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Dorset Council

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and
Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

Grant Scheme Document

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2 Background

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

For more information, visit [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus)

In addition to funding provided by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), a total of £2.1 million of capital funding has also been awarded to Dorset from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

3 Dorset UKSPF / REPF grants

This Document provides comprehensive details regarding Dorset UKSPF and REPF grants.

To access the funding Dorset Council (DC) has developed Investment Plans (IPs) for the UKSPF and REPF. The IPs were developed in conjunction with local stakeholders and through consultation with key stakeholders including members of the Dorset SPF local partnership. The IPs outline how the funding will be used to target local priorities or in pursuit of specific, measurable goals.

For UKSPF, Dorset Council chose interventions across the three 'Investment Priorities' of Communities and Place, Local Business and People and Skills. DC's £4.44m allocation is divided across the three Investment Priorities as follows:

Investment Priority	Amount £'s	%
Communities & Place (Lead: DC Economic Growth & Regeneration)	£ 1,088,458	25%
Local Business Support (Lead: DC Economic Growth & Regeneration)	£ 2,705,354	61%
People & Skills (Lead – DC and Skills & Learning Adult Community Education)	£ 642,000	14%
Total	£4,435,812	100%

The following interventions have been chosen under each Priority. Only selected interventions use grants to deliver their outputs.

3.1 Communities and Place interventions (4 interventions):

- **E2 & E12:** Funding for new, or improvements to existing community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding. (Grants)
- **E13:** Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change. (Delivered through Healthy Homes Dorset.)

- **E14:** Funding to support relevant feasibility studies. (In-house provision)
- **E15:** Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. (Delivered through DC's Digital Place team.)

3.2 Local Business interventions (8 interventions):

- **E17:** Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally. (Delivered through DC's Visit Dorset team.)
- **E18:** Supporting Made Smarter Adoption: Providing tailored expert advice, matched grants and leadership training to enable manufacturing SMEs to adopt industrial digital technology solutions including artificial intelligence; robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing; industrial Internet of Things (IoT); virtual reality; data analytics. The support is proven to leverage high levels of private investment into technologies that drive growth, productivity, efficiency and resilience in manufacturing. (Grants)
- **E20:** Research and development (R&D) grants supporting the development of innovative products and services. (Grants)
- **E24:** Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, incubators and accelerators for local enterprise (including social enterprise), which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace. (mix of grants/in-house provision)
- **E26:** Support for growing the local social economy, including support for community businesses, co-operatives and social enterprises. (Grants)
- **E28:** Export grants to support businesses to grow their overseas trading, supporting local employment. (Grants)
- **E29:** Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity. (Delivered through DC's Low Carbon Dorset team)
- **E31:** Funding to support relevant feasibility studies leading to new projects. (Grants)

3.3 People & Skills interventions (5 interventions):

- **E33:** Employment support for economically inactive people. Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps.
- **E34:** Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), life skills and career skills provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol on courses and complete qualifications.
- **E37:** Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training

courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.

- **E39:** Green skills courses targeted around ensuring we have the skilled workforce to achieve the government's net zero and wider environmental ambitions.
- **E41:** Funding to support local digital skills.

3.4 Outputs / Outcomes

At the Investment Plan (IP) stage, detailed information on specific projects was not required. Instead, the IPs outlined broad proposals, outputs, and outcomes based on the local context. These targets were in line with the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions \(2\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), and are periodically updated, especially following updates to the government output and outcome definitions.

Each Intervention has a measurable target and outcome. Grant awards will require recipients to agree to specific targets that will lead towards delivery of these outputs and outcomes.

3.5 Updates and amendments

This document provides details regarding the DC UKSPF grants programme only. For more details on the wider Dorset UKSPF Scheme please see DC web pages on the DC website for Shared Prosperity Fund / Rural England Prosperity Fund / Multiply (i.e. [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Dorset Council](#))

DC will update this Scheme Document, including the allocations of funding, grant eligibility, and timeline, as Dorset UKSPF / REPF progresses, in order to ensure the objectives of the Funds are met and the best use is made of public funds. It is a live document and will be updated throughout the UKSPF programme.

4 **Grant application process**

Applications are to be made via the DC website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Dorset Council](#).

Applicants for the Local Business Support grant schemes will, in the first instance, be directed to apply via DC's UKSPF business support service.

4.1 Communities and Place Grant Scheme

Please note as of 31/08/2024, Both E2 and E12 Community Infrastructure Grants are now not available as the full budget has been allocated to projects across the Dorset Council area.

4.1.1 Intervention: E2: Community Infrastructure grants

Size of overall grant pot: £200,000

Initial grant pot allocation	£200,000
Eligible grant size	£1,000-£15,000
Match funding required	10% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£4,500
Projected number of grants awarded	44

4.1.2 Intervention: E12: Community Infrastructure grants: Parish & Town Councils Fund

Size of overall grant pot: £175,000

Applications open to Parish and Town Councils for FY 24/25 – submit online identifying E12P&TC grant pot

Initial grant pot allocation	£175,000
Eligible grant size	£20,000-£100,000
Match funding required	10% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£58,000
Projected number of grants awarded	3

Summary

E2/E12 Grants to provide support for grassroots community-led local development, supporting local groups to lead on what their community needs and wants. Community infrastructure is the facilities, structures and environment of a neighbourhood (sometimes referred to as the built environment), which contributes to the quality of life and overall safety and health of a community. Eligible activity could include, for example, projects focusing on connectivity to services; crime prevention; facilities and infrastructure; or safety and security. Projects located in areas of greatest need are especially encouraged. In designing a project, applicants should give consideration to the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

Outputs and outcomes

This intervention is expected to deliver the following outputs and outcomes:

- Grants to organisations.
- Non-financial support to organisations.
- Neighbourhood improvements undertaken.
- Local events or activities supported.
- Facilities supported / created.
- Greenhouse gas reduction.
- Improved perception of facilities.

4.1.3 Application submission information

Groups and organisations are required to submit a costed application to DC detailing what the grant will procure, which organisation(s) are involved (e.g. delivery partner) if applicable, timescales, outputs and outcomes and baseline for evaluation. For further details, please see Appendix 2 Grant Schemes – Supplementary information and conditions. Applications are to be made via the Dorset Council website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Dorset Council](#).

