



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Dehenna Davison MP
Minister for Levelling Up
2 Marsham Street
London
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Our reference: 21068875

Stephen Kinnock MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

23rd December 2022

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 20th September about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). I have been asked to respond as this matter falls within my ministerial responsibilities. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

As you will know, I wrote to you separately on 5th December to notify you that all UKSPF investment plans have now been approved. Officials are currently working with lead local authorities to address any funding conditions and agree next steps, with payments to follow.

Turning to your letter of 20th September and taking each of your points in turn – with regards to the timescales of UKSPF, we provided local authorities with pre-launch guidance in February 2022, enabling them to start the process of preparing their investment plans some six months before the submission deadline. The fund was formally launched on 13th April 2022, giving local authorities more than 15 weeks to produce their investment plans. I'm pleased to say that we received all 256 Investment Plans from places over the Summer. As you noted, the light touch approach – fundamental to UKSPF – enabled authorities to submit their plans in good time and reduced the administrative burden in comparison to predecessor funds.

We strongly believe that UKSPF allocations are best directed by lead local authorities, as they are closest to the local needs of citizens and are therefore best placed to deliver on the ground. As you rightly point out, there are several key organisations, such as higher education institutions, who have been pivotal to the delivery of previous structural funds. We recognise their role in the development and roll-out of the UKSPF and have therefore asked lead local authorities to ensure these organisations form part of the partnership group and ongoing delivery of the fund.

We will encourage lead local authorities to publish their investment plans, and many have done so already.

In England, UKSPF is focusing on Communities and Place and Supporting Local Business interventions to boost pride in place in 2022-23 and 2023-24, alongside support for People and Skills through the Multiply adult numeracy programme. Lead local authorities have the flexibility to fund targeted People and Skills provision in 2022-23 and 2023-24 where this is a continuing priority for 2024-25 and may be at significant risk of ending due to the tail-off of EU funds.

Finally, as per our previous letter, UKSPF is not a direct replacement for EU structural funds. At Spending Review 2020, it was announced that funding for the UKSPF will ramp up so that total domestic UK-wide funding will at least match receipts from EU structural funds – the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund.

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend an upcoming meeting of the APPG. As has been communicated to you already by my office, I would be pleased to accept. My officials will be in touch in the New Year to organise a suitable date.

I look forward to working with you and the APPG and want to thank you again for writing to me on such an important topic.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dehenna". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DEHENNA DAVISON MP