

Meeting	GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH JOINT COMMITTEE (GEGJC)
Report Author	Lisa McCance, Director, Shared Intelligence (economic development consultant to GCC)
Background documents	Funding opportunity: UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
Location/Contact for inspection of background documents	N/A
Main Consultees	Gloucestershire Economic Development Leads
Purpose of report	To update the Committee in respect of the UKSPF.
Recommendations	That the Committee notes the content of the paper and comments on progress so far.
Reason for recommendations	To explore the opportunities of the UKSPF and discuss the potential for collaboration.
Resource Implications	There are no further resource implications.

1.1	<p>Background</p> <p>This paper seeks to set out the parameters of the UKSPF, including the Multiply programme and the core UKSPF.</p>
1.2	<p>Context</p> <p>The UKSPF has been designed by government as the replacement funding for EU investment. At a national level, £2.6bn is being allocated to district, unitary and combined authorities over the next three years. This equates to investment of £0.4bn in 2022-23, £0.7bn in 2023-24 and £1.5bn in 2024-25.</p> <p>The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK through the support of high-quality skills training, improving pay, supporting employment and productivity growth. It aligns with Levelling Up White Paper missions, particularly “by 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing”.</p> <p>The fund includes two parts. Multiply (adult numeracy) and the core UKSPF which has three themes including: communities and place; supporting local business; people and skills (which comes into effect from 2024/25 onwards).</p> <p>The UKSPF is intended to fund support towards achieving government policies and initiatives. This includes net zero, green growth and broad levelling up ambitions along with employment and skills support. Priorities across rural areas have also been highlighted. The parameters of the fund include the need to agree and commission people and skills activity, or business support activity over a larger scale to achieve representative of the full local labour market or business base where relevant.</p>
1.3	<p>At a Gloucestershire level</p> <p>The total allocation to Gloucestershire across the two programmes is just under £10m. The below section of this report highlights some of the key facts surrounding the two programmes.</p> <p>Multiply</p> <p>The Multiply (adult numeracy) programme allocation over 3-years is £2,742,440. This allocation goes to the County Council (subject to an investment case) for activity to be delivered at a county-wide level. Multiply is 100% revenue funding. It builds on existing statutory entitlement for funding of maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2 in the Adult Education Budget. It can also be used to fund non-learning activities and capacity support such as outreach, administration, communications and encouraging people to take the first step towards participation in formal learning.</p> <p>The main outcomes highlighted under the Multiply programme include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More adults achieving maths qualifications in numeracy courses and an increase in participation in these courses. 2. Improved labour market outcomes i.e. an increase in the proportion of adults that progress into sustained employment and / or education.

	<p>3. Increased adult numeracy across the population.</p> <p>Core UKSPF</p> <p>The total allocation for the core UKSPF is £7,055,350 over 3-years. This will go to the district councils across Gloucestershire (subject to an approved local investment plan) and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheltenham £1,178,035 • Cotswold £1,000,000 • Forest of Dean £1,000,000 • Gloucester £1,486,352 • Stroud £1,378,985 • Tewkesbury £1,011,978 <p>The core UKSPF allows 10% of the funds to be spent on capital in the first year, increasing to 13% then 20% in subsequent years. The fund can be used flexibly to support interventions across the three themes including grant to public or private organisations, commissioning third party organisations, procurement of service provision or in-house provision and loans (in “limited circumstances”). There is a prescribed set of interventions, outputs and outcomes for the fund but there is also flexibility for the inclusion of other measures, subject to agreement.</p>
1.4	<p>Developing local investment plans</p> <p>Under both Multiply and the core UKSPF, the county council and the districts have been tasked to develop an investment plan. These plans need to be supported by evidence and a rationale for why and how investment is required to support local opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>The guidance for UKSPF makes numerous references for the need to collaborate across the fund. These references include a long list of organisations, networks and government departments including (where relevant to each place) neighbouring authorities, county councils, employment and skills stakeholders, including Jobcentre Plus employer bodies, MPs, civil society organisations, LEPs, businesses or business representative groups, Local Skills Improvement Plans and Skills Advisory Panels, Voluntary and Community Sector and rural representatives, etc.</p> <p>In preparation for this, the County Council has commissioned an evidence base, a review of strategies across the county and the development of a local investment framework at a county level. This suite of documents will be developed to support the county’s Multiply business case as well as the districts’ submission to government under the core UKSPF. This should help to inform decision making over priorities and investment plans appreciating that each lead partner has overall responsibility for the creation of their own investment plan.</p> <p>It has also convened an economic development officers’ forum, meeting monthly since February 2022, in order to collaborate, share plans and potentially develop joint projects. This group is well positioned to explore any economies of scale and understand where gaps in provision across the themes may exist based on local evidence.</p>
1.5	<p>Wider funding opportunities</p> <p>Partners across the county are also considering further opportunities of the Levelling Up Fund Round 2.</p>

In Round 1, the county received funding for three including:

- Investment for Gloucester City Centre
- Gloucester Docks Sustainable Travel Improvements
- Levelling up the Future of the Forest (of Dean)

Gloucestershire has also been shortlisted as one of five remaining sites within the STEP Fusion project at Berkeley and Oldbury. If successful, this would deliver significant investment while addressing global sustainability ambitions.