



# The UK Shared Prosperity Fund

TSI Experiences of  
Engagement November 2023

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## Executive Summary

The [TSI Scotland Network](#) is a body of charities that support the third sector across Scotland including support on volunteering, capacity building, social enterprise, and support for community planning.. There are 32 Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) in Scotland, one for each local authority area. Some are partnerships working across large urban and geographical areas, some combine all the functions of the TSIs' work under one roof.

In Autumn 2023 the Network undertook research on the experiences of TSIs across Scotland with regard to third sector engagement in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

UKSPF is one strand of a suite of funding which succeeded the old EU structural funds. This money has three priorities: communities and place, support for local businesses, and people and skills. In addition, there is a pot of funding called Multiply which focuses on improving adult numeracy.

The research identified a number of positive areas.

- There were many instances of third sector organisations benefitting from UKSPF funding across the country, and some examples of local authorities working closely with local charities and community groups across the funding process - from engagement to grant applications and in relation to learning from the programme.
- Some TSIs identified positive examples of engagement of the third sector in the process of shaping the local delivery of UKSPF.
- Despite the challenges noted below, the multi-annual funding was welcomed, allowing the third sector to have some security, and offer fairer work terms.

However, a number of challenges with the distribution of UKSPF monies so far were also identified:

- Engagement of the TSIs in local discussions in relation to local Investment Plans and decision-making on the distribution of funding has been patchy; several TSIs reported that they had not been meaningfully involved in the process.
- Concerns were raised by some respondents about transparency and additionality of the funding. Few TSIs thought that decision-making processes on funding distribution had been clear and transparent, and there was a particular lack of awareness of how funding is being distributed via the City Region Deals.
- The short lead in time to distribution of the funding has impacted on community engagement, the quality of decision-making, and the quality of applications.
- Whilst multiannual, year by year allocation of these funds made it difficult to plan effectively, with unrealistically large grants in Year One. The length of the programme kept being reduced due to delays, and ultimately was not long enough to achieve the impact required.
- It may be that the above challenges led to the exclusion of some communities from the UKSPF even though it's likely that they would have benefitted from the fund e.g. lack of awareness, not having time to plan and ensure local spent met community needs.

### Recommendations

The third sector remains an effective and dynamic strategic partner, offering value for money, and has much to offer to a future iteration of the UKSPF. If there is to be a future round of UKSPF, or a similar fund, the TSI Scotland Network has identified a number of areas where it would be keen to work with the UK Government around shaping the future direction of delivery:

**Early and meaningful engagement of TSIs:** The Network is keen to work with the UK Government and with individual local authorities to ensure that the third sector is effectively represented in all decision-making about the funding. In order to achieve this, an administration fee to give TSIs the capacity to fully

engage in the process and support the sector to participate would be welcomed, in line with the practice elsewhere.

**Guidance to local authorities:** There should be more guidance for local authorities on what engagement is expected around decision-making; there should also be a mechanism for ensuring that this takes place. In order to ensure transparency of spend, it would be helpful if local authorities were required to report on their spend broken down into statutory and third sector expenditure, and if there was more engagement in how the funding was allocated between the UKSPF (or other fund) themes.

**Longer Lead In Time:** Early discussions and more planning time would be welcomed to ensure that decision-making is open and transparent, and to ensure that the best quality projects are funded.

**Continuation Funding:** As there may be delays between the current and any future rounds of the UKSPF, we strongly urge that the existing funding stream is continued until a new programme comes on stream, to ensure the continuation of valued, local services at a time of social and economic challenges for many.

**Flexibility:** Much more flexibility around moving funding between years would help to ensure that the most effective use is made of the monies, and would assist in workforce planning for the sector.

**Longer Timescales:** Given the intractable nature of some of the problems that UKSPF is trying to address, a funding period of longer than three years would be welcome.

# The UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Third Sector Interface Experiences of Engagement

## 1.0 Purpose of this Report

This report outlines the experiences of Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) across Scotland with regard to third sector engagement in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

## 2.0 Background

UKSPF is one strand of a suite of funding which succeeded the old EU structural funds. This money has three priorities: communities and place, support for local businesses, and people and skills. In addition, there is a pot of funding called Multiply which focuses on improving adult numeracy. These priorities have been set by the UK Government. The prospectus for the funding can be accessed here: [PROSPECTUS](#)

The funding was devolved to local authorities in Scotland to manage, and some of them have chosen to work in partnership with their local City Region Deal. In order to access the funding, local authorities needed to write an Investment Plan which detailed how the money would be distributed locally.

Lead local authorities were tasked with working with a diverse range of local and regional stakeholders, civil society organisations, employer bodies responsible for identifying local skills plans, and businesses or business representative groups to achieve Fund outcomes in their areas. The guidance highlighted that amongst the groups who should be involved were:

*‘Voluntary sector, social enterprise and civil society organisations, including Third Sector Interface Groups in Scotland’*

The TSI Scotland Network is a body of charities that support the third sector across Scotland. There are 32 Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) in Scotland, one for each local authority area. Some are partnerships working across large urban and geographical areas, some combine all the functions of the TSIs’ work under one roof. The TSI Scotland Network is supported to carry out its main functions by the Third Sector Unit of Scottish Government.

In September 2022, the TSI Scotland Network undertook research with Chief Officers of TSIs to establish how involved the local third sector had been in the development of UKSPF, and to identify learning from the UKSPF for both the sector and the UK Government, particularly if this approach to distributing the former EU funding is to be developed further. This research outlines the involvement of TSIs in the local implementation of the UKSPF monies. It should be noted that the research only reflects the views of TSIs, and not the wider third sector.

### 3.0 Methodology

A survey was distributed to all Chief Officers of Third Sector Interfaces via MS Forms. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix B.

21 responses were received, covering 66% of the local authority areas in Scotland. At a time of real operational pressure on TSIs this represents an excellent return of responses. A good geographical spread of responses was received, including large urban areas, rural areas, and islands. A full list of respondents can be found in Appendix A.

Comments were anonymised so that individual TSIs and local authorities were not identified. Minor changes were made to quotes such as correcting typographical errors, and acronyms were clarified. The full list of comments can be found in Appendix C.

## 4.0 Findings

### Introduction

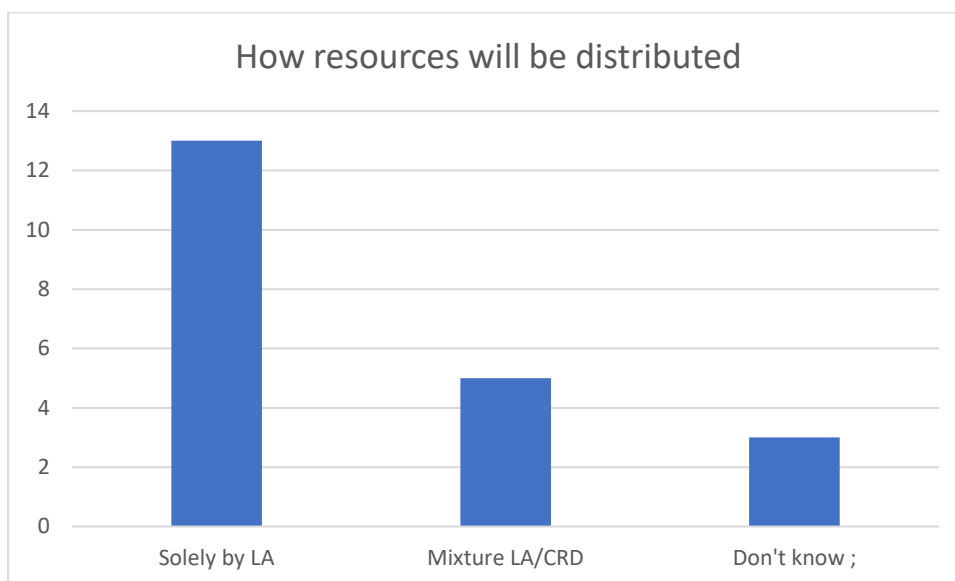
This section outlines the findings of the research, grouped into the following headings:

- Investment Plan
- UKSPF Resources for the Third Sector
- TSI Applicants
- Challenges of the UKSPF Processes
- UKSPF Positives

