

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Shop Front Grant Applicant Guidance

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Introduction

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for South Staffordshire

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.

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.

A portion of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has already been allocated to the continuation of successful local schemes and projects, leaving the residual for allocation.

Shop Front Grant

South Staffordshire council is committed to supporting the districts business community. We are targeting a portion of our UKSPF allocation to support our local business, with a focus on those operating in the village centres.

We have established a 'shop front' grant scheme to support and sustain existing businesses in the village centres, this grant will help to improve the look and feel of our village centres, making those shops more attractive to passing visitors and local residents increasing trade and footfall.

The Shop Front Grant is available to independent retail and hospitality businesses and property owners in South Staffordshire's village centres to improve their shop front or to bring vacant premises back into use.

The objective of the grant is to support traders and the local economy as well as improving the retail environment for shoppers, residents, and visitors.

Approved projects have to be spent and accounted for with all expenditure invoices and payments available to complete funding claims for submission to South Staffordshire Council by 31st March 2025. Any claims later than this will not be paid.

When you apply for funding, you're competing with other applicants in your area. All applications for grant funding will be assessed to ensure they fit the priorities and interventions for funding and which projects provide best value for taxpayers' money. The Council's decision is final.

Funding

You can use UKSPF shop front grant to cover a certain percentage of project costs – some costs may not be eligible.

How much funding is available?

The amount of funding offered is discretionary to the Council. In general, funding for businesses will be limited to a maximum of 80% of the project's eligible costs or restricted to a maximum of £5000.

Schemes or projects with exceptional delivery outcomes or 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

Who can apply?

To apply for funding your business must be;

- Based in or around a village centre within the South Staffordshire district.
- A retail or hospitality businesses only
- An independently owned business
- Traders must own the property or have a lease agreement with a minimum term of 12 months remaining
- Traders must have been trading for at least 6 months
- The applicant must have a business bank account
- The applicant must be eligible for funding under the Subsidy Control Act 2022
- Only one application will be accepted per property

The following types of retail business are ineligible to apply for the grant:

- Pawn brokers/money shops, adult/private shops, betting shops, vape shops, shops licensed to sell alcohol for consumption off the premises, national chain stores.

What funding can be used for:

The grant can contribute towards the following improvements (subject to planning conditions):

- New shop front
- Re-painting of shop front in a suitable colour
- Rendering and painting of building
- New signage
- External lighting
- Alterations to doors and level entry to improve access
- Replacement gutter and downpipes
- Awnings and canopies
- Internal security grilles

The grant will not support general maintenance work or rebranding.

Ineligible grant uses

The grant scheme will not fund the following:

- Lighting within window displays
- Professional fees associated with the development and delivery of the project, including planning application fees, advertising consent fees and advisory services.
- Window display equipment
- Repointing, repair and cleansing of external stonework and brickwork above fascia level
- Repair of external stonework and brickwork
- General repairs and maintenance
- Repair and reinstatement of guttering and down-pipes
- Externally mounted security features (shutters and CCTV cameras)
- The purchase of machinery or equipment
- Improvements undertaken solely to allow compliance with legislation (e.g. Disability Discrimination Act requirements)
- Works to the upper floors or basement (i.e. works not at street level)
- Works to residential properties
- Works to industrial premises or offices.

Business must be able to demonstrate that they are trading, and not insolvent

Planning

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the appropriate planning consent is in place. Work carried out without consent may result in enforcement action or prosecution.

Please note that it can take approximately eight weeks to determine a planning application, advertisement consent or other statutory consent. This consideration should be built into the project timescale.

Some alterations to shop fronts and vacant premises will require permission under the Planning Acts, Advertisement Regulations or both.

Planning permission is required for works that involve a material change to the external appearance of premises. Such works include alterations to the fascia, the windows or the doorway, changes to the materials used or the installation of blinds/awnings or security shutters.

Advertisement consent is required for the display of certain types of signs in particular locations, notably illuminated signage.