Applicants are encouraged to notify the relevant Town or Parish Council of their communities and place grant application.

4.1.4 Award levels and match funding

Communities and Place Grants (main fund) are for between £1,000 and £15,000. Groups and organisations are required to provide at least 10% (i.e. 1:10) match funding. For example, the maximum £15,000 grant will require match funding of at least £1,500.

E12 Communities and Place Grants (Parish and Town Council only specific fund) are for between £20,000 and £100,000 (max). Parish and Town Councils are required to provide at least 10% match funding. For example, the maximum £100,000 grant will require match funding of at least £10,000.

4.1.5 Ineligible expenditure

This UKSPF grant cannot be used to for:

- Motor vehicles
- Staff wages
- Land purchases
- Core revenue funding and continuation funding for projects started or completed.
- Payments for activities of a party political or exclusively religious nature
- Value Added Tax (VAT) reclaimable from His Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)
- Gifts, or payments for gifts or donations
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties
- For a full list of ineligible expenditure, please refer to Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions.

4.1.6 Eligibility (Main E2 fund)

- All sizes of groups or organisations located within the DC administrative / geographical area.
- Project must complete by 31st December 2024.

- If the organisation or group is registered or trading, then it must be financially sound.
- Organisations that will not exceed the permitted Subsidy Control threshold of £315,000 in relation to Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) during this and the two previous financial years (please see Appendix 1: Grant Schemes, Additional terms – Subsidy Control).
- The group or organisation must commit to providing an end of project monitoring report with supporting evidence.
- Groups and organisations that have not been approved for another Dorset UKSPF funded grant (including grants from Low Carbon Dorset)
- Groups and organisations will only be eligible for a maximum of one grant. Where multiple organisations share directors and premises, only one grant application will be considered.
- All activity and actions relating to this UKSPF funded grant must be completed within the same DC financial year (i.e. which ends in March each year). This includes the applicant undertaking and completing the project activity; payment for the project activity by the applicant; provision of monitoring and evaluation report to DC; submission of claim to DC with evidence of payment; as well as payment of the grant by DC.

Failure to meet these deadlines may result in the group or organisation having to repay the grant. Please additionally refer to Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions.

4.1.7 Eligibility (Parish and Town Council E12 fund):

Dorset Parish and Town Councils, consortia of Dorset Parish and Town Councils, and consortia led by Dorset Parish and Town Councils only.

- The group or organisation must commit to providing an end of project monitoring report with supporting evidence.
- All activity and actions relating to this UKSPF funded grant must be completed within the same DC financial year (i.e. which ends in March each year). This includes the applicant undertaking and completing the project activity; payment for the project activity by the applicant; provision of monitoring and evaluation report to DC; submission of claim to DC with evidence of payment; as well as payment of the grant by DC.

Failure to meet these deadlines may result in the Parish or Town Council having to repay the grant. Please additionally refer to Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions.

4.1.8 Community grant payment

In accordance with Cabinet Office guidance on Managing Public Money, it is expected that grant funding payment models will reflect need, and avoid paying portions of funding up-front, except where that can be justified and is approved via the organisation's formal governance route.

DC appreciates that community groups may need Communities and Place Grants to be paid up-front to the group or organisation, ahead of the activity taking place. This will be assessed on application, especially where cash-flow may be a barrier to the project being delivered successfully.

Please note when paying for an item, payment must be made by either direct bank transfer or debit card. Through using these methods, it is then easy to track the payment across to the bank statement and to provide the evidence of expenditure for that item.

Where funding is paid in arrears grants will be paid as quickly as possible on production of evidence and relevant documentation.

4.1.9 Application deadlines and timings

There will be two application rounds for the Communities and Place Grant Scheme.

The “First Application Round” (Round 1) ran from Tuesday 12th December 2023 to Wednesday 31st January 2024 relating to expenditure in financial year 2023/24 only. Project activity had to be completed and paid for by the group or organisation no later than the end of February 2024. All supporting documentation (including claim form; evidence of payment; and monitoring and evaluation report etc.) to be provided to DC within two weeks of completion of the activity. Therefore, the latest possible date for submitting this documentation was Friday 15th March 2024. Following approval of documentation, DC paid the grant to the group or organisation by Thursday 28th March 2024.

The “Second Application Round” (Round 2) took place between Monday 29th April 2024 to Sunday 30th June 2024 with Round 2 relating to expenditure in financial year 2024/25.

For the Second Application Round, the grant activity must be completed and paid for by the group or organisation by no later than Sunday 15th December 2024.

All supporting documentation (including claim form; evidence of payment; and monitoring and evaluation report etc.) is to be provided to DC within two weeks of completion of the activity. Therefore, the latest possible date for submitting this documentation to DC is Tuesday 31st December 2024, which is an absolute deadline. Following approval of documentation, DC will pay the grant to the group or organisation promptly.

For both the First Application Round and the Second Application Round of the Communities and Place Grant Scheme, decisions on applications will be made by the Grants Panel.

Round 1: the panel met every three weeks to assess the applications.

Round 2: the panel met every month to assess the applications.

All applicants were notified of decisions within two weeks of the Panel.

Please note, **that failure to meet these deadlines may result in the group or organisation forfeiting the grant and no payment being made**, where a grant is being paid in arrears. Where a grant has been paid up up-front then the failure to meet these deadlines may result in the group or organisation having to repay the grant.

4.2 Supporting Local Business Grant Schemes

4.2.1 Intervention E18: Digital technology and automation grants

Size of overall grant pot: £175,000

Initial grant pot allocation	£175,000
Eligible grant size	£2,000-£20,000
Match funding required	100% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£5,000
Projected number of grants awarded	35

Summary

Grant programme to support enterprises in adopting new technologies and digital technologies. Eligible activity could include, but is not limited to, the purchase of new equipment; software development and implementation; IoT; adaptations; automation and robotics. When designing a project, applicants should give consideration to the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

Outputs and Outcomes

This intervention is expected to deliver the following outputs and outcomes:

- Grants to enterprises.
- Non-financial support to enterprises.
- People attending training courses.
- Increased investment.
- Enterprises adopting new technologies or processes to the firm.