### Investment Plan

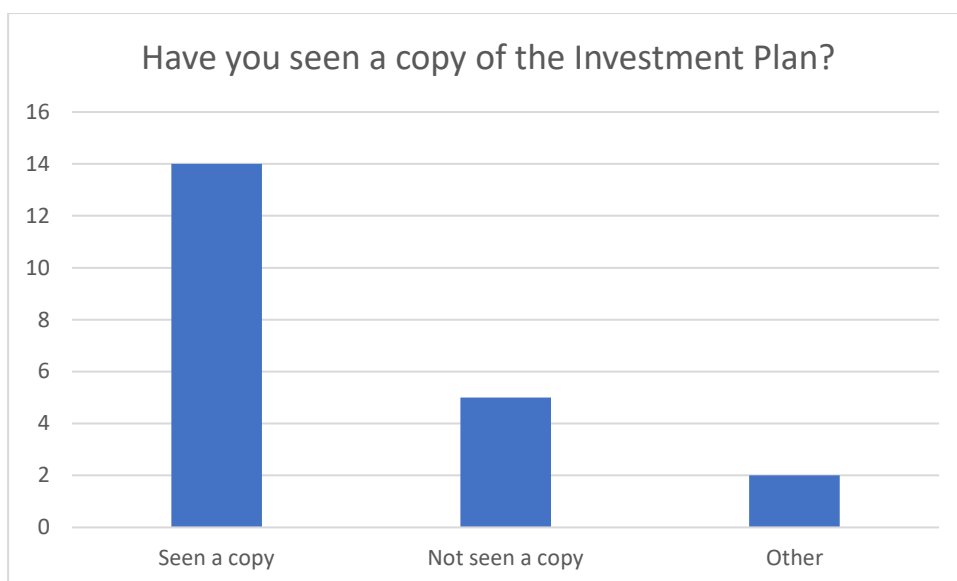
All local authority areas now have an Investment Plan outlining how they intend to spend the UKSPF and Multiply funding. Respondents were asked if the resources in the Investment Plan were distributed:

- Solely by their local authority
- Solely by their City Region Deal
- A mixture of local authority and City Region Deal



Respondents were asked about the extent of their involvement in the development of the Investment Plan. They were asked to identify which of the following statements reflected the current situation in their local authority:

- We have seen a copy of the Investment Plan that was submitted to the UK Government
- We have not seen a copy of the Investment Plan that was submitted to the UK Government
- Other (please explain)



Respondents were given the opportunity to provide further information on this.

### Partial involvement

Several responses highlighted the partial nature of their involvement

*We were involved in a small amount of discussion with the council regarding [local authority's] submission into the city region bid. This was only in relation to a small segment of the bid (relating to social enterprise).*

*We saw the document but didn't have the opportunity to contribute or comment despite asking for this.*

*We were involved in the development of the place-making narrative as part of the investment plan but have not been briefed on the whole submission.*

*We are seen parts of the Investment Plan but not the full submission.*

*We saw a copy after it had been submitted, only after requesting it.*

### Local Third Sector Funding

Several responses identified that funding was going to the local third sector in their area

*We were invited to the table late in the day, however some of the money that was going into employability is now going to the Third Sector (in the region of £250K).*

*Revenue - year 1-3 will about £450K go to employability service provided by [local authority] plus year 2-3 - about £200K plus all Multiply money goes to third sector provider.*

*Business - provided about £80K to ...a local social enterprise ... who deliver our local Business Gateway programme. This includes expert help; women's programme and a new growth programme - all open to third sector. [Our TSI] received £2K towards operating our online directory and some admin costs.*



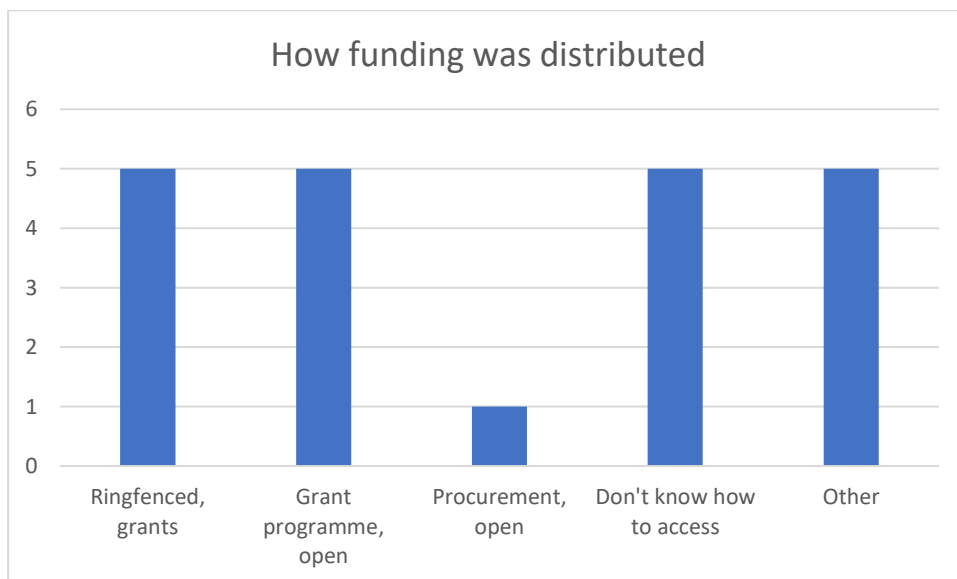
*Communities - only getting capital this year - will be about £70K left over. Open grant at the moment. This will increase next year.*

*They have been fair and open, we actually gained £20,000 of investment for Social Enterprise and we are able to advertise other opportunities to members.*

## UKSPF Resources for the Third Sector

Respondents were asked which of the following statements described how their local authority (or City Region Deal) distributed funding to the third sector:

- Funding for the third sector was ringfenced, and they applied for it through a grants programme
- Funding for the third sector was ringfenced, and there was a procurement process
- Third sector organisations applied through a grants programme open to the third sector and others
- Third sector organisations responded to procurement opportunities open to the third sector and others
- We don't know how third sector organisations could access UKSPF
- Other method (please explain):



Several respondents expanded on how funding was distributed:

*Bit of a mix - part of the money for community capacity building will be used to enhance the councils grant scheme. Money to support social enterprise was originally discussed as being allocated to [our TSI] to distribute but there has been no progress on doing this, or info about what is happening with this despite us asking for info. Other money around sustainability has been used by the LA to commission the provision of carbon literacy training which will be made available to TSOs.*

*The Local Authority created an expression of interest for all funds and is now allocating and matching funds internally as submissions are received. Once considered, it then goes to a*

*subgroup formed by partners, including TSI for endorsement. A number of these submissions are local authority led.*

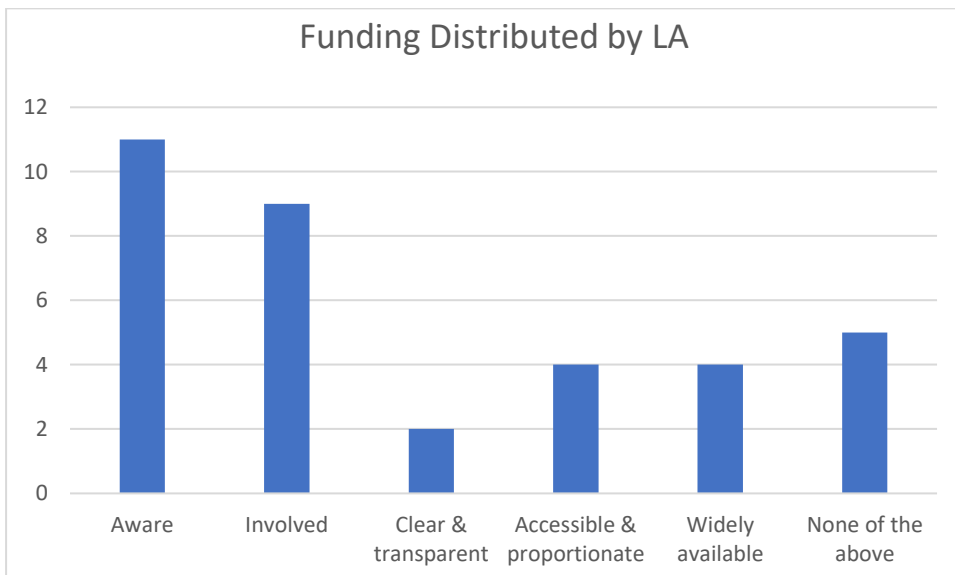
*Funding for CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] is through challenge funds that haven't been launched yet. [Our TSI] was not given the opportunity to inform the design of these challenge funds.*

*Our local authority initially asked for potential project ideas from the third sector (short notice to submit a proposal). The local authority chose what projects they felt that they wanted to pursue and then asked for a formal proposal. No structured grant programme and procurement opportunities are now in process.*

*Members of [local economic partnership] were asked at short notice to identify possible projects including projects deliverable by the third sector. These were then short listed by a sub group of the partnership likely to have been mainly local authority colleagues before being submitted to the [local] Economic partnership for sign off.*

Respondents were invited to reflect on the funding distribution by their local authority, by selecting the answers they felt to be true from a list of statements. These were:

- Information about how the third sector could access UKSPF funding was widely available
- Processes for applying for UKSPF funding were accessible and proportionate to the available funding
- Decision-making about UKSPF funding were clear and transparent
- The TSI was involved in decision-making about how the UKSPF funding was allocated locally
- The TSI is aware of how funding was spent locally.



