



UKSPF Sunderland – Assessment and Decision Making

Please read this guidance in conjunction with the Call for Projects, Business Case and other guidance available on the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\) in Sunderland - Sunderland City Council](#) website.

There will be a three staged approach to assessment and decision making.

Stage 1 Gateway: The first stage is a **pass/fail gateway** criterion, where applications will be assessed against whether they meet core criteria including:

- Is the application from an organisation eligible to receive UKSPF and does the applicant have legal authority to carry out the project?
- Is the project being delivered in Sunderland (and wider North-East area if applicable)?
- Is the project to be delivered in the eligible UKSPF programme period – will delivery be complete by March 2025?
- Is the application in response to a current call for projects and does it address a need identified in the call?
- Will the project complement Sunderland City Plan priorities?
- Is the proposed activity permissible within Subsidy Control rules?
- Will the project duplicate other national or local provision?

Applications that do not meet this gateway criteria will not be assessed further and will not be eligible to be considered for funding. Subject to Call for Projects application deadlines, project applicants are able to revisit and resubmit applications where gateway criteria can be satisfied following a modification to the project application.

Stage 2 Assessment and Shortlisting Bids: Applications will be **assessed against the criteria** set out in Table 1 below. Applications will be assessed against strategic fit, deliverability and value for money. These criteria align to the 5 cases of the Business Case template. Table 1 below provides detailed guidance on what project applicants will be expected to demonstrate against each criterion in their application form. The Strategic Fit and Value for Money (Economic) criteria are scored out of 15 each. The Deliverability criteria (Commercial, Financial and Management) are collectively scored out of 30. Table 2 below provides a detailed scoring matrix for the assessment criterion. Assessment will be undertaken by a panel made up of Officers of the Council and other relevant external members. Clarifications and modifications may be sought by the Council throughout the assessment process.

Stage 3 Decision Making: Once bid assessment and moderation has concluded, the local Investment Panel will consider these and make recommendations to be presented to the Council's Chief Officer Group, or an agreed subset of its members, who will make funding decisions. Decisions will be reported to the Sunderland City Board who will maintain strategic oversight of the UKSPF programme in Sunderland and ensure any conflicts of interest are managed appropriately.

In making recommendations the Investment Panel may take account of some or all of these additional considerations:

- Ensuring a reasonable thematic split of approved projects (e.g. across the Investment Priorities and the Intervention Priorities subject to the Call for Projects the project application has been submitted in response to);
- Ensuring a fair spread of approved project delivery across the City of Sunderland geography, residents, communities, and businesses
- Prioritisation of either ‘strategic fit’ or ‘deliverability’ or ‘value for money’ over the other criteria
- Taking into account other investment in a local area
- Ensuring delivery of overall investment plan priorities and outputs and outcomes.

Table 1: Assessment Framework for shortlisting bids

Strategic Fit (15 marks)	
Sub-Criteria	Factors that will be taken into account
Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation	<p>There is an expectation of engagement with all relevant stakeholders. The range of relevant stakeholders will vary and therefore there is no list of stakeholders for whom evidence of support must be provided</p> <p>We are looking for applications that set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what engagement has been done with local stakeholders and the community • The extent to which this engagement has informed the development of the proposed project
The case for change	<p>We are looking for applications to set out a strong case for funding demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the local challenges and the opportunities that the project is seeking to achieve. A clear explanation and supporting evidence on what you are proposing to deliver and why. An explanation of why the proposed interventions will address those challenges and barriers with supporting evidence. As part of this, we would expect to understand the rationale for the beneficiaries that the project application is focusing on. Projects will need to provide strong evidence to support their interventions including where appropriate an Intervention Logic Model or Theory of Change. • Clear consideration of the potential for innovation (design, delivery or scope), recognising the persistent nature of a number of the barriers which UKSPF is seeking to address • Appropriate SMART objectives linked to your planned outputs and outcomes, setting out how you will deliver the outputs and how the outcomes/results are likely to flow from the interventions to be

	<p>delivered and how they align to the menu of UKSPF Outputs and Outcomes that will be delivered through Sunderland's Investment Plan. Project applicants may wish to refer to Annex B, which provides a summary of the outputs and outcome indicators by Investment Priority and by Intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An explanation on why UKSPF is needed (what is the market failure) • Explain whether/ how other public and private funding will be leveraged
Alignment with the local and national context	<p>We are looking for applications that explain how the project aligns to and supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant local strategies (including Sunderland's City Plan and other relevant local plans and strategies) • relevant regional and national strategies (including the North East Strategic Economic Plan and the UKSPF Prospectus) • Local and UK Government policy objectives, legal and statutory commitments, such as delivering Net Zero carbon emissions and other environmental considerations • Other investments from different funding streams
Cross Cutting Themes and Equalities and Diversity	<p>Applications should confirm how the project contributes to the 3 cross cutting themes: Equal Opportunities, Sustainable Development and Partnership Working.</p> <p>Applications should demonstrate how the project will positively support the protected characteristics and equality areas of any individuals or groups engaged with.</p>
Value for Money (15 marks)	
Criteria	Factors that will be considered
Effectiveness of proposal in addressing problems	<p>Analysis and evidence on how the project will address existing needs and challenges. Quantifiable outputs and outcomes should be appropriately forecasted. Key factors are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robustness of the forecast assumptions and methodology used • Quality of the analysis of need and preferred option proposed
Costs of the proposal	<p>Explanation of how benefits and costs are estimated, and of how the preferred option is proportionate for the proposal being considered.</p>
Social value	<p>How the project presents social value more widely to Sunderland, both during the delivery of the project and in the longer-term such as procurement of local suppliers, etc.</p>

