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Dorset Council

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and  
Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)  
2025 -26

Grant Scheme Document

# 1 Contents

2	Background .....	4
3	Dorset UKSPF / REPF Programme .....	4
3.1	Communities and Place (3 activities): .....	4
3.2	Local Business interventions (4 activities): .....	5
3.3	People & Skills interventions (3 activities): .....	5
3.4	Outputs / Outcomes .....	5
3.5	Updates and amendments .....	5
4	Grant application process .....	6
4.1	Communities and Place Grant Scheme – NOW CLOSED .....	6
	Small One-Off Capital Grants: Community Infrastructure .....	6
4.1.1	Community grant submission information .....	6
4.1.2	Ineligible expenditure .....	6
4.1.3	Eligibility .....	7
4.1.4	Community grant payment .....	7
4.1.5	Application deadlines and timings .....	7
4.2	Supporting Local Business Grant Schemes .....	8
4.2.1	Business Grants .....	9
4.2.2	Business grant submission information .....	9
4.2.3	Award Levels and match funding .....	9
4.2.4	Ineligible expenditure .....	9
4.2.5	Eligibility .....	9
4.2.6	Application deadlines and timings .....	10
4.3	Enterprise Culture and Startup Support .....	10
4.3.1	Startup grant submission information .....	11
4.3.2	Award Levels and match funding .....	11
4.3.3	Ineligible expenditure .....	11
4.3.4	Eligibility .....	11
4.3.5	Application deadlines and timings .....	12
4.4	Upskilling Grants .....	12
4.4.1	Upskilling grant submission information .....	12
4.4.2	Award Levels and match funding .....	13
4.4.3	Ineligible expenditure .....	13
4.4.4	Eligibility .....	13
4.4.5	Application deadlines and timings .....	13
5	Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) .....	14

5.1	Rural England Prosperity Fund Business Grants .....	15
5.2	Eligibility for REPF .....	16
5.3	Low Carbon Grants .....	16
6	Appendix 1: Grant Schemes, Additional terms and Subsidy Control.....	16
6.1	How grants will be provided .....	16
6.2	Subsidy Control and the Subsidy Control Act 2022.....	17
7	Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions .....	18
7.1	Business enterprise .....	18
7.2	Ineligible expenditure.....	18
7.3	Information to include in submissions .....	18
7.3.1	Startup grants: .....	19
7.4	Best value .....	20
7.5	Revenue and capital assets .....	20
7.6	Assessment and decisions .....	20
7.7	Scoring Criteria .....	21
7.8	Notification of decision.....	23
7.9	Review of decisions .....	23
7.10	End of project monitoring report and evidence of spend .....	23
7.11	Project changes .....	23
7.12	Complaints .....	23
7.13	Taxation and VAT .....	23
7.14	Managing the risk of fraud .....	24
7.15	Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid .....	24
7.16	Marketing and communications.....	24
7.17	Data Protection and use of data.....	24
7.18	Freedom of Information (FOI).....	24
7.19	Modern slavery .....	25
7.20	Further guidance.....	25

## 2 **Background**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) 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.

UKSPF 2022 to 2025 completed in March 2025 with an extension by the government from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. This is to provide additional funding across the country for local investment. For new information go to [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Technical note - GOV.UK](#)

UKSPF 2025- 2026 proactively supports delivery of the government's five national missions, supporting authorities to make local decisions within their communities. Missions have a specific focus to help kickstart economic growth, promoting opportunities in all parts of the UK and boost community cohesion.

The three priority areas of UKSPF are:

- Communities & Place
- Support for Local Business
- People & Skills

## 3 **Dorset UKSPF / REPF Programme**

This Document provides comprehensive details regarding Dorset UKSPF and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) activities.

Following the successful completion of UKSPF 2022-25, Dorset Council (DC) has developed existing and new plans for UKSPF and REPF. New targets have been agreed with government to ensure funding meets local priorities and are in pursuit of specific, measurable goals.