There was an opportunity for respondents to expand on their responses. Most of the responses highlighted that the TSI was not involved meaningfully in decision making.

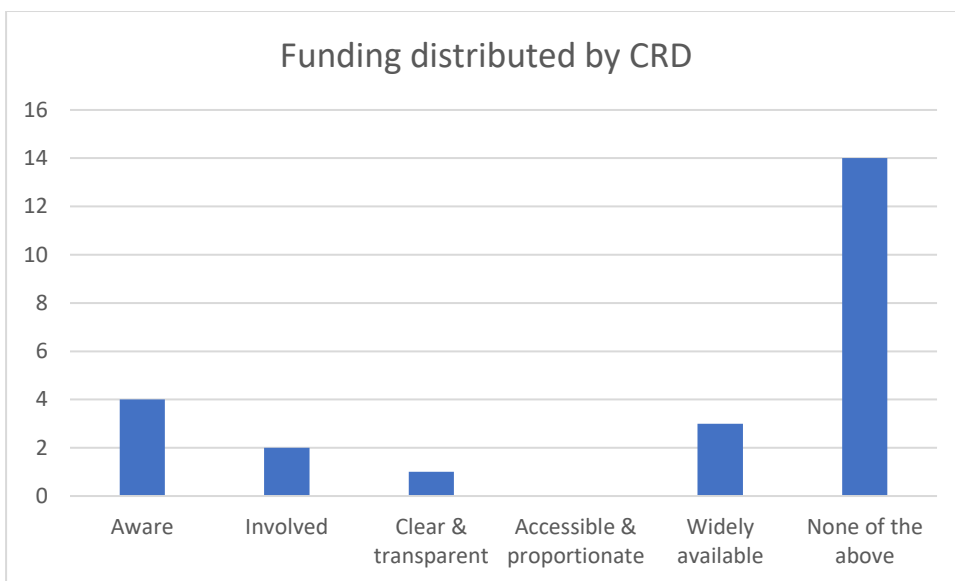
*There are concerns about the process created by the local authority which seems to be only involving other partners and TSI when endorsement is required. The steering committee*

*endorsing applications can also be applicants which creates issues regarding governance and transparency as some partner and umbrella organisations may find it difficult to challenge local authority decisions, particularly if they are also funded by the council.*

*We are only aware of what funding was distributed locally due to our attendance at the committee meeting. Outwith [our TSI] there were only two community organisations that where successful in securing monies via the UK SPF.*

*The plan was shared to a range of partners including [our] TSI, and we were not involved in any planning or consideration of how to allocate the funding*

Respondents were then asked to respond to the same questions but looking at the funding that was distributed by the City Region Deal.



Is there anything you want to tell us about how funding was distributed in your region? (Please state your answer below)

*We were very clear about how the funding was distributed by the local authority but we are much less clear what the City Region Deal portion of the money is being spent on. We have asked for information through the social enterprise meetings of the CRD but this hasn't been forthcoming.*

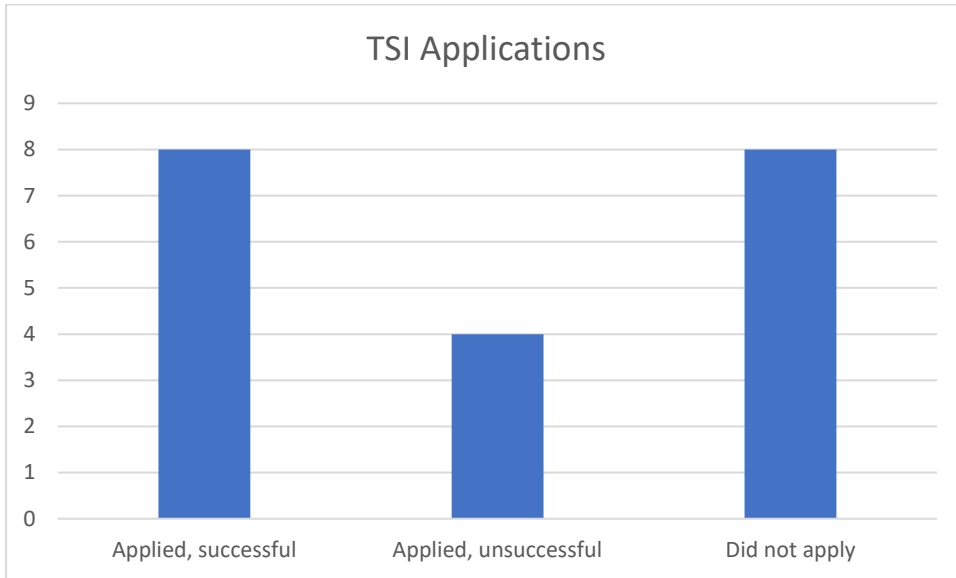
*I feel there's a need for meaningful participation in decision-making rather than an expectation that the TSI and other bodies will only attend meetings to endorse applications that have already been rated by local authority officers. On a couple of occasions were not sent in time for meetings with significant investment being discussed and approved without full information being considered. There also seems to be less scrutiny and discrepancy between the information provided in bids submitted by third-sector organisations and internal council projects - this has been highlighted by myself directly in meetings.*

*[Our TSI] are not happy about the UKSPF process in [local area] and have provided this feedback to key officers and plan to provide formal feedback to the council*

## TSI Applicants

Respondents were invited to provide information about whether they had applied for UKSPF funding, by identifying which of the following statements best described their situation:

- We applied to our local authority or CRD for UKSPF funding and were successful
- We applied to our local authority or CRD for UKSPF funding and were not successful
- We did not apply for UKSPF funding



TSI's who did not apply for funding were asked to comment further. Most of the responses identified issues about the process

*The process by which we could directly do this was extremely unclear and not encouraged.*

*We were not given the opportunity to apply for funding although we advised key council officers of ways in which the TSI could do so. There was a procurement process for social enterprise support which [our TSI] could not tender directly for due to the scope and outcomes of the tender but hoped to do so in partnership with other providers, but this was not possible either.*

*We were not made aware of any opportunity to do so - it was dealt with internally by [local authority].*

TSIs who did apply for funding, were asked for comments about the application process in their area.

*We were responsible for putting together the plan and narrative for the SPF, particularly on the Placemaking project. The local authority received the funds as agreed but asked us to submit another application for the project. This was done and the fund was obtained for the pilot project now running.*

*It was a difficult and fraught process with one sided communication with large gaps between application and response to application*

TSI's who applied successfully for funding, were asked for comments about the monitoring process to date.

*The monitoring process is onerous and cumbersome. We are replicating previous behaviours relating to other European funding. Acting on a spend and claim basis, due to complexities in the process we are yet to receive any funds in mid-September for work undertaken in the previous financial year.*

*The numbers required are fine, and relate to what was on the application form. Our local authority is requiring grantholders to use the Helix case management system to monitor projects, and it does not fit well with the Place and Communities outcomes.*

*The council employed two staff members who have applied a LEADER level model of monitoring in case they are audited and it requires a staff member to fill in forms and collate receipts three days every month which is completely disproportionate to the funding received.*

## Challenges of the UKSPF Processes

The survey contained a section on the challenges of the UKSPF processes, and respondents were asked their opinion on the issues created by:

- Short timescales;
- Length of the funding;
- Year by year allocation of the funding.

### Timescales

It has been acknowledged that the timescales for distributing the funding were tight. Respondents were asked what issues, if any, this caused for them.

### Consultation & Engagement

A number of responses highlighted the impact on consultation and engagement.

*There was no time to consult with local TSOs/community.*

*Very limited timescales for meaningful engagement with the sector.*

*We had no time to consult the sector and had to submit proposals based on our own knowledge of projects that were ready to roll, none of which were shortlisted for support.*

### Quality of Decision Making

Issues were raised regarding the tight timescales impacting on the quality of applications and decision-making processes.

