

# Westmorland and Furness Council (W&F) UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) & Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

## SCHEME GUIDANCE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was launched in April 2022 as a pillar of the government's Levelling Up agenda and comprises both UKSPF and the aligned Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The Fund runs until 31 March 2025 and is a key lever in the government's mission to level opportunity and prosperity across the United Kingdom, restoring pride in people's places, empowering local communities and providing better life chances.

1.2 Funding for UKSPF is available for capital and revenue activity for projects that demonstrate alignment and deliverability against the call criteria. Further information on UKSPF can be found in the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus](#) and the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: additional information](#).

REPF is entirely capital in nature with no additional allowance for revenue activity. For REPF, beneficiaries must be located within the areas covered by the previous Eden and South Lakeland District Council areas. More detailed information can be found in the [Rural England Prosperity Fund: prospectus](#).

1.3 Where relevant, a breakdown of capital and revenue funding available is included within the specific Project Funding Calls.

1.4 In Westmorland and Furness a total of £8,313,323 of UKSPF and a further £2,189,651 of REPF is available. Funding is profiled over the programme as follows:

Funding Source	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
UKSPF	£1,008,898	£2,017,797	£5,286,628
REPF	£0	£547,412	£1,642,239

1.5 There are no requirements for match funding, however, those projects that can demonstrate an element of match/aligned funding will be prioritised to

ensure the Programme generates maximum value for money. All projects must also comply with the UK Subsidy Control arrangements.

- 1.6 Funding will be primarily distributed following applications against a range of Funding Calls. Each Funding Call will set out key information such as the priorities for delivery, funding available, outputs and outcomes and eligibility criteria. Live Funding Calls can be found on the [W&F UKSPF website](#).
- 1.7 Applications are invited against the Funding Calls from any organisation who can demonstrate it has the capacity and capability to deliver its aims. Projects will be assessed on their relative merits against other project proposals.
- 1.8 Applicants must demonstrate how they will deliver key UKSPF/REPF outputs and outcomes. These in line with the national UKSPF/REPF Programme definitions and progress against these form part of key reporting metrics to government. Further information can be found on the [W&F UKSPF website](#).
- 1.9 The Funding Call sets out the priority outputs and outcomes under each intervention. Applicants can however consider if their project will contribute to any other outputs and outcomes set out in the UKSPF/REPF guidance.
- 1.10 The application, assurance and claims and monitoring processes detailed in this guidance provide the accountable body with appropriate measures to ensure the programme is managed and governed in a fair and transparent manner and mitigate the opportunity and occurrence of fraud.

## **2. PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT**

- 2.1 UKSPF and REPF was originally allocated to Westmorland and Furness's predecessor Councils – Barrow Borough Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council.
- 2.2 Each Council produced an Investment Plan to draw down UKSPF and REPF setting out challenges, opportunities and priorities for action. A summary of their combined documents can be found on the [W&F UKSPF website](#).
- 2.3 Successful projects will need to set out how they can contribute to the aims of the combined Investment Plans, as well as other key documents such as the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan and other important local and national plans and strategies.
- 2.4 The Council is committed to encouraging sustainable and green growth. Applicants should consider how projects can work with the natural environment to achieve project objectives, and – at a minimum – consider the project's impact on our natural assets and nature. Further information

on how to take these considerations into account can be found in the guidance at [Enabling a Natural Capital Approach \(ENCA\)](#).

- 2.5 Applicants should consider how their project can contribute to net zero and nature recovery objectives, including the UK's legal commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, wider environmental considerations, such as resilience to natural hazards and the 25 Year Environment Plan commitments.
- 2.6 The Council is committed to delivering inclusive growth as well as our responsibilities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 2.7 The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities in exercising their functions to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. In the design and delivery of UKSPF and REPF schemes, applicants should ensure their projects are compliant with the public sector equality duty.

### **3. THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

- 3.1 Projects seeking support from the W&F UKSPF/REPF go through a single stage application process, which is assessed by Westmorland and Furness Council using HMT Green Book principles.
- 3.2 Application forms are available to download from the [W&F UKSPF website](#). Alternatively, a form can be requested by contacting [UKSPFEnquiries@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPFEnquiries@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk).
- 3.3 The Council encourages interested organisations to make contact at the earliest opportunity, to discuss potential applications. This can be done by contacting the Council at [UKSPFEnquiries@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPFEnquiries@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk).
- 3.4 More detailed technical guidance on completing the application form can be found on the [W&F UKSPF website](#). This is for information only, and to assist applicants in understanding the process the Council will follow when appraising each application.
- 3.5 Completed application forms (including appendices) should be submitted to the Council at [UKSPFDelivery@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPFDelivery@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk), by the date

and time specified within the relevant Funding Call. Applications received after this time may be rejected.

