

# UK Shared Prosperity Fund

## Village Centre Improvements

### Applicant Guidance

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# Introduction

## UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

This is made up of two funds, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund. UKSPF is for delivery over the coming financial years, reporting ends in March 2025. UKSPF Residual is an allocation from UKSPF which has been made available to organisations and businesses which do not fit with the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

As a delegated fund UKSPF enables places to be empowered to identify and build on their own strengths and needs at a local level, focusing on building pride in place and increasing life chances and delivering through three investment priorities: Communities and Place, Local Businesses and People and Skills, all detailed later in this document.

This document explains how to apply, how the funding can and cannot be used and how applications are assessed.

UKSPF Residual is available for both capital and revenue expenditure - Capital is for lasting assets, costs of which individually have a book value of at least £1,500 and retain a book value for at least 5 years. - Revenue funding is available to support the delivery of community schemes either additional to capital project spend or separately.

The amount you can apply for depends upon the type of organisation/business, the project, the outputs and outcomes, any additionality and the costs involved. The minimum value is £1,000 and the maximum value is up to £30,000 incl VAT, £20,000 net\* for both organisations and businesses. (\*in some limited cases more, funding allowing)

Funding will typically be limited to a maximum of 70% of the project's total eligible costs for organisations with 60% of the cost for low/zero carbon energy infrastructure. Or 60% for businesses with 50% of the cost for low/zero carbon energy infrastructure (\*up to £100,000 in line with the [Green Solutions](#) support for businesses). You can use other public money to pay for eligible costs up to a maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs – please be aware beneficiary subsidy restrictions may apply, especially if you are an enterprise. Please read [Funding and costs](#) for more information on eligibility of costs.

Organisations/businesses/groups can apply for funding for more than one scheme or project under any South Staffordshire UK Shared Prosperity Funding, UKSPF Residual or REPF (small enterprises only) as long as they jointly are under the maximum funding value of £100,000 from South Staffordshire Council direct or via a delivery partner.

Dual funding schemes and projects from any of the other following government funds renders them ineligible for any UK Shared Prosperity Funding, UKSPF Residual or REPF.

[Farming Investment Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Farming in protected landscapes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Platinum Jubilee fund for village halls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Approved schemes/projects have to be finished, spent and accounted for with all expenditure invoices and payments available to complete funding claims for submission to the Council by 31st January 2024. Any claims later than this will not be paid.

When you apply for funding, you're competing with other applicants in your area. An Evaluation Panel will assess all applications to see how well they fit the priorities and interventions for funding and which projects provide best value for taxpayers' money. The Council's decision is final.

## Who can apply?

As covered in the introduction, to apply for funding your organisation/business and/or your project and beneficiaries must be in an eligible South Staffordshire area. Please check the registered address, project post code / business rates are showing as being in the South Staffordshire district. If unsure, please email [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk)

What type of business / organisation are you?

An applicant must be registered with HMRC, Companies House, Charities Commission or be a trustee led organisation with a constitution which allows them to apply for funding and enter into a contract or an agreement to deliver funded activity;

- sole trader
- partnership
- private company
- group of companies
- public organisation
- voluntary organisation
- charity
- parish council
- community amateur sports club (CASC)

## What size is your business/organisation?

As part of the application process, you will be asked what the size your organisation, business or group is. The size depends on the number of full-time equivalent (\*FTE) paid employees it has and/or its financial performance. The table below shows what qualifies as a micro, small or medium size business. Anything over these sizes is considered large.

