

April 2022

# The Levelling Up White Paper: A funding briefing

In February 2022 the UK government published the [Levelling Up White Paper](#) (LUWP). It sets out how the government intends to tackle economic disparities in the UK.

The following briefing provides a digest of current funding opportunities mentioned in the White Paper. It also includes a preview of upcoming policy papers relevant to Big Local areas.

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## Funding opportunities

**[Community Ownership Fund](#)**: The **£150m fund** gives local people across the UK the chance to own and manage local community assets such as local pubs, shops or sports teams. The third of at least eight bidding rounds will open in May 2022. The fund is scheduled to run until 2024/25. [Assessment criteria guidance](#) and [the application form](#) (not yet open for round 3) can be found online.

**[UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\)](#)**: This new fund, a central pillar of the government's levelling up agenda, will provide **£2.6bn** for local investment by March 2025. It is designed to replace EU structural funds following Britain's exit from the EU and has three main strands: *improving communities and place*, *people and skills*, and *supporting local business*. It also comprises Multiply, a new UK-wide programme worth over £559m to improve adult numeracy skills and improve their employment prospects.

UKSPF funding will be allocated via a funding formular to areas rather than via competition. The authorities delivering the funding for England are listed [here](#). The government published the [prospectus](#) in April.

**Community Forests:** The UK Government will invest **over £750m** until the next general election on tree planting and peatland restoration in England supporting the creation of new community forests in the North East, Cumbria and Plymouth to improve access to woodlands where these are needed most.

As part of this commitment, applications for the Local Authority Treescapes Fund and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund are now open again until 31 March 2022, and over £9m is available from both funds. Now in its second round, successful applicants to the Local Authority Treescapes Fund will be allocated a share of £5.4 million for the planting of up to 650,000 trees in 2022/23. The Urban Tree Challenge Fund is now in its fourth round and aims to grow the number of trees in and around deprived urban areas to bring people from all socio-economic backgrounds closer to nature. Both funds are expected to open for further rounds in the future.

All projects supported through the Local Authority Treescapes Fund must be led by a local authority, whereas the Urban Tree Challenge Fund is also open to projects led by charities, community groups and other organisations. Guidance on how to apply to both funds can be found [here](#).

**Supporting Families programme:** In the LUWP, the government announced that an additional **£200m** would be made available in 2022 and 2023 to expand the Supporting Families programme in England. The funding allocation is based on need, to ensure that areas with higher levels of deprivation receive additional funding. Local authorities are responsible for distributing the funding. Details on which local authorities in England have received funding can be found [here](#).

**National Youth Guarantee/ Youth Investment Fund:** The **£560m** fund aims to ensure every young person in England has access to volunteering opportunities by 2025. The government has specifically committed to investing in areas with high deprivation through the fund, with 300 new and refurbished youth facilities to be delivered in the most deprived parts of England. Youth services across 45 local authorities and around 600 district wards in the most deprived parts of England will be eligible to apply for the fund. The LUWP also announces a £368m investment from the fund in areas of England with high levels of child income deprivation and a lack of youth provision to reach major urban areas and other pockets of deprivation.

The LUWP also referenced a **£10m** portion of the fund aimed at the provision of youth services in left-behind areas. A list of the local authorities and wards eligible for funding can be found [here](#).

The government [has closed](#) the first phase of the fund early due to significant demand, with details on the next phases yet to be published.

**Brownfield Housing Fund:** The **£400m** fund was created in 2019 to transform derelict sites across the country to regenerate brownfield land, boost local communities and support people onto the property ladder. Funding is allocated to local councils across seven mayoral combined authorities. In the latest round of funding in November 2021, £11m were made available to 23 redevelopment schemes across 15 councils, with the list to be found [here](#). The next wave of funding is yet to be announced.

**Parks Fund:** A new **£30m** parks fund will be set up to deliver up to £1m to at least 30 local parks in England for refurbishment, with an emphasis on facilities for young families. Details on how to access funding have yet to be published. This is in addition to the existing £9m UK-wide Levelling Up Parks Fund, which provides direct grants to deliver over 100 green spaces in the communities with the lowest access.

