

Title: UK Sport Grant Funding Agreement – EURO 28
Report of: Phil Witcherley, Director of Economic Growth and Innovation
Portfolio: Culture, Creative, Tourism and Sport

Report Summary

Newcastle upon Tyne has been selected to be a Host City for Euro 28. This mega event is the third biggest event in the world with the 2024 edition commanding audience figures of 4 billion people worldwide. Five matches will be hosted at St James' Park, which could see total attendance in excess of 250,000. There will be a wide range of activities and opportunities for the region's residents to take part.

In November 2022, the North of Tyne CA Cabinet agreed an allocation of £3.4m of Investment Fund to support Newcastle City Council's bid to host the men's Euros in 2028, subject to submission of a business case. In May 2024, the North East CA Cabinet agreed the formal decisions which the former North East Combined Authority and the former North of Tyne Combined Authority made be treated as decisions of the Authority.

The purpose of this report is to request approval of £2,937,210 investment funding towards Euro 28 – Newcastle Host City. This report was recommended for approval by the Finance and Investment Board at its meeting held on 7 July 2025.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive, is recommended to:

Approve £2,937,210 of North East CA Investment funding to Newcastle City Council, to deliver Euro 28 – Newcastle Host City.

A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)

Project Outline	
Funding Source	Investment Fund
Proposal Name	Euro 28 – Newcastle Host City
Lead Organisation	Newcastle City Council
Delivery Areas	Regional
Start Date	1 st September 2025
Financial End Date	1 st June 2029
Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)	1 st August 2028
Total Project Value	£14,686,047
Grant Amount Requested	£2,937,210

1. Background

Newcastle City Council, along with Newcastle United Football Club (NUFC) entered the bidding process for the city to become a Host City as part of the Football Association of England's (FA) bid for UK and Ireland to host the men's 2028 UEFA European Football Championship (Euro 28) in 2028. Newcastle was on the long list of eight cities / stadia included in the FA's preliminary bid dossier submitted in November 2022. In consultation with UEFA, the FA submitted the final four cities (plus one contingency city) in the final bid dossier in April 2023. As part of the process there

was a requirement for Newcastle City Council to make a funding commitment prior to the FA submitting their preliminary bid to UEFA in October 2023.

The Euros will provide multiple volunteering, training, and employment opportunities to the people of the North East. It will provide wider value to the region by delivering an event that combines greater impact through the promotion of health and wellbeing, as well as boosting the regional economy, attracting thousands of visitors for the matches to be hosted in Newcastle.

Following Newcastle's selection as a Host City for Euro 28, both NTCA and NCC Cabinets approved in November 2022 the required 40% match funding. DCMS, via UK Sport, have confirmed their 60% contribution to the programme.

Following this, Host City agreements have been signed with UEFA, the governing body of the Euro 28 tournament, fully committing Newcastle and the region as a Host City.

Both North East CA and NCC are currently developing / reviewing the Region of Sport and Physical Activity strategies, both of which will be boosted by the Euro 28 event, driving participation and inclusive activity across the region. With support from Newcastle United Foundation, the Sunderland AFC Foundation of Light, and their well-established community networks in the North East local authorities, there is an opportunity to build on collective goodwill and establish football development and participation opportunities for people of all ages, culture and physical abilities.

The proposed investment aligns with the ambitions set out by the North East CA Cabinet in July 2024 as part of the Strategic Plan for the Culture, Creative, Tourism and Sport portfolio to "leverage and realise the region's cultural, creative, heritage, visitor and sport assets and opportunities to help deliver a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy and better outcomes for our residents" and "develop and deliver a regional events programme to support a programme of major and impactful events and festivals, for both regional audiences and to attract more visitors..". The investment also aligns with the aim of "establishing the North East as the first UK Region of Sport, commencing work to strategically scale up sport and physical activity to support economic, health and wellbeing outcomes."

The November 2024 Cabinet report makes specific reference to Euro 2028 as part of the Region of Sport objective, as follows: "The bid was supported by the then North of Tyne Combined Authority in November 2022 when Cabinet approved investment to maximise regional impact from the event should host city status be confirmed. With Host City status confirmed, the Euros 2028 now provides an opportunity to model the health promotion, wellbeing and local economic benefit that major sporting events can bring. The long lead in time to the event provides the opportunity to develop and commission and comprehensively evaluate a complementary local sporting festival with a focus on community engagement, participation, inclusion and wellbeing."