Criteria	Micro size enterprise	Small size enterprise	Medium size enterprise
Turnover	Up to £612,000	Up to £10.2 million	Up to £50 million
Balance Sheet	Up to £316,000	Up to £5.1 million	Up to £43 million
Employees	Up to 10 (*FTE's)	Up to 50 (*FTE's)	Up to 250 (*FTE's)

## What is a 'full-time equivalent' (\*FTE) employee?

\*A full-time employee must work a minimum of 30 hours per week to count as 1 FTE. Please calculate using your standard business hours, if 35 hours per week, this counts as 1 FTE, if an employee works 14 hours for you, this is a 0.4 FTE. If an employee does not have set contracted hours, to find the average hours for an FTE add the hours over the year or period worked, then divide by the number of weeks. FTE's include business partners and directors, even if working an average of 49 hours per week they still count as 1 FTE. (This calculation may be needed to calculate job creation outputs for your funding application).

## Is your organisation/business 'linked' to other organisations/businesses?

If your organisation/organisation is linked to other businesses/organisations, this might mean you jump from the micro to the small or up to a medium size.

The most common circumstances under which businesses/organisations are considered to be linked are:

- one business/organisation holds a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another business/organisation, they share directors or partners
- one business/organisation is entitled to appoint or remove a majority of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another
- a contract between the business/organisation, or a provision in the memorandum or articles of association of one of the businesses/organisations, enables one to exercise a dominant influence over the other
- one business/organisation is able, by agreement, to exercise sole control over a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in another

Please email us for further guidance if you are unsure at [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk)

## Application process

Please read this carefully before considering how to apply for this funding.

The application process is in 2 stages. We encourage you to email your project idea with an idea of cost and contact information to [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk). If we find the project idea and funding requirement reasonable, we will request further information from you with the completion of an on-line Application plus Supporting Documentation.

The Council will use an Evaluation panel to assess your Application submission. We are looking for evidence of a sound business case for projects that meet our and the UKSPF priority interventions for funding.

When you apply for funding, you're competing with other applicants in our area. We are looking for projects that best meet the local and UKSPF priorities for funding, and that are good value for taxpayers' money. If you can show this clearly in your application, you're more likely to be granted funding.

Funding is limited and will be prioritised to project proposals that contribute the most to the UKSPF priorities, as set out below.

### UKSPF priorities for funding

Your project is unlikely to get funding unless it contributes to one of the following priorities:

#### Communities and Place

This investment priority covers a wide range of local interventions, including public realm projects, community-led initiatives, and cultural and heritage projects. The objectives of this priority are:

- Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and access to amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.
- Building resilient, healthy and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built and natural environment innovative approaches to crime prevention.

#### Supporting Local Business

This investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow. The objectives of this priority are:

- Creating jobs and boosting community cohesion, through investments that build on existing industries and institutions, and range from support for starting businesses to visible improvements to local retail, hospitality and leisure sector facilities.

- Promoting networking and collaboration, through interventions that bring together businesses and partners within and across sectors to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and stimulate innovation and growth.
- Increasing private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities, through targeted support for small and medium-sized businesses to undertake new-to-firm innovation, adopt productivity-enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques, and start or grow their exports.

#### People and skills (Not applicable to the Rural England Prosperity Fund)

Through the people and skills investment priority, places can use their funding to help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth. The objectives of this priority are:

- Boosting core skills and support adults to progress in work, by targeting adults with no or low-level qualifications and skills in maths and upskill the working population, yielding personal and societal economic impact and by encouraging innovative approaches to reducing adult learning barriers (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland only. In England, this is delivered through the Department for Education's Multiply programme).
- Reducing levels of economic inactivity through investment in bespoke intensive life and employment support tailored to local need. Investment should facilitate the join-up of mainstream provision and local services within an area for participants, through the use of one-to-one keyworker support, improving employment outcomes for specific cohorts who face labour market barriers.
- Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support including access to basic skills.
- Supporting local areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work, and supplement local adult skills provision e.g., by providing additional volumes; delivering provision through wider range of routes or enabling more intensive/innovative provision, both qualification based, and non-qualification based. This should be supplementary to provision available through national employment and skills programmes.

