

**UK Shared and Rural England Prosperity Fund**

**Newark and Sherwood**

**Call for Projects Guidance**

**(24-25)**



**1.0 Background**

* 1. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a government scheme announced in July 2022, as part of the wider Levelling-Up agenda. The fund seeks to replace former EU structural funds to improve pride in place and opportunities for local people, across three themes of:
* Communities and Place
* People and Skills
* Supporting Local Businesses

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) is also a government scheme, integrated into UKSPF that supports productivity and prosperity in rural places of need. For eligible local authorities, REPF is a top-up to [UKSPF](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus) allocations, supporting additional activities that specifically address the particular challenges rural areas face.

1.2 Lead local authorities were asked to set out their approach to administering the funding in their UKSPF submissions in July 2022 to draw down funding. In Newark and Sherwood, our local programme investment supports the established strategic frameworks (including [Newark and Sherwood Community Plan and Newark and Sherwood Economic Growth Strategy).](https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/councilstrategies/)

1.3 We have engaged with a number of key stakeholders in developing our plans, ensuring our selected focus for investment is evidence based and demonstrates local needs, challenges and opportunities. Newark and Sherwood Community Partnership govern the delivery of the UKSPF/REPF plan, with representatives from local businesses, charities, community groups and public sector partners supporting to shape programme delivery.

**2.0 Call for Projects 24-25**

2.1 Expressions of Interest (EOI) for UKSPF/REPF grant funding can be submitted for projects that deliver our programme investment priorities and enhance opportunities for local communities and the visitor economy. For this particular call, this includes a small number of projects to be delivered between **April 2024 and March 2025** across one or more of the following themes**:**

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| **Tourism and Visitor Economy** | Funding to support new and improved heritage and culture sites and/or tourism projects to support the local visitor economy, such as**:*** local visitor trails and infrastructure e.g. tourism boards, visitor centres, visitor experiences and general tourist attractions.
* improving accessibility at heritage and culture sites.
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| **Rural Communities** | Funding to support new and improved community assets in rural areas\* to enable residents to access social, physical, or cultural opportunities, such as:* indoor and outdoor spaces e.g. village halls, libraries, sports facilities, community gardens and centres.

\**rural communities must be located within areas of the district pre-determined by DEFRA to be considered ‘rural’. Please contact* *UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk* *to understand if a project may be eligible under this theme.* |
| **People and Skills** | Funding for volunteering or enrichment projects that provide support to communities at risk of, or already considered NEET (aged 11+).ORFunding for projects that provide tailored support for local employers to up-skill their workforce or progress within the employment by addressing local skills gaps. |

2.2 Any applicants should consider and where possible, address the potential impact upon environmental sustainability throughout project design and delivery, such as consideration of:

* the UK’s commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050
* wider environmental considerations, such as resilience to natural hazards
* the [25 Year Environment Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan/25-year-environment-plan-our-targets-at-a-glance) commitments

2.3 We cannot support projects that have received funding from other DEFRA schemes, as below:

* [The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes) - funding for farmers and land managers to work in partnership with National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty bodies to deliver projects on climate, nature, people and place.
* [The Farming Investment Fund](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/farming-investment-fund) - grants to improve productivity and bring environmental benefits, covering two funds - the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund and the Farming Transformation Fund.
* [The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/platinum-jubilee-fund-creates-boost-for-village-halls) - grant funding over three years (to 2025) to support capital improvement projects for village halls, covering extending buildings and modernising facilities.
	1. **Who can apply?**
	2. The following organisations in Newark and Sherwood may apply for grant funding:
* parish and town councils and public sector organisations.
* registered community/voluntary organisations and charities, including CIC’s.
* higher and further education institutions (people and skills projects only).
* Private sector companies - **grant opportunities for investment small and micro businesses will be announced early 2024.**
1. **What costs may be eligible?**

* 1. **The minimum funding request is £20,000 per project, with a maximum request of £100,000 per project.** Organisations may submit more than one application for separate projects, however the total awarded to a single organisation in this call will not exceed £100,000. Organisations seeking funding under £20,000 may be able to apply for alternative funding through [Newark and Sherwood Community Grant Scheme.](https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/communityfunding/)

* 1. **A minimum of 10% match-funding** towards the total project costs is required and the level of match is scored as part of the appraisal process (see 7.0). We will accept match funding in the form of direct applicant contribution or other sources such as alternative grant funding, loans etc. and evidence will be required as part of the monitoring and evaluation process. We encourage applicants to source additional funding contributions where possible to maximise the outcomes for local people and places.
	2. The majority of funding under both the tourism/visitor economy and rural communities theme must be awarded as capital. This means it can be used to purchase, build, or upgrade physical assets, including:

* building and construction costs.
* professional fees associated with building and construction.
* purchasing plant, machinery and equipment (excluding vehicles for personal use).

4.4 **The following costs are considered ineligible and must not be included in applications:**

* 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.
* VAT reclaimable from HMRC
* 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.
* **1maintenance and minor repairs, projects must demonstrate additionality and offer a new or a significantly improved service or product.**
* 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.
* vehicles for personal use.
* retrospective payments (we will not fund elements of a project that have already been completed prior to application and award).

