



Industrial Communities Alliance

The all-party association campaigning on behalf of local authorities in the industrial areas of England, Scotland and Wales

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Alex Norris MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Email to: ministerial.correspondence@communities.gov.uk

2 October 2024

Dear Alex,

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

I wanted to underline the growing urgency of an announcement on an extension to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and the serious consequences of delay.

On 2 August you responded to my letter of 25 July to Secretary of State Angela Rayner MP setting out the concerns that we were hearing from around the country. You acknowledged our concerns and the need for early certainty regarding future funding commitment. We circulated your response to our member authorities.

There has at this point still been no announcement on the future of the UKSPF and the uncertainty is beginning to trigger adverse consequences. As my letter to the Secretary of State noted, our best estimate is that across the UK 7-10,000 local authority jobs are funded directly by the UKSPF and, in addition, at least as many if not more are employed by contractors who deliver UKSPF-funded business services and employment support.

What we are hearing is that consultation on redundancies has in some cases already begun and that staff facing uncertainty about their future are already beginning to move on. This is bad news, not just for the individuals concerned but also for economic development in the less prosperous parts of the country that are the main beneficiaries from the UKSPF.

You will recall that what we've argued for is a one-year extension to the present UKSPF, through until March 2026, which would bring the UKSPF into line with most of the other 'levelling up' funds inherited from the previous administration and create the space for a considered and comprehensive review. The Spending Review, due to report in the spring of next year, might provide the opportunity to set out the results of this review and a new way forward.

In the meantime we need a bridge to the future for the UKSPF, for the jobs it supports and for the services it delivers. In the absence of a one-year extension, by the spring of next year and the publication of the Spending Review the UKSPF will have been dismantled.

I trust you will see the good sense in what we're proposing.

I'm copying this letter to the Chancellor.

Many thanks in anticipation of your support.

Yours,

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

Cllr Keith Cunliffe
National Chair