Dorset has been awarded £1,451,159 in capital/revenue for UKSPF 2025-26 and £619,966 for REPF. Delivery is across a range of activities and partners including a business grant scheme. Across the three UKSPF priorities areas, DC's £2,071,125m allocation is divided as follows:

Priority	Amount £'s	%
Communities & Place	£ 468,159	23%
Local Business Support	£1,344,966	65%
People & Skills	£ 258,000	12%
Total	£2,071,125	100%

Only selected activities use grants to deliver their outputs.

### 3.1 **Communities and Place (3 activities):**

- Healthy Homes Dorset Programme: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.
- Community Grants – 'Small One-Off Capital' grants- Open 23 Apr – Close 9 June 2025.

To support small one-off capital projects (including heritage, arts, museums and sports) that support community facilities, improve the places we live by improving our infrastructure, access to local amenities and our sense of belonging.

- Visit Dorset project programme. Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and general tourism products. (Delivered through DC's Visit Dorset team.)

### 3.2 Local Business interventions (4 activities):

- Business events. Providing advice, engagement and networking opportunities across the County. Tailored for local enterprises to boost productivity and growth.
- Local Business support grants. Funding for local enterprise focused on productivity, growth and employment. Funding requires a 100% match of grant value from organisation.
- Startup support. Events and workshops to support entrepreneurs and start-ups in the early stages of development and growth.

Grants available by online application through DC website [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 to 2026 - Dorset Council](#)

- Low Carbon grants: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Grants support and invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation in line with our legally binding climate target. (Delivered through DC's Low Carbon Dorset team.)

### 3.3 People & Skills interventions (3 activities):

- Marvels Programme. Tailored support to help people at risk of becoming NEET to address barriers accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting people to seek suitable employment/apprenticeship opportunities. (DC led)
- Digital skills courses: Pilot project centred in Weymouth for a digital hub to support learning opportunities to improve digital skills. Support for both community and business to receive free digital training, business support services, employment and career guidance, and community engagement activities. The programme is designed to support a diverse range of users, including residents seeking to improve their digital literacy, jobseekers, local enterprises, and professionals who assist others in becoming digitally included. (DC led)
- Upskilling grant. Support through DC online grants for organisations to engage employees in new training that leads to improved performance, business growth and development. For details and criteria see DC UKSPF 25-26 webpage under business grants.

### 3.4 Outputs / Outcomes

In line with the activities of UKSPF 2025-26, new outputs, and outcomes have been agreed with government. These targets conform to the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund - GOV.UK](#). which may be periodically updated.

Each activity 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

As a live document DC retains the right to update all or any of the Scheme documentation, initiatives and projects throughout the programme. This includes the allocations of funding, grant eligibility, match funding and timeline, to ensure objectives of the Funds are met and best use is made of public funds.

## 4 **Grant application process**

Details for applications and how to apply are available via the DC website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 to 2026 - Dorset Council](#)

Applicants for the Local Business Support grant schemes will be required to contact DC's UKSPF business support service prior to submission.

### 4.1 Communities and Place Grant Scheme – NOW CLOSED

Small One-Off Capital Grants: Community Infrastructure

Grant pot allocation	£135,000
Eligible grant size	£5,000-£15,000
Match funding required for total project cost	Min 20%
Projected average grant award	£4,500
Projected number of grants awarded	30

The fund provides “one-off” capital grants to help address the needs in local communities, increase access to amenities, strengthen the social fabric in towns and villages, and invest in local activities, buildings and spaces.

Grants are for small capital projects only. Awards are “one-off” and cannot be repeated due to the nature of the funding. Applicants must focus their application on residents who live within the Dorset Council area only. Projects located in areas of greatest need are especially encouraged. In designing a project, applicants should consider the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

Expected outputs and outcomes to deliver following the activity relates to:

- Number of grants to organisations.
- Number of Amenities/facilities created or improved
- Number of increased users of facilities/amenities

#### 4.1.1 Community grant 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 general grant details, please see Appendix 1 and 2 Grant Schemes – Supplementary information and conditions. Applications are to be made via the Dorset Council website at [Community group and organisation grants from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Dorset Council](#)

#### 4.1.2 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.

#### 4.1.3 Eligibility

- 'Not for profit' community organisations in the Dorset Council area with an annual turnover of less than £1 million. Full details available on the DC website
- Project must complete by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026.
- 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 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 DC financial year (i.e. which ends in March 2026). 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.

