

Meeting of the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

29 September 2025

Responses to Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund			
Recommendations:			
1	<p>Members discussed the Council’s approach set out in the Local Investment Plan, to the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which had emphasised three themes - Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business, and People and Skills. Whilst the Committee acknowledged that a lot of different projects across the County Borough had been funded, it was also expressed that the approach lacked a guiding thread, a clear and transparent account of how projects had been prioritised, and how the success and value of them were being measured. The Committee therefore recommended that the approach to future UKSPF successor funding projects should proactively and clearly set out the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The guiding strategic aims. b. Establish what the project is about and what it should deliver. c. The agreed objectives, targets and outputs. d. The criteria for awarding grants. e. The measures of success and value to be monitored. f. The approach to contingency planning. 	<p>The UKSPF Programme and its requirements were put in place by UK Government. In developing proposals for delivery during the duration of UKSPF officers worked closely internally and externally and proposals were presented to Cabinet prior to delivery commencing. The proposals that were taken forward were those considered aligned and deliverable within the parameters of the UKSPF.</p> <p>A consultation in relation to the potential successor to the UKSPF, The Local Growth Fund, is currently being undertaken by Welsh Government. Welsh Government intend to publish the findings of the consultation in February 2026, with delivery currently expected to commence in April 2026. These dates are subject to change.</p> <p>Therefore it is difficult to provide definitive information at this time in relation to the future direction, it is currently considered that the Corporate Director Communities will liaise with the</p>	Partially Accepted

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		Chair of Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine suitable next steps.	
Additional Information Requested:			
2	<p>The Committee requested that a final UKSPF monitoring report, including a complete analysis of the successes and the lessons learned for future projects for consideration by the Committee as soon as feasible and to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. details of how the public, businesses and community organisations were informed and supported to make full use of available funding, including how the Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework had informed decision-making about the UKSPF. b. detailed information regarding the feasibility studies funded by the UKSPF and how many have or will become viable projects. c. detailed evaluation of the sustainability of jobs created across the three themes as a result of UKSPF funding, to include the monitoring processes and the support offered by BCBC; and d. detailed information about the impact the cut in funding during the transition year had on projects in the community. 	<p>The recommendation has been noted and a final UKSPF monitoring report will be provided. The Corporate Director Communities will liaise with the Chair of Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to confirm an appropriate date to report back.</p>	Accepted

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3	<p>The Committee noted that there was a lack of clarity about what the successor to UKSPF would be like and how it would work and requested that once known, Members receive information about it, including details of the proposals to engage with communities through the Council's partnership structures about the criteria for applying for funding.</p>	<p>It is difficult to provide definitive information at this time in relation to the future direction. It is currently considered that the Corporate Director Communities will liaise with Chair of Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine suitable next steps.</p>	Partially Accepted
4	<p>The Committee requested more information about the assistance that could be provided to organisations to apply for alternative sources of funding, once UKSPF funding comes to an end.</p>	<p>It is difficult to provide definitive information at this time in relation to the future direction of any successor programme for the UKSPF.</p> <p>With regards to general funding advice, third sector organisations can seek support from BAVO and the WCVA: bavo@bavo.org.uk funding@wcva.cymru</p> <p>The Council also continues to offer advise via the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Regeneration regeneration@bridgend.gov.uk • Regeneration Funding and Engagement Team regenerationfunding@bridgend.gov.uk 	Partially Accepted

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Team business@bridgend.gov.uk Bridgend Sustainable Food Partnership lauren.saunders@bridgend.gov.uk 	
5	The Committee requested that previous reports about the UKSPF considered by scrutiny committees be distributed to Members.	<p>Please see links below:</p> <p>United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund – 29 September 2025</p> <p>Update on Shared Prosperity Fund – 19 June 2023</p> <p>The United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund - 26 September 2022</p>	Accepted
Social Housing Allocation Policy			
Recommendations:			
6	The Committee expressed concern that there were approximately 3300 people on the housing register and there was an urgent need to address the fundamental mismatch between the demand for and the supply of available housing, particularly social housing, in the County Borough. The Committee therefore	.	

