

Meeting of:	SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3
Date of Meeting:	2 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	UNITED KINGDOM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND GRANT FUNDS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	IEUAN SHERWOOD, GROUP MANAGER ECONOMY, NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Council's policy framework or procedure rules as a result of this report.
Executive Summary:	<p>The purpose of this report is to update Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 on the following grant funds, funded via the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridgend Valley Placemaking Property Improvement Grant • Empty Property Survey Grants • Community Feasibility Fund • The Business Development Grant • Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme • Bridgend County Tourism Events Support <p>In addition, the report updates Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 on the Prosperity Framework.</p> <p>The report also updates Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 on UKSPF resources for 2025/26.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 on the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) grant funds and the Prosperity Framework. The report also updates Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 on UKSPF resources for 2025/26.

2. Background

- 2.1 The UKSPF is a key part of the UK government's funding, forming part of complementary funding, including the Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund.
- 2.2 The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Priorities: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.
- The **Communities and Place** investment priority will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.
 - The **Supporting Local Business** investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.
 - The **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.
- 2.3 As part of the People and Skills priority there is a dedicated and ringfenced element of the UKSPF called Multiply which seeks to improve adult numeracy skills.
- 2.4 The UKSPF allows Local Authorities to deliver activity via a range of mechanisms, namely:
- o In-House Delivery
 - o Commissioning
 - o Procurement
 - o Grant Funds
- 2.5 In July 2022 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Cabinet delegated authority to the Corporate Director Communities to submit the Bridgend County Local Investment Plan to Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) for inclusion in the overall submission of the South East Wales Local Investment Plan to the UK Government. As part of the funding process there was, and remains, a need to appoint one local authority to assume the role of the 'Lead Local Authority' for the region for the UKSPF. It was agreed by BCBC Cabinet that RCTCBC performs this role.
- 2.6 In March 2023 the Corporate Director Communities exercised the authority delegated by BCBC Cabinet in July 2022 to authorise entering into a regional funding agreement regarding the UKSPF with RCTCBC, under decision reference CMM-ED-23-046.
- 2.7 A report was produced for Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 in June 2023 which resulted in a further update and report to Cabinet in June 2023. This was required to set up the grant funds for businesses and community organisations to apply to. To facilitate the award of grants a series of unforeseen amendments were required to the Council's Scheme of Delegation of Functions in relation to Cabinet Functions.

2.8 Following the end of the 2023-24 financial year Corporate Management Board (CMB) requested a report to update on progress of the UKSPF. That report was presented in May 2024 and the spend to date and forecast spend information at that time was presented. CMB gave a mandate to the Economic Programme Board for a process to be undertaken, led by BCBC finance colleagues, of 1-2-1 project reviews with each project lead. The focus was on options relating to offsetting, reallocation and possible transfer of funds to other Local Authorities.

2.9 In August 2024 CMB endorsed the exercise undertaken by all UKSPF project leads and the Economic Programme Board to work towards fully utilising the UKSPF funds and agreed the proposals to move forward. A report was presented to Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB) in September 2024 to set out the process undertaken.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 A summary of the delivery of each of the UKSPF grant funds is set out below.

The Business Development Grant

3.2 The Business Development Grant was set up to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bridgend County Borough to diversify, decarbonise and grow which contributes to creating a vibrant and strong local economy. The grant covers the whole County and provides 50% of eligible capital project costs. The minimum grant is £5,000 and the maximum grant available is £25,000 (excluding VAT). Table 1 below gives a summary of grant awards through this grant fund.

Table 1 Business Development Grant summary

Business	Project Summary	Grant approved	Total Project Costs
Comgem Limited	Purchasing additional IT equipment which will facilitate expansion and development.	£10,254.49	£20,508.98
Vision Print Solutions LTD	Purchasing Digital production print machine	£9,813.49	£19,626.98
Ginkgo Garden Services	Purchase equipment associated with establishing a new works depot to store plants and materials.	£25,000.00	£51,428.64
Picton Stone Ltd	Purchase a mobile office unit and furniture to allow a more sustainable and accessible office at their Pyle site.	£5,893.00	£11,786.00
Unisan Limited	Purchase Injection moulding tools to make newly designed recycling bins to ensure the bin components can be assembled faster.	£25,000.00	£55,000.00

