

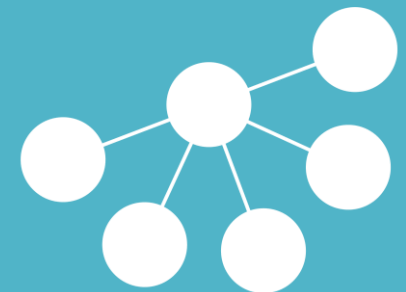
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Action Learning Sets 2023

LGA commissioned project

Shared Intelligence

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SHARED INTELLIGENCE

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Introduction – what was the brief?



[Shared Intelligence](#) (Si) was commissioned in January 2023 by the Local Government Association (LGA) to provide support to local authorities leading on UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) delivery.

Aims:

- Support local government in delivering their local investment plans.
- Provide opportunities for officers to share learning.

We produced a ‘top tips’ guide.

We held six ALS in March 2023.

UKSPF resources developed

Our top tips research has been incorporated into [the LGA's online UKSPF hub](#).

In our research several cross-cutting themes emerged:

- Climate change
- Culture and Tourism
- Digitalisation
- Economic growth
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Health inequalities
- Internal processes

The thematic hub pages explain how each area is linked to UKSPF delivery and the key things to consider to support outcomes. It also signposts to other useful LGA resources.

Climate change and net zero

Councils are taking, and must take, urgent action in their local areas with partners and their local communities to combat the negative impacts of climate change and to deliver net zero by 2050.

Culture, tourism and sport

By supporting and cultivating a thriving culture, tourism, leisure and sport offer, local authorities can foster places that are attractive for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

Cyber, digital and technology

Investment in digitalisation is a key area which fits within all three of the UKSPF investment priorities, by investing in digital infrastructure, increasing connectivity and improving digital skills in communities.

High streets

High streets and town centres are central to local places. They establish a favourable business environment that entices and promotes businesses, enhances employment opportunities, provides reskilling initiatives and invests in local commerce.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The themes under the UKSPF can support councils to embed equality, diversity and inclusion and tackle local inequalities, increase opportunities and improve public services for those living in poverty and furthest away from the jobs market.

Communications and engagement

It is key that councils communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders, from MPs and voluntary sector organisations to employers and members of the public. This can manifest in a range of different ways from top-down communications to complete co-production.

Procurement

As the UKSPF is a delegated fund, lead authorities are able to procure, commission, deliver in-house and run competitive bidding processes. While time restrictions may limit the approach undertaken, there are opportunities for some lead authorities to use procurement for wider social and economic benefit.

What is an Action Learning Set process?



Action Learning...

Identifies issues and situations which are problematic or hampering progress

Explores issues and situations through a structured discussion, to identify possible solutions or different approaches.

It involves participants exchanging their own similar experiences and encourages agreement on the practical steps that can be taken or tested.

It works well when there is...

Clarity about the task or issue that is being addressed.

Commonality around the people brought together in terms of role and/or seniority.

Commitment from the participants to meet regularly, for an agreed period and use the group to develop, test thinking and share experiences.

To function effectively a group should:

Consist of between six and 12 people (optimum is nine in each set).

Have a designated facilitator to facilitate the sessions.

Provide time for participants to reflect on the learning they have gained from the previous session.

Follow “Chatham House” rules to ensure confidentiality.

Findings from the Action Learning Sets



Three overarching themes came up across the six ALS sessions:

1. Relationship building



2. Meaningful monitoring and evaluation



3. Commissioning and procurement



Action learning examples

1. How can we develop a better relationship with the local partnership board?



Solutions

- Have simple, clear terms of reference.
- Link with other funders and projects.
- Set up sub-groups to meet on specific themes or an evaluation group to help with monitoring.
- Have the most relevant people on the board.
- Have meetings in person to encourage active conversation.
- Think about using an action learning set style discussion in board meetings.

2. In monitoring the impact of projects, how can outputs/outcomes based around improved perception be best measured?



Solutions

- Use the Association of Town and City Management perception measuring technique
- Develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks with colleagues leading the delivery of projects to agree on data required to measure change.
- Draw on previous approaches used, such as those involved in Community Renewal Fund projects (where relevant).
- Take the uncertainty out of the process by considering how the local authority would look to measure change and impact normally without the pre-requisites of UKSPF.
- Choose the core groups to engage with first, for example, this accessibility project could engage with groups representing people with disabilities or parents with young children.

3. As a district, how can you co-commission a county council when this has not been done before, without delaying the project?



Solutions

- Think about whether a lower level of “contract”, like a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is applicable.
- Clearly define who the accountable body and the delivery body is
- Consider using a service-level agreement (SLA), which will ensure delivery.
- Use a senior cross-authority group to gain greater clarity on the challenges.
- Look at examples of co-commissioned contracts from other projects and use these as guidance.

Learning on what worked well and what could have been improved

- What worked well?
 - Breaking down specific issues to explore in a structured and facilitated process.
 - Immediate ideas to existing challenges shared by peers and in a supportive environment. These ideas could be tested between sessions.
 - It identified the need for an officer network which has led to an ongoing WhatsApp group.
- What could have been improved?
 - Not everyone could attend all sessions, while it was still a great process it works best when there is consistency.
 - There was a lack of UKSPF guidance at the time to help people / places solve issues.