

REPORT TO STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 5 June 2025

Report of: Head of Service, City Centre & Net Zero

Title: Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 6

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report updates members on the impact of Exeter's Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation for 2022-2025, the evaluation of funded projects, as well as transition funding for 2025-26.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 Members note the impact of UKSPF in Exeter and the plans for transition funding for 2025-26.

2.2 The Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero to provide a further update to Strategic Scrutiny on the delivery and management of the UKSPF transition funding, the next being January and June 2026, when UKSPF has come to an end.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 Members are provided with an overview of the projects funded through UKSPF and its impact.

3.2 Members can scrutinise projects funded by UKSPF during 2022-25 and through the transition funding for 2025-26.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources

4.1 Management of UKSPF Exeter is currently overseen by the Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero. The Project Manager was on a fixed term contract until 31 May 2025, and no longer works for the City Council.

4.2 Of the £1,403,877 of UKSPF Exeter allocation, 100% of this was spent during the 3-year term. The table below highlights the 3-year allocation.

2022/2023		2023/2024		2024/2025		Total
Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	
10%	90%	18%	82%	20%	80%	
£17,037.3	£153,335.7	£63,540	£277,207	£178,551.4	£714,205.6	
Total £170,373		Total £340,747		Total £892,757		£1,403,877

- 4.3 Transition funding of £363,862 is being passported from the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA), of which £279,066 is revenue and £84,796 is capital, to the City Council for distribution to some of the existing projects. Exeter's capital allocation can be increased but cannot reduce below our allocation.
- 4.4 Funding is expected to be received once the transition funding grant agreement has been signed by the City Council and the CCA, likely to be early June 2025. A second instalment is due to arrive 30 October 2025.
- 4.5 One project, Prosper, has underspent this financial year which equals £82,353.71.

5. What are the legal aspects?

- 5.1 The original Exeter Investment Plan was signed off by DLUHC January 2023, with the original budget listed above. In relation to the transition funding, there are no plans to make any changes to the original Exeter UKSPF Investment Plan, which would require sign off from DLUHC.
- 5.2 A UK Shared Prosperity Fund Grant Agreement has been received from Devon County Council, which passports Exeter's allocation to the City Council for distribution to projects.
- 5.3 The Grant Funding Agreement reflects the terms of the UK Government grant agreement with Devon County Council, including that each partner deliver their schemes, monitor and provide the required information back to the County Council for cumulative monitoring and reporting back to MHCLG each 6-months. Devon County Council will carry out the overall financial monitoring.
- 5.4 For projects being funded through the transition funding for 2025-56, a one-year contract extension will be issued.

6. Exeter UKSPF Update 6

- 6.1 The tables below highlight the interventions funded in year 1, 2 and 3 of UKSPF. Any underspend in-year was rolled forward to the following year to spend at a later date.

Year 1 Exeter UKSPF Projects		Capital		Revenue		Rolled Forward
Intervention	Project	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	
Community & Place						
E5 - Built & Landscaped environment to design out crime	Replace old city centre CCTV cameras & provide Body Worn Cameras for enforcement	£130,373	£129,778	£0	£0	£595
Supporting Local Businesses						
E31 – Support relevant feasibility studies	Study	£0	£0	£33,186	£0	£33,186

4% Management & Administration	Salary contribution	£0	£0	£6,814	£6,804	£10
TOTAL		£130,373	£129,778	£40,000	£6,804	£33,791

Year 2 Exeter UKSPF Projects		Capital		Revenue		Rolled Forward
Intervention	Project	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	
Community & Place						
E2 Community & neighbourhood infrastructure	Exeter Parklets	£50,000	£51,803	£0	£0	£0
E3 Creation of and improvements to local green spaces	Rougemont Garden	£15,540	£14,323	£4,000	£3,168	£0
E6 Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities	Creative Arc	£0	£0	£34,808	£34,808	£0
TOTAL		£65,540	£66,126	£38,808	£37,976	£0
Supporting Local Businesses						
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Innovation Hub	£0	£0	£110,000	£116,798	£0
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Building Greater Exeter	£0	£0	£20,000	£20,000	£0
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Prosper (business support)	£0	£0	£101,000	£101,000	£0
E31 Support relevant feasibility studies	Study (rolled forward from year 1)	£0	£0	£30,717	£0	£30,717
TOTAL		£0	£0	£261,717	£237,798	£30,717
4% Management & Administration	Salary contribution	£0	£0	£8,473	£4,236	£0
GRAND TOTAL		£65,540	£66,126	£308,998	£280,010	£30,717

