**Dumfries & Galloway Council – Communities and Place Grants Funding**

1. **Introduction**

The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is part of the UK Government’s Levelling Up agenda. It seeks to recast the funding regimes available previously through the European Union with a modified and more dispersed model of funding. The aim of the UK Government SPF is to support the levelling up of all parts of the UK. Its purpose is to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards as well as improve public services, restore sense of community and empower communities. More information on the national Shared Prosperity Fund can be found on the UK Government website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

1. **Background**

Local authorities across the UK were given the task of planning and delivering investment within the following four investment priorities:

* Community and place
* Supporting local business
* People and skills
* Multiply

**Communities and Place Theme**

Communities & Place – Investment in activities to improve physical, cultural and social ties and access to amenities, for example, community infrastructure and community-led projects. Investment in targeted improvements to the built and natural environment to support the building of resilient, healthy and safe neighbourhoods.

The purpose of the funds is primarily to support projects that are contributing towards the economic resilience and regeneration of the area or wider region. They aim to ensure that community-led, place-based projects have appropriate support which will contribute towards a broader and coherent approach to sustained longer-term renewal that will promote the resilience, health and wellbeing of communities across Dumfries & Galloway.

Examples of suitable projects would be those which support:

• Development of local towns, villages and communities;

• Town centre regeneration, including the development of local jobs and businesses;

Your project should be ready to start and have all necessary statutory requirements and match-funding (where applicable) in place.

1. **Criteria and Outcomes**

* Applications will be assessed based on a set of criteria to ensure that the applicant project will meet local economic priorities and be aligned with the national strategy on regeneration.
* It is expected that applications to the fund reflect projects that will achieve outcomes and Objectives of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
* The Objectives for the Communities and Place theme of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund are the following:
  + Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and access to amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.
  + Building resilient, healthy and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built and natural environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention.
* Applications are particularly welcome from projects that will focus on the following:
* S1: Place based investments for regeneration and town centre improvements, which could include better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.
* S2: Support and improvement of community assets and infrastructure projects, including those that increase communities’ resilience to natural hazards, and support for decarbonisation of facilities, energy efficiency audits, and installation of energy efficiency and renewable measures in community buildings (including capital spend and running costs).
* Overall value for money will be considered in addition to the grant intervention level requested and the financial need for grant support.

The fund consists of two streams of grant funding dependent upon the development stage of the project. These are:

* **Capital Grant** – Grants for capital projects that support place based or town/village centres improvement. Projects must be capable of being mobilised as soon as approved and deliver within the financial year (if a project extends over a year end SPF grant will be required to be spent first to conclude its spend by the year end). Projects should demonstrate that any other funding support is in place including a **minimum 10% from the project promoter**. Grant awards will be provisional until confirmation through a satisfactory tendering process. Projects that are identified in a place plan/community or town centre action plan will be given priority. Project promoters must be able to demonstrate control of the subjects i.e. a secured title or long lease. **Maximum Grant Available £50,000**
* **Revenue Support to improve Community Assets & Infrastructure projects** – The project is revenue funding for investing in community assets and projects that could be achieved by enabling community sector project promoters to bring in specialist advice or dedicated staff resource to manage capital projects. This support would build resilience in the asset/project. **Maximum Grant Available £30,000**

1. **Eligible Grant Expenditure**

**Capital Grant**

The grant will fund Capital Costs. Projects should demonstrate that any other funding support is in place including a minimum 10% from the project promoter.

**Ineligible Expenditure**

* Groundworks
* Playparks

**Support/improve Community Assets & Infrastructure projects** – The project is revenue funding for investing in community assets and projects that could be achieved by enabling community sector project promoters to bring in specialist advice or dedicated staff resource to manage capital projects.

**Ineligible Expenditure**

* Core Staff Costs
* Feasibility Studies
* Marketing and Branding

Applications should be based on an actual quote rather than an estimate. If any item of work for which you are seeking funds is over £10,000, you must obtain at least four competitive quotes.