Finally, the Mayoral Manifesto, devolution deals and Interim Local Growth Plan recognise the benefits that events bring to the region – socially, economically and reputationally. The North East CA Corporate plan sets out an objective to establish a regional events programme. This investment will directly support the Mayoral objectives of 'a home to world-class sporting and cultural venues and events, underpinned by eclectic and fast-changing grassroots creativity and energy' as part of our Corporate Plan and contributes to the following missions: 'A home of real opportunity' – 'by growing our cultural and sporting sectors'; and, 'A North East we are proud to call home' – developing a 'thriving cultural economy' and working to 'establish and deliver a regional events and culture programme'.

2. The Investment Proposal

The business case presents the overarching costs associated with the delivery of the Euro 28 programme here in the region and identifies the three funding sources: NECA, NCC and DCMS (via UK Sport). UEFA set the financial model, being clear that all host cities must meet the costs of host city requirements / delivery of the host city concept. The host city also needs to take on

the risk of project overspend. The football club receives a hire fee from UEFA but must provide a temporary overlay and required upgrades to the stadium to bring it up to specification for tournament delivery requirements. This includes any additional media facilities, broadcast facilities and, in the case of St James Park, significant upgrades to the power requirements.

The investment from NECA contributes to meeting these overall costs and is aligned to supporting region-wide benefit and impact. Any additional revenue subsequently received by Newcastle Council as the host authority, over and above a de minimus threshold of £125,000 set by UK Sport, will be deducted from the grant award from DCMS, pro-rata. Key expenditure headings include the following: salaries; marketing & promotion; Host City dressing / Fan Zone; infrastructure, security, match day operation costs and welfare; evaluation of event impacts; and volunteer programme.

Key elements of the event include:

A 'FREE' Fan Zone with a capacity of 15-20,000 people on Newcastle's Town Moor. It will show all live matches and deliver a programme with a diverse offer of concerts, shows and football-related content. This will create opportunities to work with the region's cultural organisations to programme a diverse mix of activity appealing to the entire population of the region. Additionally, the Fan Zone will include other football-related interactive experiences for people to visit and take part in family activities, making it a full tournament duration attraction. While the five matches hosted at St James' Park are group stage games, the Fan Zone and additional activity will continue throughout the tournament's 31-day duration, from 9th June to 9th July 2028, the date of the final.

A core team of 12 experienced professionals will be employed to deliver the tournament requirements as set out in the UEFA Host City manual. This will be a team completely dedicated to the delivery of Euro 28. North East CA's investment will contribute towards these additional new roles.

The roles are expected to be:

Host City Lead, Project Coordinator, Operations Manager, Mobility Coordinator, City Experience Manager, Marketing & Communications Manager, Sponsorship Manager, Dressing & Wayfinding Manager, Sustainability Manager, Volunteer Manager, Grass Roots & Community Manager and Finance Manager.

Volunteer programme – 750 volunteers will be recruited from across the NE region to assist with tournament requirements and ensure that visitors to the region will be welcomed and guided where needed. The programme will align with our mission to create a North East which is the Home of real opportunity for all, and as such will support residents more likely to face barriers, or experience financial hardship, into volunteering. This includes care leavers, carers, unemployed and economically inactive residents. A recruitment campaign will be conducted region wide and include key partners for example, NU Foundation (Newcastle) and Foundation of Light (Sunderland).

UK Sport have estimated that 60% of match attendees will be travelling to the North East region. Given this expected demand for accommodation, it is vital that NCC promote the full regional accommodation offer. As with all host city marketing, this will need to be promoted in partnership with the proposed regional economy body and the North East Hoteliers Association. While the matches are being played in Newcastle, the influx of visitors to the region will lead to economic benefits which will be felt widespread in all the North East.

UEFA, FA, and UK Sport alongside host city partners will be establishing a community and grassroots programme that aims to leave a long-lasting legacy in the region. While this will be centred on the growth of participation in football including increased levels of teams, coaches and referees, it is crucial that this will be established region wide and involve not only our premier league and English football clubs, but also necessary to work in partnership with the regions football foundations and organisations such as Rise.

City dressing and marketing – the city will be dressed in Euro 28 branding with requirements for access to all outdoor advertising. Regional marketing of the tournament, Fan Zone and additional activity is a requirement. Local authorities and transport providers will work together to enable safe and smooth transit for all tournament visitors, from teams and officials arriving at airports to spectators using train, bus and metro systems, maximising capability in the area.

The key focus of the North East CA is ensuring wide participation in and engagement with the event across the entire region, supported by strong regional branding and communications.

Using the UK Sport Socio Economic Impact model developed for the Euro 28 Host City value calculations, the following benefits will be achieved, assuming that 60% of the people attending the five matches will be from out of region.