**Towns Fund:** 101 towns across England will be receiving **£2.4bn** from the Towns Fund, which was set up in 2019. Funding is aimed at "unleash[ing] the economic potential of towns and

high streets”, for instance by transforming public spaces such as parks and revamping cultural attractions. Some funding has already been allocated as follows:

£346m across 15 towns in the East Midlands: Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield, Boston, Clay Cross, Corby, Lincoln, Long Eaton, Loughborough, Mablethorpe, Mansfield, Newark, Northampton, Skegness, Stapleford and Staveley (Derbyshire)

£172m across seven towns in the North East: Bishop Auckland, Blyth, Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Thornaby-on-Tees

£287m across 12 towns in the East of England: Bedford, Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, King’s Lynn, Colchester, Grays, Harlow, Stevenage, Tilbury, Lowestoft, Norwich and Peterborough

£486m across 20 towns in the North West: Barrow-in-Furness, Birkenhead, Blackpool, Bolton, Carlisle, Cheadle, Cleator Moor, Crewe, Darwen, Leyland, Millom, Nelson, Oldham, Preston, Rochdale, Runcorn, Southport, St Helens, Warrington and Workington

£109m across five towns in the South East: Crawley, Hastings, Margate, Milton Keynes and Newhaven

£198m across nine towns in the South West: Bournemouth, Bridgwater, Camborne, Glastonbury, Penzance, St Ives, Swindon, Torquay and Truro

£328m across 15 towns in the West Midlands: Wolverhampton, Kidsgrove, Bloxwich, Dudley, Redditch, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, West Bromwich, Burton-on-Trent, Nuneaton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Hereford, Telford, Walsall and Worcester

Over £422m across 18 towns in Yorkshire and the Humber: Brighouse, Castleford, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Goldthorpe, Goole, Grimsby, Keighley, Morley, Rotherham, Scarborough, Scunthorpe, Shipley, Stainforth, Stocksbridge, Todmorden, Wakefield and Whitby.

### **Towns Fund-financed projects across England**

As the Towns Fund was set up in 2019, it has already funded a number of initiatives and projects across England. In Norwich, the Towns Fund is financing the delivery of new and improved green spaces and sustainable transport links. In Boston, the money will be used to create a new community hub at the town’s railway station. In Darlington, historic yards and wynds will be revitalised using Towns Fund monies, and new town centre lighting and WiFi will be installed. A number of cities are using the money to acquire buildings that can then be transformed or used to drive forward regeneration of city centres. Examples include Barrow-in-Furness, Leyland and Oldham. In Margate, funding will be spent on supporting town centres, creating jobs, boosting businesses and connecting people to where they live and work through physical and digital infrastructure.

## Other relevant policy measures

**Strategy for community spaces and relationships:** The LUWP referenced a new Strategy for Community Spaces and Relationships, to be underpinned by community power as one of the central principles. From conversations with government officials, Local Trust understands that the strategy is currently still in its very early stages, with further details on its contents yet to be published.

**White Paper on Health Disparities:** The Department for Health and Social Care will soon publish a white paper designed to tackle the core drivers of disparities in health outcomes, with a focus on prevention and disparities by ethnicity, socioeconomic background and geography.

**Decent Homes White Paper:** In spring, the government will publish a policy paper to consult on introducing a legally binding Decent Homes Standard in the private rented sector.

**Food Strategy White Paper:** The government's forthcoming Food Strategy White Paper will take forward recommendations from Henry Dimbleby's independent review to help ensure that everyone can access, understand, and enjoy the benefits of a healthy and sustainable diet.

**Dormant Assets Scheme:** The LUWP says that government "will consider a Community Wealth Fund" as part of the national consultation on the use of dormant assets and "focus lottery cash to reach into the most deprived small areas of the country". Around **£880m** will be available from the next wave of dormant assets for social and environmental initiatives across the UK. The national consultation will open early this summer.

**Schools White Paper:** The forthcoming Schools White Paper will focus on improving literacy and numeracy for those furthest behind. The Department for Education will take a place-focused approach, working with local partners to build strong trusts and investing in diocesan trusts to ensure every type of school can benefit.

## About Local Trust

Local Trust is a place-based funder supporting communities to transform and improve their lives and the places where they live. We believe there is a need to put more power, resources and decision-making into the hands of local communities, to enable them to transform and improve their lives and the places in which they live.

We do this by trusting local people. Our aims are to demonstrate the value of long term, unconditional, resident-led funding through our work supporting local communities make their areas better places to live, and to draw on the learning from our work to promote a wider transformation in the way policy makers, funders and others engage with communities and place.

[localtrust.org.uk](http://localtrust.org.uk)

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