#### 4.1.4 Community grant payment

DC appreciates that community groups may need Communities and Place Grants to be paid up-front to the group or organisation to start a project especially where cash-flow may be a barrier to the project being delivered successfully.

In accordance with Cabinet Office guidance on Managing Public Money, grant funding payment will normally be made in arrears, except where justified and approved by DC. All grants will be paid as quickly as possible on production of evidence and relevant documentation.

Important note: when paying for an item, payment must be made by either direct bank transfer or debit card. Using these methods means it is easy to track the payment to the bank statement and prove evidence of expenditure has been made.

#### 4.1.5 Application deadlines and timings

One application round 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 to 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Decisions on applications will be made at one Grants Panel. All applicants notified of decisions within two weeks of the Panel.

All supporting documentation for a grants claim is to be provided to DC within two weeks of completion of the activity. Submission as early as possible is recommended but no later than Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

There can be no payments or activity after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

Please note, 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

Information that applies to all grants.

- All applicants must be located in, or their activity/business directly serve the Dorset Council area.
- Grants are **paid in arrears**, after the activity has been completed. In certain circumstances a request for a 50% payment earlier in the project may be considered. Contact the DC UKSPF team to discuss [sharedprosperityfund@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:sharedprosperityfund@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)
- Businesses must submit a costed application detailing what support the grant will procure; any organisation(s) (i.e. delivery partner / consultant) involved in the project; timescales; measures to meet outputs and outcomes including baseline for evaluation. For full details, please see Appendix 2 Grant Schemes – Supplementary information and conditions.

Important notes for all grants:

- when paying for an item, payment must be made by either direct bank transfer or debit card. Using these methods means expenditure can be tracked from the invoice to the bank statement, providing evidence of payment.
- Goods, services or Works supplied by businesses that share any directors, owners and/or major shareholders to the main applicant are not eligible.
- Invoices for project payments should be kept to the minimum required.
- Failure to meet the claim deadlines will result in the business forfeiting the grant and no payment being made. Please refer to Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions.
- No activity or payments will be made after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

DC reserves the right to request any supplementary information from applicants, and they should provide this, when requested, as soon as possible. DC will suspend an application in the event an applicant fails to provide sufficient requested evidence. If the applicant fails to meet the request within the required timeframe the application may be rejected.

#### Grants Panel

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

- Recommendations will be made by an independent third party after assessment of each application. These will be shared with the grants panel.
- The grants panel will meet regularly to assess the applications. Submissions will be presented at the earliest panel available.
- Applicants will be notified of decisions within ten days of the Panel Meeting by email.



#### 4.2.1 Business Grants

Initial grant pot allocation	£370,000
Eligible grant size	£10,000-£40,000
Match funding required for value of grant	100%
Projected average grant award	£25,000
Projected number of grants awarded	15

Summary: Grants to support specific projects to facilitate growth through increased productivity by new processes, innovation and technology, together with the creation of high skilled, high waged jobs in Dorset businesses. Eligible projects could include, but is not limited to, investment in new production methods and net zero innovation. When designing a project, applicants should consider the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

Expected Outputs and Outcomes:

- Enterprises receiving grants.
- Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes.
- Number of enterprises engaged in new markets.

#### 4.2.2 Business grant submission information

Applicants for business grants will first need to contact DC's UKSPF business support SBA CIC for a short discussion and reference number (details on UKSPF 25-26 webpage) Submission can then be made via the Dorset Council website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 to 2026 - Dorset Council](#) .

#### 4.2.3 Award Levels and match funding

Grant awards are from £10,000 up to £40,000 per business. Businesses are required to provide at least 100% (i.e.1:1) match funding in cash. For example, the maximum £40,000 grant will require at least the same cash match funding (i.e. £40,000).