Please see the full list of the interventions, outputs and outcomes matched with the above priorities here -

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1068875/UKSPF\\_England\\_Outputs\\_and\\_Outcomes.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1068875/UKSPF_England_Outputs_and_Outcomes.pdf)

For definitions please view - [UKSPF Indicators 22.02.2023.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

## What we look for in an Application

It will help your application if you explain your project clearly. Tell us exactly what you're proposing, why it's good for your community/district and organisation/business, the cost, how, where and when you will be completing it and who will benefit from it.

The on-line application form has been set out in a question and answer format plus documentary evidence to try and capture all the required details. We will use the information provided in your application submission to check that both you/your business/organisation and your project are eligible. Then we assess how well your project meets the local and UKSPF priorities for the funding by your indicated \*interventions, outputs and outcomes. The Village Centre Improvement Fund is specifically aimed at Intervention E1 as the primary for output and outcome delivery in your application, additional interventions are encouraged. Full details are found here - [\\*https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1068875/UKSPF\\_England\\_Outputs\\_and\\_Outcomes.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1068875/UKSPF_England_Outputs_and_Outcomes.pdf) Please note that there have been a couple of changes to the output/outcome recording, i.e. greenhouse gas is now CO2e. Changes and definitions found here - [UKSPF Indicators 22.02.2023.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

If we feel anything is unclear in your Application answers or supporting documentation, we will ask for further information. Please ask if unsure, email [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk)

## Supporting documentation

Additional to your Application questions you're invited to submit supporting documentation to further assess/evaluate you/your organisation/business and project, we will request evidence of:

- initial identification - driving licence, if a not a driver, a passport
- organisation/business registration if not found through the usual sources
- links to any other organisations/businesses we may need to consider
- any required planning permissions, licences or other permission constraints
- ownership of land, premises or lease agreement with landlord consent
- financial accounts for the last three years or forecasts if a start up
- bank statement/s and/or loan offer to show available match funding/cashflow
- proposed expenditure calculations, including 3 quotes (tender if costs over £25k)
- business plan if available, if not, sufficient financial forecasts to show breakeven
- letters of support, survey reporting, research to show need\*
- any other public funding your organisation/business is applying for\*
- anything else we feel requires further input to assist our assessment\*

\*If not covered in your answers, these will be requested to help assess your application.

From your answers and supporting documentation we will evaluate your project. Information on the evaluation process is covered later in this document.

## Funding and costs

Funding can cover a certain percentage of scheme or project costs - some costs may not be eligible. Funding is for capital lasting assets, building, equipment, etc. costs of which have a net cost of at least £1,500 and retain a book value for 5 years or more. Revenue funding is available for certain community scheme delivery types.

How much funding is available?

The amount you can apply for depends on the size of your business, the type of scheme or project and the costs involved. The minimum grant is £1,000 for both organisations and businesses, the maximum is £20,000 excluding VAT (more in some limited cases up to £99,999 dependent upon available funding)

Grants will be limited to a maximum of 60% of the project's eligible costs for businesses and to a maximum of 70% of the project's total eligible costs for not for profit organisations. However, some types of community projects may get higher rates – for more information please contact us with specific details of your project by email to [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk) You can use other public money to pay for eligible costs – but only up to the agreed maximum percentage of 80% (possibly more for not for profit organisations). The remaining project costs must be paid for with money from private funding sources, savings or a bank loan.

Organisations/businesses/groups can apply for funding for more than one scheme or project under any UK Shared Prosperity Funding/UKSPF Residual/REPF (small enterprises only) as long as they jointly are under the maximum funding value of £100,000 from South Staffordshire Council or their delivery partners. However, some types of community projects or schemes may be offered a higher value.

Has your organisation/business as an enterprise already had public funding?