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	<p>recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Communities ‘deep dive’, consider potential ideas to address the shortfall in the supply of housing, and; b. That the Strategy and Action Plans be updated setting out the steps being taken to urgently address this position. 	<p>Discussed at Deep Dive on 6 November.</p> <p>Many of the reasons for households presenting to the Common Housing Register are wider socio-economic issues, including increasing house and rent prices over sustained periods and insufficient levels of house building.</p> <p>The primary funding streams for the development of social housing are the Social Housing Grant & Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme. BCBC works closely with Welsh Government and partner RSL’s to maximise these grants ensuring full spend. Whilst grant opportunities are maximised year on year, there are limitations to the level of grant and therefore the number of developments which can be taken forward.</p> <p>In addition, BCBC has mobilised and actively operates Leasing Scheme Wales, which brings private properties into use for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. An Empty Property Working Group is in place with an aim to bring into use as many empty properties as possible.</p>	

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Additional Information Requested:			
7	The Committee requested that an All-Member Briefing session be provided regarding the revised Social Housing Allocation Policy and how it will change, especially in respect of the bandings and how properties will be allocated.	An All-Member Briefing will be provided once the new SHAP is approved by Cabinet.	
8	The Committee requested additional information regarding the impact of the Welsh Government’s Nation of Sanctuary Plan on the draft Social Housing Allocation Policy.	The Nation of Sanctuary Plan has no impact on the SHAP. Eligibility for the SHAP is dictated by national immigration legislation and the Housing Act 1996 and there is no element of the banding which considers the National of Sanctuary Plan.	
9	The Committee requested additional information about both the statutory and non-statutory review processes, including the number, the outcomes, and the steps taken to ensure fairness and the consistent application of policy.	<p>Section 9 of the SHAP sets out the right to review. This section is detailed below:</p> <p>9.1. Any applicant has the right to request a review of any of the following decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That they are not eligible under the Allocation Policy. This includes decisions where an applicant is deemed ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour; or ii. To remove an application from the Housing Register following unreasonable refusals of offers of accommodation; or 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. About the facts of an applicant's case which have been, or are likely to be, taken into account in considering whether to make an allocation to them; or iv. The assessment of an application, including the Banding; or v. The cancellation or withdrawal of an application. <p>9.2. Any applicant wishing to request a review of a decision must do so by contacting the Council in writing within 21 days of the date of the letter that informed them of that decision.</p> <p>9.3. Homeless applicants may also have a statutory right of review on certain homelessness decisions, including decisions on the suitability of accommodation offered and any discharge of duty.</p> <p>9.4. A Review Officer who was not involved in the original decision will deal with the review within 14 days of the request. All decisions following reviews will be notified</p>	

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		<p>to the applicant in writing giving the reasons for the decision. The decision letter will be sent out within 21 days of the original request. The review decision cannot be appealed at the County Court and the only available legal challenge against the review decision is by means of judicial review.</p> <p>9.5. Should an applicant request a review of the suitability of accommodation, a review will be undertaken informally before undertaking a formal review.</p> <p>9.6. Individuals can request statutory reviews of homeless decisions within 21 days of being notified of their homeless decision. The decision will be issued 56 days after the request. The decision can be appealed to the county court if there has been an error in law in the decision making.</p> <p>9.7. They system does not record reviews of suitability of accommodation, there is only the ability to record statutory homeless reviews.</p>	

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Forward Work Programme:			
10	<p>The Committee requested that the following items be added to their Forward Work Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Final Monitoring Report</u> to include the information in Request 2 above. b. <u>Homelessness and Housing</u> to include: People presenting as homeless or potentially homeless, for whom the Local Authority has a final legal duty to secure suitable accommodation, the strategic plans to address the mismatch between the supply and demand for housing, particularly social housing. (CL/RJ) c. <u>Street / Utility works</u> to include charges and analysis of the utilities and performance. 	<p>To be actioned by Scrutiny, Chair of Committee and Corporate Director - Communities in Work Planning Meeting.</p>	