Value for money of proposal	<p>A summary of the overall value for money of the proposal. This will include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added value to be achieved from match funding/other leverage into the project • Inclusion of other/non-qualifiable impacts and how they have been identified and assessed • Complementarity with other local provision whilst demonstrating added value • A summary assessment of risks and uncertainties that could affect the overall Value for Money • The longer-term strategic value of the project
Deliverability (30 marks)	
Criteria	Factors that will be considered
Financial	<p>Provide details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs and spend profile • Certainty over the whole funding package, including evidence of any match funding (i.e. letters, contractual commitments) and identification of any gaps in funding • Information on how costs have been calculated, the affordability and rationale for any inflation/ cost of living rises considerations • The main financial risks and how they will be mitigated, including how potential cost overruns will be dealt with <p>Capital projects should also include details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of contingency sums • Sustainability plans and considerations • Asset ownership and management
Commercial	<p>Provide details of:</p> <p>The procurement plan for the project, including the rationale for the plan selected and other options considered and discounted. The procurement route should also be set out with an explanation as to why it is appropriate for the scale and nature of the project application submitted.</p> <p>All procurements must be made in accordance with all relevant legal requirements. Applicants must describe their approach to ensuring full compliance in order to discharge their legal duties.</p>

<p>Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A delivery plan which demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear milestones, key dependencies and interfaces, resource requirements, task durations and contingency. ○ An understanding of the roles and responsibilities, skills, capability, or capacity needed. ○ Arrangements for managing any delivery partners and how you will ensure project benefits are delivered. ○ Engagement of key stakeholders (where needed) and the strategy for managing stakeholders and considering their interests and influences within project delivery. ○ Confirmation of statutory approvals or consents required eg Planning permission, DBS clearances, etc <p>A detailed risk assessment which sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the barriers and level of risk to the delivery of your project. • appropriate and effective arrangements for managing and mitigating these risks. • a clear understanding on roles / responsibilities for risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence of a track record and past experience of delivering schemes of a similar scale and type, where applicable.
<p>Monitoring, Evaluation and Funding Compliance</p>	<p>A summary of the performance management system to be used for the project including consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, identifiable and auditable financial records, including authorisation of purchases and payments • How claims will be compiled and authorised • Overview of monitoring, recording and reporting arrangements for key metrics (covering inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts) • Resourcing and governance arrangements • Document retention processes • The approach proposed for project evaluation <p>Project applicants should also explain how the project will comply with other funding compliance requirements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications, engagement and publicity plans • Subsidy control • Relevant organisational/corporate policies • All other statutory requirements applicable to your project e.g. GDPR.

Table 2 – Detailed Scoring Matrix

Assessment of Project							Max
Gateway Criteria	PASS			FAIL			PASS/ FAIL
	All criteria met			One or more criteria not met			
Strategic fit	15-13	12-10	9-8	7-5	4-3	2-0	15
	Very strong fit and strong evidence of need and rationale for intervention. Very Likely to deliver exceptional and relevant outcomes	Strong fit with moderate evidence of need or rationale for intervention. Likely to deliver good level of relevant outcomes	Moderate fit with limited evidence of need or rationale for intervention. Likely to deliver a reasonable level of relevant outcomes	Moderate fit with poor evidence of need or rationale for intervention. Likely to deliver limited outcomes	Low fit with poor evidence of need and rationale for the intervention. Likely to provide limited outcomes	No fit with no evidence of need or rationale. Unlikely to meet any of defined outcomes	
Value for Money	15-13	12-10	9-8	7-5	4-3	2-0	15
	Exceptional value for money	Potentially very good value for money	Represents reasonable value for money	Represents moderate value for money	Offers less favourable value for money.	Unlikely to offer any value for money.	
Deliverability Risk	30-26	25-21	20-16	15-11	10-6	5-0	30
	<p>Considered to have a high chance of success & completion by the timescales indicated - risks well managed.</p> <p>Likely to have a significant and immediate impact.</p> <p>Independent legal opinion supports compliant route or confirms no Subsidy.</p>	<p>Considered to have a good chance of success & completion by the timescales indicated - risks well managed.</p> <p>Applicant identifies a compliant Subsidy Control route.</p>	<p>Moderately likely to succeed and be delivered by the timescales indicated, some risks with strategies to mitigate in place.</p> <p>Relevant Subsidy Control issues understood and clarified</p>	<p>Moderately likely to succeed and be delivered by the timescales indicated, some risks identified but with limited mitigation considered.</p> <p>Relevant Subsidy Control issues understood but currently unable to be clarified</p>	<p>Management and delivery arrangements considered to be weak. High risk of failure with limited mitigation considered.</p> <p>Impact unlikely to be significant or speed of delivery slow.</p> <p>No appropriate consideration of Subsidy Control provided</p>	<p>Considered to have a very low likelihood of successful completion by the timescales indicated / multiple high-level risks with no clear management.</p> <p>Request not compliant with Subsidy Control.</p>	
Score							/60