For grants bigger than £40,000 in the first instance contact the UKSPF team with an expression of interest (EOI). This may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### 4.2.4 Ineligible expenditure

This UKSPF grant cannot be used for:

- Motor vehicles
- Staff wages
- Core revenue funding and continuation funding
- Like for like replacement of worn or outdated equipment including computers, software.
- Stock

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

#### 4.2.5 Eligibility

- Medium, small and micro enterprises located within the DC Council 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 must commit to providing an end of project monitoring report with supporting evidence.
- Businesses that have not been approved for another UKSPF 2025-26 funded grant under Low Carbon Dorset.
- Successful UKSPF 2022-25 business grant awardees may apply however applicants who have not received grants in previous rounds or schemes may be prioritised.
- Only one grant application will be considered. Enterprises who share any directors, owners and/or major shareholders are not eligible to make additional applications. This includes subsidiaries of parent companies.
- All activity and actions relating to this UKSPF funded grant must be completed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. 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.

#### 4.2.6 Application deadlines and timings

There will be one round for the Supporting Local Business Grant Schemes. Applications will remain open until all money has been awarded.

Applications will open on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 and relates only to expenditure in financial year 2025/26 for project activity from the date of award.

All projects must be complete by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 and all claims and expenditure made before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

No activity or payments will be made after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

On submission of a claims form and approval of documentation, DC will pay the grant to the business/enterprise promptly.

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

### 4.3 Enterprise Culture and Startup Support

Initial grant pot allocation	£55,000
Eligible grant size	£500 - £4,000
Match funding for value of grant	Min 30%
Projected average grant award	£2,000
Projected number of grants awarded	27

Summary: Fully funded workshop events will be available across the County.

Grant application will be online via DC website with eligibility to include the need to have attended a Startup course or similar event. Full details available on UKSPF 25-26 webpage.

Expected outputs and outcomes are:

- Number of enterprises receiving support
- Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready
- Number of enterprises engaged in new market

#### 4.3.1 Startup grant submission information

Applicants for the Startup Support grant schemes should apply online to the Dorset Council website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 to 2026 - Dorset Council](#).

Preference will be made for those who have attended a Startup Course and received 1:1 business support. This may be either the DC provided Startup events with Evolve or similar providing evidence is submitted.

Attendance at an Evolve event will include follow up 1:1 support to assist with business plans and applications.

#### 4.3.2 Award Levels and match funding

Grant awards are from £500 to £4,000 per business. Businesses are required to provide at least 30% match funding in cash. For example, the maximum £4,000 grant will require a minimum cash match funding of £1200 meaning a project total cost minimum of £5200.

#### 4.3.3 Ineligible expenditure

This UKSPF grant cannot be used for:

- Motor vehicles
- Staff wages
- Core revenue funding and continuation funding
- Like for like replacement of worn or outdated equipment including computers, software.
- 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.

#### 4.3.4 Eligibility

- Trading businesses (i.e. cannot be in administration, insolvent or be in a situation where a striking-off notice has been made). Businesses older than 3 years of trading are not eligible.
- Businesses must provide evidence of registration with either HMRC/Companies House and further documentation of credibility ie. Business plan, business bank account, insurance etc.
- 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 must commit to providing an end of project report with their claim.
- Businesses that have not been approved for another UKSPF 2025-26 funded grant under Low Carbon Dorset.

- Successful UKSPF 2022-25 business grant awardees may apply however applicants who have not received grants in previous rounds or schemes may be prioritised.
- Only one grant application will be considered. Enterprises who share any directors, owners and/or major shareholders are not eligible to make additional applications. This includes subsidiaries of parent companies.
- All activity and actions relating to this UKSPF funded grant must be completed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. 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.
- You must be a UK business and have a right to work in the UK.

#### 4.3.5 Application deadlines and timings

There will be one round for Startup support grants. Applications will remain open until all money has been awarded. This means the fund could close at any time.