When you apply, as part of the Application process we ask you to tell us if you as an enterprise have had any funding or funded support from the EU or other public sources via a Minimal Financial Assistance Declaration, we ask you to list all the support received over the last 3 financial years. Awards from financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 onwards would have been under de-minimis, special drawing rights or minimal financial assistance. Depending on the value already received (a £315,000 allowance over the last three financial years) and the period of time, we might need to limit the amount of the funding you can get, to comply with the UK subsidy control rules and regulations. If unsure, please email [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk)



## Paying for the project

Funding is paid in one lump sum or in 2 project stages, in arrears. Funds can only be claimed after the work being claimed for is finished and has been paid for. We expect you to make a maximum of 2 claims with invoice and bank statement evidence over the funding term, the minimum value of each claim will be £1,000 for both organisations and businesses. A claim form will be provided with a list of expected evidence.

You must show that you have sufficient funds to pay for the project costs until you get the funding payments.

We may be able to offer different terms for not-for-profit organisations, please contact us with evidence of your registration type and basic details of your project needs via email [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk) before submitting an Application.

Hire-purchase or leased items must be paid off before you claim.

Please note that, if you buy an item for a capital project using lease purchase or hire-purchase, you must own this outright before you can claim any funding towards it.

This means that, before you claim the funding, you must:

- pay all of the instalments
- show that the title has passed to you

Otherwise, you will not be able to include these costs in your claim.

Lease purchase or hire purchase may not be an option for projects starting near the end of the fund, since it may not be possible to pay all instalments before the final date for claims.

**Do not start work, incur costs or place an order before your funding agreement has been signed. This will potentially make your whole project ineligible.**

# Ineligible costs

## Costs which are not eligible for any projects

The following are not eligible for funding under any priority intervention. This list is not exhaustive.

### General costs:

- any costs incurred before the project start date shown in the grant funding agreement
- the cost of getting any permissions or consents, such as planning permission
- any items which you have already had EU or other public funding for (or intend to other public funding for)
- relocation costs – if the business needs to relocate in order to expand, it can only apply for funding for the cost of the expansion
- costs associated with the provision of housing
- projects that are carried out only to meet a domestic legal requirement

### Buildings, land and equipment costs:

- general repairs and maintenance of existing buildings, equipment and machinery
- like-for-like replacement of existing items (such as buildings, equipment and machinery)
- machinery or equipment that will not be on the asset register of the organisation/business 5 years after payment of your last funding claim
- the cost of moveable fittings – like soft furnishings, beds, tables, chairs, cutlery and crockery, curtains, televisions and audio equipment, hand tools, small domestic kitchen equipment and utensils
- purchase of land<sup>1</sup> (exception)
- purchase of buildings for commercial projects

### Business running costs:

- salaries and running costs for commercial projects<sup>2</sup> (exception)
- in-kind contributions (this means the value of donated work or services) such as the cost of using your own labour, vehicle and office space
- recurring license fees, subscriptions and service charges
- computers, software and printers used in the general running of the business, like processing orders or accounts
- mobile phones
- the delivery of training activities not associated with project interventions
- consumables
- standard, non-specialised domestic vehicles, such as cars, motorbikes

## Costs which are not eligible for any projects (continued)

### Agricultural business costs:

- standard agricultural or horticultural inputs like animals and crops
- the cost of agricultural production rights and payment entitlements
- setting up agricultural businesses

### Financial costs:

- bad debts
- advance payments
- insurance policy costs
- working capital
- financial charges, such as bank charges, fines, and interest
- costs connected with a leasing contract, such as a lessor's margin, interest refinancing costs, overheads and insurance charges
- reclaimable VAT

<sup>1</sup>Purchase of buildings for community use may be eligible. In these cases, the purchase of the land on which the building stands may also be eligible, but the cost of the land cannot be more than 10% of the total project costs. Please talk to the Council if your project involves the purchase of a building for community use.

<sup>2</sup>Some limited salary costs or running costs may be eligible in limited and specific circumstances. Eligibility of these costs will be considered on a case by case basis and will only be considered where the project need is clear and linked to community use or supporting rural jobs and growth. Please talk to us before submitting a proposal if your project involves any salary costs or running costs.

