, automation of some basic job roles (e.g. retail, distribution), and higher skilled job opportunities growing faster than low skilled occupations.
- Growth in well paid jobs in key sectors for people with the right skills, including digital, clean energy, manufacturing and professional services, alongside a high volume of vacancies in established sectors such as construction, transport, health and care, retail, and distribution.
- Opportunities for people of all ages to train / re-train in 'green skills' to take up jobs in growing low carbon industries, ensuring the net zero transition supports inclusive economic growth.

Objectives

Examples of Indicative Activities

OBJECTIVE 1

Supporting economically inactive people and those furthest from labour market to overcome barriers to accessing sustainable work and learning

- Community-based, personalised and intensive support delivered through trusted key support workers, including referrals to relevant local training, skills and specialised support.
- Supported employment provision and work placements for individuals with health and disability needs.
- Training activities and work experience opportunities that match residents with employment opportunities.
- More targeted local interventions for those missing out on support.
- Development of an 'information hub' for local employability / skills provision and available training and job opportunities.
- Projects that use innovative ways of engaging residents not normally targeted for support, including counselling and advice services, tailored mental health support and support groups.
- Community based basic and digital skills support.
- Post-employment support, in-work advocacy and advice (e.g., health support, financial advice).
- Activities that raise aspirations and tackle under-employment and in work poverty.
- Activities which address digital exclusion and data poverty such as digital skills support to access courses, job / careers information, CVs / covering letters, job interviews.
- Activities that promote mentoring, volunteering, progression support and transition support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enrichment activities for the socially isolated delivered in neighbourhood centres, such as sports, arts and other interactive activities. ▪ Financial support to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications, debt advice to help manage money, housing support, financial support for clothes or travel, and childcare support. ▪ Support for activities to increase people’s motivation and confidence in getting online. ▪ Provision of devices for digitally excluded people, accompanied by essential digital skills courses delivered at local community facilities.
<p>OBJECTIVE 2</p> <p>Improving skills to progress in work and responding to local skills needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pathways to employment initiatives and in-work progression. ▪ Projects that focus on addressing sector specific responses to the jobs-skills mismatch. ▪ Technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2. ▪ Training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs. ▪ High-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that cannot be met through mainstream funding. ▪ Widening participation and talent retention initiatives. ▪ Green skills, environmental skills and low carbon courses where there are clear skills shortages and strong demonstration of upskilling, career progression, employment and business growth opportunities. ▪ Courses targeted at employees from local high carbon sectors to develop their existing skills in lower carbon alternatives. ▪ Developing an inclusive and accessible community digital skills pathway programme.

Benefits and outcomes

<p>Who will benefit?</p> <p>Unemployed people; economically inactive; those with poor basic skills, poor mental health, low paid, low skilled, insecure jobs; people interested in low carbon industries, individuals seeking to improve their skills and qualification</p>	<p>What difference will the UKSPF make?²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More economically inactive people receiving employment support and progressing into jobs ▪ More people with better basic skills for work ▪ More people with improved skills to retain jobs and make career progress ▪ More people in better paid, secure jobs ▪ More people with ‘green skills’ progressing into low carbon jobs and awareness of career opportunities in low carbon industries
--	--

² The Council is also responsible for local delivery of the UK-wide Multiply programme, which will support adults to improve their numeracy skills.



