

UKSPF Investment Plan Year 1 Project Call

Community and Place E13 – Community measures to reduce the cost of living

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 and Eden District Council submitted our UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plans to Government on 1st August 2022. Government has allocated £3.8m of UKSPF funding to South Lakeland and £1.9m to Eden. 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

South Lakeland and Eden face a number of key challenges and opportunities relevant to the Communities and Place investment priority. Our latest research and evidence, insights from existing policy and strategies, as well as our stakeholder engagement, identifies the following:

Demographic Challenge

South Lakeland is facing a serious demographic challenge that is expected to worsen in the next decade. The population of the district has only increased by 1.1% since 2015, with a decline in children and working age residents, with an increase of some 6% of older age residents. This is a trend which is expected to continue through to the early 2040s. South Lakeland is expected to experience a slower rate of population growth than the national average at 5% compared to 10% in England. These projections forecast a 5% loss in working age residents in South Lakeland by 2043, whilst the older demographic will increase by 28%. It is notable that during the pandemic the level of economic inactivity due to retirement in South Lakeland rose by 15.5 percentage points from 28.4% economic inactive retired in 2019 to 43.9% in 2021.

Eden is also facing a demographic challenge. While the population has increased overall since 2015 (+2.2%) this growth has been concentrated outside of the working age demographic (16-64 year olds) which has experienced a decline of 0.7% since 2015. This underlines Eden's ageing population, which rose by over 10% since 2015 and is estimated to rise by 36% by the early 2040s. An ageing population will present challenges for Eden as fewer working age residents will reduce the supply of labour and in turn the level of



economic activity in the district. It is notable that during the pandemic the level of economic inactivity due to retirement in Eden rose by 4.6 percentage points from 25.7% economic inactive retired in 2019 to 30.3% in 2021.

An ageing population will place increased dependency on services in the districts including health and social care. This cohort are also more likely to be affected by the national cost of living crisis. Furthermore, the loss of young and working age residents will create a labour market challenge to support economic growth. Efforts to grow the working age population rely on access to quality affordable housing, quality jobs and supporting infrastructure.

Deprivation Challenge

Although overall South Lakeland and Eden are reasonably prosperous districts with many residents experiencing low levels of deprivation, within the districts clear deprivation challenges can be seen with concentrations in mid-level deprivation around Ulverston and Kendal in South Lakeland. There are also areas in Eden that are within the top 30% most deprived areas of England, including central Penrith and to the south of the district in Appleby-in-Westmorland and Kirkby Stephen. Eden exhibits a high level of need for regeneration on the Priority Places Index (66th out of 368 local authorities) which reflects commercial voids and long term dwelling vacancy rates.

Accessibility Challenge

South Lakeland ranks as the 60th most in need authority for improved transport connectivity on the DLUHC Priority Places Index which is informed by evidence on average journey times to employment centres by car, public transport and bike. The rurality of South Lakeland limits access to basic services, town centres and places of employment.

The highest contributor to carbon emissions in South Lakeland is transport emissions, which contributes 44%. Overall, South Lakeland currently produces more CO₂ per capita (8.2t) than the national average (5.6t).

Eden has one of the highest levels of need for improved transport connectivity (11th out of 368 local authorities) on the Government's Priority Places Index which is informed by evidence on average journey times to employment centres by car, public transport and bike. Within the specific domains of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, deprivation in Eden is often a side-effect of the district's rural nature. A large geographical area and small population leads to challenges for many rural residents in their ability to access important services. Nearly one in three LSOAs in the district is within the top 10% of most deprived LSOAs in England for the domain of deprivation of housing and services which includes geographical barriers such as the road distance to services.

Transport emissions accounts for 46% of CO₂ in Eden, illustrative of car dependency in the district in addition to the presence of major roads such as the M6.

There is need to improve active travel, EV infrastructure, public transport and basic infrastructure to support safe and effective movement connecting people to jobs, training, services and visitor destinations. Investment in accessibility improvements will help to reduce deprivation, lower transport related emissions, and improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our communities.

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



and Eden economies, 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 Harness Social Capital

Interventions which facilitate an improved sense of belonging and enhanced community resilience and cooperation can build pride in place and quality of life. There is a need to put residents at the heart of public service delivery through a collaborative response to drive transformation and inclusive growth and equip people with the skills and confidence they need to achieve their potential.

Improving life satisfaction will help to attract and retain young people and families in the area. Residents of South Lakeland and Eden have higher life expectancy than national average and with the growing proportion of older residents, there is the opportunity to capitalise on social action and volunteering opportunities to add to the wellbeing and quality of life of older residents.

Opportunity to Build Pride in Place

South Lakeland and Eden have rich culture, heritage and natural capital offer to support enhanced quality of life. According to the RSA Heritage Index, the districts have two of the highest heritage scores in England with South Lakeland ranking 6th and Eden 11th. 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 and Eden have 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 the districts to capture spend in town centres to support vitality. The districts have a wealth of cultural assets which help to create pride and social cohesion in the area.

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 districts 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 E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.

Through the development of our investment plans and the identification of the local challenges and opportunities detailed above we have recognised that there is a need to provide support for community measures to reduce the cost of living and improve household energy efficiency. Through this intervention we intend to provide funding to a project which can help South Lakeland and Eden households through the cost of living



crisis during the winter of 2022/23, increase the take up of energy efficiency measures and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the districts.

A total of £101,465 in revenue funding only will be available through this intervention. This is made up of £92,294 from South Lakeland District Council and £9,171 from Eden. The output we intend to achieve through this initiative is to reach directly at least 150 people or households in South Lakeland and 15 in Eden with support for energy efficiency improvements. This output should result in the outcome of increased take up of energy efficiency measures (5% increase compared to the previous benchmark).

The funding must be used to provide support to households to adopt energy efficiency measures in the South Lakeland District Council and Eden District Council areas only. It must 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 project must be completed and the proposed output achieved by March 31st 2023. The quantitative outputs delivered in each geographic local authority area must also be reflective proportionally of the different funding allocations from each local authority detailed above.

The successful applicant will have a proven track record of delivering community measures to reduce the cost of living and improve household energy efficiency in the local area. They must also be able to demonstrate a methodology for measuring, monitoring and reporting the intervention's output and outcome.

We anticipate that there will be one successful applicant for this project call who will receive the full funding allocation of £101,465. Match funding is not required; however, applicants must demonstrate that the project can be fully funded through the UKSPF or with other sources of funding.

This project call will be made in South Lakeland and Eden 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 plans 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 Councils and successful applicants. Delivery of the project must 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)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund framework of Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs \(England\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund Interventions List \(England\)](#)