To check if a cost is eligible, please email [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk)

**Funding cannot be considered for any projects involving the manufacture of tobacco related products, companies involved in gambling activities, or those sectors deemed to cause potential reputational damage to the UK Government and / or South Staffordshire Council**

## How to apply

Please first read the [Application process](#) for an overview of the type of information we are looking for and the evidence you must provide when [Supporting documentation](#) is requested.

The application process is either direct or by initial email contact.

First, you are invited to submit your project idea, outlining the main details of your project idea with an indication of cost and the delivery timescale to confirm eligibility. Then/or direct entry via the link on this webpage [Village Centre improvement fund | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](#) Please register to allow completion of an online Application.

### How to submit your project idea

Please contact us via email [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk) include an email address that you monitor regularly. If the project details are eligible and appear viable for the fund you will be invited to submit an Application via the link to an online form, when completing there will also be a requirement for Supporting Documentation - details of which is covered on page 7 in this guidance.

### What happens after you submit your Application

Once you have completed all the online questions in the application and uploaded the required supporting documentation, this will be submitted for Evaluation – the evaluation process is covered in the next section of this guide.

# Evaluation

Your Application answers along with the Supporting Documentation will be used to present to an evaluation panel made up of sector representatives who can offer their expertise to assist the Council. They will help decide if an Application is successful and if a funding offer can be made. Below is a list of evaluation criteria that is used to help guide the decision-making process from the questions you are asked in the online form.

## Evaluation Criteria

Fit	How well the project meets the UKSPF and local priorities for funding and fits with interventions, outputs, and outcomes.
Value for money	<p>How the project costs represent value for money.</p> <p>The amount of funding required to deliver the outcomes and outputs, including jobs.</p> <p>What difference funding will make compared to what would happen without funding.</p>
Need for the project	<p>Why funding is required for the project.</p> <p>There is a clearly identified need for the project.</p> <p>The impact the project has on the community/other organisations, both positive and negative. There is a clear understanding of any competition.</p>
Financial health and projections	<p>The current financial viability of your organisation/business.</p> <p>How the project may impact on your existing operations.</p> <p>How you will fund the project until the funding is claimed.</p> <p>How the organisation will benefit from the project financially.</p>
Delivery and sustainability	<p>Whether the project will be delivered in budget and on time.</p> <p>What the right skills and resources are in place to deliver the project successfully.</p> <p>How project outputs, outcomes and other benefits will be monitored and recorded.</p> <p>What risks to project delivery have been identified and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>Are there any future sustainability considerations.</p>

You will be contacted if there are any questions that come up during the evaluation process that require answers before a decision can be finalised. The Council will let applicants know whether or not they have been successful.

If an application is unsuccessful

We will send you an email with the reasons behind the decision. In exceptional cases, and only with additional satisfactory evidence and clarification from the Applicant, and if timing and funding availability allows, will the Council reconsider an application. Once reconsidered, the Council's decision is final. Please use email [UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk)

If you are offered funding

If you're offered funding, we'll provide a funding agreement for you to sign. This will set out the legal terms and conditions, including:

- the amount of the funding
- the outputs and outcomes we've agreed for your project
- which suppliers you're using
- any conditions relating to the funding offer and the timescale to meet them

If you need to change anything (e.g. organisation/business or supplier/purchase details) in the funding agreement over the course of the project, you need to get written agreement from us first. If not, we could terminate your agreement and reclaim any funding we've already paid.

You'll get more information and help with this if you're offered funding.

Please note that successful applicants will be expected to sign up to a grant funding agreement and abide by HM government's UKSPF branding and publicity guidelines found here [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: branding and publicity \(6\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-branding-and-publicity-guidelines)

Many thanks for your interest in the Rural England Prosperity Fund element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the South Staffordshire district.

Privacy Notice

All applicant data will be stored securely in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

For further information see [Privacy | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/privacy)