* 1. **What are the funding requirements?**

5.1 Before we issue grant funding agreements to any successful organisations, applicants must:

* supply evidence of three quotes for any goods or services procured over £9,999 and evidence of tender for any services over £74,999. Applicants will be asked to provide at least one quote per item at the point of application.
* supply evidence of permissions in place to undertake work e.g., licences, planning permission and land-owner permission if applicable.
* pass all due-diligence checks undertaken and determined by the council, including evidence of relevant insurances, accounts and policies.

* 1. Applicants must ensure that any funding request is compliant with the [UK Subsidy Control regime](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime) and will be asked to demonstrate this within the application form. Applicants will be asked to declare whether they, or any businesses they are formally linked with has received funding from EU or other public sources within the last five years upon application.
	2. Applicants must ensure the project is completed and monies spent by no later than 31st March 2025 and have all arrangements in place to undertake the project within the timescales. This includes prior engagement with our planning department to ensure compliance with potential planning requirements. The council may ask for evidence of permissions before a grant agreement is issued, however this is the sole responsibility of the applicant, and will not form part of the application process.
	3. If the applicant is not the land/property owner of the premises where capital works may be undertaken, we will require written permission from the owner to undertake works and evidence of a minimum 5-year lease guarantee from March 31st 2024.
	4. Applicants must supply evidence of expenditure and defrayal, before receiving payment of the grant and by no later than 31st March 2025 in the format determined by the Funder. In some individual circumstances, funding *may* be paid in advance, subject to application and eligibility.
1. **How can organisations apply?**
	1. The grant funding application process will involve several stages, as detailed below:

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| **Stage**  | **Summary** | **Key Dates**  |
| **Stage 1:****Expression of Interest** | Applicants must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk by no later than 5pm Monday 15th January 2024. This should be sent in writing using the template attached to this guidance document as an appendix.The EOI is not scored and provides no guarantee of successful application. This process helps to filter out any projects that do not meet the funding criteria to prevent organisations from spending time submitting an application that is unlikely to be successful. We will respond to you with any queries we may have after receiving your EOI. | Deadline: 5pm Monday 15th January 2024 |
| **Stage 2:****Formal Application** | If your project is determined to be suitable for application following the EOI stage, you will be invited to submit a formal application to us by 5pm Friday 16th February 2024.**Organisations will not be able to apply for funding without submitting an EOI by 5pm 15th January 2024.** If invited to submit a full application, you will be required to provide the following documents:* evidence of planning permission (if applicable)
* quotes
* completed application form
* evidence of financial standing
* any other supporting documents (plans/drawings etc.)
 | Deadline: 5pm 16th February 2024 |
| **Stage 3:****Appraisal and Award process**  | All applications will be assessed by an independent panel of officers after the application deadline of Friday 16th February 2024. A formal update will provided by email afterwards to confirm the outcome of your application.  | 16th February to 13th March 2024 |
| **Stage 4:****Grant Funding Period**  | 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 |

1. **How will applications be assessed?**

* 1. The table below provides an overview of how we will score and assess formal applications out of a total score of 100. Each element will be scored out of 5 based on the quality and content of the answers provided in the application form, with consideration of how well the applicant demonstrates the points below. This applies to full applications only, and expressions of interests are not scored.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme**  | **Component**  | **Weight** | **Calculation** |
| **Justification of funding** | The local social, economic or physical challenges are clearly demonstrated. | 20% | Score 0-5 x 4 |
| **Strategic Fit**  | The project clearly helps to address the challenges/opportunities identified including demonstration of long-term benefits of investment for the community/economy, with key links to the Economic Growth Strategy/Community Plan objectives.  | 30% | Score 0-5 x 6 |
| Environmental sustainability is considered as a key aspect of the project/environmental implications addressed where possible.  | 5% | Score 0-5 x 1 |
| Potential equality and diversity implications are recognised and addressed. | 5% | Score 0-5 x 1 |
| **Match-funding** | 10% or more – 1/ 20% or more – 2/ 40% or more – 3 / 60% or more – 4/ 80% or more - 5 | 10% | Score 0-5 x 2 |
| **Deliverability**  | It is clear how outputs and outcomes will be captured, measured, and evaluated. | 10% | Score 0-5 x 2 |
| It is clear how risk will be managed and mitigated including delivery on time and in budget. | 20% | Score 0-5 x 4 |

* 1. Awards will be made to applicants that score the highest, in accordance with funding availability as below:

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| --- | --- |
| **Capital availability** | **Revenue availability** |
| Total allocated to this call - £523,817A minimum of £320,708 must be allocated to projects in rural areas. | Total allocated to this call- £195,000A minimum of £100,000 must be allocated to People and Skills projects. |

* 1. The council reserves the right not to allocate some, or all of the funding through this process and may withhold from delivering any potential future grant funding rounds. Where applications may tie on scores, the council at its discretion will determine additional assessment criteria to undertake further moderation and will re-mark applications in the first instance.

**8.0 Support**

* 1. For any queries, please email: UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

**Appendix A: Expression of Interest Template**

To be returned to UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk by 5pm 15th January 2024

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| **Applicant** |
| Organisation Name:Lead Contact Name:Contact Email and Tel No: |
| **Background*** Explain the nature of your organisation including legal status, the activities delivered and links to any websites (max 200 words)
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|  |
| **Project**Briefly explain:* the project you are requesting funding for and which of the three funding themes it aligns to.
* the amount to be requested from us and the amount of match-funding secured.
* the current status with obtaining planning permission, if applicable to your project.

(max 300 words) |
|  |

**END**