

Cllr Neil Hargreaves, Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy

Report to Full Council – 18 December 2025

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The MHCLG has reviewed the performance of a selection of councils carrying out the administration of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocations. Uttlesford was one of 34 councils across all of the UK to be reviewed

'The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) provides a total of £3.5 billion of funding for local investment over 4 years (2022 to 2026), with all places in the UK receiving an allocation via a funding formula. Local decision-makers work with their local communities and partners to deliver interventions under three investment priorities: Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills.'

Sampling some of the others shows generally that funds have been well spent, and the report for Uttlesford is a particularly good one. This is a testament to the skills and hard work of our two officers, working only part time on this. It also reflects the quality of our local businesses and voluntary organisations in making high quality applications matching the categories, and then implementing the work. It was often difficult when presented with a list of excellent proposals exceeding the available funds as to which didn't make the cut. Officers however were sometimes able to source alternative funding, for example using UDCs environmental funds generated from the commercial investment income.

The report is here: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund place-based evaluation: Uttlesford](#)

The evaluation looked at 4 themes and key outputs and outcomes: parenting support, food and nutrition, connecting people with available services, and business support

'Key outcomes include significant improvements in parents' skills, mental well-being, and social interaction, alongside a reduction in isolation for families involved in the programme.'

For food and nutrition 'outcomes of these projects include a reduction in food waste and improved access to food-sharing services, contributing to enhanced community well-being and support for vulnerable individuals.

Connecting people with services: Key outcomes include people being able to stay in their homes due to improved access to services, and sustained markets benefiting local traders and residents.'

And for business support 'Key outcomes include 10 new enterprises, new sales for local traders leading to further investment in equipment and business growth and improved business confidence.'

Parking

Following comments at Scrutiny about the requirement for local support for new restrictions, here is the guidance from the NEPP website:

'Evidence of support: clarity around the requester's responsibilities has been included. Applicants must demonstrate 75% support from affected residents/businesses for a request in order to be automatically progressed to scoring stage and prioritised, setting a clear threshold for community backing. This does not mean requests showing less than 75% will not be considered, though there

have been past incidents where schemes which progressed without this evidenced support have received significant levels of objection and subsequently been withdrawn. This evidenced support helps to ensure funds are used wisely. '

At the Joint Parking Committee meeting in November I therefore asked members if they found that the 75% was a problem. None of them said it was. Of the schemes put forward having passed NEPPs scoring process only one was marked 'Defer - insufficient residential support'. An Epping Forest resident speaking in favour of this application had done a lot of door knocking but there was a group of properties with older residents who did not have cars and were not interested. NEPP officers said they would advise people making applications to contact them first to agree what houses and businesses should be included.

I asked for that to be put on the TRO applications page, which has not been done yet, so I will follow up. NEPP meetings are normal council ones, and are peripatetic, around all the participant councils, run to Colchester City Council procedure rules. The next one is on 26th January at UDC and anyone may book to speak.

Finally, to clarify, the on street functions of NEPP - enforcement and new restrictions - are not tax payer funded. It is paid for out of parking ticket revenues and Residents Schemes. UDC and the other participants do not pay NEPP for this work.

Cllr Neil Hargreaves