4.2.2 Intervention E20: R&D grants

Size of overall grant pot: £270,000

Initial grant pot allocation	£270,000
Eligible grant size	£2,000-£20,000
Match funding required	100% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£6,000
Projected number of grants awarded	45

Summary

Research & Development grants to facilitate the development of innovative products and services. R&D is a broad term to describe the ways in which businesses spend resources and make investments to innovate and increase revenue. Eligible activity could include, but is not limited to, R&D tax credit support; support with Intellectual Property (IP); patents; trademarks; designs; copyrights; or other options for protecting IP; capital funding for new machinery for new products; and development of new services or products. When designing a project, applicants should give consideration to the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

Outputs and Outcomes

This intervention is expected to deliver the following outputs and outcomes:

- Non-financial support to enterprises.
- Enterprises receiving grants.
- Increased investment.
- Enterprises adopting new technologies or processes to the firm.
- Enterprises adopting new or improved products or services.
- Increase in active R&D enterprises.
- Enterprises bringing new products to the market.

4.2.3 Intervention E24: Business growth grants and Startup grants

Size of overall grant pot: £480,000

Initial grant pot allocation	£480,000
Eligible grant size	£2,000-£20,000
Match funding required	100% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£4,000
Projected number of grants awarded	120

Summary

Grants to facilitate growth, promote innovation and increase productivity, together with the creation of high skilled, high waged jobs in Dorset businesses. Eligible activity could include, but is not limited to, investment in new production methods; staff training programmes / up-skilling staff; marketing and e-commerce development; net zero innovation. When designing a project, applicants should give consideration to the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

Outputs and Outcomes

This intervention is expected to deliver the following outputs and outcomes:

- Non-financial support to enterprises.
- Enterprises receiving grants.
- Assistance to potential entrepreneurs to be business ready.
- New enterprises created.
- Increased investment.
- Enterprises adopting new technologies or processes to the firm.
- Early-stage enterprises increasing their revenue as a result of support.

4.2.4 Intervention: E28: Export grants

Size of overall grant pot: £90,000

Initial grant pot allocation	£90,000
Eligible grant size	£2,000-£20,000
Match funding required	100% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£6,000
Projected number of grants awarded	15

Summary

Grants to facilitate and support businesses that are either, already exporting, or wish to start exporting. Eligible activity could include, but is not limited to, introductory training programmes; developing export strategies; customs declarations; market research; translation services; completing exporting forms; Intellectual Property (IP); Trade Shows (to attend, or exhibit, at overseas or UK inbound trade shows); safety and security declaration requirements; and specialist / niche training. When designing a project, applicants should give consideration to the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

Businesses are required to submit a costed application to DC detailing what support the grant will procure, which organisation(s) i.e. delivery partner / consultant), if applicable will deliver the support, timescales, outputs and outcomes and baseline for evaluation.

Outputs and Outcomes

This intervention is expected to deliver the following outputs and outcomes:

- Enterprises receiving grants.
- Enterprises engaged in new markets.
- Enterprises increasing their export capability.

Please note, this grant is not contingent on increasing export performance, nor is the grant tied to actual or anticipated exportation or export earnings.

4.2.5 Intervention E31: Feasibility study grants

Size of overall grant pot: £90,000

Initial grant pot allocation	£136,000
Eligible grant size	£5,000-£50,000
Match funding required	100% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£10,550
Projected number of grants awarded	13

Summary

Grants to provide funding to support relevant feasibility studies. When designing a project, applicants should give consideration to the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

Outputs and Outcomes

This intervention is expected to deliver the following outputs and outcomes:

- Feasibility studies developed.
- Projects arising from funded feasibility studies.

4.2.6 Application information

The Supporting Local Business grants are **paid in arrears**, after the activity has been completed.

Businesses are required to submit a costed application to DC detailing what support the grant will procure, which organisation(s) (i.e. delivery partner / consultant), if applicable will deliver the support, timescales, outputs and outcomes and baseline for evaluation. For further details, please see Appendix 2 Grant Schemes – Supplementary information and conditions.

Applicants for the Local Business Support grant schemes will, in the first instance, be directed to apply via DC's UKSPF business support service. After support, applications are to be made via the Dorset Council website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Dorset Council](#) with a reference number allocated by the business support team.

4.2.7 Award Levels and match funding

Grant awards are from £2,000 up to £20,000 per business. Businesses are required to provide at least 100% (i.e.1:1) match funding in cash. For example, the maximum £20,000 grant will require at least the same cash match funding (i.e. £20,000).

For grants bigger than £20,000 in the first instance contact the UKSPF team with an expression of interest (EOI). This may be considered on a case by case basis.

4.2.8 Ineligible expenditure

This UKSPF grant cannot be used for:

- Motor vehicles
- Staff wages
- Core revenue funding and continuation funding
- Stock
- 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

For a full list of ineligible expenditure, please refer to Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions.

4.2.9 Eligibility

- All sizes of enterprises located within the DC administrative / geographical area.
- Trading businesses (i.e. cannot be in administration, insolvent or be in a situation where a striking-off notice has been made).
- Businesses that will not exceed the permitted Subsidy Control threshold of £315,000 in relation to Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) during this and the two previous financial years (please see Appendix 1: Grant Schemes, Additional terms – Subsidy Control).
- Businesses that i) have completed DC's UKSPF business support service and received a reference number; and ii) commit to providing an end of project monitoring report with supporting evidence.
- Businesses that have not been approved for another UKSPF funded grant under Low Carbon Dorset. Successful UKSPF business grant awardees from Rounds 1 and 2 may apply for a further grant in Round 3 if previous grants are completed.
- Businesses where multiple businesses share directors and premises, only one grant application will be considered.
- All activity and actions relating to this UKSPF funded grant must be completed within the same DC financial year (i.e. which ends in March each year). This includes the applicant undertaking and completing the project activity; payment for the project activity by the applicant; provision of monitoring and evaluation report to DC; submission of claim to DC with evidence of payment; **and** payment of claim by DC.

Please note when paying for an item, payment must be made by either direct bank transfer or debit card. Through using these methods, it is then easy to track the payment across to the bank statement and to provide the evidence of expenditure for that item.

Failure to meet the above deadlines will result in the business forfeiting the grant and no payment being made. Please additionally refer to Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions.

