

UKSPF Investment Plan Year 1 Project Call

Community and Place E6 – Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities

Background

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was launched in April 2022 and succeeds the old EU structural funds. The fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and seeks to target funding where it is needed most to build pride in place, support high quality skills training, support pay, employment and productivity growth, and increase life chances. The fund will invest in three local priorities: communities and place, support for local businesses, and people and skills.

South Lakeland District Council submitted the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan to Government on 1st August 2022. Government has allocated £3.8m UKSPF funding to South Lakeland. The area is currently undergoing Local Government Reorganisation and from 1st April 2023 will be part of the new Westmorland and Furness Council. The current local authorities have collaborated closely to develop aligned Investment Plans in readiness for a merged Investment Plan in Year 2 and 3 of the Fund. As such, the project call for Year 1 is being led by the current local authorities working closely together to select projects through a shared approach.

Local Challenges and Opportunities which the Project needs to Respond to

South Lakeland faces a number of key challenges and opportunities which fall under the Communities and Place investment priority and are relevant to this project call. Our latest research and evidence, insights from existing policy and strategies, as well as our stakeholder engagement, identifies the following:

Vitality Challenge

Town centres have been heavily impacted by changing consumer patterns and a shift to online retail, which has been accelerated by the pandemic, contributing to declining footfall, reduced spend and commercial vacancies. However, with the gap in digital skills, the older demographic still heavily relies on town centres to cater to health, wellbeing and social needs. There is the need to make town centres more accessible for the older demographic as well as providing a broader offer to attract residents and visitors to the area and support improved access to services. The visitor economy is a key driver of the South Lakeland economy, and there is a need to ensure that town centres can provide an experiential offer which attracts tourism spend.

Cumbria has a lower crime rate than the national average. However, consultation pointed to hot spots of crime in town centres, highlighting the need for interventions which can create a safer town centre environment.

Opportunity to Build Pride in Place

South Lakeland has a rich culture, heritage and natural capital offer to support enhanced quality of life. According to the RSA Heritage Index, South Lakeland has one of the highest



heritage scores in England ranking 6th. Leveraging these assets through investment and promotion will attract and retain residents, visitors and businesses to the area.

Opportunity to Strengthen Town Centres through a Diversified Offer

South Lakeland has significant natural capital assets supporting growth in the visitor economy, including the World Heritage Lake District National Park.

There is the opportunity to attract and disperse visitors within South Lakeland to capture spend in town centres to support vitality. South Lakeland has a wealth of cultural assets which help to create pride and social cohesion in the area. Data from the Active Lives Survey shows that the 75% of adults in South Lakeland attended an arts event, museum or gallery or spent time doing an arts activity in the last 12 months, this is higher than the national average of 70%.

Local cultural, heritage and tourism assets need increased promotion to capitalise on the visitor economy and their ability to continue providing benefits for local residents. Town Centres in the district need to respond to drivers of economic growth which attracts residents and workers to the area and captures their spend locally.

In addition, town centres can provide a supportive business environment to facilitate enterprise and business growth including the provision of incubation and flexible workspace, and a range of housing options to meet the demands of a changing demographic. Vacant and underutilised units can be repurposed with new uses in response to these opportunities and inject vitality and footfall into the town centres.

Aim of the Project Call

The aim of this project call is to invite proposals in response to the Community and Place intervention E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.

Through the development of our investment plan and the identification of the local challenges and opportunities detailed above which we aim to address through the UKSPF we have recognised that there is a gap in funding available to promote and support local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Through this intervention we intend to provide funding to an organisation able to deliver a marketing campaign over the winter of 2022/23 that will promote the district's arts, cultural and heritage institutions and assets, increase visitor and engagement numbers for these organisations and enhance the area's year-round visitor economy offer.

Revenue funding only will be available under this intervention. The total amount of funding available is £92,294 and the intended outcome is to improve engagement numbers for the institutions and assets supported by the marketing campaign at least 7%.

The marketing campaign must effectively promote and support local arts, cultural and heritage institutions and assets in the South Lakeland District Council area and the district's wider cultural offer. It must also respond to the local challenges and opportunities detailed above, the objectives of the Community and Place investment priority and the relevant Levelling Up missions listed in the UKSPF prospectus. The marketing campaign must commence as soon as is practically possible following commission and be completed by March 31st 2023.

The successful applicant will have a proven track record of delivering major place-based marketing initiatives across the local area and have significant experience of working in collaboration with the district's arts, cultural and heritage institutions. Applicants must set out in their application how they intend to consult with the district's arts, culture and heritage institutions during delivery of the project. They must also be able to demonstrate a methodology for measuring, monitoring and reporting the intervention's outcome of improved engagement numbers (% increase).



We anticipate that there will be one successful applicant for this project call who will receive the full funding allocation of £92,294. Match funding is not required; however, applicants must demonstrate that the marketing campaign can be fully funded through the UKSPF or with other sources of funding.

This project call will be made in South Lakeland in 2022/23 only and further funding will not be made available through this intervention in 2023/24 or 2024/25.

Process and Timescales

The deadline to submit this application is 7th October 2022. Assessment and appraisal of all submissions will then take place during October 2022. Subject to approval of our investment plan from Government, which is expected in autumn 2022, project awards will be confirmed in November or December 2022 with grant agreements then made between the Council and successful applicants. Delivery of the project will then be completed by March 31st 2023 with monitoring, evaluation and reporting ongoing.

Contact Details

Questions about the details of the project call description can be directed to sam.butcher@southlakeland.gov.uk

Questions about the application process and completing the application can be directed to chris.fox@hatch.com

Reference Documents

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106222/uk-sp-prospectus-2020-21.pdf)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund framework of Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs \(England\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106222/uk-sp-framework-2020-21.pdf)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund Interventions List \(England\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106222/uk-sp-interventions-list-2020-21.pdf)



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District Council