Applicants should be at least, formally constituted and have a governing body, such as a committee or board which includes at least three unrelated people and a written governing document. The applicant will be required to provide the following documentation at full application stage.

* Constitution or memorandum and articles of association
* An organisational bank account
* Organisational policies where relevant (e.g. equal opportunities, health & safety, child protection, environmental)

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

* Deliverability and ability to start delivering in 2024/25 and project spend by 31 March 2025
* Strategic fit with UKSPF as outlined the criteria set out in the UKSPF guidance, particularly the menu of interventions, outputs and outcomes (see Appendix A) – bids that fail to meet at least one of these criteria are ineligible and will be rejected above
* Strategic fit with South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, which can be found here <https://sosrep.dumgal.gov.uk/article/21953/Regional-Economic-Strategy>
* Evidence of need
* The extent to which they will make a real and tangible difference to communities/businesses/people across Dumfries and Galloway, particularly in our most disadvantaged areas and how will this project be sustainable in the future.

## **Application Assessment**

The deadline for funding applications is **5pm, on Monday 19th February 2024**. We will assess how well your proposed project can potentially achieve the fund outcomes, how well planned and deliverable it is and how you plan to sustain the project in the longer term. The urgency and any associated risks of the project will also be taken into account.

1. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Project sponsors will be required to have quarterly monitoring meetings with the Place Team Officer to check the progress of the project and spend. It is also a requirement that Proof of expenditure, including a copy of relevant bank or credit card statements/card receipt detailing grant expenditure in line with application project costs should be provided along with each monitoring report.

1. **Use of Funds**

Organisations must use the full grant for the purposes specified. Organisations may be requested to repay all or part of the grant to the Council within 30 days in the following circumstances:

a) if it is not used for the purpose(s) for which it was awarded;

b) the organisation ceases, or abandons proposals to carry out the activities for the purposes specified;

c) if any information provided by the organisation is subsequently found to be false or misleading; and

d) if the organisation transfers the undertaking to any other person(s) or organisation(s) without the prior written consent of the Council.

In the event of a refusal or delay by the organisation in making the requested repayment in any of these circumstances, the Council will consider legal action to recover such money as it considers in all the circumstances should be repaid.

If the organisation does not spend its entire budget allocation, they must advise the Council of this and return the unspent amount to the Council within 30 days after the end of the funding period or contract, or of ceasing to operate.

The overall value for money your project offers against all of these factors will be considered as well as the level of grant intervention requested and the organisations financial need for grant support.

1. **Grant request & Funding profile**

It is anticipated that grant requests will focus on projects that have the ability to progress with technical development work shortly after successful grants have been awarded. Grant may be requested over more than one financial year where appropriate, but all expenditure must be completed and claimed by **31 March 2025** or the grant may be withdrawn.

**Grant cannot be claimed for costs incurred prior to grant award.**

It is expected that the grant requests to this fund will include some level of match funding. However, applicants may request the full amount of costs where financial need is evident and other sources of funding have been considered. Evidence of financial need must be provided alongside the application and should be in the form of the most up to date financial statements or equivalent.

Please note that in the event of an application being successful, the panel may recommend a level of grant other than that requested in order to ensure all eligibility criteria are met or to fully utilise the overall fund. This would be subject to discussion with individual applicants.

**Appendix A**

**Communities and Place UK Shared Prosperity Fund Interventions**

Below is the list of interventions, your project should meet at least one of these criteria to be eligible for funding.

**Intervention: S1 Place based investments regeneration and town centre improvements**

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| **Output/Outcome** |
| Commercial buildings developed or improved |
| Rehabilitated premises |
| Low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed |
| Jobs created/safeguarded |
| Increased footfall |
| Increased visitor numbers |

**Intervention: S2 Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects**

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| **Output/Outcome** |
| Low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed |
| Organisations receiving financial support other than grants (numerical value) |
| Organisations receiving grants (numerical value) |
| Organisations receiving non- financial support (numerical value) |
| Neighbourhood improvements undertaken (numerical value) |
| Facilities support/created |