*The application process was rushed, due to the understandable desires of all parties to see spend in year one. There was a limited amount of time for consultation, although I think [local authority] did what they could.*

*It allowed [local authority] to provide committee reports with less-than-ideal information but conversely to introduce time consuming procurement processes*

*The process has been unclear and as a result, submissions are being approved internally by the local authority with only endorsement being sought by partners. There seems to be a lack of evidence based on need and more in terms of money being distributed asap which is really disappointing.*

*It was a such short turnaround, short application period but amazing the number of applications from Third Sector were still high, albeit the quality maybe not where required. Due to the timescales it does highlight issues like monitoring returns, we have still not received a copy of what will be expected.*

*Tight deadlines always put pressure on the workforce with limited time to put in a good application for funding.*

Respondents were asked if there was a second tranche of funding how could this work better.

### **Improved Engagement**

Responses identified a number of ways in which engagement could be improved.

*Provide genuine community engagement through us.*

*CPP partners as sign off signatories, as opposed to elected members.*

*More open communication with all the partners from the onset, and clear processes and guidelines put in place.*

*More time for CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] input into the investment plan, supported by TSIs.*

*A more realistic lead-in time is required.*

*More time for proper engagement with the sector in the hope that more funding goes to the third sector in the future.*

*Early communication to allow for co-production.*

### **Increased Guidance to Local Authorities**

There were responses relating to more guidance for local authorities in how to distribute the funding.

*Much clearer direction in guidance on how TSI's could apply or ringfence an amount for the sector and much more scrutiny on how the local authority had consulted with the sector*

*It needs to be a true partnership and this written in the terms of contract*

*UK government needs to tell councils to adopt an outcome led model and not to monitor the spend in such detail.*

### **Improved Engagement of TSI**

Several respondents referenced the need for improved engagement of the TSIs.

*Better involvement of the TSI from the start.*

*There needs to be agreement regarding full participation and allocation of funds at the bid development stage. Bringing TSI and other partners to endorse and also apply for funds once this is open is not appropriate and it feels like a tick-box exercise with funds for third sector distributed by TSIs and not local authorities.*

*TSIs involvement in above to be a formal requirement.*

*TSIs formally recognised as a strategic partner.*

*Monies being ring fenced for the local voluntary sector and a formal grant process put in place. In addition, asking for the TSI input when decision making, ensuring that organisations have a fair and proportionate opportunity to access funding.*

*By involving us from the outset.*

### **Application Process**

There were responses in relation to improving the application process.

*A reasonable turnaround for applications, support for groups and organisations submitting applications, all relevant paperwork supplied when notified of successful funding i.e. monitoring return.*

*Increased knowledge on how to apply, make the process simple and straight forward, reasonable timescales would help.*

### **Year on Year funding**

There was a separate allocation of funding for each year, compared to European funding which was agreed in advance and left to the managing authority to decide the annual split of funding. Agreement to move funding between years could only be agreed in March for the following year. Respondents were asked what issues, if any, this caused for them.

*This had a huge impact. It was obvious to everyone that there would be an underspend in year one, and it would have greatly helped everyone's ability to plan their projects if they had known at the beginning of the programme that underspends could be carried forward.*

*It makes communication about the fund to the third sector very difficult and it makes longer term planning impossible.*

*... a mammoth grant for the final three months of the first year was forced on us which was not realistic.*

*The timing of the allocation of the funding confused the issue especially no alignment with the financial year which muddy the waters in some respect in how much monies were available, as there appeared to be a large reduction in the second year of the fund*

*So far, the multi year funding element has been a positive, although will depend on how successfully we manage the spend and claim process by year end.*

Respondents were asked if there is a second tranche of funding, how could this work better.

### **Flexibility of Multi-year Funding**

Most of the responses related to improving the flexibility of the

*Flexibility in deciding the split.*

*Multi-year funding commitments.*

*More flexibility over the e.g. 3 year period to allocate and spend as the lead partner, as you choose.*

*If there is another tranche of funding, it should be awarded over a period of years, and the spending profile should be decided locally. It makes a huge difference to the recruitment of staff to know that underspends can be profiled into the following year. The Government has been quite light touch in allowing local authorities to run their programmes locally - why not give them control of the spending profile as well?*

*...there needs to be a joint plan agreed upon prior to submission. Investment in the third sector should be allocated to TSIs for discussion with the wider sector and dispersion. Until then, the process will continue to be top-down with the inclusion of TSIs as an add-on rather than as a meaningful collaborator.*

*Multi-year and flexible funding are required for CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] to be able to plan and contribute effectively.*

*Allow transfers between years and carry overs*

### **Communication**

Several other responses related to improved communication.

*Clear communications and service level agreements.*

*The TSI's need a place round the table from the outset*

*By involving us from the outset.*

*More time for planning.*



### *Clearer guidelines*

*Communication and real engagement with the Third Sector would enable those decision makers to make adequate splits in funding and ensure the criteria meets the needs of our local communities.*

#### Length of funding available

Funding was available for approximately 2.5 years after the agreement of the Investment Plans, and the time period was even shorter in areas which did not immediately allocate the funding. Respondents were asked what issues, if any, this caused for them.

#### **Issues Timescale Caused for Delivery**

Respondents identified the issues that the timescales caused for successful delivery of projects.

*We have managed to mobilise quickly. The main issue has been the lack of true partnership when trying to collaborate e.g. with Multiply a handful of partners are delivering to different target groups, and the intention was to best co-ordinate, but some partners aren't engaging as they haven't received their funding.*

*Programmes were asked to be significant (£200k+) but short-term, which limited participation of some orgs.*

*Rushed decisions and funding submissions being approved based on assumed need rather than evidence based. Some repetitions of previous projects were also funded without evaluation or considerations provided based on learning and previous experience.*

#### **Reduced Impact**

Some responses highlighted the effect of the timescales had on the impact of projects.

*Two years is a very short timescale to deal with the issues that UKSPF is set up to address. The third sector urgently needs long term investment to deal with the issues arising from the cost-of-living crisis; the UKSPF turned into yet another short-term funding pot when what is needed is proper regeneration and investment.*

*The main issue was timing which meant that some projects had to be delivered over a shorter period of time which reduced the benefit of the project.*

#### **Shorter Timescales than Publicised**

Some responses noted that the short timescales were made even shorter due to delays.

*We had been informed that it was for two years, but already we are running behind due to local authority decision making processes. This has caused us no direct issues, but we did have two members of staff that we pinpointed to move to these projects. Both members of*

*staff were funded by different agencies and this left a shortfall where [TSI] did have to pay additional monies to keep both employed.*

*This was shared and promoted to the Third Sector as multi-year support but with the significant delays at a Government level, coupled with delays at Local Authority level, this has impacted on groups and organisations to gain this duration of support.*

Respondents were asked if there is a second tranche of funding, how it could this work better.

### **Changes to Process**

A number of changes to the process were highlighted.

*More trust - pay in advance, even quarterly, so partners don't need to concern with cash flow and can focus on the delivery and outcomes.*

*Year 4 onwards would be good to have more flexibility as you never know what is coming out from SG [Scottish Government] - there is some cross over in indicators so it would allow redistribution if that happened.*

*Timing alongside the fiscal year of the local authority would allow consideration to lengthen some of the projects.*

### **Longer timescales**

Longer timescales were requested.

*European funding streams were seven years long, to recognise that 1) there will always be time lost at the beginning of the programme as it is set up and 2) we are dealing with long term, intractable issues that cannot be dealt with in two years. It would be good to see a return to this length of investment.*

*Offering 2-year funding, have service agreements/grant letter in place and better and clearer communication with both the TSI and the wider local voluntary sector.*

*Happy with 2.5 but would prefer 3 for workforce planning purposes.*

*Longer time scales and the more advanced notice the better.*

### **UKSPF Positives**

Respondents were asked if there was anything they felt had worked well from this round of UKSPF that they would like to see maintained and developed if there was a second tranche of funding.

## **Funding**

Many respondents noted that third sector organisations had received funding through the process.

*Despite the issues it is good that there has been some money allocated to community capacity building that is being directed to support for TSO's. Would like to see this developed but have more ownership of this*

*I think [city region deal] have had a good go at doing this as a Region, would like to see this explored further, with enhanced CPP [community planning partnership] partner involvement in the process from start to finish.*

## **Involvement**

Several positive instances of involvement were identified.