Engineering Industrial Solutions Ltd	Purchasing an industrial acoustic imaging camera designed for compressed air leak detection.	£8,084.58	£16,169.17
YC Plastics Manufacturing Ltd	Oversheet current roof to make the premises a safer and healthier facility.	£25,000.00	£50,800.00
Godspeed brakes ltd	Purchase a new CNC Machine.	£25,000.00	£60,000.00
Burts The Bakers Ltd	Purchase of a labelling machine for the products.	£12,270.00	£24,540.00
A- Head of The Game Enterprises	Purchasing kitchen equipment to assist with a culinary school expansion project.	£22,024.29	£44,048.57
Bridgend Ravens Rugby Club Limited	Purchase a digital screen.	£25,000.00	£54,000.00
Club Penybont Limited	Provide base and ground works and electricity, water connections for Portable Female, Officials Changing Accommodation and Merchandise Shop.	£20,000.00	£40,000.00
Enhanced Consultancy Ltd	Website, flooring, various medical equipment and building work at Apollo Business Village	£16,827.83	£33,655.65
La Cocina Tapas	Purchasing of food lift and tables and full shop fit out.	£25,000.00	£56,022.83
Anstee Landscapes and Tree Felling Contractors Ltd	Purchase a mobile elevated work platform (MEWP), which will allow the business to conduct tree work safer and more efficiently.	£25,000.00	£79,000.00
Drainforce Ltd	Purchase Solar panels and batters to charge plant and equipment.	£24,500.00	£49,000.00
Edwards Steel Services Limited	Purchase CNC plasma cutting machine	£25,000.00	£107,000.00
LMG Solutions Ltd	Purchasing IT equipment, ensuring compliance with the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR).	£6,682.24	£13,364.47

Rhymney Brewery Limited	Purchase PV solar panels and battery, new artificial slate roof to incorporate solar installation, Hyper efficient water cooler, Energy saving glass washer, Energy saving Cellar Cooling and Smart Cellar	£25,000.00	£50,300.00
Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club	2 x Samsung TVs, Sliding door double fridge, Computer till system, Development of Club's website, Installation of disabled ramp, Furniture for Clubhouse lounge area,	£15,334.20	£30,734.34
RJ Chumley Ground Maintenance	Purchase of tree shears and land clearing grab.	£24,750.00	£49,500.00
Bespoke-UK Ltd	Purchase a Falach Cube 20 Briquette Machine, the installation of more energy efficient LED warehouse lighting and the purchase of a more up to date and more efficient edge bander machine	£11,380.00	£22,760.00
Summitk2 Limited	Make the business compliant with the disability discrimination act, including purchase and installation of new turnstile, accessible doors and flooring.	£12,157.32	£24,314.64
Armex Tech Limited	Purchasing Ajax Systems control alarm panel x 6, Ajax Systems outdoor motion detector x 30, Ajax Systems outdoor siren x 12, Kiosk Housing Unit, Vinyl Graphics, SmartSolar Battery Units & Solar Panels.	£5,184.92	£10,369.84
R W Christopher Crane Hire Ltd	Purchasing Rolling Road to Test & Certify Vehicles	£17,630.00	£35,260.00
Odyssey Pensions Limited	Capital expenditure on property improvements, PC equipment and website re-design	£12,371.91	£25,278.00
S D M Glass Ltd	Complete sheet roof covering.	£23,375.00	£46,750.00
InfoTeam International	Apple 14 inch MacBook Pro Computers x 5, Apple 15 inch MacBook Air Computers x 5, Apple 13 inch MacBook Air Computers x 5, Office furniture:- Chairs, Desks, Various Storage, Drawers, Shelving Units, Desk Lamps	£21,740.84	£43,481.67

Resolution Care Services Ltd	Office Reconfiguration for Training, Social Media & Support Service Growth and Creation of New Website and Social Media Platform	£10,942.00	£21,884.00
Severnside Car Company	Purchasing Mobile phones x 2, Phone System, Laptops x 2, Desks x 3, Desk Chairs x 3, Customer Chairs x 8, Uniform, Printer	£5,096.33	£10,192.65
R & R Coles	Conversion of unused space to an additional surgical treatment room.	£20,417.50	£49,001.99
Tyre Boss Ltd	Hydraulic bead breaker kit, specialist attachment teletruck, Hydraulic OTR tyre press, Shipping Container and Compressor	£21,412.00	£42,824.00
J H Apsee & Sons	Supply and fit of new fire alarm system to warehouses	£5,175.00	£10,350.00
Club Penybont Limited	Ground works re Electrical Armoured Cable to Portacabin Car Park Entrance and Main Gate Entry and Gate/Carpark Lighting	£2,159.20	£4,318.39
Dragon Café	Purchasing a coffee machine, kitchen equipment, furniture and kitchen canopy fan.	£16,500.44	£33,000.87
Phil's News & Café	Purchasing Rational icombi pro cooking centre, Merrychef Connex 12 High Speed Oven x 2, Front of House Display Refrigeration, Classeq Duo Dishwasher	£15,580.49	£31,160.97
Engsolve Ltd	Office furniture, Laptops x 5, computer monitors x 3, Video Conferencing Camera, Nero Executive Boardroom Table.	£8,459.96	£16,919.91
Euroschools Plus Ltd	Purchasing Melco EMT16X embroidery machine	£13,725.00	£27,450.00
Talgarth Bakery Limited	Purchasing Blast Chiller, Welsh Cake Hot Plates, Canopy Extraction	£25,000.00	£61,195.00
Waterstone Mirrors & Frames LTD	Purchase of a new UV Flatbed Printer to allow us to produce glass wall art.	£21,958.50	£43,917.00
Leaping Wing Ltd.	Purchase an aerial LiDAR scanning unit, and the necessary ancillary equipment and software to enable this roll-out.	£8,805.84	£17,620.05

Dollcast Limited	Purchase of Overhead Gantry Crane	£25,000.00	£50,012.00
Infinite Renewables Ltd	Purchase of BestWatt 10 Mobile Wind Turbine	£25,000.00	£81,132.78
Clear View Surgical Ltd	Air conditioning & Ventilation System, Specialist medical kit, Computer hardware, Electrical & Building works	£25,000.00	£50,000.00
G & S Roberts Ltd – Steak & Stamp Restaurant	Purchasing Fire Detection & Alarm System and Fire Suppression System	£5,191.50	£10,383.00
Gemini Digital Colour Ltd	Hewlett Packard Indigo 7K Digital Printing Press,	£25,000.00	£290,000.00
The Steel Shop Ltd	Airless Paint Set, CNC Machine, Forklift, Pillar Drill and Magnetic Drilling Machine	£25,000.00	£50,000.00
	TOTAL	£810,697.87	£2,026,062.39

The Business Feasibility Grant

3.3 The Business Feasibility Grant was set up to support businesses to explore feasibility of longer-term options to diversify, decarbonise and grow including:

- Preparation of plans and studies, e.g. Business Plans/Feasibility Studies
- Before purchasing a piece of machinery, the study could determine the market for increased production or new product is financially viable.
- Explore using space in retail, hospitality to introduce new service / product e.g. new hotel spa
- Cost benefit analysis to introduce Green procurement

3.4 The grant covers the whole County and provides 100% of eligible revenue projects costs. The minimum grant is £5,000 and the maximum grant available is £25,000 (excluding VAT).

Table 2 Business Feasibility Grant summary

Business	Project Summary	Grant Approved
Markes International	Feasibility study to identify potential partners and markets within the Middle Eastern region	£25,000.00
LMG Solutions Ltd	Fund the engagement of an external consultant who specialises in the targeted sectors to expand the customer base to a wider European market.	£25,000.00

Codel Software Ltd	Marketing feasibility study on the HR software marketing in the UK and Internationally	£13,500.00
IARA Ltd t/a KK Solutions	Commission a feasibility study into the market potential for bespoke wallpaper production and installation.	£6,300.00
Corilla Plastics (Bridgend) Ltd	Feasibility study into erecting a solar panel farm on, or in the grounds of the company, to provide renewable energy instead of gas	£25,000.00
Harlequin Home Care Ltd	Feasibility study into exploring sustainable energy solutions	£21,623.00
Club Penybont Ltd	Feasibility study for the club to assess how to increase revenues streams from all and any diversified business opportunities	£25,000.00
Old Industries Limited	Feasibility study to explore long-term options for the business to diversify, decarbonise and grow	£10,098.00
Brewery Field Limited	Feasibility study to assess how to generate diversified alternative income through a range of measures including the creation of a new hotel development adjacent to the Club	£24,950.00
	TOTAL	£176,471.00

The Tourism Events Grant

3.5 The Tourism Events Grant was set up to support tourism events which:

- have strong potential to attract visitors from outside the local area, whether that is from other regions or other countries.
- have a positive impact on the local economy, such as by generating revenue for local businesses, creating jobs, or promoting the region as a tourist destination.
- have cultural significance or highlight a unique aspect of the local area's history, culture, or identity.
- have the potential to raise the profile of the county borough in a positive way

3.6 The Fund covers the whole county. Tier 1 applications can be supported with up to 50% of eligible revenue costs to a maximum of £2,500 grant, and Tier 2 applications can be supported with up to 20% of eligible revenue costs to a maximum of £10,000.

Table 3 Tourism Events Grant summary

Event / Organiser	Type of Event	Grant amount	Grant Tier	Total event cost
Between the Trees	Music Festival	£9,995	20% Tier2	£123,625
Bridgend County Show	Outdoor Show	£7,600	20% Tier2	£40,000
Porthcawl Triathlon Club	Sporting event	£2,500	50% Tier1	£5,710
Porthcawl 10K	Sporting event	£9,950	20% Tier2	£97,114
Rabbit Run	Sporting event	£5,200	20% Tier2	£26,000
Bridgend Town Council	Christmas Event	£6,450	50% Tier1	£13,000
Maesteg Town Council	Christmas Event	£4,000	50% Tier1	£55,159
Porthcawl Town Council	Christmas Event	£5,200	50% Tier1	£13,000
Ogmore Valley Community Council	Christmas Event	£ 3,840	50% Tier1	£8,000
Garw Valley Community Council	Christmas Event	£ 3,840	50% Tier1	£8,000
	TOTAL	£58,575		£389,608

The Bridgend Community Feasibility Fund

3.7 The Bridgend Community Feasibility Fund has been set up to test the feasibility of longer-term community-led ideas. It provides communities in the Borough the opportunity to gather evidence to support locally led community project ideas. Focusing on Health, Climate and Economy they will provide the required data, knowledge and understanding with the ambition to lead to future funding bids and continue community planning. The fund covers the whole County and can provide up to 100% of required funding via a grant.