Multiply Programme

Challenges and opportunities in Sunderland

- Large numbers of adults who lack basic numeracy skills which are crucial for life and work, business success, and economic growth. Community based Multiply activity will provide practical and social support to help adults to persist with learning. This may include support with childcare, transport and travel assistance, and support from other agencies for more vulnerable learner groups if needed, to remove barriers faced to engagement with learning.
- The Multiply programme provides the opportunity to deliver Family Learning activities to help families manage their money, signposting to welfare advice and increasing numeracy skills to support parents/carers into employment or to progress in work.
- Workplaces with basic skills gaps amongst employees resulting in a range of costs for businesses including increases in errors made by staff, a constraint on the introduction of new and /or more efficient processes and reduction in product or output quality. Sunderland based employers will be invited to participate in the Multiply programme, with a priority focus on those that have a high proportion of lower-paid employees with families.
- Over the last 3 years there has been a decline in the number of people accessing and achieving the current maths offer in Sunderland with over a 40% decrease in numbers and the pass rate falling by over 23%. Our aim for Multiply activity is to provide informal, flexible engagement activities to address falling rates of participation and increase residents' confidence to progress to more formal mainstream activity funded through the Adult Education Budget.
- Campaign to recruit numeracy champions, volunteers from either employer groups or community groups, who will be ambassadors for functional maths. The role of champions will include raising awareness of the Multiply programme, help reduce the negative attitudes to maths and assist with recruitment and sustaining participation.

Multiply Themes	Activities
<p>OBJECTIVE 1</p> <p>Community engagement & family learning</p>	<p>Innovative, collaboratively designed numeracy skills that are related to participants everyday lives will be delivered through taster sessions and short courses providing progression through to formal numeracy qualifications. Delivery under this theme will also include longer interventions for individuals with 1 to 1 wrap around support to address barriers to learning and increase confidence to take the first steps to more formal skills training provided through AEB and/or wider skills offers through the UKSPF People & Skills theme. In addition, numeracy skills will be embedded into innovative Family Learning activities to support to work to address poverty and exclusion.</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 2</p> <p>Numeracy skills for the workplace</p>	<p>Numeracy skills for the workplace will be delivered through key partners currently engaged with employers who recognise the need to offer numeracy skills to employees in order to improve confidence, address workplace skills gaps and address in-work poverty.</p>

Benefits and outcomes

Who will benefit?

Unemployed people; economically inactive; those with poor basic skills; parents/carers, employers, people in low paid jobs

What difference will Multiply make?

- Increased number of informal adult numeracy activity through the Multiply programme
- Increased participation in basic skills provision
- More people with better numeracy skills for work
- Increase in referral to 'upskill' courses
- More people undertaking formal numeracy qualifications