Applicants will need to provide evidence that all required permissions have been obtained where they are required. If you are unsure what permissions are required you can find further information at <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning/development-management/development-management/development-management/development>

[Applicants also have the option to submit a pre-application enquiry to determine whether or not planning permission is required for any works.](#)

Further information can also be found here: <https://interactive.planningportal.co.uk/flat-and-shop>

What type of legal entity are you?

An applicant must be able to demonstrate they are a legal entity that has been trading for a minimum of six months, or will be by the Application stage this includes:

- sole trader
- partnership
- private company
- group of companies
- public organisation
- voluntary organisation

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



As part of the application process, you will be asked if your organisation/business is linked to any other organisations/businesses, this can make a difference to your deemed financial stability, which may be beneficial or not.

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

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

Application process

The application process is in two stages. Firstly, you must complete a one to one meeting with an officer from the council.

Secondly, if we find the project idea and funding reasonable, we will request further information from you, with the completion of an on-line Application plus Supporting Documentation.

The Council will assess your application for grant funding internally. We are looking for evidence of a sound business case for projects that meet our UKSPF priority interventions for funding.

When you apply for funding, you're competing with other applicants in our area. We're 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.

UKSPF funding is limited and will be prioritised to 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

The communities and place 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

The supporting local business 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 & Skills

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.

See the full list of the interventions, outputs and outcomes that are matched with the above here [Interventions, Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs – England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
For definitions view [UKSPF Indicators 22.02.2023.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

How to apply

Please 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.

First, you must submit an 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) form and attend a one to one meeting with an appointed officer. If we endorse your project, we will then invite you to submit an application for grant funding.

How to submit your Expression of Interest (Eoi)

We can only accept Eoi's that are submitted via the online form linked from the following webpage - [South Staffordshire Shop Front Grant | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](#)

We cannot accept proposals in any other format – including PDF documents, scanned documents, printed applications or hand-written applications.

Please contact us if you need help with a submission, email UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk

Provide an email address that you monitor regularly. We will use the email address you put in your Eoi as our main way of contacting you.

What we look for in an application

The on-line application form has been set out in a question-and-answer format to try and capture all the required details. We will use all the information provided in your application submission to check that both you /your business and your project are eligible.

We then assess how well your project meets the local and UKSPF priorities for the funding. This funding aims to increase Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.

An application will not be successful if the proposed project simply moves activity from one place to another or replaces similar activity unless evidentially justified.

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

If we feel anything is unclear in your application answers or supporting documentation, we will ask for further information.

Supporting Documentation

Additional to your Application questions you're invited to submit supporting documentation if applicable to further assess/evaluate your project, we may request evidence of:

- organisation/business registration if not found through the usual sources
- links to any other organisations/businesses we may need to consider
- match funding, a bank statement or loan offer to show available cashflow
- proposed expenditure calculations, including 3 quotes per cost
- any other public funding your organisation/business is applying for
- anything else we feel requires further input to assist our assessment
- Confirmation of your identity
- Planning consent/evidence of why planning consent is not required
- Image/s of the property prior to works

From your answers and supporting documentation we will evaluate your project. Details of the evaluation process are covered later in the document.

Planning approval/consents

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the appropriate planning consent is in place. Work carried out without consent may result in enforcement action or prosecution.



Please note that it can take approximately eight weeks to determine a planning application, advertisement consent or other statutory consent. This consideration should be built into the project timescale.

Some alterations to shop fronts and vacant premises will require permission under the Planning Acts, Advertisement Regulations or both.

Planning permission is required for works that involve a material change to the external appearance of premises. Such works include alterations to the fascia, the windows or the doorway, changes to the materials used or the installation of blinds/awnings or security shutters.

Advertisement consent is required for the display of certain types of signs in particular locations, notably illuminated signage.