*In [local authority] there was good partnership working between the third sector and the local authority. It would be good to see this encouraged and embedded in programme. The civil servants who supported UKSPF were very approachable and helpful. It was good to have a named contact for the fund, and it would be good to continue this.*

*The attempt to involve TSI has worked but it would be good to see more meaningful participation with shared roles and responsibilities moving forward, otherwise, it will continue to be a tick-box exercise.*

*We are now included and have a seat round the table.*

*Decision making panel on bids has good third sector rep*

*We were pleased that the value of our contribution was recognised and supported by the [local] Economic Partnership*

## 5.0 Conclusions

### Positives to Date

The research also identified a number of positive areas.

- There were many instances of third sector organisations benefitting from UKSPF funding across the country, and some examples of local authorities working closely with local charities and community groups across the funding process - from engagement to grant applications and in relation to learning from the programme.
- Some TSIs identified positive examples of engagement of the third sector in the process of shaping the local delivery of UKSPF.
- Despite the challenges noted below, the multi-annual funding was welcomed, allowing the third sector to have some security, and offer fairer work terms.

### Challenges to Date

The research identified a number of challenges with the distribution of UKSPF monies so far:

- Engagement of the TSIs in local discussions in relation to local Investment Plans and decision-making on the distribution of funding has been patchy; several TSIs reported that they had not been meaningfully involved in the process.
- Concerns were raised by some respondents about transparency and additionality of the funding. Few TSIs thought that decision-making processes on funding distribution had been clear and transparent, and there was a particular lack of awareness of how funding is being distributed via the City Region Deals.
- The short lead in time to distribution of the funding has impacted on community engagement, the quality of decision-making, and the quality of applications.
- Whilst multiannual, year by year allocation of these funds made it difficult to plan effectively, with unrealistically large grants in Year One. The length of the programme kept being reduced due to delays and was not long enough to have the impact required.
- It may be that the above challenges led to the exclusion of some communities from the UKSPF even though it's likely that they would have benefitted from the fund e.g. lack of awareness, not having time to plan and ensure local spent met community needs.

### Recommendations

The third sector remains an effective and dynamic strategic partner, offering value for money, and has much to offer to a future iteration of the UKSPF. If there is to be a future round of UKSPF, or a similar fund, the TSI Scotland Network has identified a number of areas where it would be keen to work with the UK Government around shaping the future direction of delivery:

**Early and meaningful engagement of TSIs:** The Network is keen to work with the UK Government and with individual local authorities to ensure that the third sector is effectively represented in all decision-making about the funding. In order to achieve this, an administration fee to give TSIs the capacity to fully engage in the process and support the sector to participate would be welcomed, in line with the practice elsewhere.

**Guidance to local authorities:** There should be more guidance for local authorities on what engagement is expected around decision-making; there should also be a mechanism for ensuring that this takes place. In order to ensure transparency of spend, it would be helpful if local authorities were required to report on their spend broken down into statutory and third sector expenditure, and if there was more engagement in how the funding was allocated between the UKSPF (or other fund) themes.

**Longer Lead In Time:** Early discussions and more planning time would be welcomed to ensure that decision-making is open and transparent, and to ensure that the best quality projects are funded.

**Continuation Funding:** As there may be delays between the current and any future rounds of the UKSPF, we strongly urge that the existing funding stream is continued until a new programme comes on stream, to ensure the continuation of valued, local services at a time of social and economic challenges for many.

**Flexibility:** Much more flexibility around moving funding between years would help to ensure that the most effective use is made of the monies, and would assist in workforce planning for the sector.

**Longer Timescales:** Given the intractable nature of some of the problems that UKSPF is trying to address, a funding period of longer than three years would be welcome.

## 6.0 More information

More information on this research can be obtained from Dr Lesley Kelly at [Lesley.kelly@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:Lesley.kelly@mvacvs.org.uk)

Find out more about TSIs here – [www.tsi.scot](http://www.tsi.scot)

## Appendix A: Organisations Who Responded to the Survey

1. Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action
2. ACVO TSI
3. Argyll and Bute TSI
4. Borders Community Action
5. CTSI
6. CVS Inverclyde
7. Dundee
8. EDVA
9. Engage Renfrewshire
10. Fife
11. Glasgow CVS
12. Midlothian TSI
13. Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise (SVE)
14. Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway
15. TSI North Ayrshire (TACT and Arran CVS)
16. tsiMORAY
17. VASLan
18. Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire
19. Voluntary Action Shetland
20. Voluntary Action South Ayrshire
21. VSGWL

## Appendix B: Copy of Survey

### UK Shared Prosperity Fund TSI Research Autumn 2023 Survey

You will remember that in September 2022 the TSI Network undertook research about the development of the UKSPF Investment Plans. We are now undertaking follow up research to identify TSI experiences of engagement and involvement in the implantation of the Plans. (Please fill out the form below)

#### Section 1

##### TSI

1.What is your TSI's name?

Enter your answer

2.Please state your first name

Enter your answer

3.Please state your last name

Enter your answer

4.Who was your Investment Plan submitted by?

Your local authority? If so, which one:

Your City Region Deal? If so, which one:

5.Please state which local authority submitted your Investment Plan?

*(Please write don't know if you are unsure)*

Enter your answer

6.Please state the City Region Deal that submitted your investment plan?

*(Please write don't know if you are unsure)*

Enter your answer

7.Will the resources in the Investment Plan be distributed: (Please select all that apply)

- Solely by your local authority
- Solely by your City Region Deal
- A mixture of local authority and City Region Deal

Don't know

#### Section 2

##### TSI Involvement Investment Plan

8.Which of the following statements reflects the current situation in your local authority? (Please select **one** option).

- We have seen a copy of the Investment Plan that was submitted to the UK Government
- We have not seen a copy of the Investment Plan that was submitted to the UK Government
- Other (please explain)

9.Please explain (in the box below) the current situation in your local authority

Enter your answer

10.Please use the space below to add any additional comments around the current situation regarding the Investment Plan

Enter your answer

## Section 3

### UKSPF Resources for the Third Sector

11. Which of the following statements describe how your local authority (or City Region Deal) distributed funding to the third sector:

- Funding for the third sector was ringfenced, and they applied for it through a grants programme
- Funding for the third sector was ringfenced, and there was a procurement process
- Third sector organisations applied through a grants programme open to the third sector and others
- Third sector organisations responded to procurement opportunities open to the third sector and others
- We don't know how third sector organisations could access UKSPF
- Other method (please explain):

12. Please explain (below) the method your local authority used to distribute funding to the third sector

Enter your answer

13. For funding distributed by your local authority, please tick all of the statements that are **true** for your local situation:

- Information about how the third sector could access UKSPF funding was widely available
- Processes for applying for UKSPF funding were accessible and proportionate to the available funding
- Decision-making about UKSPF funding were clear and transparent
- The TSI was involved in decision-making about how the UKSPF funding was allocated locally
- The TSI is aware of how funding was spent locally
- None of the above

14. This is a space for you to tell us anything you want to about how the funding was distributed locally (please leave blank if you have no comments)

Enter your answer

15. For funding distributed by your City Region Deal, please tick all of the statements that are **true** for your local situation:

- Information about how the third sector could access UKSPF funding was widely available
- Processes for applying for UKSPF funding were accessible and proportionate to the available funding
- Decision-making about UKSPF funding were clear and transparent
- The TSI was involved in decision-making about how the UKSPF funding was allocated in the region
- The TSI is aware of how funding was spent by the City Region Deal
- None of the above

16. Is there anything you want to tell us about how funding was distributed in your region? (*Please state your answer below*)

Enter your answer

## Section 4

### TSI Applicants

17. As a TSI, which of the following statements best describes your situation: (please select **one** option)

- We applied to our local authority or CRD for UKSPF funding and were successful
- We applied to our local authority or CRD for UKSPF funding and were not successful



- We did not apply for UKSPF funding

18.If you did NOT apply for funding, were there any particular reasons why not? *(Please state reasons below or leave blank)*

Enter your answer

19.If you DID apply for funding, do you have any comments about the application process in your area? *(Please leave comments below, or leave blank)*

Enter your answer

20.If you applied successfully for funding, do you have any comments about the monitoring process to date? *(please leave comments below or leave blank)*

Enter your answer

Section 5

## Challenges of the UKSPF Processes

Section 6

### Timescales

21.It has been acknowledged that the timescales for distributing the funding were tight. What issues, if any, did this cause for you?

Enter your answer

22.If there is a second tranche of funding, how could this work better? *(Please explain below or leave blank)*

Enter your answer

Section 7

### Year on Year funding

23.There was a separate allocation of funding for each year, compared to European funding which was agreed in advance and left to the managing authority to decide the annual split of funding.