Year 3 Exeter UKSPF projects		Capital		Revenue	
Intervention	Project	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual
Community & Place					
E6 – Local arts, culture, heritage and creative activities	Creative Arc	£37,440	£37,440	£92,160	£92,160
E13 – Community measures to reduce the	Exeter Energy Grants	£30,000	£26,618	£0	£0

cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency					
TOTAL		£67,440	£64,058	£92,160	£92,160
Supporting Local Businesses					
E23 – Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Innovation Hub	£0	£0	£104,250	£89,367
E23 – Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Building Greater Exeter	£0	£0	£20,000	£20,000
E26 – Growing the local social economy	Prosper	£0	£0	£118,182	£35,829
E31 Support relevant feasibility studies	Study (rolled forward from year 2)	£0	£0	£30,717	£47,087
TOTAL		£0	£0	£273,149	£192,283
People & Skills					
E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people	Urban Learning Academy	£0	£0	£172,800	£172,800
E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people. Priority given to supporting residents aged 16-24 and 50+	Exeter Youth Hub	£0	£0	£100,000	£100,000
E34 – Courses including basic skills provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget	Retrofit Academy	£142,000	£142,000	£49,575	£49,575
TOTAL		£142,000	£142,000	£322,375	£322,375
4% Management & Administration	Salary contribution	£0	£0	£26,521	£25,034
GRAND TOTAL		£209,440	£206,058	£714,205	£631,852

6.2 After submitting our final return to UK Government in May 2025, of the £1,403,877 original grant received, £1,320,628 has been spent. The £83,249 will be handed by to Uk Government. It was too late to re-distribute the underspend from Prosper.

6.3 Most of the year 3 projects received their UKSPF grant in two tranches, April and September 2024.

6.4 The Project Manager has undertaken a review and evaluation of projects funded via UKSPF to determine their impact on the city, its communities and how projects link back Building Pride in Place and Increasing Life Chances.

6.5 Updates on each of the UKSPF projects are highlighted below, which includes impact and evaluation.

6.5.1 Community & Place

6.5.1.1 E2 Community & neighbourhood infrastructure - Exeter Parklets

Project closed.

The Fore Street parklet has been moved to Queen Street, due to demand for more seating, as there is high student footfall on this particular street. There was also some low level anti-social behaviour associated with the Fore Street Parklet. The cost of the relocation was covered by InExeter. The second parklet is located on Musgrave Row and remains there and is an opportunity to further enhance this area, subject to external funding applications.

6.5.1.2 E3 Creation of and improvements to local green spaces - Rougemont Garden

Project closed.

This project restored the circular footpath within Rougemont Garden, which is adjacent to the city wall and Exeter Castle. The footpath is fully open for use by residents, visitors and the Red Coat Guides. Some additional maintenance issues were also addressed in Rougemont Garden as part of the project.

6.5.1.3 E5 Built & Landscaped environment to design out crime, CCTV & Body Worn Video Cameras

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

58 additional CCTV cameras were installed in 27 locations across the city centre and in some multi-storey car parks, to replace old analogue and damaged cameras. Body Worn Cameras are now used by the new Community Safety Team to enable evidence to be collected to address and reduce anti-social behaviour in the city centre. This project has supported the feeling of safe within the City Centre and enables the Control Room to provide better coverage and evidence in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

6.5.1.4 E6 Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities, Creative Arc

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

A Creative Arc Programme Manager is employed by the University of Exeter and has been in post since July 2025. The Programme Manager has led on working with communities and cultural providers to facilitate connections between practitioners, community groups and researchers, and explore the ways in which creative activity can contribute to 'pride in place' – a core element of UKSPF. More information on Creative Arc can be found <https://www.creativearc.co.uk/> Commissions are within 3 categories, with 14 commissions to date:

- **Health & Wellbeing**
 - Honeyscribe – Plant Prescription
 - All Soul's Day St Thomas
 - Burn the Curtain – Spring Parade
 - Art Work Exeter – River Radio
 - Bookbag – Fore Street Stories
- **Environmental Sustainability**
 - Hannah Mumby & Hannah Hayes – Flood Risk & Topsham
 - Exeter Seed Bank
 - Documental Theatre – Sign & Sign and Newsicals
 - Exeter Northcott Theatre – The Commotion Choir
 - Natalie McGrath – Pink Plates & Shipwrecks

- **People & Place Shaping**

- Lightbear Lane – Proud to Be
- Yellow Mouse Studios – Exeter Animation Academy
- Almanac Theatre – The Cultivate Sessions
- Positive Light Projects – The Pelican Press

6.5.1.5 E13 – Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, Exeter Energy Grants

Project closed.

Grants of up to £1,000 were made available to residents to pay for upgrades to their homes to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty. The grant has contributed to loft insulation, the replacement drafty windows and doors and new and improved heating. There were 53 grant applications, with 34 grants being awarded, with an average grant of £824 per household.

6.5.2 Supporting Local Businesses

6.5.2.1 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Innovation Hub

Project closed.

The Innovation Hub has proven to be an effective mechanism in bringing together key local partners and providing accessible, visible support for businesses in the Exeter area. The range of interactions and level of engagement exceeded initial expectations, contributing directly to the vitality of the local innovation ecosystem. The Innovation Hub will continue to trade until July 2025, when the University of Exeter will decide on its long-term future.

6.5.2.2 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Building Greater Exeter

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

The management of Building Greater Exeter has been transferred to Exeter College. The Building Greater Relaunch has been a transformative initiative aimed at inspiring new candidates of all ages into the Built Environment, fostering business innovation and growth. Through engaging panel discussions, real-time feedback, and networking, it has provided valuable insights that directly contributed to achieving key targets.

6.5.2.3 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Prosper

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

Prosper covers Exeter, as well as Mid Devon and East Devon providing free support for businesses.

111 beneficiaries were supported overall. Of these beneficiaries, 53 achieved further project outcomes, including over delivery in the jobs created. The cost per business supported is well within the expected costs for a programme like this and as such the programme did provide good value for money.

One area of additionality was from the outcome Jobs created, where the suppliers successfully delivered over target for Exeter. The project also delivered 4 large events alongside the procured support delivery;

- February 2024 – “Net Zero and Sustainability Workshop”
- June 2024 – “Achieving Net Zero with AI”
- January 2025 – “People Planet Profit: Packaging and Waste Solutions” packaging laws.
- March 2025 – “Mastering Bid Writing Workshop”

Exeter’s output & outcome achievements struggled for Prosper. Exeter’s business support offers focused on Green/Net Zero and had a lower level of interest from businesses than initially anticipated. The supplier, Devon County Council and the City Council tried on multiple occasions to attract businesses to participate, with limited success. Going forward business support will be focused on starting a new business, recruitment and for those that need support through times of stress.

6.5.2.4 E31 Support relevant feasibility studies – Exeter City Centre

Project will continue.

Consultants were appointed to review and develop a new Vision, Strategy and Action Plan for the City Centre to ensure the City Centre is responsive to creating a growing and vibrant economy, addressing changes within the retail and hospitality market. 4 business workshops and a member workshop were delivered. A wider public consultation will form part of the 2025 Exeter Residents Survey. From this, consultants will develop the new Vision, Strategy & Action Plan is due to be consulted on in early 2026.

6.5.3 People & Skills

6.5.3.1 E34 – Courses including basic skills provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget, Exeter College Retrofit Academy

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

The project has been highly effective in achieving its core objectives, notably the successful installation of six green skills training bays. Funding allowed Exeter College to deliver project aims proficiently, exceeding the initial target of 98 learners, with 107 individuals benefitting from the new facility within just six weeks of its installation. Feedback from participants and prospective employers highlights a marked improvement in employability and skill levels, demonstrating strong alignment with our original success criteria.