4.2.10 Application deadlines and timings

There were three application rounds for the Supporting Local Business Grant Schemes.

Following approval of documentation, DC will pay the grant to the business/enterprise promptly. All expenditure must complete by 31st March 2025.

Failure to meet these deadlines will result in the business forfeiting the grant and no payment being made.

Past Application Round dates and details:

The “First Application Round” (Round 1) ran from Tuesday 12th December 2023 to Wednesday 31st January 2024 relating to expenditure in financial year 2023/24 only. For the First Application Round, the grant activity was required to be completed and paid for by the group or organisation no later than the end of February 2024.

The “Second Application Round” (Round 2) ran from Monday 29th April 2024 to Sunday 30th June 2024 and relates only to expenditure in financial year 2024/25.

For the Second Application Round, the grant activity must be completed and paid for by the Business or organisation by no later than the Sunday 15th December 2024. With all supporting documentation (including claim form; evidence of payment; and monitoring and evaluation report etc.) is to be provided to DC within two weeks of completion of the activity. Therefore, the latest possible date for submitting this documentation to DC is Tuesday 31st December 2024, which is an absolute deadline.

Following approval of documentation, DC will pay the grant to the group or organisation by Friday 10th January 2025.

The “Third Application Round” (Round 3) will be opened on Tuesday 1st October 2024 and closed on Sunday 17th November 2024 and relates only to expenditure in financial year 2024/25.

Grants Panel

Applications will be reviewed, discussed and decisions made by the Grants Panel.

Round 1: the panel met every three weeks to assess the applications.

Round 2: the panel met every month to assess the applications.

Round 3: There will be three panel meetings, 4th week of October and 2nd and 4th week of November 2024.

Applicants will be notified of decisions within ten days of the Panel Meeting.

4.2.11 Round 4 – Business productivity grants

A final round of funding relating to expenditure for the 2024/25 financial year will launch on Wednesday 12th February 2025 and close on Monday 24th February 2025.

This grant round will focus on business productivity and will act as pilot scheme ahead of extension to SPF funding Dorset will receive for the 25/26 financial year.

Businesses can apply for grants ranging from £5,000 to £40,000 to help cover up to half the total cost of a project. To be eligible, projects must be completed by 31 March 2025.

Grants will be considered that; facilitate growth, promote innovation and increase productivity, together with the creation of high skilled, high waged jobs in Dorset businesses. Eligible activity could include, but is not limited to, investment in new production methods; new machinery; staff training programmes / up-skilling staff; net zero innovation.

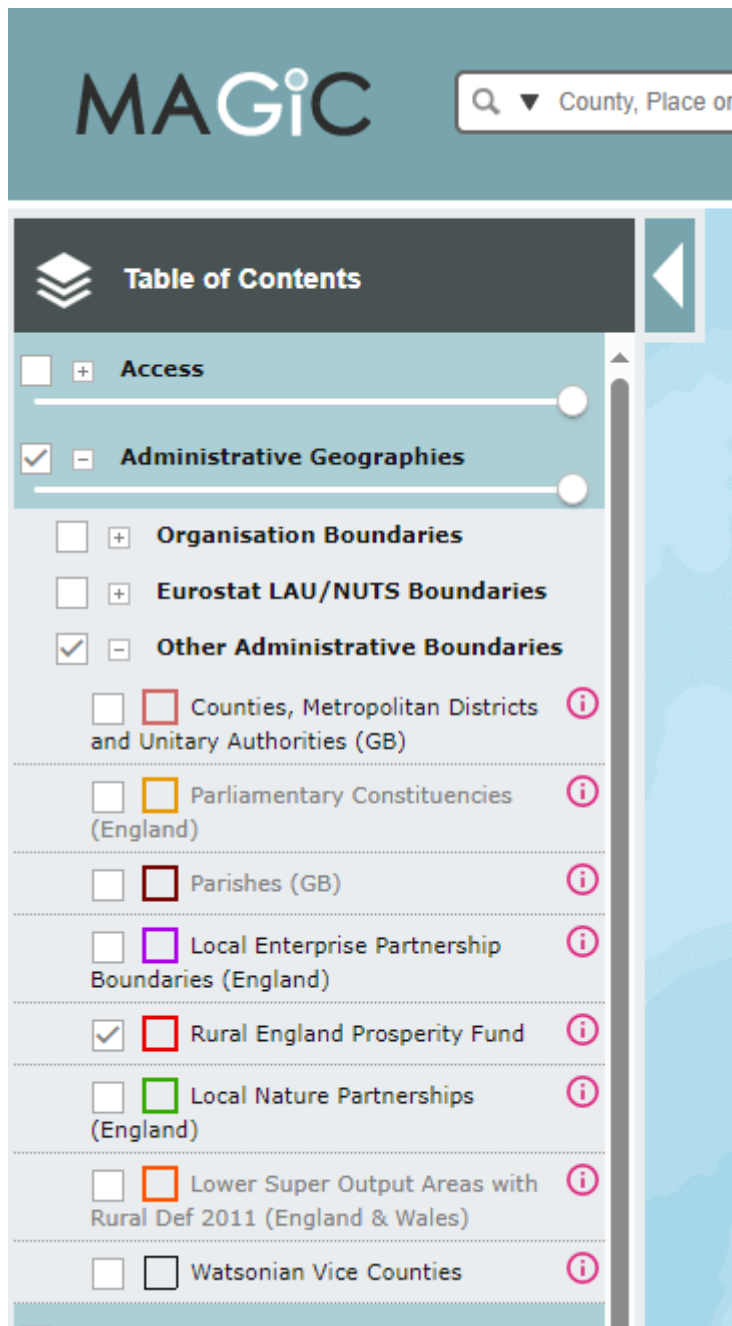
Businesses who have received funding in previous rounds **can** apply again for this round of funding.

