



# Shared Prosperity Fund

# Frequently

# Asked Questions

V 8

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# 1. About the Shared Prosperity Fund

## 1.1 What is Shared Prosperity Funding?

Shared Prosperity Funding is part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Programme; it is designed to:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector; especially in those places where they are lagging;
- Spread opportunities and improve public services; especially in those places where they are weakest;
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging; especially in those places where they have been lost;
- Empower local leaders and communities; especially in those places lacking local agency.

## 1.2 How much money will Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly receive?

The total programme value for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is £132,001,531 until 31 March 2025.

## 1.3 Who is responsible for managing the fund?

Cornwall Council has been designated as Lead Authority by the UK Government. Cornwall Council is responsible for:

### **Fund Management**

- Issuing invitations to bid;
- Receiving applications;
- Appraising applications;
- Contracting, paying grants to successful projects, monitoring delivery and managing their performance.

### **Fund Strategy and Implementation**

- Ensuring alignment with Government policy and strategy;
- Management of partnerships and stakeholders;
- Programme level monitoring and evaluation of priorities and objectives;
- Communication and PR.

### **Fund Support and Facilitation**

- Providing guidance on the most suitable route to funding;
- Supporting applicants in the submission of high quality applications;
- Signposting to specialist advice or other funding streams.

## 1.4 How can I access Shared Prosperity Funding?

There are two main ways for organisations to access Shared Prosperity Funding:

- Respond to an open invitation to bid. These thematic funding opportunities will be delivered and contracted by Cornwall Council and will be publicised and launched on the Good Growth website.

Or

- Via programmes (known as delegated funds) such as the Community Capacity and Facilitation programme, the Community Levelling up programme or the Good Growth Hub. These programmes will support multiple beneficiaries with a range of support including smaller grant awards. Delegated funds will operate their own separate application, appraisal and contracting processes. Please note that some programmes are not yet live.

All interested parties must complete a brief enquiry form which can be found here: [ciosgoodgrowth.com](https://ciosgoodgrowth.com). Your interest in Shared Prosperity Fund will be registered on a database and the enquiry triaged. The Good Growth Team will respond within 5 working days and provide project specific advice about the eligibility and the best route to funding for your individual project.

## 1.5 Can I benefit from Shared Prosperity Funding if I do not make an individual application?

Residents and businesses may also benefit through a variety of different types of funded activity, such as:

- Training Programmes;
- Business Advice;
- Provision of employment opportunities;
- Development of community assets;
- Public realm improvements;
- Flood Risk reduction

## 1.6 Who can apply?

Any legally constituted organisation in the public (including town and parish councils), private (e.g. sole trader, partnerships, limited companies) and community and voluntary sectors can receive funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver an approved project. An approved project is a project governed by a funding agreement between the relevant Lead Authority and the project deliverer.

Organisations located / registered outside of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are eligible to apply for funding however all supported activity must take place within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

There are no exemptions that are industry specific providing the proposed project delivers against the strategic vision set out in Good Growth Investment Plan and delivering the outputs and outcomes specified for the open invitation you are submitting an application against. Where multiple organisations will be involved in delivering a project one organisation will need to apply as Lead Partner.

### 1.7 Is the fund open to start-up businesses?

Yes, although the process for demonstrating business viability and financial due diligence is different if you don't have 2 years trading accounts.

We will need to see supporting evidence of:

- Is the company an offshoot company or an existing company?
- is there previous trading history?
- Is there previous experience of operating in the sector?
- Can you prove business acumen?
- Any previous account information, including linked businesses, etc?
- CRN Number?
- What % of private match will they provide?

Please note we might need to ask further information as part of the appraisal process. Start-up companies will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Please attach all supporting documents with your project at the review point.

If further advice is needed please email [goodgrowth@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:goodgrowth@cornwall.gov.uk)

### 1.8 Could SPF be combined with other sources of funding such as Levelling Up or Town Deal funding?

Yes, we are actively encouraging project applicants to leverage in funding from other sources to maximise funding for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Towns or places in receipt of other sources of funding such as Towns Fund will not be precluded from bidding for SPF, but each project application will need to clearly demonstrate the need for funding and will be assessed against applications from other places, including towns that have not received any other sources of funding.