- Additional event time spend, estimated £186.8 million.
- Total impact of GVA plus legacy impact, estimated £117.7 million.
- Event time employment supported (FTE, annual equivalent figure) 2,879.
- Regional benefit: increased tourism, hospitality, and transport across the North East.
- Funding ask: £2,937,210 contribution, as approved by NTCA in 2022.

Hosting Euro 28 will lead to many longer-term legacy benefits: -

- Reputation & brand
 - Opportunity to reposition Newcastle internationally as a major event destination
 - Builds on past success (e.g., Rugby World Cup, Great North Run, Magic Weekend)
- Repeat visitation and word of mouth
 - UEFA research shows 30-40% of fans return from holidays or recommend destinations post event
 - Potential uplift in future overseas visits driven by awareness and emotional connection
- Business confidence and investment
 - Major events stimulate – hotel and hospitality investment, public realm and transport improvements, private sponsorship and partnerships
- Talent attraction and civic pride
 - Positive perceptions of place support broader economic aims e.g., inward investment, graduate retention, workforce morale.

2.1 Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	Total
Number of cultural / tourism events taking place				38	38
Number of knowledge exchange interactions (volunteering)				750	750

The outputs are driven by the delivery of the volunteering programme (knowledge exchange interactions) and through a suite of events and linked activities through interventions including the fan zone etc.

Description of Outcomes	Timeframe for achievement	Totals
Increase in GVA / productivity	July 2028	£117.7m
Number of attendees participating in a cultural tourism event	July 2028	234,000
Residents supported into volunteering	July 2028	750

2.2 Timetable for Implementation

Milestone	Forecast Date
Proposal Start Date	01/09/2025
Anticipated Proposal Completion Date (date by which all outputs/outcomes will have been achieved)	01/08/2028
Employ 12 Experienced Professionals to Deliver the Tournaments	01/01/2027
Recruit Volunteers in time for first Tournament	09/06/2028
UEFA Euro 28 Tournament Dates	09/06/2028 – 09/07/2028
Deliver Fan Zone & Additional Activity	09/06/2028 – 09/07/2028
Financial Completion Date	01/06/2029

Given the scale of the event and outputs and outcomes sought, the investment will enable resource (staffing / consultants) to be brought into design, develop and implement activities with key stakeholders well in advance of the actual hosting of the event.

2.3 Evaluation

An evaluation will be delivered by the organisers of Euro 28 – Newcastle Host City. A budget of £150,628 has been identified and is part of the project. North East CA will work with NCC to ensure the evaluation captures all visitor spend, economic impact, social impact including social wellbeing and skills benefits, media attention and GVA created for the region as a whole as a result of the Euro 28 Host City status.

2.4 Appraisal

The appraisal of the business case provided by the applicant has been assessed and is rated GREEN on all aspects.

Appraisal Summary – Euro 2028 Host City Business Case

The business case for Newcastle's EURO 2028 Host City proposal is compelling and has been rated **GREEN** across all assessment areas, reflecting a strong and well-rounded submission.

The proposal demonstrates a clear alignment with the North East Combined Authority's strategic priorities. It thoughtfully integrates regional economic and cultural goals, making a persuasive case for its long-term value to the area.

The commercial approach is both ambitious and credible. The decision to form a dedicated team of experienced professionals, combined with plans for a large-scale fan zone and music festival, reflects a confident understanding of the region's strengths and its capacity to deliver a world-class event.

The economic rationale is strong. The projected visitor numbers and associated economic impact suggest a high return on investment. The estimated £40.12 return per £1 invested by the North East CA underscores the proposal's exceptional value for money. Whilst total return on investment of £7.96 for every £1 of public funding investment is lower, it is still considered strong value for money.

The financial planning appears robust and well-informed. The two-year development process, in collaboration with UK Sport, lends credibility and ensures the budget is realistic and benchmarked appropriately.

Governance arrangements are well-structured and proactive. The leadership by Newcastle City Council and the phased escalation of oversight meetings indicate a thoughtful and disciplined approach to project delivery.

Based on the information provided, NECA Legal Team have concluded that the funding would constitute 'no subsidy' on the straightforward basis that any financial advantage would 'flow through' NCC to the end beneficiaries and that no economic advantage would be conferred on one or more enterprises over any others. Legal have made the usual assumption that all payments made to providers/suppliers for goods and services will be at market rate as they will be procured as per

public procurement rules (along with salaries for the new team being hired or seconded to facilitate delivery of the programme).

2.5 RAG Assessment

Overall RAG assessment		
Risk Rating	Strategic case	Green
	Commercial case	Green
	Economic case	Green
	Financial case	Green
	Management case	Green
	Overall rating	Green

2.6 Recommended Conditions of Funding

There are no **proposed funding conditions**.