6.5.3.2 E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people, Urban Learning Academy, Urban Learning Academy

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

Funding has enabled learning providers to come together to connect and collaborate on learning and meaningful activities to enhance people’s lives, to focus on people and skills in Exeter, reduce isolation, increase community connection and cohesion and be an excellent reliable adult and community learning offer in the city that has become well recognised and utilised by many. A selection of outputs include:

Number of economically inactive people engaging with services: 696

Number of people supported to access basic skill course: 334

Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support: 31

Number of active or sustained participants in community groups because of support: 441

6.5.3.3 E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people, Exeter Youth Hub

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

Led by Devon County Council the Hub has been an agile, responsive, place-based approach to support communities, that do not currently engage.

The Exeter Employment & Youth Hub managed to surpass ten out of eleven SPF outcome targets. Notably, the hub supported 25 people who were out of work prior to support, into paid work, with the target set at 12. Meanwhile, it also exceeded targets relating to education and training, including economically inactive people engaged with mainstream education, people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support, and people in education/training following support.

13 people were supported with basic skills against a target of 25. This is below target due to people already being aware of basic skills opportunities in Exeter, so don't visit the hub for basic skills support. To resolve this, Learn Devon was present in the hub, to support people in signposting.

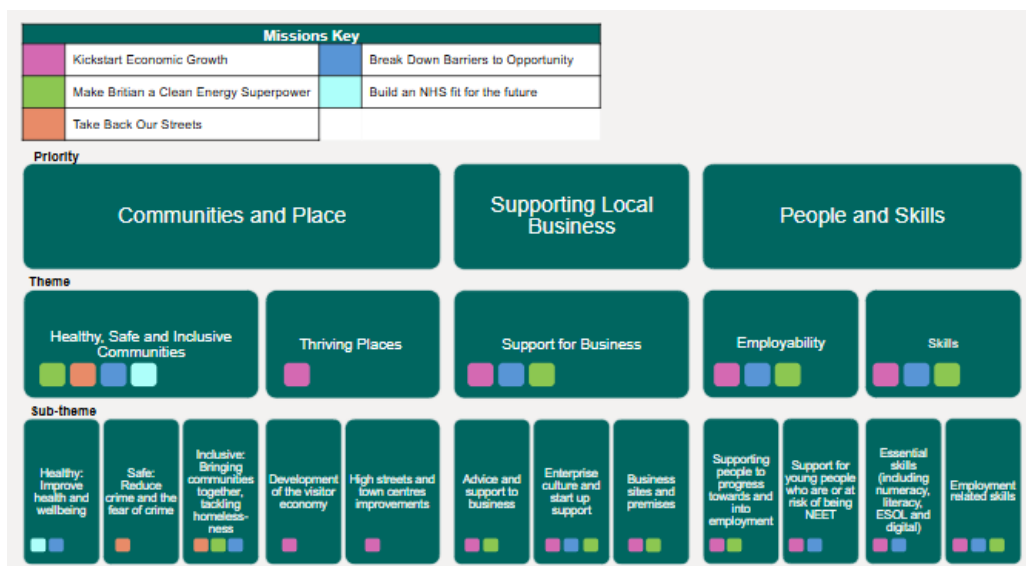
The hub managed to support 112 people to increase their employability through the development of interpersonal skills against the target of 25. One of the key strengths of the hub service has been getting to know the people being supported and taking the time to support them with aspects such as confidence and communication skills.

7. UKSPF Transition Funding

7.1 The UK government's Autumn Budget announced further funding for local investment by March 2026. All areas of the UK are receiving a further allocation of UKSPF and where a County Combined Authority is in place, funding would be channelled through that body. The aim of the UKSPF extension year is to provide a smooth transition from the existing UKSPF programme to a new, future funding framework.

