

From the Minister of Finance

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Your reference: SS. P&C – 09.08.2022
Our reference: CORR-2163--2022
Date: 27 September 2022

Dear Sara

RE: SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

Thank you for your letter of 20th September 2022 sent on behalf of the People and Communities Committee regarding the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). I understand you have also written to the Ministers for Communities and the Economy. As my department leads on this area of work on behalf of the NI Executive they have asked that I respond directly.

SPF is a regular topic for discussion in my engagement with British and Devolved Government Ministers. I have raised and I continue to raise my concerns with SPF and I continue to seek clarity and information on this fund directly with British Ministers.

The North's allocation from the Shared Prosperity Fund will be just under £127m over three years £19m in year one, £33m in year two and £74m in year three. Under the 2014-2020 EU Multi-Annual Financial Framework we received an average of £64m per year from equivalent EU funds generating a minimum loss of close to £65m over the three year period before factoring in inflation.

This significantly lower level of funding lacks any flexibility and is not being provided to the Assembly or Executive to support those activities previously funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) but will be delivered directly by Whitehall risking a significantly reduced impact.

As you may already know, DLUHC have established a Partnership Group, which includes a representative from Belfast City Council, for the development of a local investment plan for the SPF. Executive Departments have been unable to participate in these structures as no decision making role has been provided for the Executive

and Assembly, there is a lack of detail on accountability and governance structures and it has not be subjected to screening under our equalities legislation.

However, I will not stand in the way of funding flowing here. I will continue to seek information on the SPF and to represent the concerns of those who previously benefited from EU Funding to British Ministers. I have also instructed my officials to continue to engage with DLUHC to seek detail on this fund and to try to find a path that maximises the benefit for citizens here.

Is mise le meas

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conor Murphy." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

**CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**