

Briefing Note: Approach to selecting representation for the Theme Group Membership

In line with the original UKSPF Business Plan and public Prospectus, agreed by Members, the Theme Groups were intended to be specialist consultative groups and cover the broad geography of the entire SELCP area. They were selected on account of their technical expertise and consequently, local representation, while a factor, was not systematically considered when inviting candidates. Conversely, the Partnership Sub-Groups, whose function is to provide appropriate local input for each District, were drawn from volunteers from the relevant Town Deal Board, which were constituted with local and appropriate political representation fully considered. This is rooted in the wide public consultation undertaken at the commencement of UKSPF and the long-term consultative model delivered by the Town Deal and Levelling Up Programmes. There have been regular calls for additional Panel volunteers made to CCB and it has also received regular oversight of and input into UKSPF decision-making (providing a 'double layer' of local input). With the Town Deal Board's permission, we have recently invited additional representatives to join the PSG (representatives of two local businesses and the Sir Joseph Banks CIO, Horncastle) to diversify the range of contributions where gaps existed. To ensure 'joined up' governance and continuing representation, It is anticipated that further oversight and membership of the PSG will be provided by the new Market and Inland Towns Group – the Connected Wolds. All UKSPF decisions are reviewed by the two lead Portfolio Holders prior to award (as legally, the Theme and PS Groups are only consultative – the decision on award of grant is made by the Programme's SRO in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder). The approach is aligned with central government guidance on the management of UKSPF and REPF and it is congruent with the agreed Growth and Prosperity Plan.

With regard to wider Member involvement - Regular open Member briefings on the progress of the Fund and its strategic priorities have been held, with the next one due in late Autumn. However, even so, we welcome any views and intelligence that Members wish to contribute outside of these set events. Furthermore, if it is the feeling of Members that representation within the decision-making structures requires change to better reflect their communities, we are fully open to that conversation. With the Fund concluding in March 2025 and now 98% committed, 47% spent, the impact on the current Programme will be limited by definition. However, any structural change, alongside the incorporation of additional linkages to the new Market and Inland Towns Group, could be incorporated into the decision-making of a prospective renewed UKSPF or successor Fund and potentially trialled within this one.