Applications will open on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and relates only to expenditure in financial year 2025/26 for project activity from the date of award.

All projects must be complete by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 and all claims and expenditure made before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. No activity or payments will be made after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

Following approval of documentation, DC will pay the grant to the business/enterprise promptly. In certain circumstances advance payments may be made and should be discussed with the UKSPF Team at time of a successful award.

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

## 4.4 Upskilling Grants

Initial grant pot allocation	£75,300
Eligible grant size	£500 -£4,000
Match funding required for value of grant	Min 30%
Projected average grant award	£950
Projected number of grants awarded	79

Summary: Upskilling grants are available for an organisation to support further training to develop employees' skills and promote business growth and productivity. Full details available on DC UKSPF 25-26 webpage.

Expected outputs and outcomes are:

- Number of people retraining
- Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support

#### 4.4.1 Upskilling grant submission information

Applicants for the Upskilling grant scheme should apply online to the Dorset Council website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 to 2026 - Dorset Council](#).

Only one application per organisation is permitted although this may be for several employees up to the grant limit. Courses are to be nationally recognised, certified and not meet a requirement for statutory progression or renewal of qualifications. Full details are available via the DC website.

#### 4.4.2 Award Levels and match funding

Grant awards are from £500 to £4,000 per business. Businesses are required to provide a minimum 30% match funding in cash. For example, the maximum £4,000 grant will require a cash match funding of at least £1,200.

#### 4.4.3 Ineligible expenditure

Conditions specific to this grant are:

- Courses that can be funded and/or provided by alternative providers ie. FE Colleges, Apprenticeships.
- Courses not accredited or nationally recognised and certified by a leading organisation.
- Training to renew existing qualifications or to meet statutory requirements.
- Courses that have no direct link to the business.

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

#### 4.4.4 Eligibility

- 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 must commit to providing an end of project report with supporting evidence where required.
- Businesses that have not been approved for another UKSPF 2025-26 funded grant under Low Carbon Dorset.
- Only one grant application will be considered. Enterprises who share any directors, owners and/or major shareholders are not eligible to make additional applications. This includes subsidiaries of parent companies.
- All activity and actions relating to this UKSPF funded grant must be completed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. 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.

#### 4.4.5 Application deadlines and timings

There will be one round for Upskilling support grants. Applications will remain open until all money has been awarded.

Applications will open on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 and relates only to expenditure in financial year 2025/26 for project activity from the date of award.

All training must be complete by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 and all claims and expenditure made before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. No activity or payments will be made after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. Following approval of documentation, DC will pay the grant to the business/enterprise promptly.

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

## 5 Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

A new allocation for REPF was made by government in April 2025 covering the financial year 2025/26. Dorset Council's allocation of £619,966 forms two activities that provides Capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas:

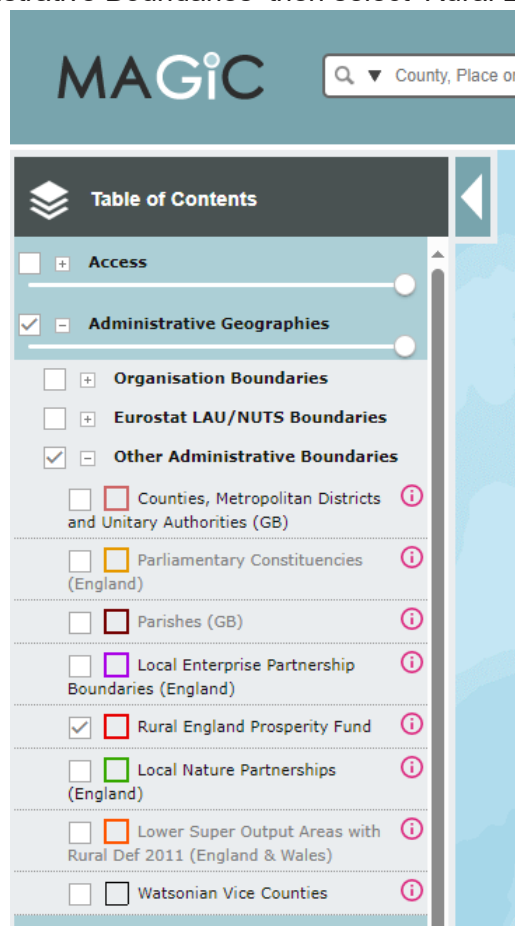
- Business grants £309,983 (lead: DC - Growth & Economic Regeneration)
- Low Carbon Capital Grants £309,983 (lead: Low Carbon Dorset grants)

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 before applying for the fund.

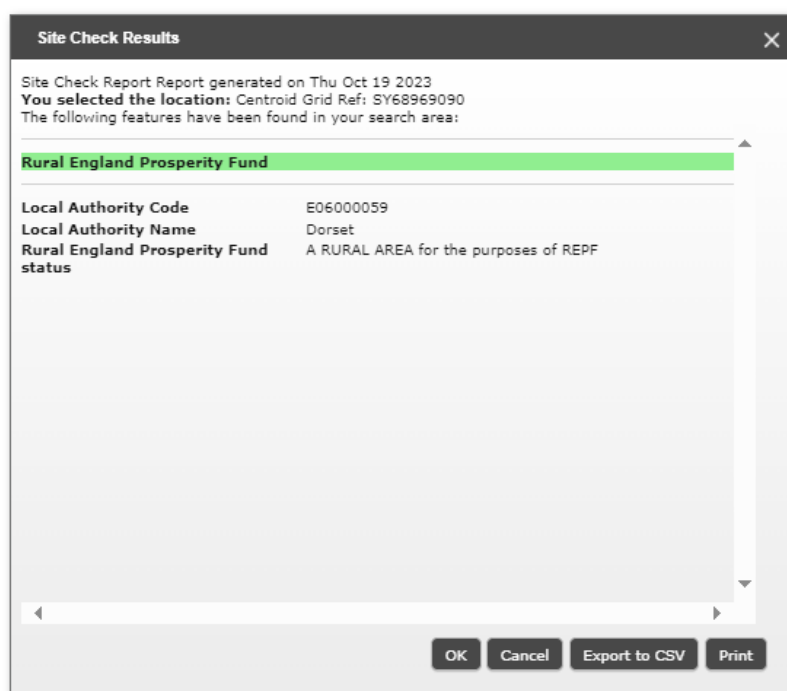
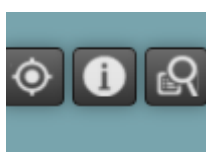
Using the Magic map;

- 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:



### 5.1 Rural England Prosperity Fund Business Grants

Business grants will be delivered alongside UKSPF 2025-26 Supporting Local Business Grant scheme detailed at Section 3 above. See [Rural England Prosperity Fund \(REPF\) - Dorset Council](#)

Grant pot allocation	£309,983
Eligible grant size	£10,000-£40,000
Match funding required	100% of grant value
Projected average grant award	£22,000
Projected number of grants awarded	14

## 5.2 Eligibility for REPF

- Any organisation with legal status can apply for grant funding. This may include:
  - private sector companies
  - voluntary/charity organisations who have a business trading status
- Businesses need to be classed as small or micro businesses as defined by government:
  - Micro – where there are 1- 9 employees
  - Small – where there are 10 – 49 employees
- 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. See Appendix 2: Grant Schemes - Supplementary information and conditions for full list.

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 \(businessinfopoint.co.uk\)](#) .