Table 4 Bridgend Community Feasibility Grant summary

Beneficiary / Recipient	Project	Grant amount
Public Service Board	The PSB Climate Change Risk Assessment - The risk assessment will provide a clear view of the PSB's resilience to the future challenges of climate change and options for further joint strategic action.	£12,000
Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) - Community Asset Transfer (CAT)	Bridgend Energy Efficiency Project - The project provided bespoke energy efficiency surveys for 39 community & sports facilities. The aim is for the surveys to provide relevant evidence needed, to secure future capital grants for environmental sustainability and a reduction in running costs.	£40,000

Porthcawl Veterans Hub	Porthcawl Veterans Hub - The Veterans Hub was supported with a feasibility study to identify self-contained accommodation to help enhance their services and community impact. Currently operating in shared accommodation, the Hub faces challenges, lacking privacy for one-to-one interactions and hindering their full potential.	£7,875
Coity Higher Community Council	Coity Higher Community Council (CHCC) are seeking a freehold asset transfer of Coity Higher & Litchard Cross Community Centre. A feasibility study was developed for the pre-construction period. The study explored the condition of the building; considered structural reconfiguration; accessibility, vehicular access and parking; mains services and costings for remedial works.	£24,479
Ogmore Valley Community Council	Caedu Park Memorial Garden - Professional landscape design and feasibility assessment was requested, to create a community wellness and memorial garden in Caedu Park, a former nursery site at Park Avenue, Ogmore Vale.	£8,944
South Cornelly Renewable Energy CIC	The CIC was established to be the vehicle used by the village to achieve its ambition of creating a "Net Zero Village". The aim of the feasibility study is to investigate how the Local Energy Market can be expanded and integrated with a proposed electrolyser producing green hydrogen, from community owned solar and wind assets, for the decarbonization of heat within the village.	£24,850
BCBC CAT / OVCC	Ogmore Valley All Weather Pitch - CAT & OVCC worked together to progress the project and required a study to look into determining the most suitable type of all-weather pitch to reflect potential demand / usage, funding constraints and the current suitability of infrastructure, e.g. changing facilities.	£9,750
Maesteg Celtic Sports Facilities Ltd	Maesteg Celtic Sports Facilities Ltd requested a study to look into options for Garth Park Pavilion: expanding changing facilities, renovating the building and bringing the facility up to date with modern sporting guidelines.	£17,420
BCBC Climate Change Response	Bedford Park Surveys & Study - This project involved developing a preparatory study to ascertain the viability of an on-site building development proposal. The proposed building or buildings will be for a remote 'work-hub' space and to accommodate volunteer tool storage and necessary facilities.	£25,350

Lads & Dads Wellbeing CIC	The CIC approached us to develop a study and a 5 year business plan. The study researched and surveyed the group's members, their capacities and capabilities, in order to help progress their current offer and work towards their goal of becoming self-sustainable with paid members of staff.	£9,825
Porthcawl Town Council	The PTC applied for feasibility study to be carried out to identify options for a new community building to accommodate the PTC and respond to local community needs.	£24,960
Tondu RFC	A feasibility study to consult and test the project of developing Pandy Park and Tondu RFC to incorporate playing fields (rugby and football) together with parking areas, public open space and the changing pavilion.	£34,840
Cornelly Outreach Group	Cornelly Outreach Group - The Cornelly Outreach Group applied for a feasibility study to create a clear direction in the form of a 5-year strategy for the group, based on information from the committee, members and service users. Their top priority is securing a suitable premises from which to run their confidential Services.	£14,960
The Contact Zone	The Contact Zone applied to the Feasibility Fund to investigate the possibility of the organisation obtaining a premises. The study will also undertake a financial assessment, produce a five-year action plan and to undertake an assessment of comparable operations in other areas in relation to services offered.	£14,960
Bridgend Town Council	Carnegie House - Bridgend Town Council are keen to explore options for the vacant Carnegie House in Bridgend as an arts and cultural centre. A feasibility study is needed to establish how it can be best put to use within the confines of the covenant and take into consideration the BCBC Town Centre Masterplan.	£25,000
BCBC/ Garw Valley Community Council	Parc Calon Lan - BCBC and the Garw valley Community Council are co-working on a study test the viability of a remote work-hub being installed at Parc Calon Lan. The work-hub will provide further potential to increase visitors to the Park and provide a warm safe space for isolated remote homeworkers.	£28,800

Westward Community Centre Committee	West Ward Community Centre - Building Improvements. The community centre committee requested a building condition survey and landscape designs and drawings. The aim is to attract future capital funding for much needed renovation work at the centre.	£25,000
Nantymoel Boys & Girls Club (The Mem)	The Nant Y Moel Boys & Girls Club (The Mem) has a state-of-the-art infrared heating system but the electricity costs are preventing this being used properly. The study requested that several renewable energy options are considered for the trustees of the centre to take forward for capital funding grants.	£7,500
Llangynwyd Rangers	The Reach team are working with Llangynwyd Rangers on developing feasibility report and masterplan to enhance community and sport provision at Llangynwyd Playing Fields, including improved playing, training and social facilities.	£25,000
The Noddfa Youth Development Project	Blaencaerau School Site - The Noddfa Youth Development Project are working with the Reach team to undertake a feasibility study that will develop options for the usage of the site at Blaencaerau school in Maesteg.	£9,988
Llynfi BMX Racing Club	Llynfi BMX Bike Tracks Park - Llynfi BMX approached the Reach team for a study that would assist the group in for a Community Asset Transfer of the former Coegnant Colliery Site. The feasibility study will include consultation with local young people, development options for the site, consideration of floodlighting, a standalone building including toilets and changing facilities, as well as costings for the acquisition and development of the site and the identification of potential capital funds to deliver the project, presented in a report that will inform future funding bids.	£9,988
St.Ceins Church	A feasibility study is needed to investigate costed options for improvements to the church building, which currently has no running water or facilities for community use and renovate an 'out of bounds' church tower.	£14,960
Rest Bay Sports Ltd	Rest Bays Sports Ltd are looking for a 5-year business plan to revise the club's priorities and work towards capital funding opportunities for renovations and pitch improvements.	£10,000
	TOTAL	£426,449

The Bridgend Valleys Placemaking Property Improvement Grant

3.8 The Bridgend Valleys Placemaking Property Improvement Grant contains two elements:

- To enhance building frontages and bring vacant commercial floor space back into beneficial use, by supporting commercial property frontage improvements, along with other external and internal works.
- To convert vacant upper-floor space into new residential accommodation above commercial units, including internal and external works to bring vacant space back into use for residential purposes.

The grant was originally set up to support the District Centres and Local Service centres in the valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore (excluding Maesteg Town Centre). However, due to a lack of applications the area of support was broadened to a wider geographical area. The grant supports a maximum of 80% of reasonable eligible costs, up to a maximum grant award of:

- o £30,000 for occupied properties
- o £50,000 for properties that have been vacant for more than 6 months

Table 5 Bridgend Valleys Placemaking Property Improvement Grant summary

Premises/Company	Project Summary	Total Project Costs	Grant Committed
Station Hotel, Caerau, S&E Properties Ltd	Internal and external improvements to bring vacant ground floor commercial unit back into use on the high street. (with residential on first floor supported by BCBC Sustainable Renewable Housing team)	£90,922.00	£49,999.00
Ogmore Vale Family Dental	External and internal property improvements, safeguarding the commercial property on the high street	£58,000.00	£30,000.00
Ogmore Valley Dragons Boxing	External and internal property improvements to bring vacant commercial space into use and safeguard the commercial property on the high street.	£35,459.75	£28,367.80
Pontycymmer Rugby & Community Sports Ltd	External and internal property improvements to bring the vacant premises back into use on the high street	£57,280.00	£48,880.00
Margam Ministry Ltd	External and internal improvements to safeguard the commercial property on the high street	£15,247.20	£12,197.76
Pretty Hot & Tattooed	External and internal improvements to safeguard the commercial property on the high street	£30,000.00	£24,000.00

Talbot Community Centre	External improvements that will safeguard the commercial property on the high street	£10,000.00	£8,000.00
G&S Roberts Ltd	External and internal improvements to bring vacant commercial space into reuse, safeguarding the commercial property on the high street	£8,033.00	£6,426.40
	TOTALS	£304,941.95	£207,870.96

- 3.9 A further grant, the Empty Property Survey Grant, was set up to offer applicants the opportunity to undertake building condition surveys/architectural assessments and concept designs in order to progress the redevelopment of empty commercial properties. It was established to cover the District Centres and Local Service centres in the valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore (excluding Maesteg Town Centre). The intention has been to provide up to £2,000 for Condition Surveys (depending on size of property) and up to £3,000 for Architectural Assessments and Concept Designs. However, interest in the grant was for residential interventions that were better suited to other grant funders within the local authority, for example the Housing team. As the grant fund was drawn from revenue budget, it was absorbed into the revenue budget to support agents fees for the Bridgend Valleys and District Centres Property Improvement Grants.
- 3.10 To date the above grant funds have committed support to the creation of 135 jobs, the safeguarding of 468 jobs, 65 community organisations and 29 community led projects.
- 3.11 A grant panel exists to oversee and make recommendations for approval for the grants outlined above. The panel includes relevant BCBC departments, e.g. finance, regeneration and enterprise.
- 3.12 Decisions relating to award of grants are made in line with the Scheme of Delegation.
- 3.13 Any required statutory consents (e.g. planning permission, SuDS Approving Body) remain the responsibility of any grant applicant for any of the grant funds.
- 3.14 Each grant has its own assessment criteria which is robust but proportionate, depending on the different level of financial assistance available. Details of these are available on the BCBC website.

