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**Sunderland City Council – UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Final Evaluation Report**
Executive Summary

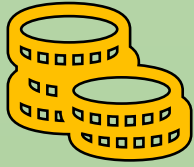
April 2025

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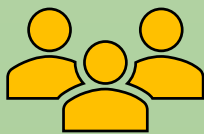
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Sunderland UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Programme: Key Numbers



- 27 Projects supported
- c.£14.3m UKSPF spent on projects
- c.£4.47m match Funding leveraged through projects
- £3.1m of private investment unlocked



- Over 1 million engagements with residents or individuals working in the city
- Over 1,600 engagements with enterprises and organisations
- At least 8,174 households engaged



- 6,172 local events and activities
- Improved use or perceptions of community facilities and assets or community safety from almost 100,000 people¹
- 876,000 increase in footfall, visitor numbers or engagement numbers for local places, events or organisations



- Improvements to at least 165 local facilities and assets
- Improvements to at least 23,535m² of land, public realm or building space
- 333 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent reductions



- 894 job-related outcomes, including jobs created within enterprises or economically inactive residents moving into work
- 401 improvements in enterprises or organisations in terms of productivity, increased revenue or new enterprises being established
- 2,763 examples of improved skills or participation in training or qualifications



- Net additional gains of **£36,093,847**, representing an overall return on investment of **2.4:1**
- Estimated gross value added of **£25,743,164** into the wider economy.
- Over 50% of beneficiaries from communities ranked among the 10% most deprived in England



Executive Summary

This is the final evaluation report produced as part of the evaluation of Sunderland's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme. It has been delivered by Centrifuge Consulting on behalf of Sunderland City Council (SCC). A separate evaluation report is available for the Multiply programme which was also funded through UKSPF.

1. The Programme

The programme funded a range of interventions across the following three Investment Priorities:

- Communities and Place.
- Supporting Local Business.
- People and Skills.

2. Communities and Place

Communities and Place within the Sunderland UKSPF Programme was shaped to build community capacity and infrastructure and foster inclusive growth across all communities in the city. This brought a particular focus on supporting community action and local physical and social regeneration; including built and institutional infrastructure, inclusion activities, and individual support focussed on culture, health and wellbeing. The 12 projects supported under this theme spent c.£5.3m of grant funding and fell broadly under three headings:

- Property and Facilities.
- Culture and Arts.
- Wellbeing.

This funding leveraged in an additional £2.36m of match funding. Taken together, they make a significant contribution to community regeneration in the city, with a focus on areas of need.

The activities undertaken under this IP have undoubtedly contributed to the overall original UKSPF aim of '*build(ing) pride in place and increasing life chances.*' Projects have also made a clear contribution to the development of the creative infrastructure in the city, strengthening the cultural and arts sector, which in turn should have a positive impact on pride in place. Investments in infrastructure and property projects will also have a lasting effect both on organisational sustainability and services available to residents.

In terms of performance against output and outcome targets, the 12 projects funded under this Investment Priority:

- 25 out of 26 output targets for this Investment Priority were achieved or exceeded. Outputs were also claimed against a further output indicator which had no targets.
- 18 out of 19 outcome targets for this Investment Priority were achieved or exceeded. Outcomes were also claimed against a further outcome indicator which had no targets.



3. Supporting Local Business

The Supporting Local Business Investment Priority of the Sunderland UKSPF Programme was designed to support the growth and development of enterprise and entrepreneurship along with the ecosystem which supports this; support the development of social economy and the transition to net zero. A total of 12 projects were funded with c.£5.2m of UKSPF expenditure which was expected to leverage in c.£2.4m of match funding and c.£3.1m of private sector investment. The 12 projects supported under this theme fall broadly under six headings:

- Entrepreneurship.
- Innovation.
- Growth and job creation.
- Sector Specialisation.
- Social enterprise
- Net zero.

A wide range of approaches taken and activity being delivered to achieve the objectives of the Supporting Local Business Investment Priority and contribute to the objectives of UKSPF, particularly in relation to boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector; as well as empowering local leaders and communities and restoring a sense of community through the development of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. The methods adopted included a number of grant schemes to act as a catalyst for business growth and development or to support the transition to net zero; specialist or traditional enterprise or business support through one-to-one advice, workshops and events; and student and graduate placements to support innovation projects within local enterprises.

- Analysis of performance against output and outcomes targets for these projects shows that:
9 out of 12 output targets were achieved or exceeded. Outputs were also claimed against an additional 7 output indicators which had no targets.
- 9 out of 13 outcome targets were achieved or exceeded. Outcomes were also claimed against an additional outcome indicator which had no outcome targets.

4. People and Skills

This Investment Priority of the Sunderland UKSPF Programme was designed to provide employment related support to those furthest from the labour market to progress into or towards labour market participation; and training to address key local skills needs, drive productivity and support inclusive growth. A total of 3 projects have been funded with c.£3.8m of UKSPF grant expenditure with an additional £40,000 of private sector funding leveraged. Two of these are large projects with the Sunderland Skills and Inclusion Programme (SSIP) being allocated around £2.6m of UKSPF funding for a one-year project; and the Relational Mentoring project originally allocated c.£1.5m for what is effectively an 18-month project, although this was subsequently reduced to £1.25m. The two larger projects were characterised by wider local delivery and referral networks which sought to provide a wide range of support for target beneficiaries and utilise local organisations to provide a pathway for beneficiaries to access the support available.