B. Potential Impact on North East Combined Authority Objectives

1	Supporting the Mayoral / North East CA missions	<p>Home of Real Opportunity (“We’ll see this opportunity mission in action at a regional level in our growing cultural and sporting sectors, with Mayoral Combined Authority support to ensure everyone can participate”).</p> <p>A North East we are proud to call home (“Establish and deliver a regional events and culture programme), Home to a growing and vibrant economy for all (“It’s important that we continue to sell the North East, and the Mayoral Combined Authority will progress a North East brand that builds on our remarkable creative, cultural, sports, and visitor economy assets”).</p>
2	Deliver 5 matches as part of Euro 28 reaching 90% capacity.	<p>To host 5 matches at St James Park in Newcastle.</p> <p>The aim of each match to have a 90% of capacity in the stadium resulting in over 225,000 spectators.</p> <p>For Euro 24 all group games sold out. If this were the case in Newcastle, we would see more than 250,000 spectators.</p> <p>Euro 28 is a global tournament, The world-wide audience for Euro 24 was over 4 billion people. The matches in Newcastle will attract people from all over the world to the region.</p> <p>Time bound – The tournament dates are already set for between 9th June (opening game) and 9th July 2028 (final).</p>
3	To develop and implement a volunteer programme that engages with residents from across the NECA area.	<p>To develop a region-wide volunteer recruitment programme for 750 residents.</p> <p>This number is the agreed number of volunteers with UEFA that host city delivery requires.</p> <p>Great North Run has more than 2,000 volunteers so 750 is very achievable.</p>

		<p>People applying for volunteer roles far exceeded places available at Euro 24.</p> <p>Volunteers need to be recruited and in place for the start of the tournament on 9th June 2028.</p>
4	Raise the profile of the North East region as one that can host mega events.	<p>The hosting of this event which is one of Global standing alongside other international events such as the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 in Sunderland, the Mercury Prize, and the MOBO Awards.</p> <p>Euro 28 will be broadcast to a global tv audience of 4 billion people creating huge exposure for Newcastle and the North East region.</p> <p>Realistic – Host City agreements are in place and Newcastle has been announced as a host City.</p> <p>5 matches for Euro 28 are all confirmed and must be delivered on specific dates.</p>

C. Key risks

A proposal-specific Risk Register has been completed and will be reviewed on a fortnightly basis by the Project Team and any concerns will be highlighted to the Project Board which will make decisions on any major mitigation measures needed. The risks associated with this proposal have been fully considered through the Combined Authority's Single Assurance Framework and will be regularly reviewed through the North East CA's claims and monitoring process.

D. Financial and other resources implications

The financial profile for the project/programme is included below:

Funding source	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
<i>North East CA Investment Fund (£)</i>	£43,702	£281,417	£984,364	£1,627,727	£2,937,210
<i>Newcastle City Council (£)</i>	£43,701	£281,417	£984,364	£1,627,728	£2,937,210
<i>DCMS/UK Sport (£)</i>	£131,104	£844,250	£2,953,092	£4,883,181	£8,811,627
Total (£)	£218,507	£1,407,084	£4,921,820	£8,138,636	£14,686,047

E. Legal implications

The comments of the Monitoring Officer are included in this report.

F. Equalities implications

The North East CA follows the Public Sector Equality duty and this report has due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. In June 2024, the North East CA adopted equality objectives to reflect the different roles of the Combined Authority as an employer, a commissioner and deliverer of services, and a civic leader.

G. Consultation and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken with the Chief Executive, the Mayor, and the Cabinet Member for Culture, Creative, Tourism and Sport portfolio, and with Local Authority officers.

H. Appendices

None

I. Background papers

North of Tyne Combined Authority [November 2022 Cabinet](#), and North East CA [July 2024 Cabinet](#) – ‘Culture, Creative, Tourism and Sport Strategic Portfolio Plan’ – pages 35-36.

[November 2024 Cabinet](#) - ‘Early Delivery Priorities for Culture, Creative, Tourism and Sport in the North East’ - pages 87-94.

J. Contact officers

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K. Glossary

North East CA	North East Combined Authority
NTCA	North of Tyne Combined Authority
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport
Euro 28	UEFA European Football Championship 2028
NCC	Newcastle City Council
NUFC	Newcastle United Football Club
FA	Football Association of England
NE	North East
FY	Financial Year

L. Consultees

Cabinet Member:	Director/Head of Service:	Director of Finance and Investment:	Monitoring Officer:
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes