



Business Growth and Productivity Grant Scheme

Application Guidance

2025 – 2026

Newark and Sherwood



**Funded by
UK Government**

1. **Background**

1.1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a Government scheme providing funding to Local Authorities for local investment until March 2026. Government's ambition is that UKSPF is used to support initiatives which will kickstart economic growth, break down barriers to opportunity and make Britain a clean energy superpower.

2. **Growth and Productivity Grant Scheme**

2.1. This grant programme will provide funding of up to £10,000 to existing small and micro businesses in Newark and Sherwood to help them grow, increase productivity or become more environmentally sustainable.

2.2. Projects must also align with one or more of the themes listed below:

- **Productivity and Growth** – purchases such as equipment, software, or premise improvements that will enable the business to introduce new products, services or processes to market and/or improve everyday business operations. These projects should result in the creation of new jobs or improved productivity through increased revenue or gross value added (GVA).
- **Environmental Sustainability** – purchases such as equipment, premise improvements or software that will help the business towards becoming more environmentally sustainable such as reduced CO² emissions.

2.3. If you are unsure if your project may be eligible, please email UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk.

3. **Who is eligible?**

3.1. Businesses must have a registered business address in any area of Newark and Sherwood to be eligible and must have no more than 50 full-time employees or equivalent (FTE). A full-time employee is considered to work 30 hours or more.

3.2. Businesses may be expanding sole traders, micro or small businesses registered with HMRC. When applying, we will require your Company Reference Number. If you are registered as a sole trader, we will require your Unique Tax Reference Number to verify your business.

3.3. Businesses must have been trading for a minimum of 12 months to be eligible to apply.

4. What costs may be eligible?

- 4.1. Eligible businesses can apply for a **grant of up to £10,000** with a **minimum grant request of £2,500**. Applicants may submit more than one application however the total awarded to a single business will not exceed £10,000.
- 4.2. **Businesses must contribute a minimum of 40% funding towards the total project costs.** For example, if the cost of an item of equipment is £10,000, the business must contribute a minimum of £4,000 and request no more than £6,000 from us as grant funding.
- 4.3. The applicant's minimum 40% contribution may be from a variety of sources such as private funds, loans and other grants (excluding in-kind). The business contribution must be confirmed, and funding secured, at the point of grant application. This may include loans in-principle.
- 4.4. If you previously received grant funding through UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), you may still apply for further funding, however the combined requests must not exceed £10,000. For example, if you have previously been awarded £5,000 through UKSPF, you will only be eligible to apply for a further £5,000.
- 4.5. Grant funding must be spent, and activity funded by the grant complete by 31st January 2026. We will not retrospectively fund purchases that have already taken place prior to confirmation of funding.
- 4.6. The following costs are considered ineligible and must not be included in applications:
- Paid for lobbying, entertaining, petitioning or challenging decisions, which means using the Fund to lobby (via an external firm or in-house staff) in order to undertake activities intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, government or political activity including the receipt of UKSPF funding; or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- Operational costs associated with running the business, including salaries, overheads, rent, subscriptions, recruitment costs etc. This includes like for like repairs and maintenance costs.
- Purchases made through credit, as well as lease or rental agreements.
- Improvements to residential premises (all sites must be registered for commercial use).
- Projects or costs where there is a statutory duty to provide them.

4.7. Any funding requests relating to improvements to premises must be sites registered for commercial use and located in Newark and Sherwood. We will not fund improvements to domestic properties. Applicants must be able to confirm ownership or lease of the site/asset relevant to the application, as well as long-term arrangements for maintenance and repairs. If the applicant leases the site/premises, the long-term security of tenure (generally a minimum of 5 years) will be considered and reviewed as part of the appraisal and due-diligence process, relative to the individual request, and must have written permission from the owner to carry out work.

4.8. Applicants must have all necessary approvals in place to undertake the planned activity (such as licences and planning permission) prior to applying. This includes approval of any planning applications that may be associated with grant funded activity. This may be reviewed as part of the due-diligence process and the council may ask for evidence before a grant agreement is issued, however this is the sole responsibility of the applicant, and will not form part of the application process.

5. **Grant Funding Timeline**

5.1. The grant funding process will involve several stages, as detailed below:

Stage	Anticipated Date
Application submission opens	Wednesday 18th June 2025
Application submission deadline	Wednesday 16th July 2025
Appraisal and award process	July – August 2025
Applicants contacted regarding outcome of assessment	August 2025

Grant Funding Agreements issued	September 2025
Grant funding period ends	31st January 2026

6. How will applications be assessed?

6.1. All applications submitted will first be assessed against the following gateway criteria to ensure eligibility. Any application that fails the gateway stage will not be taken forward for appraisal by the panel.