5 **Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) interventions**

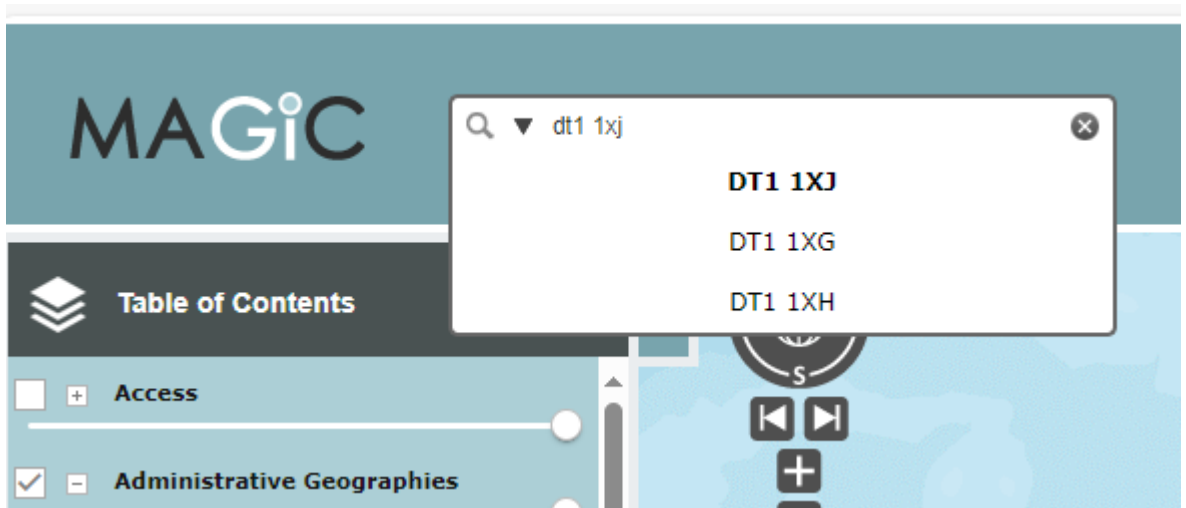
The REPF provides capital funding for interventions in rural parts of the country. In the DC area almost the whole of the county is eligible. The main exceptions are built-up areas of Ferndown, West Moors, Weymouth, and Wimborne Minster.

To check a specific location, Use [Magic Map Application \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://defra.gov.uk/magic-map-application) to check postcode eligibility for the fund.

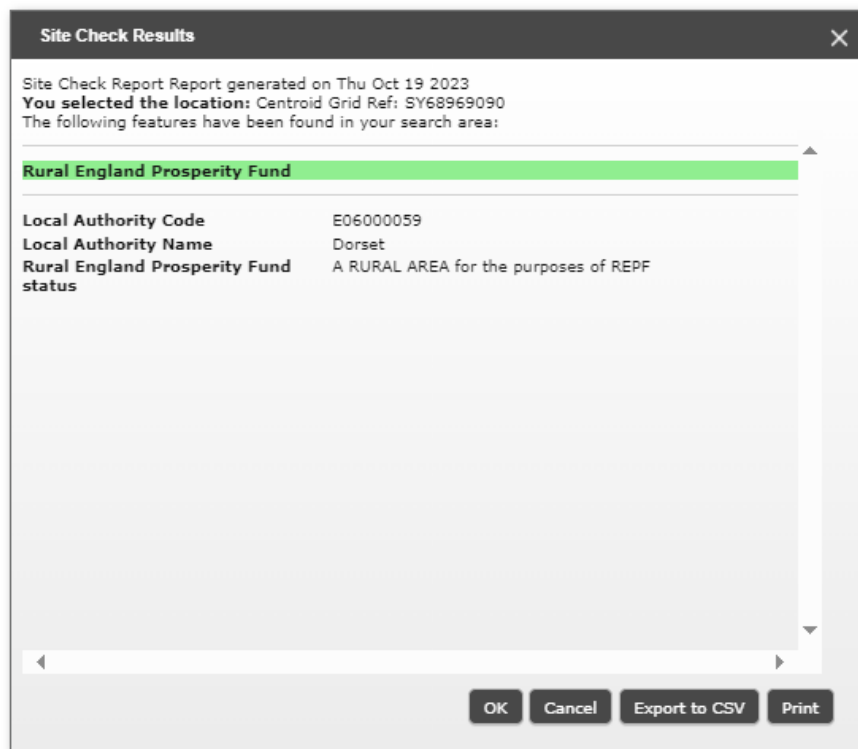
- i Under 'Table of Contents' select 'Administrative Geographies' then 'Other Administrative Boundaries' then select 'Rural England Prosperity Fund' (REPF):



- ii Search for a location by entering the postcode within the search bar (top left of page) and selecting it from the drop down or manually zoom in on a location:



- iii From the toolbar of icons above the map select the (i) 'Identify' icon and click on the exact location of your project. A pop-up box will appear showing the site check results as A RURAL AREA for the purposes of REPF or NOT A RURAL AREA for the purposes of REPF:



A separate IP for the REPF was submitted in November 2022 and approved in April 2023 covering the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. The delivery of the REPF is through the

partnerships and mechanisms set up for DC's UK SPF. The Interventions for the REPF fall under two sets of interventions, namely:

- Intervention 1 – Supporting rural businesses.
- Intervention 2 – Supporting rural communities.

Following advice from DC's Senior Leadership Team, together with internal and external consultation, the following interventions have been chosen for the DC area:

5.1 Supporting rural businesses:

Intervention 1.1: Capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas – to provide:

- Low Carbon Capital Grants £300,000 (lead: Low Carbon Dorset grants)
- Business grants £800,000 (lead: Growth & Economic Regeneration)

Intervention 1.3 (aligns with E17): Capital grant funding for developing and promoting the visitor economy – to provide:

- 2 tourism trails £65,000 (leads: Dorset Council/Dorset National Landscapes)

5.2 Supporting rural communities:

Intervention 2.2 (aligns with E11): Capital grant funding for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civic society and community groups – to provide:

- Low Carbon Capital Grants for energy efficiency £206,918 (lead: Low Carbon Dorset grants)

Intervention 2.6 (aligns with E7): Capital grant funding for active travel enhancements in the local area – to provide:

- 1 new cycleway and accessible footpaths in the Purbecks £115,000 (lead: Dorset Council)

5.3 Rural England Prosperity Fund Grants

Under intervention 1.1 the business grants will be delivered as part of the UKSPF Supporting Local Business Grant schemes for interventions E18, E20 and E24, and E28 which are detailed at Section 3 above.