5. How the UKSPF will be spent and what it will deliver

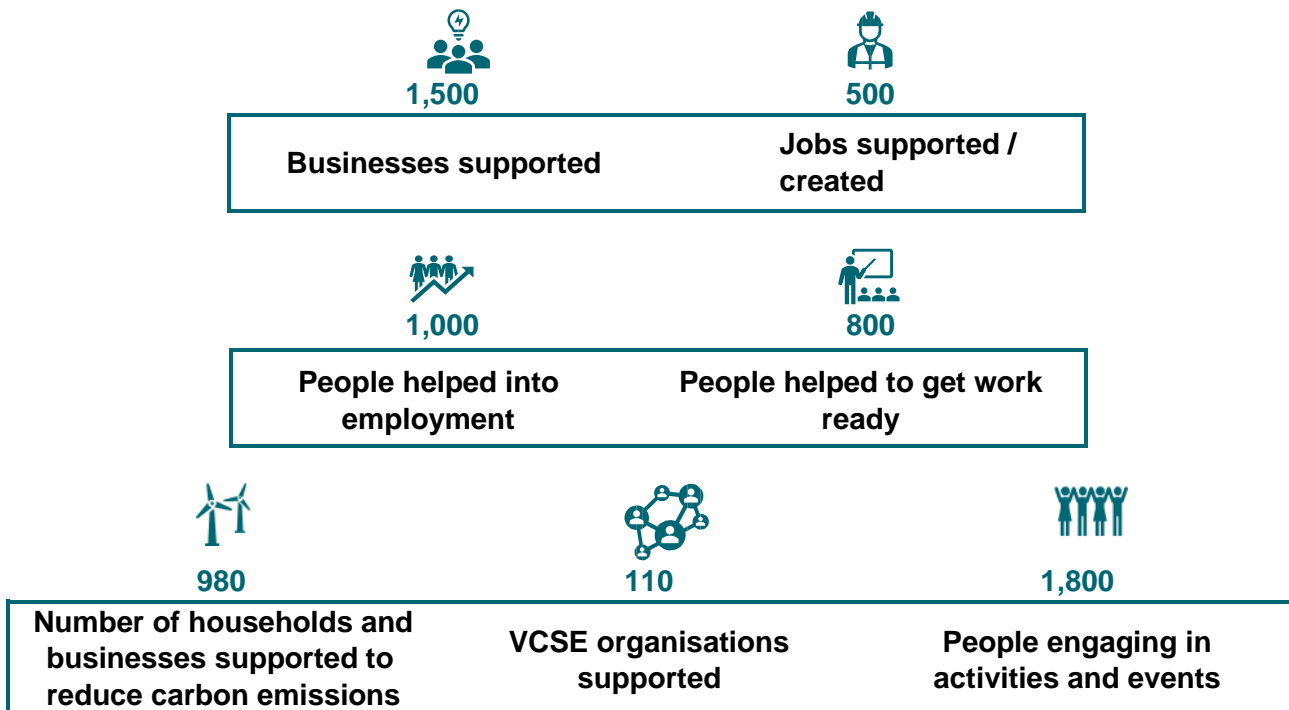
UKSPF Allocation in Sunderland

The table below sets out the current UKSPF allocation for Sunderland, made up of £14.9m Core UKSPF grant and £1.5m for the Multiply programme. The Core UKSPF allocation is mainly revenue funding, with 21% capital funding amounting to £3.16m. UKSPF support, including the Multiply programme, will be invested in Sunderland as follows.

(£m)	Total
Communities and Place	£4,232,418
Supporting Local Business	£5,911,260
People and Skills	£4,792,483
Total Core UKSPF	£14,936,161
Multiply Programme	£1,472,055
Total Core UKSPF and Multiply	£16,408,216

Types of outputs and outcomes to be achieved

UKSPF investment will deliver a wide range of outputs and outcomes for residents, visitors, workers, businesses and organisations. Some examples are listed below.



Managing UKSPF funding

The Council is the lead authority for the UKSPF in Sunderland, accountable to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) who are the lead department for UK Government. The Multiply initiative is also managed by the Council at a local level, with separate monitoring and reporting arrangements overseen by the Department for Education (DfE).

The Council is responsible for: managing the UKSPF funding received from Government; allocating the funding to projects and delivery partners (based on the priorities described in the Investment Plan submitted to DLUHC); managing and monitoring successful project delivery against objectives and targets; reporting progress to Government and partners; and ensuring the funding is used in accordance with public spending guidelines and regulations.

Recommendations and decisions on the allocation of UKSPF funding to projects are made by the Sunderland UKSPF Investment Panel and the Council's Chief Officer Group. The Council will report on programme progress to the Sunderland City Board which has strategic oversight of the programme. The Investment Panel is chaired by the Council and includes representation from Sunderland City Board partners including Gentoo, Department for Work and Pensions, Northumbria Police and the Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance. An assurance framework has been developed to guide programme management and administration responsibilities.

Collaborating with our North East Partners

We have developed our Investment Plan in close discussion with the other UKSPF lead authorities in the North East (the Local Authorities in County Durham, Gateshead and South Tyneside, and the North of Tyne Combined Authority) to ensure there is a coordinated approach to addressing the common opportunities and challenges facing the wider region.

Where it is appropriate and will improve the efficiency and impact of UKSPF investment in Sunderland, we will continue to explore opportunities to collaborate in key areas such as business support, innovation, low carbon, employability and skills.

6. Further information

-
- Further information on UKSPF in Sunderland can be accessed on the Sunderland UKSPF webpage available at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\) in Sunderland - Sunderland City Council](#).
 - If you have a general enquiry, please email us on ukspf@sunderlandgov.uk.
-