

UKSPF Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

Applicant Guidance

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Introduction

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

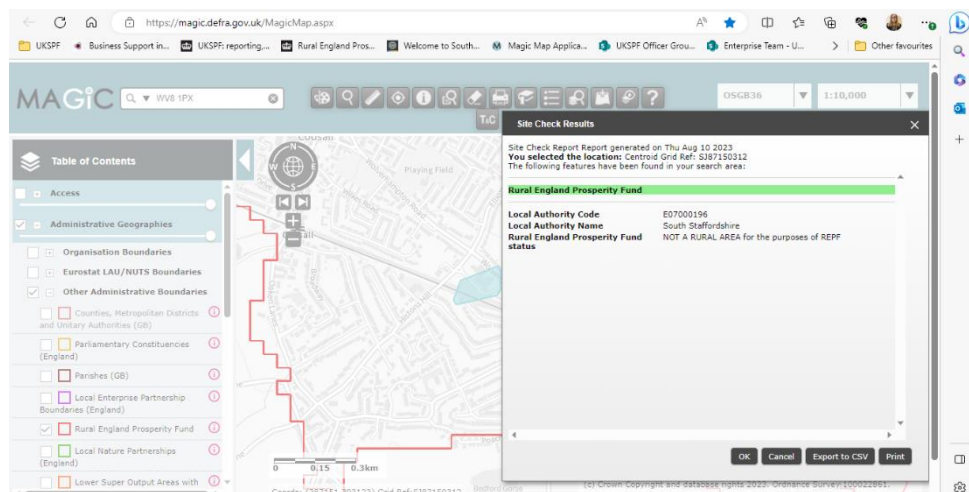
This is made up of two funds, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund. UKSPF is for delivery over the coming financial year, reporting ends in March 2026.

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, the initial two priorities are applicable to the Rural England Prosperity Fund, detailed later in this document.

Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

This is a ring-fenced and related UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation that provides funding specifically for micro/small organisations and businesses to deliver capital

projects in rurally located areas. Due to the funding conditions, some parts of the larger South Staffordshire villages are not included, a postcode search may be undertaken to check applicant eligibility or eligibility of the project location access [Magic Map Application \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://magic.defra.gov.uk) once in the application, from the left-hand menu, select:



+Map Layers

+ Administrative Geographies

+ Other Administrative Boundaries

+ Rural England Prosperity Fund.

- Input a postcode in the top search box,

- then select the postcode from the drop down.
- To pinpoint the property or exact location select the (i) icon from the icon bar,
- moving the +, hover over the site in the rhombus shaped area,
- click to identify whether the location is eligible.

The example results pop up above shows the ineligible council offices in Codsall, which is identified as NOT A RURAL AREA for the purposes of REPF. An eligible pop up will be identified as A RURAL AREA for the purposes of REPF. If in doubt, please email UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk for help.

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

This funding is specifically for capital expenditure, lasting assets, costs of which have a book value of at least £1,500 and retain a book value of at least 5 years.

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 £1,500 for organisations and £5,000 minimum for businesses. The maximum value is £25,000 for both organisations and businesses.

Funding will typically be limited to a maximum of 70% of the project's total eligible costs for organisations and 60% 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 UKSPF/REPF (small enterprises only) as long as they jointly are under the maximum funding value of £50,000 from South Staffordshire Council.

Dual funding schemes and projects from any of the other following government funds renders them ineligible for UKSPF or REPF.

[Farming Investment Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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

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

Please note any projects must be completed, evidenced, paid for and claimed by 31st December 2025. 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 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 REPF funding, your organisation/business and/or your project and beneficiaries must be in an eligible South Staffordshire area.

Please check, as under REPF criteria there are ineligible postcode areas in some of the larger settlements. REPF is specifically for registered organisations/businesses from micro to small size with funding available for capital only projects.

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 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?

Under REPF, your organisation or business size depends on whether you can apply for this funding, it needs to be Micro or Small. (Under UKSPF it may be larger). The size depends on the number of full-time equivalent (*FTE) paid employees it has and its financial performance. The table below shows what qualifies micro or small size.

Data source [Companies House accounts guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/companies-house-accounts-guidance)

Qualifying criteria	Micro size enterprise	Small size enterprise
Turnover	Not more than £632,000	Not more than £10.2 million
Balance Sheet Total	Not more than £316,000	Not more than £5.1 million
Number of employees	Not more than 10 (FTE's)	Not more than 50 (FTE's)

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

*A full-time employee must do 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.

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

If your business/organisation is linked to other businesses/organisations, this might mean you exceed the small business/organisation size requirements for REPF.

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

Application process

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

We encourage you to email your project idea with any eligibility questions to UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk before submitting an Expression of Interest.

The application process is in 2 stages. Firstly, you must submit an on-line Expression of Interest which will be reviewed for eligibility. 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 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 REPF priority

s for funding.