Initial grant pot allocation	£800,000
Eligible grant size	£2,000-£20,000
Match funding required	100% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£20,000
Projected number of grants awarded	40

Under interventions 1.1 and 2.2, the Low Carbon Capital Grants will be delivered by Low Carbon Dorset as a separate stand-alone grant scheme within UKSPF/REPF.

5.4 Eligibility for REPF

Any organisation with legal status can apply for grant funding. This may include:

- private sector companies
- voluntary organisations
- registered charities

We cannot support projects or costs where there is a statutory duty to provide them.

We cannot support projects that have received funding from other Defra schemes. This includes:

- [The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme](#) - 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](#) - grants to improve productivity and bring environmental benefits, covering 2 funds - the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund and the Farming Transformation Fund.
- [The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund](#) - grant funding over 3 years (to 2025) to support capital improvement projects for village halls, covering extending buildings and modernising facilities.

Support for farmer-owned businesses is available under the [Farming Investment Fund \(FIF\)](#) , [Organisations giving free advice in your area \(listed by county\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Future Farming Resilience | Business Information Point \(businessinfopoint.co.uk\)](#) .

6 Appendix 1: Grant Schemes, Additional terms – Subsidy Control

6.1 How grants will be provided

All applications for UKSPF grant funding will be required to apply for the grants via the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Dorset Council](#) online application process.

Applicants for the Local Business Support grant schemes will first be directed to apply via DC's UKSPF business support service. After support, applications are to be made via the Dorset Council (DC) website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Dorset Council](#) with a reference number allocated by the business support team.

In all cases, applicants will be required to confirm that they are eligible to receive the grant. Additionally, applicants are under an obligation to notify DC should they no longer meet the eligibility requirements.

Applicants will be notified within ten days of the Grants Panel meeting as to whether their application has been successful. Grants are paid in arrears upon completion of the project and following submission of the required documentation (i.e., monitoring report, copy invoices and proof of payment and photos of the purchased item or successful change). Once the documentation has been approved, grants will be paid to the successful applicant via a BACS transfer within two weeks.

There is a finite amount of funding. When this is exhausted there will be no further awards. No activity will be possible beyond 31st March 2025.

6.2 Subsidy Control and the Subsidy Control Act 2022

Having left the European Union (EU), the UK is no longer subject to EU State Aid rules. In September 2020, the UK Government announced its intent to design a new domestic subsidy control regime that best suited the needs of the UK, representing value for money to the UK taxpayer and complying with international obligations. The Act was introduced to Parliament as the Subsidy Control Bill in June 2021 and came into force on 4th January 2023.

All support and grants will be issued under Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA). According to the "*Statutory Guidance for the United Kingdom Subsidy Control Regime*" which was published in November 2022 and which public authorities such as the Council must have regard to when giving a subsidy, MFA allows public authorities to award low value subsidies without needing to comply with the majority of the subsidy control requirements. MFA has a financial threshold so no recipient can receive more than £315,000 over the applicable period. The applicable period is:

- The elapsed part of the current financial year (i.e., from 1 April); and
- The two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.

Cumulation rules apply to MFA. This is essential to ensure that the UK is complying with its international obligations. MFA subsidies cumulate with each other and with other subsidies that fall within the category of 'Minimal or Services of a Public Economic Interest (SPEI) financial assistance'. This captures all the different low value exemptions an enterprise could receive support from UK public authorities.

For example, the following should all be taken into account during the current and previous two financial years: MFA; SPEI assistance; aid given under the EU State Aid de minimis regulations either before the end of the implementation period of 31 December 2020 or after this date, if by virtue of the Northern Ireland Protocol; and subsidies given as small amounts of financial assistance (SAFA) under Articles 364(4) or 365(3) of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement after the end of the implementation period but prior to this section of the Act coming into effect.

This prevents enterprises being able to receive many subsidies that are in isolation considered low value, but cumulatively could create distortive impacts on domestic competition or investment or international trade or investment if their combined value exceeds the threshold.

Businesses are required to keep a written record of the amount of MFA received and the date/s when it was received. The written record must be kept for at least three years beginning with the date on which the MFA was given. This will enable businesses to respond to requests from public authorities on how much MFA they have received and whether they have reached the cumulative threshold. Further details can be found in the Statutory Guidance [here](#). It is the responsibility of all businesses to declare the amount of subsidies they have received.

All applicants will be required to complete and submit an MFA Subsidy letter, in the following format:

Dear **XXXX**

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Subsidy Control (formerly ‘state aid’)

The Council wishes to provide grant funding to your organisation under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The amount of funding is **£XXXX**.

By way of explanation, when the Council makes grants to commercial enterprises, this can amount to a public subsidy within the meaning of the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Such subsidies will however be exempt from the substantive subsidy control requirements if the subsidy amounts to what is called ‘Minimum Financial Assistance’ (MFA).

MFA may be given by the Council to an organisation if in doing so this does not exceed the threshold of £315,000 in public subsidy received by a commercial enterprise over the previous three financial years.

Before making payment, we therefore require written confirmation from you that receipt of the payment in relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will not exceed the threshold of £315,000 received by you by way of public subsidy in the previous three financial years.

You are required to keep a written record of the amount of MFA you have received and the date/s when it was received. The written record must be kept for at least three years beginning with the date on which the MFA was given. This will enable you to respond to future requests from public authorities on how much MFA you have received and whether you have reached the cumulative threshold.

Confirmation must be sent by someone who is authorised to do so on behalf of your organisation.

Please provide the necessary confirmation below. If you have any queries, please let me know.

Kind regards

XXXX

I confirm, for and on behalf of **XXXX** that receipt of MFA of **£XXX** from Dorset Council will not exceed the organisation’s MFA threshold specified in section 36(1) of the Subsidy Control Act (2022).

.....
Signature

.....

Name

.....

Position

.....

Date

7 Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions

7.1 Business enterprise

A business enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity.

7.2 Ineligible expenditure

In the Dorset Council (DC) area, funding from the UKSPF cannot be used for the following:

- Purchase or leasing of motor vehicles.
- Staff wages.
- Payments for activities of a party political or exclusively religious nature.
- Value Added Tax (VAT) reclaimable from His Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC).
- Stock
- 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.
- 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.
- Projects or costs where there is a statutory duty to provide them.