Agreement to move funding between years could only be agreed in March for the following year.

**What issues, if any, did this cause for you?** *(Please explain in the box below)* Required to answer.

Enter your answer

24.If there is a second tranche of funding, how could this work better? *(Please explain below)* Required to answer.

Enter your answer

Section 8

### Length of funding available

25.Funding was available for approximately 2.5 years after the agreement of the Investment Plans, and the time period was even shorter in areas. What issues, if any, did this cause for you? *(Please explain below)*

Enter your answer

26.If there is a second tranche of funding, how could this work better? *(Please explain below)* Required to answer.

Enter your answer

Section 9

### **UKSPF Positives**

27. Is there anything that you feel has worked well from this round of UKSPF that you would like to see maintained and developed if there is a second tranche of funding? *(Please enter your answer below)*

Enter your answer

28. We are keen to identify projects that have made good use of UKSPF funding to date and would make good case studies. Which of the following statements are true for your situation:

- We can provide a case study of a UKSPF project from within our TSI;
- We are aware of suitable projects in our area and could put you in touch with them;
- We are not aware of any suitable projects for a case study.

Section 10

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

We will be in touch with the results once we have collated all the responses

## Appendix C: Comments in Full

### TSI Involvement Investment Plan

Please explain (in the box below) the current situation in your local authority

- We were involved in a small amount of discussion with the council regarding [local authority's] submission into the city region bid. This was only in relation to a small segment of the bid (relating to social enterprise)
- [Local authority] have submitted committee reports about the SPF but the plan itself has not been attached to the reports as far as I know
- Some projects underway since January 2023, others still haven't progressed as in the mix re LA budget efficiencies
- Investments have been made – there is little further engagement with the sector.
- We were involved in the development of the place-making narrative as part of the investment plan but have not been briefed on the whole submission.
- We were invited to the table late in the day, however some of the money that was going into employability is now going to the Third Sector (in the region of £250K).
- We saw the document but didn't have the opportunity to contribute or comment despite asking for this.
- We have good relationship and are part of a steering group.
- revenue – year 1-3 will about £450K go to employability service provided by [local authority] plus year 2-3 – about £200K plus all Multiply money goes to third sector provider, [local authority] Economic Regeneration Trust (who worked with [our TSI] on the Community Renewal Fund consortium project.)
- Some funding went to [local project] for town centre regeneration
- Business – provided about £80K to [ ] a local social enterprise and who deliver our local Business Gateway programme. This includes expert help; women's programme and a new growth programme – all open to third sector. [Our TSI] received £2K towards operating our online directory and some admin costs.
- Communities – only getting capital this year – will be about £70K left over. Open grant at the moment. This will increase next year.
- Year 3 – all the above but with more revenue for communities.
- We work closely together and the same people on the panels of these funds and the [local] fund so wider knowledge of what can be done across the area.
- We have two project that are funded through the UK SPF via the [local] City Deal. Both projects are now active and we are receiving grant funding via our local authority, but we have never seen the complete investment plan for [our area].
- We have had almost no involvement at all, to date. We have been asked to join a Board to oversee the fund in [our area], but it hasn't met yet.
- They have been fair and open, we actually gained £20,000 of investment for Social Enterprise and we are able to advertise other opportunities to members
- Funds have been dispersed to projects and projects underway
- We are seen parts of the Investment Plan but not the full submission.
- the plan was shared with partners with a focus on people and skills – investing in LA in house employability service and in sectors linked to oil and gas there is a requirement for training/ retraining of workers and for this training to accessed locally. Grant scheme to support local rural shops under local business and supporting local communities in developing place plans for local areas. Also for multiply – funding will primarily be used to employ specialist tutors

to develop and deliver learning opportunities which focus on key interventions. Other associated costs will be venue hire, transport, publicity, resources, refreshments and any other locally specific overheads

- The Local Authority is managing the fund on behalf of the [local area] Economic Partnership. [our TSI] sits on the partnership and has been funded to support social enterprises for 2 years from the UKSPF
- Filled in last minute by the Council
- We saw it only because it was made public through the committee cycle. We are involved in some discussions around some of the spend, but through our existing role with Community Planning
- We saw a copy after it had been submitted, only after requesting it.

Please explain (below) the method your local authority used to distribute funding to the third sector

- Bit of a mix – part of the money for community capacity building will be used to enhance the councils grant scheme. Money to support social enterprise was originally discussed as being allocated to [our TSI] to distribute but there has been no progress on doing this, or info about what is happening with this despite us asking for info. Other money around sustainability has been used by the LA to commission the provision of carbon literacy training which will be made available to TSOs
- The Local Authority created an expression of interest for all funds and is now allocating and matching funds internally as submissions are received. Once considered, it then goes to a subgroup formed by partners, including TSI for endorsement. A number of these submissions are local authority led.
- Funding for CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] is through challenge funds that haven't been launched yet. [Our TSI] was not given the opportunity to inform the design of these challenge funds.
- Our local authority initially asked for potential project ideas from the third sector (short notice to submit a proposal). The local authority chooses what projects they felt that they wanted to pursue and then asked for a formal proposal. No structured grant programme and procurement opportunities are now in process.
- Members of [local economic partnership] were asked at short notice to identify possible projects including projects deliverable by the third sector. These were then short listed by a sub group of the partnership likely to have been mainly local authority colleagues before being submitted to the [local] Economic partnership for sign off. The Social enterprise support was not shortlisted however the [local economic partnership] decided it was an important programme that they should support.

This is a space for you to tell us anything you want to about how the funding was distributed locally (please leave blank if you have no comments)

- I have ticked two of the above boxes but both are true only to a very small extent
- There are concerns about the process created by the local authority which seems to be only involving other partners and TSI when endorsement is required. The steering committee endorsing applications can also be applicants which creates issues regarding governance and transparency as some partner and umbrella organisations may find it difficult to challenge local authority decisions, particularly if they are also funded by the council.

- To date most of the spend for UKSPF has gone through the council. Funding for CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] has not been launched yet and when this information is available [our TSI] will promote and support.
- We are only aware of what funding was distributed locally due to our attendance at the committee meeting. Outwith [our TSI] there were only two community organisations that were successful in securing monies via the UK SPF.
- None
- I have ticked two answers to question 11 but when I said the TSI was involved in decision-making, this was only for one part and as a member of the LEP. When I said we are aware of how funding was spent again we only mean in relation to Employability and Skills and Multiply as we have been requested to support the Third Sector to apply for SMALL pots of money through the Multiply provision.
- The plan was shared to a range of partners including [our] TSI, and we were not involved in any planning or consideration of how to allocate the funding
- Unclear how all this was brought together

Is there anything you want to tell us about how funding was distributed in your region? (Please state your answer below)

- see my above comments
- Generally very discouraged by [local authority's] approach. The place planning programme is responsible for recommending how SPF is awarded to communities. Out of 32 members 24 are from [local authority] with only 3 or 4 from local communities including ourselves and all final decisions made by two senior council officials. The LEP administers the SPF for skills and again done through the daunting procurement portal.
- We were very clear about how the funding was distributed by the local authority but we are much less clear what the City Region Deal portion of the money is being spent on. We have asked for information through the social enterprise meetings of the CRD but this hasn't been forthcoming.
- I feel there's a need for meaningful participation in decision-making rather than an expectation that the TSI and other bodies will only attend meetings to endorse applications that have already been rated by local authority officers. On a couple of occasions were not sent in time for meetings with significant investment being discussed and approved without full information being considered. There also seems to be less scrutiny and discrepancy between the information provided in bids submitted by third-sector organisations and internal council projects – this has been highlighted by myself directly in meetings.
- [Our TSI] are not happy about the UKSPF process in [local area] and have provided this feedback to key officers and plan to provide formal feedback to the council
- None
- There was discussion about how our region were not developed enough to apply collaboratively and that a request to the Government to submit three individual Investment Plans for [three local authorities] was accepted. This was the approach that was taken, therefore we have no knowledge about funding distributed as a region.
- not applicable

If you did NOT apply for funding, were there any particular reasons why not? (Please state reasons below or leave blank)

- The process by which we could directly do this was extremely unclear and not encouraged

- We were not given the opportunity to apply for funding although we advised key council officers of ways in which the TSI could do so. There was a procurement process for social enterprise support which [our TSI] could not tender directly for due to the scope and outcomes of the tender but hoped to do so in partnership with other providers but this was not possible either.
- We never compete with our sector if there is a member org able to deliver and now there is for employability as that is why we applied and were successful with the community renewal fund. Business services are provided by another third sector org. The sector does well and [our TSI] should not compete.
- There is a discussion to be had around the 'volunteer' element in the indicators and again it might be for us to deliver that part in Year 3 and beyond.
- We were not made aware of any opportunity to do so – it was dealt with internally by [local authority].
- was not sure how to
- Uncertain about the criteria. Although we have secured provisional funding on behalf of the Food Network to support its sustainability in 23/34 and 34/35. [Our TSI] is providing governance support to the Food Network during 23/24
- We have little understanding of what is available, what for, and when.