### 1.9 Geographical distribution of funds.

SPF will be used in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to target those areas and communities that need it the most so we can ensure that all parts of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly can prosper and thrive. The open invitations 'initiation forms' will highlight any specific requirements around geographical targeting to ensure that we spread the benefits from SPF across CloS. This will then form part of the assessment of those bids coming forward in

response to those open invitations. Similarly programmes such as the Community Levelling Up programme and the Community Capacity and Facility Programme will specifically target those areas of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly that need support the most.

### 1.10 Will funds be allocated on a first come first served basis?

Many of the open invitations will remain open for 12 months with quarterly application review points. Applications received in advance of each review point will be considered at the next Economic Prosperity Board meeting and there is no guarantee as to how much funding there will remain for later review points.

All applications will be assessed under the same appraisal framework to ensure equality of funding decisions. Consideration of how much funding to contract following each review point, will be taken by the Economic Prosperity Board. It is also worth noting that this is year one of a three-year programme with the current open invitations representing the first opportunity to bid for funding and where the majority of the funding will be allocated in years two and three which will allow the time to develop quality applications.

### 1.11 Is there a minimum / maximum grant?

Yes, this depends on each open invitation that you are applying to. The amounts are outlined in the initiation forms which can be found with each funding opportunity on the website: [ciosgoodgrowth.com/funding-opportunities/](https://ciosgoodgrowth.com/funding-opportunities/)

SPF is a funder of last resort and can only be used to fund a demonstratable gap in your project costs. We therefore expect applicants to utilise all other funding available to them in the first instance. Part of the assessment process will look at what this gap is and if successful you might be awarded a lower grant rate, the minimum necessary to make the project happen. Projects will be expected to have explored other routes of funding as part of their options analysis.

Future small grant schemes will allow for smaller minimum grant applications.

### 1.12 What can't be funded?

The aim of Shared Prosperity is to make a positive difference to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. In order to be successful all projects funded under SPF must therefore make a positive contribution to Good Growth, as outlined in the CloS SPF Good Growth Investment Plan and the Good Growth policy both available on the website: [ciosgoodgrowth.com](https://ciosgoodgrowth.com).

In addition, the following costs are not eligible for support through SPF:

- Paid for lobbying; which means using grant funds to fund lobbying (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; or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action;



- Using grant funds to directly enable one part of government to challenge another on topics unrelated to the agreed purpose of the grant;
- Using grant funding to petition for additional funding;
- Expenses such as for entertaining; specifically aimed at exerting undue influence to change government policy;
- VAT reclaimable from HMRC; VAT that cannot be recovered from HMRC is an eligible cost;
- Payments for activities of a party political or exclusively religious nature;
- Interest payments or service charge payments for finance leases;
- Gifts, or payments for gifts or donations;
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties;
- Payments for works or activities which the Lead 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;
- Bad debts to related parties;
- Payments for unfair dismissal or other compensation;
- Depreciation or amortisation costs;
- Contingencies and contingent liabilities;
- Dividends;
- Costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors;
- Costs involved in winding up a company;
- Legal expenses in respect of litigation;
- Costs incurred by individuals in setting up and contributing towards private pension schemes;
- Payments that breach or are contrary to the funding agreement or UK legislation;
- Stock to be sold on.

### 1.13 Are residential and housing projects eligible?

All projects funded under SPF must deliver against the CloS Good Growth Investment Plan. While residential housing is not excluded it was not set out as a priority in the CloS Good Growth Investment Plan. The principle aim of SPF is to deliver economic growth, however, if there is the requirement for a small amount of residential accommodation, for example, live / work scenarios in a town centre regeneration project, then please discuss your project with the Good Growth Team.

### 1.14 What is Multiply?

The Multiply programme will be funded via ring-fenced grant within Shared Prosperity Fund and aims to increase the levels of functional numeracy in the adult (19+) population across the UK. Multiply will complement and enhance existing numeracy training provision and promotion. Success measures include:

- More adults achieving maths qualifications courses (up to, and including, Level 2), an increase in participation in numeracy courses and improvements in functional numeracy;

- Improved labour market outcomes, for example fewer numeracy skills gaps reported by employers, and an increase in the proportion of adults that progress into sustained employment and / or education;
- Increased adult numeracy across the population – this overall impact, which goes beyond achieving certificates or qualifications, will track both the perceived and actual difference taking part in the programme makes in supporting learners to improve their understanding and use of maths in their daily lives, at home and at work - and to feel more confident when doing so.

### 1.15 Is it correct that People and Skills won't be funded until 2024/25?

Yes, as stated in Section 2.5 of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus local areas are not able to invest in the People and Skills Priority until 2024/25. However, in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly we do expect people and skills to be integrated into the design and delivery of projects.

A number of European Social Funded projects will continue to be funded into 2023. Activity under the Skills and People priority cannot commence until April 2024, but we will be issuing funding opportunities in advance of this to ensure projects under these two strands are ready to start delivery from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024. We would also recommend that organisations review all funding opportunities that are launched, including those under Communities and Place and Local Business Support as these will have people and skills outcomes included and can offer funding in advance of the People and Skills opportunities for April 2024.

### 1.16 How do smaller specialist skills providers be part of the shared prosperity plans?

We would encourage you to put in an enquiry form on our website outlining a general overview of your project/interest. We will then be able to support you in terms of the best fit for your projects in terms of current and forthcoming funding opportunities and alert you to any potential delivery organisations that you could partner with and also support you in terms of the timing of your application

### 1.17 What is your position on Sole Traders and Voluntary organisations applying?

Sole traders and voluntary organisations are eligible for UKSPF funding.

## 2. Application Support

### 2.1 Will there be any help available to applicants?

Cornwall Council has a dedicated project facilitation and support team for the programme. Once you have submitted an initial enquiry form and your project has been triaged you will

be provided with contact details for the Team. There are also funding streams available to support with specialist advice and feasibility support.

The delegated small grant schemes will also have facilitation staff to provide support to organisations and the community capacity and facilitation team will be working in local communities to support organisations.

## **2.2 My project potentially cuts across several themes (community, people & skills and supporting local business) - do I need to apply 3 times?**

If you are unsure which opportunity to apply for, we can discuss best fit with you. Email us at [goodgrowth@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:goodgrowth@cornwall.gov.uk)

## **2.3 In what sense, if at all, does the "High Street" label apply in rural communities?**

Providing that the project fits the general criteria outlined in the Town, Rural and Coastal High Streets Development and Skills programme (BUS006) then this open invitation is very much welcoming project proposals from rural communities. We would like to see proposals from neighbourhood shopping areas in smaller villages/hamlets in rural and coastal areas as well as high streets in towns. In addition, if a project located adjacent to a high street or neighbourhood shopping area can demonstrate that they will encourage more footfall into the town/village/rural community they may also be able to apply.

## **2.4 Will you publish which projects get funded as that will help applicants see the sorts of priorities that are being funded?**

Yes. Projects that are approved will be announced on the Good Growth website after the funding agreements have been signed.

## **2.5 Can I make more than one application to Shared Prosperity Fund?**

Organisations can make multiple applications to Shared Prosperity Fund. This could be one organisation seeking funding for two different projects that fit under separate open invitations or one project that is seeking funding for different elements of that project under different open invitations.

Applicants should be mindful that each submission will have a separate application form, will be appraised individually and have a separate funding agreement with specific outputs and outcomes to deliver. Applicants cannot double count outputs and outcomes, e.g., if one job is created and reported within one project it cannot be counted again in another. If you intend to make more than one application for the delivery of individual parts of a larger project, please discuss with the Good Growth Team prior to submission.

We are unable to accept one application form to cover combined applications to multiple invitations to bid.

## 2.6 Are there any more details on the outputs and outcomes?

The outputs and outcomes projects are expected to contribute towards are outlined in the initiation form for each individual open invitation.

An updated list of outputs and outcomes can be found on the Government SPF website; [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1091803/UKSPF\\_Indicators\\_13.07.22.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1091803/UKSPF_Indicators_13.07.22.xlsx)

## 2.7 Regards Real Living Wage - Please can you clarify the current rate you are working to? If this is not currently met in all positions is this a blocker for applying?

All projects, if not already paying RLW, should work toward paying [Real Living Wage](#) at the time of the final claim submission. This commitment will be a contractual output.

<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage>

## 2.8 What percentage of costs will SPF cover?

Cornwall Council encourages applicants to maximise the leverage of other funding, this may include other public sector funding or private sector investment. We recognise that not all projects or applicants will be able to secure match funding, however applicants should note value for money will be a selection consideration.