The Bridgend County Prosperity Framework

- 3.15 In addition, BCBC has operated the Prosperity Framework. This has been used as a standalone commissioning tool, sitting alongside and adding value to backbone projects, as well as an offsetting tool for BCBC. An overview of commissioned and offset activity is set out below. It is to be noted that whilst the Prosperity Framework performs as an additional commissioning tool, many of the backbone projects have also undertaken extensive commissioning activity to external delivery partners within the scope of project delivery.

Table 6 The Bridgend County Prosperity Framework commissioning summary

Contract Name	Brief Contract Description	Contract Value	Contracted Organisation	Sector – Public/ Private/3rd
Resilient communities mapping and research	The project researched Bridgend’s charities, community groups, community & town councils, networks, third sector organisations and volunteer groups that are currently operating in Bridgend.	£35,000	The Means	Private
Resilient communities engagement and capacity building	Helping clubs, community groups and venues protect and improve the services/opportunities they offer. Providing tailored funding advice, funding events such as funding fayres and bid writing guidance so that community services and venues can attract inward investment and manage/grow their work.	£73,184.00	BAVO	3rd
Resilient communities: community facilities and activities	Strengthening and broadening the existing Creative Wellbeing programme. The project includes creative wellbeing events and workshops in the community.	£73,184.00	Awen Cultural Trust	3rd
Energy efficiency advice and guidance	The project provides advice and guidance to businesses/residents of Bridgend County Borough on how they can implement energy saving measures in their place of work/home.	£275,000	Challoch Energy Ltd	Private
Quickstart Bridgend	The Quickstart Bridgend project aims to support short term, paid work placements across the county borough with a view to participants gaining a permanent job within their host business at the end of that period.	£900,000	Whitehead Ross Education	Private
Thriving Communities Local Democracy Resources	The project is creating and pilot resources that can be used to raise awareness amongst young people across the county borough of the local democracy process; to encourage their participation in local decision making and local regeneration.	£40,000	Children In Wales	3rd

Thriving Communities Local Democracy Engagement	The project raises awareness amongst young people across the county borough of the local democracy process. A series of musical theatre sessions will be delivered with participants ages 11-15. The workshops will focus on devising an original musical theatre piece/show all about local democracy, including educating participants on how local government works and how they can best get involved, and why that matters.	£24,999	Tanio	3rd
Quickstart Bridgend Evaluation	To provide an evaluation report on the process and impact of the Quickstart Bridgend Scheme.	£35,000	Miller Research	Private
	TOTAL	£1,456,367		
LIVE TENDERS				
Bridgend Sustainable Food Economy	The successful organisation will seek to develop a sustainable food network in Bridgend County Borough.	£10,000	Unknown – not yet awarded	Unknown – not yet awarded
Bridgend Business Forum Feasibility Study	A study to explore options to grow and sustain the Bridgend Business Forum.	£40,000	Unknown – not yet awarded	Unknown – not yet awarded
Manufacturing and Engineering Skills for Young People	Delivery of the Manufacturing and Engineering Skills for Young People project in connection with secondary schools.	£30,000	Unknown – not yet awarded	Unknown – not yet awarded
	TOTAL	£80,000		

3.16 The Prosperity Framework has enabled BCBC to offset core spend with UKSPF funding. In simple terms it has enabled BCBC to use UKSPF funding for activity that would otherwise have incurred core BCBC spend, and in doing so it has enabled BCBC to reduce its in-year overspend.

Table 7 The Bridgend County Prosperity Framework off setting summary

DIRECT DELIVERY (OFFSETTING)			
Cosy Corner Play	£103,000	Communities	Capital
Bridgend Resource Centre and Bryn Y Cae Decarbonisation	£290,993	Communities	Capital
Porthcawl Metro Link	£500,000	Communities	Capital
Pathways into Employment	£643,000	Social Services and Wellbeing	Revenue
TOTAL	£1,536,993*		

**At its meeting of 15 November 2024, the Economic Programme Board agreed a proposal to allocate a further £275,000 to enhance the existing offsetting of Social Service and Wellbeing Pathways to Employment delivery. If finalised, following due diligence, the total offsetting would increase to £1,811,993.*

UKSPF 2025/26

3.17 Whilst the UK Government has recently announced funding for UKSPF for the period 2025/26, details are high level and much remains unknown.

