

UKSPF Partnership Group
4 June 2024, 11.30am-1.30pm
Queen's University Belfast

Members attending

Name	Organisation	Sector
John Osborne (chair)	DLUHC	UK government
James Dillon (representing Prof Sir Ian Greer, left meeting at 12.05)	Queen's University Belfast	Higher education/skills
Valerie McConville	CO3	Voluntary & community
Adrian McCreesh	SOLACE (Mid Ulster District)	Local government
Celine McStravick	NICVA	Voluntary & community
Phil Murray (representing Suzanne Wylie)	NI Chamber of Commerce	Business
Lisa Toland (representing John Walsh)	SOLACE (Belfast City Council)	Local government
Abbie Lea-O'Mahony (via Teams)	NIO	UK government

Secretariat

The meeting was supported by DLUHC staff – Chris Taylor, Rebekah Bleakley, Chris Moore, Benjamin Ekpenyong, Christine Robinson (in person).

Apologies

Apologies were received from Professor Sir Ian Greer (Queens University Belfast – represented by James Dillon), John Walsh (represented by Lisa Toland) and Suzanne Wylie (Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce – represented by Phil Murray).

1. Chair's welcome

The Chair welcomed members and nominees to the tenth UKSPF Northern Ireland Partnership Group meeting and noted the declaration of members' interests. The Chair thanked Queen's University for hosting the meeting.

Members were joined by Raymond Kelly (Department for the Economy), Paul Gunn, Julia Gilbert, and Patricia Copeland (Invest NI) to present their new UKSPF-funded projects.

2. Progress since the last meeting

DLUHC officials provided an update on activities undertaken since the last meeting, including Minister Young's visit to Northern Ireland, assurance work that has been carried out, evaluation process and project visits completed.

2.1 Update and feedback on Economic Inactivity projects

DLUHC officials updated members on the Economic Inactivity portfolio, providing a detailed update on the Year 1 data from the end of year reports, including:

- Overall, UKSPF projects have spent 80% of funding paid in 2023/24.
- The majority of UKSPF projects have achieved 80% of their target outputs, outcomes are lagging slightly behind.

- Projects are ahead in terms of support for over 50s, women and young people, and on track to achieve the targets for disability and ethnic minorities.
- The team also facilitated a project update workshop at Springvale Employment & Learning Centre with over 35 project leads in attendance.

Feedback was received from members on cohort and outputs and outcomes performance.

2.2 Update and feedback on Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed)

DLUHC officials updated members that:

- Community engagement and entrepreneurs engaged with the service is very high and encouraging.
- Due to initial delays there is a lag in terms of grants allocated, jobs created, and enterprises supported/business created, but the project team are confident that this will be addressed by the second quarter of 2024-25.
- DLUHC officials noted that around £4.6m of funding being carried over to 2024-25.

Feedback was received from members on support for social enterprises, recruitment of staff and the allocation and distribution of grants.

3 Manufacturing, Innovation, Sectors and Green Growth Presentation (Invest NI)

Staff from Invest NI provided members with an update on their Innovation and R&D, Manufacturing, Sector Support and Green Growth activity. This included:

- Planned activities for the 2024-25 period including budget allocations.
- Synergy between their projects and the UKSPF investment plan.
- The range of support they will provide projects and expected outputs and outcomes.

Feedback was received from members on how Invest NI can support Go Succeed and Invest NI grant process eligibility.

4 Multiply Presentation (Department for the Economy – DfE)

Staff from DfE provided an update on their Multiply projects. This included:

- The development of a number of Multiply pilot projects including boot camps and 'Bring your Grown Up' as a precursor to UKSPF delivery.
- 129 projects from 19 different organisations have been submitted with 109 successfully approved.
- Intent to support 3,650 people to participate in numeracy courses, and 1,500 people to achieve a maths qualification.

Feedback was received from members on programme launch plans.

5 Future Funding

DLUHC noted that due to the pre-election period, there are no updates on future funding at the present time. Commitment of remaining 2022-25 UKSPF funding is also affected.

In respect of communities and place and remaining allocations, Council representatives noted that they are at a state of readiness should a decision be made to proceed with communities and place activities post-election.

6 AOB

None.

7 Date of next meeting

It was suggested that an update meeting may be convened in the period following the general election.