The value for money selection criteria amongst other things will look at amount of grant against the amount of outcomes/outcomes. For example a project asking for 80% grant rate and delivering 4 outputs will not score as well as a project asking for 40% and delivering 4. Therefore, in a competitive application process it is in the applicant's interest to apply for the minimum funding amount to make the project happen.

Please note that SPF is the lender of last resort, we therefore expect applicants to explore all other forms of funding. You will need to provide evidence that you have sought other funding and this has not been possible. We expect this to be evidenced by email trails, rejection letters etc see section 1.1., above).

## 2.9 Are in-kind contributions allowed as match funding?

In-kind contributions are eligible as match funding.

## 2.10 What is the difference between capital and revenue?

Both capital and revenue expenditure are eligible for support through Shared Prosperity Funding. The proportion and amounts vary depending on the individual funding opportunity and are identified in the initiation forms on the Good Growth website.

Capital expenditure refers to funds used to acquire, build or upgrade physical assets. Such expenditure is usually a one-time large purchase of a fixed asset:

- Acquisition of land and or buildings;
- Building and construction;
- Professional fees associated with building and construction;
- Plant and machinery;
- Any large value item of equipment, assessed in accordance with the project deliverers capitalisation policy.

Revenue expenditure refers to ongoing operational expenses required in the running of the project:

- Staff costs;
- Cost of business travel, subsistence and accommodation;
- Contractors and consultants
- Cost of materials;
- Marketing and publicity costs;
- Grants provided to end beneficiaries;
- Training participant costs e.g. allowance, travel expenses;
- Small items of equipment (less than £5k).

### **2.11 If a project requires planning permission which has not been formally approved can a funding application be submitted?**

Yes, you can submit an application without all planning permissions formally approved, but the more statutory permissions you have in place such as planning, landlords' consent and listed building consent, the better your application will score in terms of deliverability. The Good Growth Programme team are unable to influence or fast track projects through the planning process.

### **2.12 Is there a limit on overheads and salary costs?**

Overheads can only be claimed for staff involved in the delivery of an SPF funded project. All other overheads incurred as part of normal day to day operations are ineligible. For SPF funded staff overhead costs will generally be calculated via the simplified cost model applying a fixed rate of 15% of salary costs to contribute to the overhead costs relating to all SPF funded staff. No evidence of overhead costs is required but evidence of time spent working on the project will be necessary (e.g. timesheets).

There is no limit on the value of salary cost or the percentage of any project that can be allocated to salary costs directly involved in the delivery of the project. However, the salary rate paid for any given post needs to be set at levels commensurate to the tasks being undertaken and evidence that the selected salary rate is comparable with other similar roles in the applicant organisation and/or the wider labour market will be required.

### **2.13 Will the indicative cost on the enquiry form be the maximum we can apply for?**

We understand that costs may increase between concept phase and the submission of your final application. Therefore, whilst costs included in the enquiry form should be as accurate as possible, they can increase/decrease prior to submitting a full application if necessary.

### **2.14 Do we have to have gone out to tender and got firm costs to apply?**

Applicants will need to ensure that cost estimates are as accurate as possible at the time of submission. An increase in SPF following approval would require reconsideration by the Board, resulting in a delay in contracting. Therefore, any potential inflationary costs should be considered carefully at time of application.

### **2.15 When does the project need to complete spend?**

This will be set out in the initiation form and included in the funding agreements. Generally, costs incurred on the delivery of a Shared Prosperity Fund project up to the 31 March 2025 are eligible for support.

### **2.16 What are the requirement for a business case?**

The need for a separate business case/plan in addition to a completed application form will depend on the size and type of projects and the Good Growth Team will let you know if a business case/plan is needed after your submission.

### **2.17 What are the rules around procurement?**

Please refer to the Good Growth Procurement Policy on the website. All applicants must provide a Procurement Policy as part of their application form. The Good Growth Team can provide you with more detailed advice and guidance. A project does not need to have completed the procurement of goods or services in advance of submitting their application form.

### **2.18 Are there procurement levels for paying for services?**

Yes, please refer to SPF procurement guidance - <https://ciosgoodgrowth.com/our-good-growth-application-support/>. You must provide a procurement policy that complies with the guidance.