Analysis of performance against project targets shows that:

- 10 out of 21 output targets were achieved or exceeded, with 90%-97% of targets achieved for a further 3 outputs.
- 11 out of 18 outcome targets were achieved or exceeded

5. Programme Linkages

Programmes such as UKSPF can often result in the delivery of a series of standalone and relatively isolated interventions that are delivered alongside one another rather than providing a coherent programme of integrated support as intended or assumed by programme funders, designers and commissioners. However, the evaluation process has identified evidence of good linkages between numerous projects funded through UKSPF in Sunderland.

For example, each project consulted by the evaluation team has worked with at least one other UKSPF project in the delivery of their project, with two thirds identified having worked with 6 or more, while around a quarter identified have worked with 10 or more other UKSPF projects. Often this cross-project working has been through signposting or referring beneficiaries on to other projects for complementary support or in fewer cases this is due to lead partners or delivery partner organisations acting as beneficiaries of support. Examples, include:

- Several delivery partners accessing support from other UKSPF projects including VCSE delivery organisations receiving support from projects including the Community Digital Health Hub (CDHH) project, Wear Together, Strengthening Communities.
- Delivery organisations receiving support from Business Renewables Energy Efficiency Sunderland (BREEZ), Sunderland Innovate and Grow (SIG), Enterprising Sunderland, Sunderland Skills and Inclusion Programme (SSIP) and others.

Additionally, analysis of the data provided to the programme evaluation team suggests that around 20% of organisational beneficiaries of the programme have accessed support from more than one UKSPF intervention. Further analysis shows that around 38% of those accessing support from multiple interventions are VCSE organisations while 62% are private sector enterprises.

6. Impact

The outputs and outcomes for the programme covered a wide range of activities and objectives. The evaluation team have assessed this data to provide a summary overview of the reach of the programme based on core output and outcome measures, with some excluded due to the fact that their inclusion would clearly lead to double counting of supported individuals or organisations.

Analysis of outputs data shows that the Sunderland UKSPF programme has supported:

- Over 1 million engagements with residents or individuals working in the city.
- Over 1,600 engagements¹ with enterprises and organisations.

¹ The term engagements is used as there will be double counting of residents/employees/enterprises and organisations that have engaged with or been supported by more than one UKSPF project and in some cases there will be double counting within projects where an individual fulfils more than one output, although some outputs have been excluded from this analysis to minimise the latter.

- 6,172 local events and activities.
- Improvements to at least 165 local facilities and assets.
- At least 8,174 households engaged.
- Improvements to at least 23,535m² of land, public realm or building space.

From an outcomes perspective this analysis shows that the programme has supported:

- 894 job-related outcomes, including jobs created within enterprises or economically inactive residents moving into work.
- An 876,000 increase in footfall, visitor numbers or engagement numbers for local places, events or organisations.
- Improved use or perceptions of community facilities and assets or community safety from almost 100,000 people².
- 401 improvements in enterprises or organisations in terms of productivity, increased revenue or new enterprises being established.
- 2,763 examples of improved skills or participation in training or qualifications.
- 333 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent reductions.
- More than £3m of increased investment.

When originally launched the principal objectives of UKSPF were to build pride in place and increase life chances for residents. The above evidence demonstrates that the programme has made an important contribution towards these objectives through a multi-faceted programme of investment that has supported the City's residents, workers, VCSE organisations and employers.

The programme has also successfully supported residents, businesses and organisations in the City's most disadvantaged communities with analysis of beneficiary postcodes showing that 56% of individuals supported through the programme live in areas ranked among the 20% most deprived in England, with 51% of all enterprises and organisations supported also being based in these areas.

In order to generate an impact measure for the programme, outcome data was used to model impact, using appropriate assumptions drawn from the information available and experience of other programmes. Net additional figures were through the application of additionality³; leakage⁴; and displacement⁵ estimates; with multiplier⁶ effects applied where appropriate to take into account the (indirect and induced⁷) effects on the wider economy.

² Again there is likely to be some double counting here.

³ The extent to which something happens as a result of an intervention that would not have occurred in the absence of the intervention.

⁴ Flows out of the local economy

⁵ The degree to which the effects which produce additional economic activity led to consequent reductions in activity elsewhere in the economy that would not have occurred if the intervention had not been made.

⁶ Using Scottish input-output tables as a proxy <https://www.gov.scot/publications/input-output-latest/>

⁷ Indirect economic impacts are benefits to businesses involved in the supply chain of an event or project, such as suppliers and subcontractors. Induced economic impacts are benefits generated by increased spending in the local economy due to higher incomes earned by local residents from the direct and indirect impacts.