Applicants will need to provide evidence that all required permissions have been obtained where they are required. If you are unsure what permissions are required you can find further information at [Development management | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/development-management)

Paying for the project

In general, the maximum funding offer is likely to be 80% of your project cost up to a maximum value of £5000 . However, some types of projects may get a higher figure – for more information please contact us with specific details of your project by email to UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk

You can use other public money to pay for eligible costs - but only up to the agreed maximum percentage of the project cost. The remaining project costs must be paid for with money from private sources like donations, savings or a bank loan.

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

Grant funding will be retrospective, and evidence of spend must be provided before any grant funding will be approved.

Paying your supplier(s)

You must use a payment method that evidences the payment to your suppliers, i.e. **DO NOT MAKE CASH PAYMENTS**. If you pay by cheque you must take a photocopy of the cheque before you pass it on to the supplier, this will enable us to cross reference the cheque number to your bank account.

Payments by debit card and bank transfer, clearly stating the supplier name, are the preferred methods, as they provide us with the required evidence. No cash transactions will be accepted as evidence of payment.

IMPORTANT

- No claims will be paid for activity carried out and paid for prior to the issue of the Grant Offer Letter.
- Grant claims will only be paid to reimburse you of works carried out by the approved suppliers. If you change your supplier, you will need to submit a new quote and get prior approval from us. We reserve the right to reject any claims for works carried out by non-approved suppliers.
- No claims will be paid where supplier payments were made by cash, by a third party or by cheque (with no photocopy evidence).

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 business support from the EU or other public sources via a Minimal Financial Assistance Declaration, listing 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

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.

What happens after you submit your application for grant funding?

After you submit the form, you'll get a receipt email to say that we have received it. We may ask you to resubmit the application if the information is not sufficient to assess. Once you have completed all the questions in the application and uploaded the required supporting documentation, this will be assessed internally.

Once your proposal has been assessed we will let you know whether your application for funding has been approved.

Evaluation

Your proposal along with the supporting documentation will be assessed internally. The Council will decide if an application proposal 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. Any additionality.
Value for money	How the project costs represent value for money. The amount of funding required to deliver the outcomes and outputs, including jobs. (if applicable) What difference funding will make compared to what would happen without funding.
Need for The project	Why funding is required for the project. What support is there. There is a clearly identified need for the project. The impact the project has on the community/other businesses, both positive and negative. A clear understanding of any competition.
Financial health and projections	The current financial viability of your organisation/business. How the project may impact on your existing operations. How you will fund the project until the funding is claimed. How the organisation/business will benefit from the project financially.
Delivery and sustainability	Whether the project will be delivered in budget and on time. What the right skills and resource are in place to deliver the project successfully. How project outputs, outcomes and other benefits will be monitored and recorded. (if applicable) What risks to project delivery have been identified and how they will be mitigated. Are there any future sustainability considerations.

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

If you are offered funding

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

- the amount of the funding
- 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)

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)

Costs which are not eligible for any projects funded by the UK Shared prosperity scheme.

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
- 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:

- machinery or equipment that will not be on the asset register of the organisation/business 3 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 land¹ (exception)
- purchase of buildings for commercial projects

Business running costs:

- salaries and running costs for commercial projects² (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 licence fees, subscriptions and service charges
- mobile phones
- consumables
- standard, non-specialised domestic vehicles, such as cars, motorbikes

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

Continued

Costs which are not eligible for any projects (continued)

Financial costs:

- 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
- paid for lobbying, entertaining, petitioning or challenging decisions, which means using the Fund to lobby (via an external firm or in-house staff) in order to undertake activities intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, government or political activity including the receipt of UKSPF funding; or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action
- payments for activities of a party political or exclusively religious nature
- gifts, or payments for gifts or donations
- statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties
- payments for works or activities which the lead local authority, project deliverer, end beneficiary, or any member of their partnership has a statutory duty to undertake, or that are fully funded by other sources
- contingencies and contingent liabilities
- dividends
- bad debts, costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors, or winding up a company
- expenses in respect of litigation, unfair dismissal or other compensation
- costs incurred by individuals in setting up and contributing towards private pension schemes

¹Purchase 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.

²Some 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