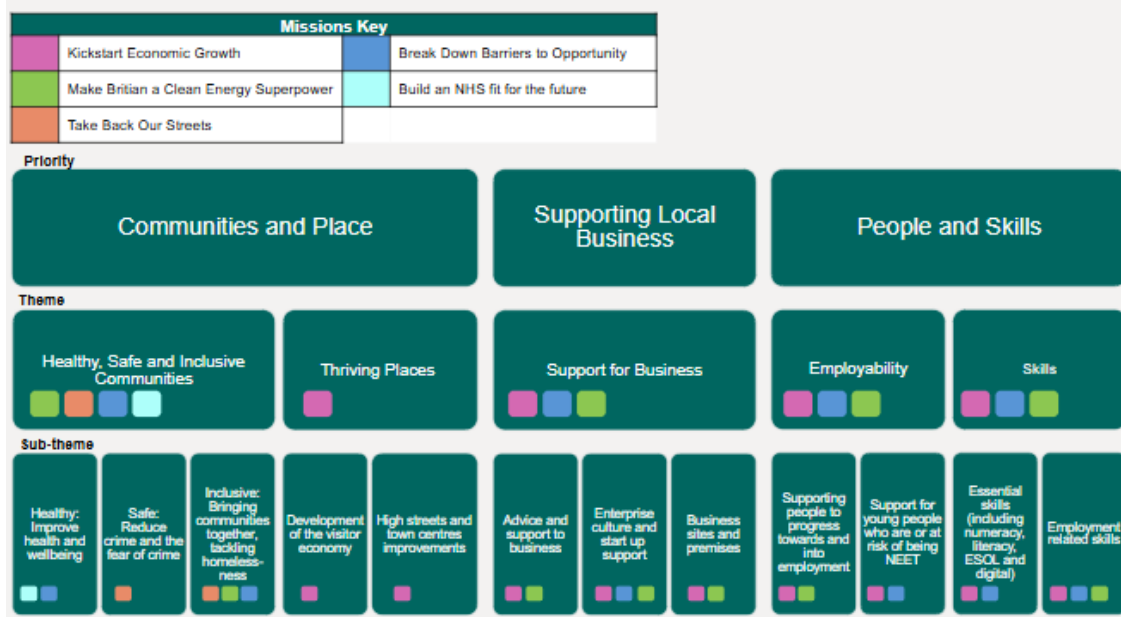
When you apply for funding, you are competing with other applicants in our area. We're looking for projects that best meet the local and REPF/UKSPF outputs and outcomes for funding, and that are good value for taxpayers' money. If you can show this clearly in your application, you're more likely to be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

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

REPF priorities for funding

Your project is unlikely to get funding unless it contributes to one of the following priorities: **Communities and Place and Supporting Local Business**

UKSPF investment priorities and the government's Missions



Communities and place

There are two themes under the priority of Communities and Place, these are Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities, and Thriving Places.

Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities supports:

- Mission 2: Make Britain a clean energy superpower
- Mission 3: Take back our streets
- Mission 4: Break down barriers to opportunity
- Mission 5: Build and NHS fit for the future

Its scope includes improving health and wellbeing, reducing crime and the fear of crime, bringing communities together and tackling homelessness.

Thriving Places supports Mission 1: Kickstart economic growth. Its scope includes development of the visitor economy, and high streets and town centres improvements.

Supporting local business

The Support for Business theme sits under the **Supporting Local Business** priority. This is the only theme under this investment priority.

Support for Business supports:

- Mission 1: Kickstart the economy
- Mission 2: Make Britain a clean energy superpower
- Mission 4: Break down barriers to opportunity

Its scope includes advice and support to business, enterprise culture and start-up support, as well as business sites and premises.

Your application should clearly demonstrate the outputs and outcomes your project will meet. Please see the full list of the outputs and outcomes here:-

[REPF Output and Outcome Indicator Lists 2025-2026 v.2.ods](#)

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/organisation and your project are eligible. Then we assess how well your project meets the local and UKSPF priorities for the funding. This funding aims to increase community and economic activity including business growth and job creation. 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 to further assess/evaluate you/your organisation/business and project, we will request evidence of:

- Initial identification - driving licence, if 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 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 per cost or tenders
- a business plan if available, if not, sufficient financial forecasts
- letters of support, survey reporting, research to show need*
- anything that has changed since submission of your EoI*
- 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

You can use REPF funding to cover a certain percentage of capital project costs - some costs may not be eligible. Funding is for 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.

How much funding is available?

The amount you can apply for depends on the size of your business, the type of project and the costs involved. The minimum grant is £1,500 for organisations, £5,000 for businesses, the maximum is **£25,000**.

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. 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 80%. 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 UKSPF/REPF (small enterprises only) as long as they jointly are under the maximum funding value of £100,000 from South Staffordshire Council.

Has your organisation/business 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, 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 funding you can get, to comply with the UK subsidy control rules and regulations. If unsure, please email UKSPF@sstaffs.gov.uk

Paying for the project

Funding is paid in one lump sum or in two 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, and that minimum value of each claim will be £1,500 for organisations and £5,000 for 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 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
- 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

The application process is in 2 stages.

First, you must submit an 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) form. If we endorse your EOI, we will then invite you to submit a full application.

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 - <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/uk-shared-prosperity-funding/rural-england-prosperity-fund>

We cannot accept proposals in any other format than online - 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

If an agent submits an Eoi on your behalf, their contact name and email address must be included. An agent cannot submit an Application for you, identification is required.

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

What happens after you submit your Eoi

After you submit the form, you'll get a receipt email to confirm we have received it. We may ask you to resubmit the Eoi if the information is not sufficient to assess. Once your Eoi has been assessed we will let you know whether or not it has been endorsed.

If endorsed, you will be invited to submit an Application, this will be requested via email using an online portal (Apply4online), when completing the online application there will be a requirement to upload supporting documentation - details of which is covered later 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 outputs and outcomes.
Value for money	How the project costs represent value for money. The amount of funding required to deliver the outcomes and outputs, including jobs. What difference funding will make compared to what would happen without funding.
Need for the project	Why funding is required for the project. There is a clearly identified need for the project. The impact the project has on the community/other businesses, both positive and negative. There is 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 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. 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 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)