If you DID apply for funding, do you have any comments about the application process in your area? (Please leave comments below, or leave blank)

- Please see earlier comments
- We were responsible for putting together the plan and narrative for the SPF, particularly on the Placemaking project. The local authority received the funds as agreed but asked us to submit another application for the project. This was done and the fund was obtained for the pilot project now running.
- It was a difficult and fraught process with one sided communication with large gaps between application and response to application

If you applied successfully for funding, do you have any comments about the monitoring process to date? (please leave comments below or leave blank)

- The monitoring process is onerous and cumbersome. We are replicating previous behaviours relating to other European funding. Acting on a spend and claim basis, due to complexities in the process we are yet to receive any funds in mid-September for work undertaken in the previous financial year.
- The numbers required are fine, and relate to what was on the application form. Our local authority is requiring grantholders to use the Helix case management system to monitor projects, and it does not fit well with the Place and Communities outcomes.
- We have received evaluation forms for both projects last week (18/9/2023).
- The council employed two staff members who have applied a LEADER level model of monitoring in case they are audited and it requires a staff member to fill in forms and collate receipts three days every month which is completely disproportionate to the funding received.
- We haven't started the project as yet so can't

- We applied through the Communities and Place Grant process that was distributing some of the UKSPF. The difficulty is the short timescales for delivery, again money to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. We are yet to receive copies of the required monitoring return.
- The monitoring is just commencing now. We have met and agreed with the local authority what the monitoring will be like and will see how this progresses.

### **Timescales**

- It has been acknowledged that the timescales for distributing the funding were tight. What issues, if any, did this cause for you?
- There was no time to consult with local TSOs/community
- It allowed [local authority] to provide committee reports with less-than-ideal information but conversely to introduce time consuming procurement processes
- Very limited timescales for meaningful engagement with the sector. Had a helpful steer from LA leadership re likely appealing priorities which may be successful. Unfortunately an LA middle manager had autonomy in the decision making which was retrospectively shared with partners.
- The application process was rushed, due to the understandable desires of all parties to see spend in year one. There was a limited amount of time for consultation, although I think [local authority] did what they could.
- The process has been unclear and as a result, submissions are being approved internally by the local authority with only endorsement being sought by partners. There seems to be a lack of evidence-based on need and more in terms of money being distributed asap which is really disappointing
- The money has still not been distributed to the Third Sector
- Insufficient time to influence the council's investment plan.
- Been ok - the issue is capital now being spent by end March which is challenging so needing projects that are ready to go.
- I would agree with this comment, we are now having to claim for the first two quarters of funding as no decision was made until the 19th April 2023, I appreciate that other local authorities are further behind in this process.
- I assume this made it easier for the Council to justify not involving us.
- They forced us to accept a larger amount in the remainder of year one to balance the budget then challenged us on some of our assumptions!
- None
- Really tight turn around in terms of application
- It was a such short turnaround, short application period but amazing the number of applications from Third Sector were still high albeit the quality maybe not where required. Due to the timescales it does highlight issues like monitoring returns, we have still not received a copy of what will be expected.
- tight deadlines always put pressure on the workforce will limited times to put in a good application for funding
- We had no time to consult the sector and had to submit proposals based on our own knowledge of projects that were ready to roll, none of which were shortlisted for support.
- Lack of information and opportunity for meaningful dialogue

**If there is a second tranche of funding, how could this work better?**

- Much clearer direction in guidance on how TSI's could apply or ringfence an amount for the sector and much more scrutiny on how the local authority had consulted with the sector
- Provide genuine community engagement through us
- CPP partners as sign off signatories, as opposed to elected members
- Better involvement of the TSI from the start
- A more realistic lead-in time is required.
- There needs to be agreement regarding full participation and allocation of funds at the bid development stage. Bringing TSI and other partners to endorse and also apply for funds once this is open is not appropriate and it feels like a tick-box exercise with funds for third sector distributed by TSIs and not local authorities.
- It needs to be a true partnership and this written in the terms of contract
- More time for CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] input into the investment plan, supported by TSIs.
- TSIs involvement in above to be a formal requirement.
- TSIs formally recognised as a strategic partner.
- What do you mean with Year 2-3 or Year 4 onwards.
- Monies being ring fenced for the local voluntary sector and a formal grant process put in place. In addition, asking for the TSI input when decision making, ensuring that organisations have a fair and proportionate opportunity to access funding.
- By involving us from the outset.
- UK government needs to tell councils to adopt an outcome led model and not to monitor the spend in such detail.
- More dialogue at start
- More open communication with all the partners from the onset and clear processes and guidelines put in place.
- A reasonable turnaround for applications, support for groups and organisations submitting applications, all relevant paperwork supplied when notified of successful funding i.e. monitoring return.
- increased knowledge on how to apply, make the process simple and straight forward, reasonable timescales would help
- More time for proper engagement with the sector in the hope that more funding goes to the third sector in the future
- Early communication to allow for co-production

### **Year on Year funding**

- There was a separate allocation of funding for each year, compared to European funding which was agreed in advance and left to the managing authority to decide the annual split of funding. Agreement to move funding between years could only be agreed in March for the following year. What issues, if any, did this cause for you?
- There was a separate allocation of funding for each year, compared to European funding which was agreed in advance and left to the managing authority to decide the annual split of funding.
- None as we were not directly allocated any funding
- It makes communication about the fund to the third sector very difficult and it makes longer term planning impossible



- So far, the multi-year funding element has been a positive, although will depend on how successfully we manage the spend and claim process by year end.
- none so far
- This had a huge impact. It was obvious to everyone that there would be an underspend in year one, and it would have greatly helped everyone's ability to plan their projects if they had known at the beginning of the programme that underspends could be carried forward.
- I need more information on this as our TSI has been reformed and came into being in April 2023.
- None
- insufficient time to influence or contribute to funding for first tranche.
- Ok - we work with CC to get the best result. More for communities would be good.
- As we were successful in securing funding this would be damaging to the project and to members of staff moral. This also has not been made clear to us to any stage. In addition, this would obviously have a financial impact on the TSI if we did not secure the monies for year two.
- As a TSI, I am unsure if this was discussed with the other projects that submitted the initial proposal or other organisations that where successful in securing funding.
- We haven't been involved.
- As before - a mammoth grant for the final three months of the first year was forced on us which was not realistic.
- N/A
- None
- The timing of the allocation of the funding confused the issue especially no alignment with the financial year which muddy the waters in some respect in how much monies were available, as there appeared to be a large reduction in the second year of the fund
- The Authority decided on the split of funding which when engaging with the Third Sector realised this wasn't a feasible split.
- none
- We are not aware of this
- n/a
- Unknown
- N/A

### **Year on Year funding**

There was a separate allocation of funding for each year, compared to European funding which was agreed in advance and left to the managing authority to decide the annual split of funding. Agreement to move funding between years could only be agreed in March for the following year. What issues, if any, did this cause for you?

- None as we were not directly allocated any funding
- It makes communication about the fund to the third sector very difficult and it makes longer term planning impossible
- So far, the multi year funding element has been a positive, although will depend on how successfully we manage the spend and claim process by year end.
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- I need more information on this as our TSI has been reformed and came into being in April 2023.
  - None
  - insufficient time to influence or contribute to funding for first tranche.
  - Ok - we work with CC to get the best result. More for communities would be good.
  - As we were successful in securing funding this would be damaging to the project and to members of staff moral. This also has not been made clear to us to any stage. In addition, this would obviously have a financial impact on the TSI if we did not secure the monies for year two.
  - As a TSI, I am unsure if this was discussed with the other projects that submitted the initial proposal or other organisations that where successful in securing funding.
  - We haven't been involved.
  - As before - a mammoth grant for the final three months of the first year was forced on us which was not realistic.
  - N/A
  - None
  - The timing of the allocation of the funding confused the issue especially no alignment with the financial year which muddy the waters in some respect in how much monies were available, as there appeared to be a large reduction in the second year of the fund
  - The Authority decided on the split of funding which when engaging with the Third Sector realised this wasn't a feasible split.
  - none
  - We are not aware of this
  - n/a
  - Unknown
  - N/A
- 
- If there is a second tranche of funding, how could this work better? (Please explain below)
  - flexibility in deciding the split
  - Multi year funding commitments
  - More flexibility over the e.g. 3 year period to allocate and spend as the lead partner, as you choose.
  - n/a

If there is another tranche of funding, it should be awarded over a period of years, and the spending profile should be decided locally. It makes a huge difference to the recruitment of staff to know that underspends can be profiled into the following year. The Government has been quite light touch in allowing local authorities to run their programmes locally - why not give them control of the spending profile as well?