- 3.6 Applications should be submitted with all appropriate supporting documentation. Further information on the types of supporting documentation required is listed in the application form.
- 3.7 During the assessment process, the Council may need to contact the applicant with technical queries relating to the application. Please ensure that contact details are provided for a person who is able to receive and answer queries in a timely manner. Failure to address queries in full may impact on the approval recommendation.
- 3.8 In completing the application form proportionality of response is key. Projects seeking an investment of £50,000 would not be expected to provide as much detail as a project seeking a £500,000 investment. In some instances, an additional level of detail will be required and the form identifies where this is the case.
- 3.9 Applications are subject to a competitive process and successful projects may be offered a funding award which is different to that set out in the application. Organisations applying for UKSPF/REPF are encouraged to identify the scalability of their project.
- 3.10 The anticipated timescales for assessment and funding decision are set out in the Funding Call. In the event these timescales change, applicants will be notified at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.11 Within the application form organisations must demonstrate they will deliver any procurement activities in line with programme regulations. As detailed below in 3.12 and 3.13.
- 3.12 Public Sector bodies shall ensure compliance with Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015 or Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 including any amendments or any subsequent legislation that replaces the Act.
- 3.13 **Other organisations involved in UKSPF/REPF project delivery**, should adopt such policies and procedures to ensure that value for money has been obtained in the procurement of goods or services funded by the Grant. **The following minimum procedures shall be followed:**

Estimated Total Contract Value	Minimum Process	Method of invitation
Up to £2,000	Responsible Officer must use a process which obtains best value for money	One oral quotation (confirmed in writing where the quotation exceeds £500)
£2,001 - £50,000	2 written quotations	Invitation to submit a quotation in writing to at least 2 candidates
£50,001 - £100,000	3 written quotations	Invitation to submit a quotation in writing to at least 3 candidates
Exceeding £100,000 but below relevant Procurement Threshold	Written Tender	Open advertisement of contract appropriate to the relevant market
Procurement Threshold and above	Written Tender	Open advertisement of the contract in accordance with the Regulations

- 3.14 All applications must take consideration of how the activity outlined will be delivered in line with subsidy control requirements, as outlined within the UKSPF guidance: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: subsidy control \(7\)](#).
- 3.15 All projects must comply with the UKSPF publicity guidelines: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: branding and publicity \(6\)](#).

#### 4. ASSESSMENT, ASSURANCE AND DECISION MAKING

- 4.1 All applications will be assessed by Westmorland and Furness Council, in line with HMT Green Book principles.
- 4.2 Assessments will be proportionate with applications for larger values and of a higher degree of complexity or risk, requiring a greater level of scrutiny.
- 4.3 As part of the assessment process, the Council may need to clarify information provided. Applicants will be required to respond to queries in a timely and thorough manner. Failure to respond to queries could result in an incomplete assessment and impact on funding decisions.
- 4.4 Applications will be subject to review by Legal and Finance teams to confirm the project can be delivered in line with UKSPF/REPF requirements, particularly in relation to complying with Subsidy Control regulations.

- 4.5 At the discretion of the Council, further information may be requested at any point of the application process, or during the delivery of the project, to assist with the above reporting requirements.
- 4.6 Upon completion of an assessment, a summary report for each application will be prepared which highlights key risks, deliverables, a recommendation for approval or rejection, a recommended funding award and any recommended conditions linked to the funding award.
- 4.7 Any commercially sensitive information will be redacted in the summary report. Applicants are required to confirm what is commercially sensitive in the application form.
- 4.8 The report will be shared with the Local Partnership Group (LPG) who are invited to provide their views on the strategic fit and deliverability of each application. Any potential conflicts of interest within the LPG will be managed in line with the Terms of Reference for the Group.
- 4.9 The assessment summary and views of the LPG will be considered by the Westmorland and Furness Investment Board who will make a final funding decision.
- 4.10 All unsuccessful projects will be offered feedback on their application.
- 4.11 The Council's decision is final.

## **5. CONTRACTING, REPORTING & DELIVERY**

- 5.1 All successful applicants will be notified of the investment decision in writing.
- 5.2 Upon confirmation that an applicant accepts the offer of funding, the Council will issue a Grant Offer Letter. The Grant Offer Letter will set out key information including the terms of the funding award, the level of funding, deliverables, timescales and reporting requirements. The offer letter may also include any conditions related to the funding which the applicant will need to satisfactorily address.
- 5.3 Any grant award will be subject to Freedom of Information requests. Any details of awards will be made public and successful projects must agree to participate in any publicity or advertisements.
- 5.4 Projects will be required to closely monitor the delivery and success of the Project throughout the project lifetime and record achievement performance against key milestones and of the project outputs and outcomes.

- 5.5 Project reporting will be via the Council's Project Report Form which will typically be submitted on a quarterly basis. In order to comply with government requirements claims will need to be submitted to the Council no later than the dates set out in the table below (these dates may be subject to change).

Project Claim Submission Date
15 January 2024
15 March 2024
15 July 2024
15 October 2024
15 January 2025
15 February 2025

- 5.6 Failure to submit properly completed report forms and appropriate supporting information may affect future grant payments.
- 5.7 Grant Payments will be made to an agreed profile set out in the Grant Offer Letter. The Council reserves the right to alter the profile of Grant Payments during delivery, to address identified performance issues for example, but not limited to, delays in project delivery or expenditure falling behind agreed profiles. The Council's approach to Grant Payments is designed to assist applicants in managing cashflow during project delivery, however applicants may be required to manage project cashflow from other resources for periods, including at the end of project delivery prior to the release of a Grant Retention Payment.
- 5.8 In line with the Programme regulations UKSPF and REPF must be fully delivered by 31 March 2025. To ensure the Council can successfully close these Programmes all projects must be financially complete by **31 January 2025**. The Council will be unable to support projects after this date.