



Better for everyone

Meeting: County Durham Economic Partnership+ Board meeting:
UK Shared Prosperity Fund – County Durham Investment Plan

Date & Time: Friday 22nd July at 10.30am

Venue: Salvus House & Zoom

	Name	Organisation/Pillar Rep
Present:	Sue Parkinson (Chair) (SP)	Vice Chair, CDEP
	Cllr Elizabeth Scott (ES)	Portfolio Holder for Economy & Partnerships, Durham County Council
	Jenny Taylor (JT)	Head of Economic Development, Durham University
	Sarah Slaven (SS)	Managing Director, Business Durham
	Claire Williams (CW)	Funding and Programmes Manager, Durham County Council
	Elaine Armstrong (EA)	Strategic Manager, DWP
	Andrew Broadbent (AB)	New College Durham
	Michelle Cooper (MC)	County Durham Community Foundation
	Reshma Begum (RB)	Federation of Small Business
	Kevan Jones MP (KJ)	Member of Parliament
	Adam Anderson (AA)	Student with Kevan Jones Office
	Danny Wood (DW)	Kevan Jones Office
	Angela Brown (ABro)	Durham County Council
Attended Via Zoom:	Grahame Morris MP (GM)	Member of Parliament (Needed to leave meeting before 11am)
	Audrey Christie (AC)	County Durham Association of Local Council's
	Bill Fullen (BF)	Believe Housing
	Michael Shannon (MS)	Public Health
	Jim Cokill (JC)	Chair of Environment & Climate Change Partnership
	Paul Howell MP (PH)	Member of Parliament
	Richard Holden MP (RH)	Member of Parliament
	Jo Laverick (JL)	Durham Community Action
Apologies:	Glynn Llewellyn	Chair of CDEP

	Alison Gittins	Durham Business Group
	Amy Harhoff	Durham County Council
	Michelle Rainbow	NELEP
	Prof Jon Gluyas	Durham university
	Dehanna Davison MP	Member of Parliament
	Alan Patrickson	Chair of Safe Durham Partnership Board
	Cllr Paul Sexton	Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board
	Jane Robinson	Chair of County Durham Together Partnership

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
1.	Welcome and apologies	SP welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their time.		
2.	Minutes of meeting of 24th June 2022	These had been circulated previously and were agreed as a true and correct record.		
3.	Matters Arising from the Minutes	None other than covered on the Agenda		
4.	United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund presentation	<p>This was a single agenda item meeting, to consider the report, which had been circulated with the Board papers.</p> <p>By way of introduction, SP delivered a presentation, which provided the Board with a reminder of the progress undertaken to date in developing the UKSPF Investment Plan for Durham. It gave a resume of the evidence base and proposed areas of focus that had been discussed at the June meeting and of the guiding principles to inform the development of the Investment Plan, which the Board had agreed at the same time. The presentation then set out the proposals for the investment plan, including selected UKSPF Interventions, that had been developed as a result, demonstrating how they had taken into account the guidance given by the Board at its previous meeting, as well as the results of ongoing stakeholder engagement. It finally proposed a future work-plan.</p>		

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		<p>The presentation closed by asking the Board to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. confirm or otherwise that it agrees to the proposals contained in this paper, which set out the focus of the UKSPF Investment Plan and is supportive of it b. note the arrangements for work to develop calls for activity and that a further meeting of this Board will be convened when a more accurate timeline for the Investment Plan approval becomes clear. <p>A wide ranging discussion ensued. This focussed on the Board's reflections on the appropriateness of some aspects of the Prospectus issued by HM Govt., and on the Board's views on the suggestions contained in the paper and presentation.</p> <p>A number of comments were made regarding the former. There was particular, and commonly shared, concern about the requirement to spend substantial amounts of funding in the current financial year, the imposed rigidity of applying spend in given financial years and also about the inability of Plans to invest in employability and skills, outside of some limited exceptions, until year 3. The point was made, and generally agreed, that this latter would detrimentally effect the ability of Durham to have continuity of provision of skills and employability support as ESF funding came to an end, effectively early in 2023. A number of Board members, individually and collectively, stated that they intended to approach the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to express these broad concerns and seek flexibility.</p> <p>With regard to the Investment Plan, there was a broad, but not unanimous, view that this was an appropriate response to the Prospectus.</p> <p>The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The view that the Investment Plan as described did not fully justify the evidence base which had led to the selection of interventions. This was noted, as was the view that this had drawn on the Economic Statement, the recent Our Big Econ-versation and extensive stakeholder engagement, and 		

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		<p>was thus fully justified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The view that the Investment Plan was too wide ranging and thus would potentially be inefficient. A proposal was put forward that it should concentrate solely on skills, employing creativity in response to restrictions to only spend money on skills in year 3. This was noted, as was the view that priorities had been identified in Communities and Place and under Supporting Local Business, including through extensive stakeholder engagement. - The view that the involvement of the Voluntary and Community sector would need support were they to be called upon to deliver in such short order. Although delivery was possible from 1st April 2022, this would need to be de-risked financially if the sector were able to utilise this, which would in turn require the support of the County Council as Accountable Body. This was noted and the possibility would be pursued. - The view that, notwithstanding the imperfections in the design of the Prospectus, nonetheless Durham partners have extensive experience of managing such funding, of taking a pragmatic approach and of recognising that such arrangements often show fluidity as time progresses. There were a number of activities which had been developed in response to opportunities from Community Renewal Fund and Capital of Culture 2025 bid which were entirely consistent with the Investment Plan and which could be brought to market in short order. <p>SP summarised the consensus and asked for specific agreement or otherwise to the following points from Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that Members, individually or collectively with others as they saw fit, would pursue with DLUHC the possibility of further flexibilities around areas of concern highlighted during the meeting. All agreed 2. that work to deliver calls for activity, as set out in the paper and presentation, commence immediately. All agreed. 3. that proposals contained in this paper, which set out the focus of the UKSPF Investment Plan, were agreed and that the Board and is supportive of it. This was the prevailing view, but with one Member expressing dissent. Otherwise all agreed. 		

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		SP thanked everyone for their involvement and input and closed the meeting.		
	Date and time of Next Meeting	TBA once initial reactions to the Investment Plan are received.		