- As per the previous answer, there needs to be a joint plan agreed upon prior to submission. Investment in the third sector should be allocated to TSIs for discussion with the wider sector and dispersion. Until then, the process will continue to be top-down with the inclusion of TSIs as an add-on rather than as a meaningful collaborator.
- The TSI's need a place round the table from the outset
- Multi-year and flexible funding are required for CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] to be able to plan and contribute effectively.

- Again - not clear if you mean Year 4 onwards - and if more for Year 3 would be good but the increase is significant already
- Clear communications and service level agreements.
- By involving us from the outset.
- Allow transfers between years and carry overs
- More time for planning.
- No answer
- Clearer guidelines
- Communication and real engagement with the Third Sector would enable those decision makers to make adequate splits in funding and ensure the criteria meets the needs of our local communities.
- not sure
- Not clear on this therefore do not know
- as previous answer re opportunity for co-production
- Unknown
- N/A

### **Length of funding available**

Funding was available for approximately 2.5 years after the agreement of the Investment Plans, and the time period was even shorter in areas which did not immediately allocate the funding. What issues, if any, did this cause for you?

- see previous answer
- please see earlier replies
- We have managed to mobilise quickly. The main issue has been the lack of true partnership when trying to collaborate e.g. with Multiply a handful of partners are delivering to different target groups, and the intention was to best co-ordinate, but some partners aren't engaging as they haven't received their funding.
- Programmes were asked to be significant (£200k+) but short-term, which limited participation of some orgs.
- Two years is a very short timescale to deal with the issues that UKSPF is set up to address. The third sector urgently needs long term investment to deal with the issues arising from the cost-of-living crisis; the UKSPF turned into yet another short-term funding pot when what is needed is proper regeneration and investment,
- Rushed decisions and funding submissions being approved based on assumed need rather than evidence-based. Some repetitions of previous projects were also funded without evaluation or considerations provided based on learning and previous experience.
- None
- see above
- Been ok with us - was clear where it could go
- We had been informed that it was for two years, but already we are running behind due to local authority decision making processes. This has caused us no direct issues, but we did have two members of staff that we pinpointed to move to these projects. Both members of staff were funded by different agencies and this left a shortfall where [TSI] did have to pay additional monies to keep both employed.
- We were not involved.

- 2.5 is fine
- Any longer term agreement would always be welcome.
- As usual short term funding never works
- The main issue was timing which meant that some projects had to be delivered over a shorter period of time which reduced the benefit of the project.
- This was shared and promoted to the Third Sector as multi-year support but with the significant delays at a Government level, coupled with delays at Local Authority level, this has impacted on groups and organisations to gain this duration of support.
- none
- The planning and engagement timescales were too short
- unsure
- Unknown
- N/A

### **Length of funding available**

- Funding was available for approximately 2.5 years after the agreement of the Investment Plans, and the time period was even shorter in areas which did not immediately allocate the funding. What issues, if any, did this cause for you?
- Funding was available for approximately 2.5 years after the agreement of the Investment Plans, and the time period was even shorter in areas. What issues, if any, did this cause for you? (Please e...
- see previous answer
- please see earlier replies
- We have managed to mobilise quickly. The main issue has been the lack of true partnership when trying to collaborate e.g. with Multiply a handful of partners are delivering to different target groups, and the intention was to best co-ordinate, but some partners aren't engaging as they haven't received their funding.
- Programmes were asked to be significant (£200k+) but short-term, which limited participation of some orgs.
- Two years is a very short timescale to deal with the issues that UKSPF is set up to address. The third sector urgently needs long term investment to deal with the issues arising from the cost-of-living crisis; the UKSPF turned into yet another short-term funding pot when what is needed is proper regeneration and investment,
- Rushed decisions and funding submissions being approved based on assumed need rather than evidence-based. Some repetitions of previous projects were also funded without evaluation or considerations provided based on learning and previous experience.
- None
- see above
- Been ok with us - was clear where it could go
- We had been informed that it was for two years, but already we are running behind due to local authority decision making processes. This has caused us no direct issues, but we did have two members of staff that we pinpointed to move to these projects. Both members of staff were funded by different agencies and this left a shortfall where CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector]I did have to pay additional monies to keep both employed.
- We were not involved.
- 2.5 is fine

- Any longer term agreement would always be welcome.
- As usual short term funding never works
- The main issue was timing which meant that some projects had to be delivered over a shorter period of time which reduced the benefit of the project.
- This was shared and promoted to the Third Sector as multi-year support but with the significant delays at a Government level, coupled with delays at Local Authority level, this has impacted on groups and organisations to gain this duration of support.
- none
- The planning and engagement timescales were too short
- unsure
- Unknown
- N/A
- If there is a second tranche of funding, how could this work better? (Please explain below)
- see previous answer
- please see earlier replies
- More trust - pay in advance, even quarterly, so partners don't need to concern with cash flow and can focus on the delivery and outcomes
- Smaller grant sizes
- European funding streams were seven years long, to recognise that 1) there will always be time lost at the beginning of the programme as it is set up and 2) we are dealing with long term, intractable issues that cannot be dealt with in two years. It would be good to see a return to this length of investment.
- As already explained, an agreement should be made ahead of submissions including TSI as the body responsible for third sector budgets.
- Plan agreed at an earlier date
- see above
- Year 4 onwards would be good to have more flexibility as you never know what is coming out from SG - there is some cross over in indicators so it would allow redistribution if that happened.
- Offering 2 year funding, have service agreements/grant letter in place and better and clearer communication with both the TSI and the wider local voluntary sector.
- By involving us from the outset.
- Happy with 2.5 but would prefer 3 for workforce planning purposes
- Any longer term agreement would always be welcome.
- Make it longer term
- Timing alongside the fiscal year of the local authority would allow consideration to lengthen some of the projects. Also to give due to consideration for consultation and preparation time to access the needs if the communities
- Deliver within the timescales agreed at the early outset.
- align it to financial years helps year end immensely
- Longer time scales and the more advanced notice the better
- clear transparent and co-production opportunity
- Unknown
- N/A

## UKSPF Positives

- Is there anything that you feel has worked well from this round of UKSPF that you would like to see maintained and developed if there is a second tranche of funding?
  - Despite the issues it is good that there has been some money allocated to community capacity building that is being directed to support for TSO's. Would like to see this developed but have more ownership of this
  - No
  - I think [city region deal] have had a good go at doing this as a Region, would like to see this explored further, with enhanced CPP partner involvement in the process from start to finish.
  - In [local authority] there was good partnership working between the third sector and the local authority. It would be good to see this encouraged and embedded in programme. The civil servants who supported UKSPF were very approachable and helpful. It was good to have a named contact for the fund, and it would be good to continue this.
  - The attempt to involve TSI has worked but it would be good to see more meaningful participation with shared roles and responsibilities moving forward, otherwise, it will continue to be a tick-box exercise.
  - We are now included and have a seat round the table
  - So far CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] involvement has been minimal despite [our TSI's] best efforts. A lot of this is due to tight timeframes set by UKG but also council prioritising spend by itself.
  - The planned challenge funds for CVS [Community and Voluntary Sector] may be useful but these are not in place yet. "
  - More flexibility so the steering group can respond to other funding from SG and allow this money to be changed over indicators. Still overall less money coming out but it is good to see it within communities now.
  - Unfortunately, no, I think the process has not been straightforward and a clear lack of TSI involvement and decision making.
  - Not really able to comment - rather in the dark.
  - N/A - the monitoring has made this unpleasant!
- 
- Decision making panel on bids has good third sector rep
  - Nothing that stands out from the 'norm'.
  - limited engagement at present would like to be more involved in the planning around the funding, information about how to apply would be good as was not aware we could have
  - We were pleased that the value of our contribution was recognised and supported by the [local] Economic Partnership
  - unsure