### **2.19 Do applications have to be supported with quotes as per procurement policy - or is this evidence required at a later date?**

No not necessarily, please see Procurement Guidance and Audit and Compliance Policy on the website. You must retain all evidence of procurement to ensure that they comply with SPF procurement guidance (link), including any procurements already undertaken or in progress at the point of applying for the SPF funding.

## 2.20 Can a project claim costs accrued in writing an application for funds as an eligible cost if successful?

No, only project costs are allowed.

## 2.21 At what intervals can claims be made and is there support available to cashflow projects?

For most organisations we would expect spend to be evidenced through providing proof of expenditure and defrayal and submitted as a claim on a quarterly basis. However, this approach may not be possible for some organisations, especially those smaller community groups with limited cash.

If there is satisfactory justification provided by the organisation there are other options that are available. This could include monthly claims, higher intervention rate or upfront payments.

Any decision to provide payment flexibility will be dependent on the individual circumstances and based on an assessed risk.

## 2.22 What will be the requirements for document retention, can this be done digitally rather than paper copies?

All documents must be retained for 7 years from then end of the project. If you are keeping only digital records, you must ensure that you have a secure and backed-up electronic filing system in which all files are date stamped and cannot be later amended or deleted. PDF copies are preferred. All documentation must be easily accessible and in a format that is suitable for external audit. Please refer to the Audit and Compliance Guidance on the website.

## 2.23 Can there be provision within an application for project evaluation?

Yes. Please see M&E Framework on website.

## 2.24 Are you able to provide initial place index figures for monitoring the impact of projects?

Cornwall Council produced a Town Economic Vitality Index which gives a base line for around 20 towns across Cornwall. However, as the Index is based on specific towns it may be difficult to use this if project impacts are to be felt across the wider geography.

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/1dwfn2j1/cornwall-council-town-economic-vitality-index-march-2022.pdf>

## 2.25 What is the timescale for year 1 applications? What about future years?

Deadlines and review point for each open invitation to bid are outlined on the website. The open invitations offer funding across the 3 financial years April 2022 – March 2025 and



projects will need to outline in their application the spend profile of their projects. The current open invitations to bid are not the only funding opportunities and future open invitations to bid will be published on the website in due course.

## 2.26 Are Freelancers consider 'full time employees' within your application?

No. We can only consider full time employees as those on your payroll. You can also not count freelancers towards your jobs created total with your outputs. Further details can be found regarding FTE here: <https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/employee>

## 2.27 Can the project be an existing project?

The SPF does not fund business as usual activity but should be used to provide additionality and new opportunities. We are looking for a step change or significant increase in range or type of activity delivered.

# 3. Appraisal Stage

## 3.1 Who makes the decision whether applications are successful?

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Prosperity Board will decide which projects are funded. The Board is a joint committee made up of 5 elected Cornwall Council Cabinet Members and 2 Isles of Scilly Councillors.

Officers from Cornwall Council will appraise and score each application against set criteria and make a recommendation to the Economic Prosperity Board.

All funding decisions will be based four key criteria;

- ✓ Strategic Alignment
- ✓ Good Growth Principles
- ✓ Deliverability
- ✓ Value for Money

## 3.2 How long will it take for a decision to be made?

The Economic Prosperity Board (EPB) will meet at quarterly intervals throughout the programme lifecycle. The dates will be published on the [Cornwall Council website](#). After the submission of a complete application the Good Growth Team will advise you of the date of the EPB.



### **3.3 If successful, might an offer be made for a lower amount or is an offer made for the applied amount or nothing at all?**

Following appraisal, the projects are presented to the Economic Prosperity Board to make the funding decisions. It is the Board's decision on whether they offer full grant amount or whether further discussions are required regarding the amount.

### **3.4 If a project does not get approved for funding, can you reapply for a later deadline?**

Yes, providing you are able to address any feedback and your project is eligible for the programme. However, there may be certain reasons for being unsuccessful such as the project not being eligible under that activity which are difficult to overcome.

### **3.5 What is your appeals process?**

There is no formal appeals process. If a project is unsuccessful then, providing there is another open invitation and the project is able to address any feedback and is eligible for the programme, the project is able to re-apply for a later deadline. If there are any issues in connection with the application process then these should be raised via the Council's complaints procedure.