The table below shows the estimated financial impacts that have been calculated using these methods. It should be noted that these impacts (with the exception of energy savings, which are allocated over 5 years) are projected to take place over the duration of the programme, and in many cases represent monetary proxy values, rather than direct financial contribution. They suggest that the net additional gains from the programme can be quantified at **£36,093,847**, representing an overall return on investment of **2.4:1**.

In addition, it is estimated that supported projects generate gross value added of **£25,743,164** into the wider economy.

Impact Calculation

Outcomes	Impact Value
Estimated Carbon dioxide equivalent reductions as a result of support (Greenhouse Gas Reductions) Tonnes	£361,694
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	£880,000
Increased footfall	£375,632
Increased visitor numbers	£2,814,339
Number of active or sustained participants in community groups as a result of support	£1,159,140
Number of volunteering opportunities created as a result of support	£3,800,995
Jobs created as a result of support	£5,304,786
Jobs created though capital investment in property	£498,771
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support	£2,070,042
Number of early stage enterprises which increase their revenue following support	£180,000
Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	£237,600
Number of enterprises engaged in new markets	£739,200
Number of enterprises with improved productivity	£264,000
Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	£6,804,000
Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity	£104,000
Increased amount of investment in firms	£1,549,060
Number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services	£1,514,880
Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education and training	£162,619
Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	£1,021,453
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills	£1,611,266
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	£4,640,370
Total	£36,093,847


7. Key Learning

This report has identified a number of lessons learned in delivery of the Sunderland UKSPF programme and the projects it funded. At a project level many of these lessons have informed project design and delivery for those being funded through the transition year of 2025-26.



Some of the key learning highlighted throughout this report includes:

- **Local Anchor Institutions** - The programme involves an extensive and predominantly local delivery network, with key local larger organisations supporting the delivery of several projects, particularly in relation to Supporting Local Business and People and Skills projects and the role of the city Council in leading some Communities and Place projects.
- **Locality Based and Specialist Support Providers** - Analysis of funded projects and delivery organisations demonstrates the degree to which the programme and Sunderland's communities and businesses are benefitting from the participation of a range of locality based and specialist support providers that have the networks and relationships in the city and/or the specialist skills and capabilities necessary to achieve the wide range of outcomes and objectives set for the city's UKSPF programme. In many instances these organisations would not be able to deliver UKSPF projects on their own, particularly in relation to Supporting Local Business and People and Skills projects. However, partnership approaches have enabled small local organisations to be involved, often through the local anchor institutions or other lead organisations.
- **Linkages Between Projects** – there is good evidence of strong linkages between projects and a more coherent programme of support than is often evident. Indeed, one project lead organisation stated that they were '*surprised at the level of cross-referrals between the [UKSPF] projects*' and highlighted how this simultaneously reduces the need for marketing and engagement by individual projects, as well as improving the integration of business support. This has helped to ensure good collective impact from the funded projects as evidenced by case studies within the report.
- **Enhancing Capacity and Coherence of Local Support EcoSystem** - Evidence presented within the evaluation clearly demonstrates that a number of business and organisational beneficiaries of the Sunderland UKSPF programme have accessed support from multiple interventions funded through the programme, with evidence suggesting cross referrals and signposting have been key to this. Such an approach no doubt helps to improve the coherence of what is ultimately a relatively complex support ecosystem. This coherence is further improved through the numerous delivery partnerships outlined above, which are enabling a range of providers to work collectively to provide a package of support involving multiple interventions.
- **Adding Value to Wider Activities** - The programme also supported activities that added value to wider interventions, with UKSPF being used to fund additional interventions to enhance the reach, impact and/or effectiveness of projects and activities being funded through other means.
- **Leveraging Investment** - the programme leveraged around £4.47m of match funding and around £3.3m of private sector investment. UKSPF therefore enabled the city to unlock further private and public sector funding in the city, thereby maximising the impact and catalytic role of UKSPF.
- **Piloting New Approaches** - The programme actively supported the development of new partnerships and approaches to delivering support and addressing areas of need across all three UKSPF themes. Examples, include the partnerships developed to deliver projects such as Enterprising Sunderland and the Sunderland Skills and Inclusion Programme; and attempts to develop a growth and innovation sector through the Esports Business Cluster project. Further examples are evident through



the various uses and reallocation of programme level underspend from projects to pilot new activities in other projects, such as retail sector support delivered through Enterprising Sunderland.

- **Adapting to Challenges** - UKSPF and the way in which SCC have managed the programme has been highlighted by many project leads as providing them with the flexibility to adapt their delivery to address new and emerging needs or challenges in delivering projects as envisaged at the design stage.
- **Flexibility and Support from SCC** - Closely linked to the above strength is the support SCC have provided to project lead organisations from design to delivery to monitoring and evaluation; providing proactive and practical guidance, and enabling them to adapt their programmes to recycle any potential underspend
- or shift delivery through adjustments to existing activities (such as changes to thresholds or eligibility criteria to projects involving the allocation of grants to end beneficiaries) or through the piloting of new approaches to address emerging needs.
- **Strengthening the VCSE Sector** - The programme and its funded projects have also directly helped to strengthen the local VCSE sector within the city, both through their involvement in delivering funded projects and as beneficiaries of projects themselves. There is evidence of such activity across each of the three investment priorities or themes.