## 5.3 Low Carbon Grants

Low Carbon Capital Grants will be delivered by Low Carbon Dorset as a separate stand-alone grant scheme within UKSPF/REPF. [Low Carbon Dorset - Dorset Council](#)

# 6 **Appendix 1: Grant Schemes, Additional terms and 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 2025 to 2026 - 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 with SBA CIC. After a short informal discussion, suitable applications are to be made via the Dorset Council (DC) website at [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 to 2026 - 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. Applicants are under an obligation to notify DC should they no longer meet the eligibility requirements.
- Applicants' submissions will be assessed and scored before presentation to the nearest grant panel meeting. Applicants will be notified of the grant panel decision within ten days of their submission being reviewed.
- Successful submissions will be sent an 'offer of grant funding' agreement letter to sign before a project can start.
- Grants are paid in arrears upon completion of the project and following submission of the required documentation (i.e., monitoring report, copy invoices, 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 5 working days.
- There is a finite amount of funding. When this is exhausted there will be no further awards. No activity or payment will be possible beyond 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.



## 6.2 Subsidy Control and the Subsidy Control Act 2022

On the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023 the UK Government introduced a new Act as the Subsidy Control Bill. The intent to be a new domestic subsidy control regime best suited to the needs of the UK, representing value for money to the UK taxpayer and complying with international obligations.

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 a declaration box on application and submit an MFA Subsidy letter on award (template provided with ‘offer of grant’ letter).**

## **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. 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.
- Items replaced due to wear and tear, items considered 'business as usual' spend, or revenue costs ie, rent.
- 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) 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 project business plan covering their proposal. The 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 economic impact and change to business productivity would this project support?
- Project costs: Please provide a breakdown including, how much funding is needed for the project (in £'s)? How much are you applying for?
- Grants must be match funded. Please provide details on how much match funding and/or balance in funding for total project costs will be met? Confirmation is required that full project costs are available.
- 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.
- If your project requires planning permission or other consents / permissions, these must be in place prior to application for a grant. (Please provide evidence where required.)
- When do you expect to deliver the project? What date do you expect the work to be completed by?
- A risk register/assessment/timeline of schedule of works to verify deliverability to project completion.
- 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. For grant requests up to £10,000 a minimum of 2 quotes is required, for grants and items over £20,000 3 quotes are essential.
- In addition, applicants are required to provide supporting paperwork and payment information to confirm the applicant's identity and liability cover, including:
  - Latest set of accounts
  - Last 2 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 and/or Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance/ Indemnity Cover
  - Equality & Diversity Policy
  - Safeguarding Policy or relevant equivalent i.e. Health and Safety, Staff Handbook.
  - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy (as per Data Protection Act 2018)
  - Evidence of planning permission (if needed)

#### 7.3.1 Startup grants:

For eligibility enterprise/entrepreneurs must have attended a Startup course within the last 12 months (evidenced) with priority given to those receiving 1:1 support through our Startup support events with Evolve.

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)

- Registration details with HMRC/Companies House. (Essential)
- Evidence of match funding. (Essential)
- Relevant Insurances i.e. Employers' insurance, Public Liability (Essential)
- Evidence of attendance at a Startup event/course. (Essential)
- Additional Questions we would expect to be answered within your submission includes:
  - Do you have previous experience of operating in the sector?
  - What business acumen or knowledge do you have?
  - How will you use the grant and what difference will it make?
- Any supporting information, including linked businesses (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 act in a fair, open and non-discriminatory manner 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 documentation which demonstrates the same.

Quotes, goods, services or Works supplied by businesses that share any directors, owners and/or major shareholders to the main applicant are NOT eligible.

#### 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 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

Applications will be assessed by a panel coordinated by DC'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 and Parish Councils etc. are only eligible for one grant award from the UKSPF programme. If an applicant forfeit's their grant and no payment is made, they will not be eligible to reapply.

## 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 productivity and growth

This category will support business growth projects which create high skilled / high wage jobs (i.e. quality jobs). Grants to support specific projects to facilitate growth through increased productivity by new processes, innovation and technology, together with the creation of high skilled, high waged jobs in Dorset businesses. Eligible projects could include, but is not limited to, investment in new production methods and net zero innovation. When designing a project, applicants should consider the environment, sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

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 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.
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## 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. This must be signed and returned to DC for the award to become active.

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 if available. There is a maximum of one resubmission per business, group or organisation. 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 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 project spend, 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 monthly.

Details of all grant awards will 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 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).