Gateway Criteria
Application completed in full and on time with all supporting documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • Quote(s) • Evidence of financial standing, see application form for details
Business and project meet eligibility criteria considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of business e.g. size, location and age • Previous UKSPF funding • Subsidy control compliance • Eligible expenditure • Minimum match thresholds met, with funding confirmed

6.2. Once you have passed the gateway stage, a panel will review and assess your proposal, and a decision will be taken as to whether a grant will be awarded. **All applications are subject to a competitive process and due to the limited availability of funding, funding is not guaranteed.**

6.3. The table below provides an overview of how the panel will score and assess applications. Each element will be scored 0 – 5 based on the quality and content of the answers provided in the application form, with consideration of how well the applicant demonstrates the points below.

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Consideration</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
Justification of Funding	Explanation of the need for grant funding to support business growth, productivity or sustainability, including current challenges or opportunities.	20%
Strategic Fit	Explanation of the use of grant funding and how the project will address the challenges or opportunities identified.	30%

	This includes demonstration of how the grant will create jobs/improve productivity or improve the sustainability of the business (CO ₂ emissions or other justified measure). Alignment to Economic Growth Strategy	
	Consideration of wider environmental sustainability, equality and diversity implications of the project and business operations.	20%
Deliverability	Explanation of how the project will be delivered on time and in budget, including risk management and how outputs and outcomes will be measured, captured and evaluated.	20%
Match-funding	40% or more – 1 (minimum) 50% or more – 2 60% or more – 3 70% or more – 4 80% or more – 5	10%

6.4. Awards will be made generally to those that score the highest. The panel's decision is final and not subject to appeal due to the competitive process.

6.5. The Council reserves the right to not allocate some, or all of the funding through this process and may withhold from delivering any potential future grant funding rounds. Where applications may tie on scores, the Council at its discretion will determine additional assessment criteria to undertake further moderation and will re-mark applications.

6.6. The panel may also consider how a project may displace or negatively impact other businesses where applicable. Any projects that are likely to result in displacement of another business should refer to how this has been considered in the application.

7. What are the funding arrangements?

7.1. Due-diligence checks will be undertaken for successful applicants, prior to issuing a grant agreement. This may include, but not be limited to, financial, procurement, subsidy control and other legal checks required to fulfil the conditions of a grant agreement. Successful applicants that have passed the due-diligence checks will receive a grant agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the grant which must be signed and returned to the council, before funding is confirmed.

7.2. Grants are paid in arrears and can only be claimed after the expenditure is paid for by the recipient. This may include payments in instalments in some

circumstances, where agreeable. You must demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to pay for the project costs upfront in full or in instalments. By exception, the payment of grants may be arranged upon receipt of an invoice from your supplier, following completion of works (in advance of Recipient payment), however this is not guaranteed and subject to further due-diligence checks.

7.3. If you are successful and awarded a grant funding agreement, evidence of payment must be sent to the Council as set out in the grant agreement, and we will arrange payment of the grant to you. If your purchase costs less than initially quoted, you will not be paid the full grant award and will be paid up to 60% (based on your matched contribution) of the total costs evidenced. If your purchase costs more than originally quoted, it is the responsibility of the business to fund the extra costs, and the grant value will not be increased by the Council.

7.4. You must ensure that any project/programme put forward is compliant with the [UK Subsidy Control regime](#). Applicants will be asked to declare whether they or any businesses they are formally linked with have received funding from EU or other public sources in the last 3 years, when applying.

7.5. All projects must comply with UKSPF procurement procedures. For more information, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-procurement-8>. This includes the requirement for 3 recent quotes for any purchases over £10,000 or an open tender for any purchase over £75,000. **At the point of application, we require at least one recent quote** (acquired within the past three months from the date of application) **to demonstrate proposed costs for each item and if successful, a further 2 quotes must be sought for purchases between £10,000 and £75,000.**

8. How can businesses apply?

8.1. To apply, please complete and submit the following documents to UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk by no later than **23:59 on Wednesday 16th July 2025**. Applications submitted after the deadline or in any other format will not be considered.

- Business Growth and Productivity Grant Application Form
- A minimum of 1 quote (see application form for details)
- Copies of financial standing (see application form for details).

9. Support

9.1. For any queries relating to the application process, scoring criteria or funding arrangements please email UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk. For additional

accessibility requirements call the Council's general enquiries number on 01636 650000. However, support for completing the application form will not be given. Officers will aim to respond to queries within 5 working days and cannot offer support by any other means without good reason.