REPF cannot support projects that have received funding from other Defra schemes. This includes:

[The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme](#) - 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](#) - grants to improve productivity and bring environmental benefits, covering 2 funds - the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund and the Farming Transformation Fund

[The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund](#) - grant funding over 3 years (to 2025) to support capital improvement projects for village halls, covering extending buildings and modernising facilities.

7.3 Information to include in submissions

Applicants are to provide a costed business plan covering their proposal. This business plan should include:

- A brief background of your business or organisation and how it has developed. How the need for the project has been identified (e.g. what problem will it solve).
- What new offer would this project support (economic impact) if granted funding?
- Outline project costs: Please provide a breakdown of costs. Please include, how much funding is needed for the project (in £'s)? How much are you applying for?
- If the total project costs exceed the amount of funding request, how will the balance in funding be filled? How much match funding are you proving and from what source?
- What will the UKSPF grant funding be spent on? What specific elements of your project are you looking for us to support?
- Set out how the grant will help improve your business / community and / or facilitate growth.
- Will your project need planning permission or other consents / permissions? If yes, when will you apply for it or do you already have it? (Please provide planning application reference and copies of any required consents or permissions.)
- When do you expect to deliver the project? What date do you expect the work to be completed by?
- A risk register for the project.
- A copy of your most recent tax return
- The last 2 sets of approved financial accounts showing a breakdown for the previous three financial / trading years. This should include information on your business turnover in the last financial year and estimated turnover for this financial year.
- Recent comparable quotes / prices (within the last 3 months) for the service and / or purchases of equipment / technology to be funded in line with the UKSPF requirements.
- Schedule of works to verify deliverability.
- Completed MFA subsidy declaration letter (see Appendix 1: Grant Schemes, Additional terms – Subsidy Control; Section 5.2)

In addition, applicants are required to provide supporting paperwork and payment information to confirm the applicant's identity and liability cover, including:

- Last 3 bank statements to verify the payment information and trading activity (the bank statement must show the business or organisations name, sort code and bank account number).
- A recent utility bill or similar type of invoice (within 3 months) to verify trading address.
- Certificate of Public Liability Insurance / Indemnity Cover
- Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance/ Indemnity Cover
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy or relevant equivalent ie. Health and Safety, Staff Handbook.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy (as per Data Protection Act 2018)

For Startup grants:

For those enterprises applying for 'Startup' grants the following documentation is requested where those in the main scheme are not available. They include:

- Business Plan (3 years minimum) with cash flow. (Essential)
- Additional Questions we would expect to be answered within your submission includes:
 - Do you have previous experience of operating in the sector?
 - Can you prove business acumen or knowledge?
 - How do you see the grant being used
- Any previous supporting information, including linked businesses (as relevant)
- Evidence of match funding. (essential)
- Relevant Insurances i.e. Employers' insurance, Public Liability (as relevant)
- An opening statement from an accountant with contact details. (where possible)

7.4 Best value

The applicant, business, group or organisation will use all reasonable endeavours to secure best value for money and will act in a fair, open and non-discriminatory matter in all purchases of goods, services and works using the UKSPF grant. DC reserves the right to request evidence that an appropriate procurement process has taken place by requesting provision of documentation which demonstrates the same.

7.5 Revenue and capital assets

Revenue expenditure means the day-to-day costs (e.g. pay, utilities, expenses, supplies and services etc.) incurred by the business, group or organisation.

Capital expenditure means expenditure on the acquisition, construction or enhancement of significant assets (e.g. land and buildings, equipment) which have a long-term value to the business, group or organisation (also referred to as capital spending or capital payments on capital assets).

The applicant, business, group or organisation may not dispose of any capital asset bought or built with the UKSPF grant during its normal economic life without DC's prior written consent. If such consent is given, DC will specify whether all or part of the proceeds of sale must be repaid to DC.

The applicant, business, group or organisation will maintain any capital asset bought with the UKSPF grant in good repair and condition and inform DC of any significant loss or damage to it. DC is entitled to monitor, inspect and require information on any capital asset bought or built with the UKSPF grant for the duration of its normal economic life.

7.6 Assessment and decisions

Applications will be determined solely on their initial submission. Applicants will not be able to provide any subsequent information to support their application unless this is specifically requested by DC for clarification purposes.

An application for a Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed on-line application form is received by DC. Prior to submitting an application under the Supporting Local Business Grant Schemes, the applicant must have completed DC's UKSPF business support service and received a reference number.

Applications will be assessed by a panel coordinated by the Council's Growth and Economic Regeneration team. The outcomes of the applications will be notified to the DC UKSPF Local Partnership Board.

Enterprises, businesses, groups, organisations, Town Councils and Parish Councils etc. are only eligible for one grant award from the UKSPF programme. In the event that an applicant forfeit's their grant and no payment is made, they will not be eligible to reapply.

DC retains the right to update all or any of the scheme documentation, initiatives and projects throughout the programme. This includes changes to grant award levels and match funding requirements.

7.7 Scoring Criteria

All applications will be scored in line with the following scoring guide detailed below.

- Category: 80% weighting
- Match funding: 10% weighting
- Additional Criteria: 10% weighting

Category: Supporting local business - Objectives: Business growth

This category will support business growth projects which create high skilled / high wage jobs (i.e. quality jobs). Projects which increase a business's productivity and promote innovation are encouraged, as well as projects which support the development of R&D and / or exporting.

Score	Descriptor and indicators for "Supporting local business" category. (Weighting: 80% of total)
30	High confidence that the project will deliver a positive impact. A higher score will be attributed to projects whereby they can demonstrate a link between suggested project and a positive impact on business growth and high skilled jobs. Applicants are to show how their project will affect jobs created; increase productivity / innovation / efficiency improvements. As well as directly or indirectly influencing an increase in turnover / profitability of the enterprise.
20	Reasonable confidence that the project will have a positive impact on the enterprise (as described above).
10	Limited confidence that the project will have a positive impact on business growth or productivity, nor help the business to improve. No real indication of project success.
0	No positive impact on business growth or productivity noted.

Category: Communities and place - Objectives: Community infrastructure

This category will support grassroots community-led projects, designed to deliver what the community needs and wants. Projects which support or build-upon the facilities, structures

and environment of a neighbourhood, and thereby contribute to the quality of life and overall safety and health of that community are encouraged.