3.18 The UK Government have confirmed the following:

- The UKSPF will be extended for 2025-26 at a reduced level of £900 million. £900m is the UK-Wide figure for UKSPF in 2025/26. The quantum of funding for Wales, or individual LA allocations, will be published in due course.
- Ringfenced funding for adult numeracy, through the Multiply programme, will not be in place for the transition year, but councils still receiving UKSPF will be able to spend on adult numeracy should they wish to do so.
- This transitional arrangement will allow places to continue investing in local growth in advance of wider funding reform. UK Government will update the UKSPF prospectus and confirm funding allocations as soon as possible.
- In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK Government will work collaboratively with delivery partners, Devolved Governments and Territorial Offices, to ensure that the extended UKSPF programme is investing in local needs and growth priorities.
- Any underspend within the current UKSPF delivery window (i.e. existing allocations up until March 2025), will be returned to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), as previously confirmed.

3.19 The confirmed UK wide reduction to £900 million is estimated to be a 40% reduction from the 2024-25 allocation at a UK level.

3.20 Indications from Civil Servants are that Ministers from the UK Government and Welsh Government are engaged in meetings to agree Nation level allocations and the methodology for the allocations to the local level. Civil servants have indicated their preferred approach is to ensure a smooth transition between funding and delivery in 2024/25 and 2025/26, with a desire to minimise change where possible in relation to the legal agreements and delivery and performance frameworks that are currently in place.

3.21 There are a range of legal matters which may require consideration, depending on the approach taken by UK Government in relation to funding allocation and delivery in 2025/26.

- 3.22 The advice received from Human Resource colleagues indicates that a cross-directorate restructure report may be required to capture all BCBC staff currently funded through UKSPF, as the reason for potential change is the same. The Council may also need to formally notify Department of Work and Pensions
- 3.23 If a situation arises where funding available cannot support the current staff capacity then those staff whose contracts currently end on 31 March 2025, and who have 12 weeks' notice requirements, will need to be under formal notice by 6 January 2025 if their roles are not continuing in 2025/26. If this situation arises, prior to this a restructure report, capturing organisational change, will need to be completed and signed off, Trade Unions and affected staff will need to be met with and notified and consultation meetings will need to take place and be completed.
- 3.24 The current allocation of UKSPF funding for the Bridgend County projects for 2024/25 are set out below with a modelled scenario of 40% cut applied evenly to all projects, capital and revenue.

Table 8 Current 2024/25 UKSPF budget and potential 2025/26 budget with 40% cut

		2024/25 current budget		2025/26 40% cut (current)	
		Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital
Communities and Place					
BCP1	Bridgend County Local Resilience Planning	£572,154	£0	£343,292	£0
BCP2	Bridgend County Thriving Communities (COMMS)	£168,970	£625,096	£101,382	£375,058
BCP2	Bridgend County Thriving Communities (SSWB)	£691,200	£68,800	£414,720	£41,280
BCP3	Bridgend County Green Spaces Enhancement Scheme	£179,323	£432,647	£107,594	£259,588
BCP4	Bridgend County Community Future Scoping Programme	£318,819	£0	£191,292	£0
BCP5	Bridgend County Prosperity Co-production Framework (cross-cutting)	£511,134	£103,001	£306,680	£61,800
Communities and Place (sub-total)		£2,441,600	£1,229,544	£1,464,960	£737,726
Supporting Local Business					
BLB1	Bridgend County Business Prosperity Programme	£49,225	£748,379	£29,535	£449,027
BLB2	Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme	£229,100	£0	£137,460	£0
BLB3	Bridgend County Centres of Enterprise	£0	£3,075,750	£0	£1,845,450
BLB4	Bridgend County Local Enterprise Support Programme	£257,083	£35,000	£154,250	£21,000
BLB5	Bridgend County Tourism Events Support	£199,566	£125,040	£119,740	£75,024
BLB6	Bridgend County Local Destination Management and Marketing	£71,603	£0	£42,962	£0
BCP5	Bridgend County Prosperity Co-production Framework (cross-cutting)	£274,014	£290,993	£164,409	£174,596
Supporting Local Business (sub-total)		£1,080,591	£4,275,163	£648,355	£2,565,098
People and Skills					
BPS1	CELT+ Bridgend Inspire 2 Work / Achieve	£1,562,423	£0	£937,454	£0
BPS2	CELT + Employability -Bridgend County	£2,678,110	£0	£1,606,866	£0
BCP5	Bridgend County Prosperity Co-production Framework (cross-cutting)	£1,545,174	£0	£927,105	£0
People and skills (sub-total)		£5,785,708	£0	£3,471,425	£0
				£0	£0
Multiply		£3,150,822	£0	£1,890,493	£0
UKSPF Core totals		£12,458,721	£5,504,706	£7,475,233	£3,302,824

Next steps – approach

- 3.25 Based on a working assumption that BCBC will be allocated a gross financial figure, reduced by 40% in line with the reduction seen at UK level, with a requirement for a split between capital and revenue, it is proposed that the following steps are considered.