7.2 Lead local authorities, which in Exeter's case is the Devon & Torbay County Combined Authority, were strongly encouraged to engage with and seek support from local partners to deliver the 2025/26 transition funding. District Council's across Devon have been working collaboratively with the County Combined Authority. There was a collaborative decision to continue funding existing projects, rather than procure new projects, as the funding is transition funding.

7.3 The UK government mapped existing interventions into Mission-led themes across the three priority areas: Communities and Place; Support for Local Business; and People and Skills (see diagram below).



7.4 Lead local authorities continue to have flexibility to invest across a range of activities that represent the right solutions for their areas.

7.5 Of the £363,862 transition funding for Exeter, the following projects have been informed of funding for 2025/26. This is a reduction on previous years funding due to a significant reduction in overall funding from previous years:

Project	Capital	Revenue	TOTAL
Community & Place			
Replace broken and analogue City Centre CCTV cameras	£85,112	£20,000	£105,112
Creative Arc		£41,750	£41,750
Supporting Local Businesses			
Building Greater Exeter		£13,000	£13,000
Prosper Business Support		£28,000	£28,000
People & Skills			
Building Green Skills		£58,000	£58,000
Urban Learning Academy		£68,000	£68,000
Exeter Youth & Employment Hub		£50,000	£50,000
	£85,112	£278,750	£363,862

7.6 Projects that applied for transition funding, but were unsuccessful, included:

- Exeter Innovation Hub – This project was led by the University of Exeter and whilst achieving many of its original aims does not sufficiently address social challenges, people and business funded projects, supporting residents into training and/or work; and business with current trading challenges.
- Two new projects, Wellbeing for Study led by Exeter College and South West Tourism Data Hub, led by South West Destination Management Organisations, were unsuccessful because transition funding is to support existing projects.

7.7 A Grant Agreement has been received from Devon County Council, so funds can be received. Once received, this funding will be passported to each funded project, with an accompanying Service Agreement, which extends the funded project for a further 12 months.

8. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

8.1 UKSPF links directly to the Exeter Vision and several Priorities within the new City Council Corporate Plan.

Corporate Plan	Local Economy	Several interventions support businesses to grow and prosper, as well as supporting individuals to start their own business.
	Homes	Interventions support businesses and people within the construction sector, to grow skills and to support the sector to innovate.
	Sustainable Environment	Interventions support business and residents to reduce their carbon emissions
	People	Several interventions support people who live in the city to start the journey into learning, training and or employment. There is an emphasis on those furthest from the jobs market. One intervention supports the feeling of safe in the City Centre.
Exeter Vision	Innovative & Analytical City	Interventions support businesses to grow and prosper. Skills and learning interventions will be developed to support residents to improve their learning opportunities.
	Accessible world class educations	Interventions support residents to access city educational institutions.
	Liveable & connected	Interventions support a thriving and safe city centre.
	A leading sustainable city	One intervention will support the delivery of the Exeter Net Zero 2030 Plan.
	Culture	Interventions support cultural activity through Liveable Exeter.

9. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

9.1 As the City Council no longer employ a Project Manager to manage and oversee Exeter funded projects, this will now sit with the Head of Service for City Centre & Net Zero.

9.2 Support will be called upon through Devon County Council officers to support in overseeing Exeter funded projects and gaining outputs and outcomes on projects funded.

10. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

10.1 No potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report is for noting only.

11. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

11.1 Elements of the People & Skills theme will continue to focus on green skills. Other projects will be reviewed to keep carbon emissions to a minimum or to net zero.

12. Are there any other options?

12.1 Not accepting the transition funding from the CCA and allocating the funding. This would have resulted in:

- CCA having to start a new procurement process to distribute funds, resulting in a delay of funds being distributed and projects having a significant gap in funding
- Projects that employ officers, having no certainty of funds for 2025-26
- The City Council not being involved in the decision-making process in which projects receiving transition funds for 2025-26

Director: Strategic Director Place

Author: Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

12 September 2024, progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 5

14 March 2024, progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 4

21 September 2023, Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 3

2 March 2023, Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 2

22 September 2022, Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 1

5 July 2022, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Exeter allocation

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