Score	Descriptor and indicators for “Communities and place” category. (Weighting: 80% of total)
30	High confidence that the project will deliver a positive impact on the local community, contributing to improvements in the quality of life and overall safety and health of that community. A higher score will be attributed to projects whereby they can demonstrate a link between suggested project and outcomes. An innovative approach to cross sector working will also increase scores as will projects which demonstrate a wider impact on Dorset’s economy and communities.
20	Reasonable confidence that the project will have a positive impact on the community.
10	Limited confidence that the project will benefit the local community or help local people and local businesses to be safe and have an improved quality of life.
0	No positive impact on local community noted.

Match Funding

Score	Descriptor and indicators for “Match funding” (Weighting: 10% of total)
5	Match funding from the applicant significantly outweighs the grant amount requested.
3	Match funding from the applicant is above the minimum requirements and provides a significant proportion in relation to the grant amount requested.
1	Match funding (in cash) from the applicant is provided, to the minimum amount required under the grant application (i.e. 100% for Supporting local business applications and 10% for Communities and place applications).
0	Only the minimum amount of in-kind match is provided (Only applies to Communities and place applications.)

Additional Criteria (AC.)

The following additional criteria and considerations apply for all applications:

AC1. Located in area(s) of greatest need and / or deprivation.

AC2. Environmental and low carbon impact of the proposal

Score	Descriptor and indicators for “Additional criteria” (Weighting: 5% for each AC; 10% of total)
5	High confidence that the project will deliver a positive or beneficial outcome in respect of this additional criteria.
3	Reasonable confidence that the project will deliver a positive or beneficial outcome in respect of this additional criteria.

1	Limited confidence that the project will deliver a positive or beneficial outcome benefit in respect of this additional criteria.
0	No positive or beneficial outcome noted in respect of this additional criteria.

7.8 Notification of decision

All decisions made by DC shall be notified to applicants by email within two weeks of the decision being made. Successful applicants will receive an “Offer of Grant Funding Agreement”, setting out the terms and conditions of the UKSPF Grant.

Where DC has reason to believe that the information it holds about the business is inaccurate it may withhold the grant. If following award of a grant it is determined that the information provided is inaccurate, DC reserves the right to recover any grant incorrectly paid in full.

7.9 Review of decisions

There is no appeal process of decisions. However, if requested, applicants will be given feedback on their unsuccessful application and will be given the option to reapply at a later date. There is a maximum of one resubmission per business, group or organisation. Please note, further applications will not be considered.

7.10 End of project monitoring report and evidence of spend

At the end of your project grant recipients are required to provide an end of project monitoring report (template will be provided) detailing the outputs and outcomes of the project. Grant recipients are also required to provide evidence showing how the grant funding has been spent. Acceptable examples of evidence include invoices; receipts; timesheets; progress photos / videos; copies of marketing collateral. Proof of expenditure is required before the grant payment can be paid.

7.11 Project changes

The UKSPF Grant is only to be used for the purpose set out in the project application, and the “Offer of Grant Funding Agreement”. There will be no changes to the objectives, outputs and outcomes of the Project without the prior written approval of DC.

7.12 Complaints

DC’s complaints procedure (available on [Complain to Dorset Council - Dorset Council](#)) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about the scheme.

7.13 Taxation and VAT

The grant will not cover VAT as this can be claimed back by the applicant from HMRC. Documentation must be provided to support any instances where the applicant is unable to claim back VAT and seeks for this to be included within the grant amount.

DC does not accept any responsibility in relation to an applicant’s tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position. All applicants

should note that DC is required to inform relevant government departments of all payments made to businesses.

The grant is not a consideration for a supply and is a non-business activity for VAT purposes.

7.14 Managing the risk of fraud

Neither DC nor the Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the grant schemes or fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them.

Applicants should note that, where a grant is paid by the DC, details of each individual grant may be passed to the Government.

Fraud checks will be carried out before a grant is awarded. As part of this, applicants are required to provide the following supporting paperwork and payment information:

- A recent bank statement (within 3 months) to verify the payment information and trading activity (the bank statement must show the business name, sort code and bank account number).
- A recent utility bill or similar type of invoice (within 3 months) to verify trading address.

7.15 Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid

If it is established that any award has been given incorrectly due to error, misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to DC by an applicant or their representative(s), DC will look to recover the amount in full.

Any changes to the use of the grant which will result in a material variation cannot proceed without the prior written agreement of DC.

7.16 Marketing and communications

DC and UKSPF 'funded by government' must be accredited on any marketing or promotion of the Grant awarded. You must state that 'This project is part funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.' Both the DC and UK Government logos must be included on all publicity and communications (including digital) regarding UKSPF.

7.17 Data Protection and use of data

All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices (which are available on the DC's website at [Data protection - Dorset Council](#)) together with the UKSPF Privacy Notice [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: privacy notice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

7.18 Freedom of Information (FOI)

As a public authority and controller DC receives information requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the UK GDPR. Under these laws, DC may disclose or publish information you have provided to us as part of your grant application, including your organisation's name (sole traders will be anonymised), details of the amount of any grant awarded to your organisation, and a summary of the project the funding will be used to

support. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and DC will only disclose personal information where we are legally required to do so. If you consider any of the information you have provided to be commercially sensitive, please state this clearly on the application form. DC will consider whether it can withhold information marked commercially sensitive under an exemption within the FOIA, and we may take steps to consult you further before reaching a decision. DC reserves the right to determine at its sole discretion whether to publish any information you have indicated is commercially sensitive.

The Local Government Transparency Code requires any payments exceeding £500 to be published online (which will include grant payments) on a quarterly basis. It also recommends publishing grant payments made to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations on a monthly basis. Accordingly, details of all grant awards will therefore be published on the DC website.

7.19 Modern slavery

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Pursuant to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, DC has adopted a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement. [Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2022 to 2023 - Dorset Council](#). The Protocol and Guidance for Modern Slavery – available at [Protocol and Guidance for Modern Slavery - Dorset Council](#).

7.20 Further guidance

Government Functional Standards

The standards set out in the following HM Guidance [Government Functional Standard GovS 015: Grants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) on grants has been adhered to in designing the UKSPF grant schemes.

Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients

Please see the following document from HM Government: [2019-01-15 Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients v. 1.01.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).