Step 1

3.26 Once the gross Bridgend County financial allocation is known either step 1(a) or 1 (b) is followed:

Step 1 (a) – Decisions made at gross financial value level. Options for decisions in relation to capital and revenue may be:

- o Maintain existing BCBC offsetting at same level
- o Top slice for CJC allocation
- o Discontinue certain projects
- o Allocation of capital budget to fund balance on 2024-25 projects where project completion has extended into 2025-26.

Step 1 (b) - No deductions at gross value level

Step 2

3.27 Following step 1, one of step 2 (a), (b), (c) or (d) will need to be applied for revenue allocation values:

- Step 2 (a) – Headline deduction percentage (say 40%) be applied consistently to all SPF funded projects (based on their original 2024-25 allocation and not including roll-forward), thereby reducing budgets available for all projects, but potentially all projects continuing in some way. Individual project leads to determine project level funding allocations within reduced budget.
- Step 2 (b) – All project leads to identify required budgets for 2025/26. Budget requests to be met based on a (forecast) outputs and outcomes performance basis, starting with the highest performance, until a point where funding is allocated. Projects 'below the line' to end, 'above the line' projects to continue.
- Step 2 (c) – Prioritise minimising redundancy liability to BCBC – estimated that majority of 2025-26 revenue allocation would be needed to fund all BCBC staff in 2025-26 including 2024-25 pay rise and NI contribution increases. Any remaining resource to be allocated via either the performance approach or consistent percentage approach, thereby reducing budgets available for all projects but potentially all projects continuing in some way.
- Step 2 (d) – All project leads to identify required budgets for 2025/26. Budget requests to be met based on a grant fund/external commission basis, starting with the highest financial value of grant fund/external commissions, until a point where funding is allocated. Projects 'below the line' to end, 'above the line' projects to continue.

Next steps – governance

3.28 It is unclear when this will all have to be completed by ahead of April 2025.

- 3.29 The above proposed steps were discussed by the Economic Programme Board on 15 November 2024. The meeting was chaired by the Leader and Cllr Farr was in attendance also.
- 3.30 The Economic Programme Board were broadly in agreement with options set out in the proposed steps in 3.25 – 3.27 above. It was agreed that a template would be sent to all UKSPF project leads to complete, gathering a range of information to assist in decision making relating to UKSPF funds for 2025/26. That work is underway.
- 3.31 The exception was that the Programme Board did not consider a top-slice for the Corporate Joint Committee to be a suitable use of Bridgend County's potential UKSPF funds for 2025/26.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 BCBC is committed to promoting sustainable development and to discharge its duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. A summary relating to the five ways of working and how they connect to the Corporate Well-being Objectives is below:

Long-term: The grant funds outlined were identified following discussion with key stakeholders and in relation to current understanding of the potential long-term challenges on the County Borough. Building on the process of developing and creating the Economic Strategy, the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the Wellbeing Plan for the County Borough it has been possible to set out a long-term response.

Prevention: BCBC has for many years worked closely with stakeholders and the local business community to support the local economy in a wide variety of proactive ways. As well as a continuation of BCBC's ability to react to local situations, the development of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan and the grant funds contained within it builds on strengths to plan for the future, take proactive action and support local businesses and local communities.

Integration: The work to develop the UKSPF Local Investment Plan is closely aligned with the BCBC Corporate Plan, the Local Development Plan and the Public Service Board's Well-being Plan and the Bridgend County Economic Strategy.

Collaboration: The development of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan has been steered by a BCBC officer group and will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders.

Involvement: For the UKSPF Local Investment Plan to successfully operate it requires the involvement of senior members of local public sectors organisations, community leaders, business leaders, representatives of business sectors and trade bodies and other key stakeholders.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 The grant funds contain within their criteria detail relating to the expectations of applicants to support BCBC Climate Change and Decarbonisation ambitions.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The total current allocation for UKSPF in Bridgend County for 2024/25 is set out in table 8 below.

Table 9 Total UKSPF allocation 2024/25

	Total Allocation 24/25
Communities and Place	£3,671,144
Local Business	£5,355,754
People and Skills	£5,785,708
MULTIPLY	£3,150,822
Management & admin	£326,312
Total	£18,289,740

8.2 The amounts available through the grant funds outlined in section 3 above are contained within the overall programme budget.

8.3 Regular monitoring, reporting and claims ensure that commitments and expenditure are in line with the funding agreement and its associated profiles.

8.4 The current, high level estimated redundancy liability for BCBC for the 97 staff funded through UKSPF is £1.2m.

8.5 The estimated overall annual staff budget required for BCBC staff currently funded by UKSPF is £4 million.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

- o notes the report;
- o Note the 2 step process for decision making in relation to UKSPF funding for 2025/26 set out in 3.24 – 3.30

Background documents

None.