

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Leicester

Open Call 3 (OC3) – Skills Call

Invitation to bid

February 2024

This programme is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Introduction

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) is the successor programme to the previous European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF), a programme that integrates five main funding streams, each supporting economic prosperity.

UK SPF will fund interventions that build pride in place, support high quality skills training, supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances.

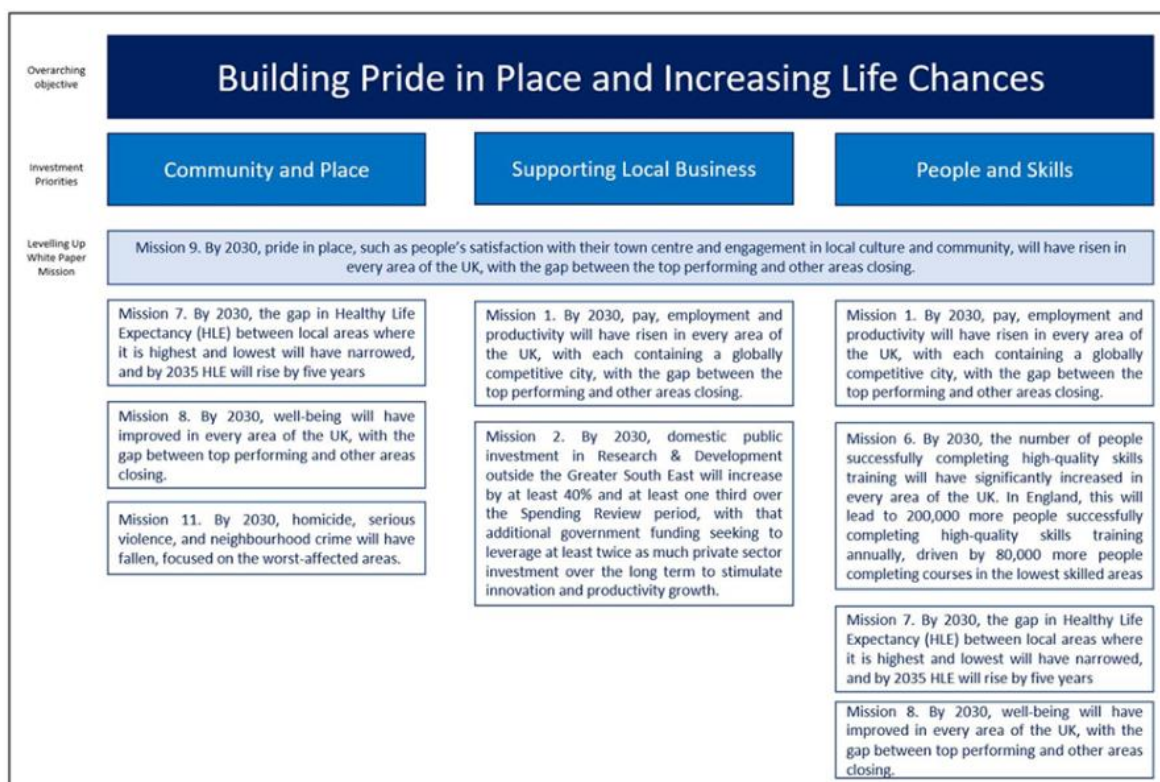
The Fund's interventions are being planned and managed by local authorities across England, working closely with local partners.

Lead local authorities were asked to set out their approach in an evidenced led Investment Plan submitted to Government on 31st July 2022. Local Authorities are required to submit a refreshed investment plan at the end of each year. All funding subsequently described is subject to Government approval of the Investment Plan and all successive refreshed yearly plans.

Background

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund 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. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

The UK SPF will support delivery of Government's Levelling Up's missions under three investment priorities: **Communities and Place; Supporting Local Business; and People and Skills.**



Leicester City Council is taking a holistic approach to UK SPF, ensuring that planned investment is evidenced based and delivers on ambitions set out within the **Key Issues and Lessons learnt document**, [UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\) \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk) which include commitments to inclusion, carbon neutrality and being an internationally renowned city of culture, creativity and innovation.

Leicester’s priorities are on Improving the economic prosperity of people and places by:

- Addressing inequalities in employment, pay, skills and productivity
- Creating a more sustainable inclusive economy, adapted for a post-Covid and digitally enabled world.

This translates into the following funding priorities under UK SPF:

	UK SPF Investment Priorities	Leicester UK SPF Funding Priorities
1.	Community and Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving the city centre ▪ Improving neighbourhoods ▪ Improved tourism, visitor economy and Inward investment support
2.	Supporting Local Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business and social enterprise support ▪ Sector support
3.	People and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employment and skills support

The themes of inclusion, productivity and carbon neutrality are interwoven throughout each of Leicester’s priorities.

Leicester City Council’s total funding allocation for the UK SPF core programme is:

2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	TOTAL
£1,115,665	£2,231,331	£5,846,087	£9,193,083

Grant Allocations

The funding available for this Open Call comes from the following UKSPF Investment Priorities within Leicester City Council’s UKSPF programme:

1. People and Skills

The tables below show:

- The UKSPF interventions in each Investment Priority that these funds are related to.
- The total amount available in each Financial Year (April – March).
- The amount available each year to support revenue and capital costs.

Table 1: People & Skills Funding

The following table outlines yearly spend across the Investment Priority themes covered by Open Call 3.

Intervention	Capital 24/25	Revenue 24/25	Capital/Revenue Totals
E38: Local areas to fund local skills needs.	£250,000	£997,296	£1,247,296
Total	£250,000	£997,296	£1,247,296

People & Skills Priorities

To help to determine the priorities for this call Leicester City Council commissioned an independent analysis of several previous EU/CRF funded projects, including the development of a set of local economic indicators.

Initially, we were allocations were across E36, E38 and E41 but on further review on what potentially looking to achieve from the areas it was felt this could all fit under E38 as would cover Digital and Carbon from the areas identified below. The outputs/outcomes would be applicable across all indicator numbers.

E38: Local areas to fund local skills needs

Support for local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs and high-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that is not being met through other provision.

Within this section we are looking for applications that help to raise the skills levels of Leicester's individuals within key sectors. We are seeking applications that:

- Show a clear fit to the Local Skills Improvement Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire [Leicestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan - East Midlands Chamber \(emc-dnl.co.uk\)](https://emc-dnl.co.uk)
- If not offering full level 1 or 2 qualification, then training needs to be delivered to as RARPA quality assurance framework or equivalent standard
- Training can be provided to both unemployed and employed individuals if eligible to receive support from UKSPF funding.
- The sector focus is as follows:

Sector	Focus
Green Skills / Retrofit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to level 1 or 2 • Focus on heating / insulation or retrofit activities • Need to ensure fits with other national provision provided
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to level 1 and 2 • Focus on support for people moving into the construction sector such as bricklaying/plastering • Needs to add value and complementary to existing provision
Creative Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to level 1 and 2 • Focus on social media / Artificial Intelligence • Need to ensure fits with local creative industry sector

Textile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to level 1 and 2 • Focus on knitting, pattern cutting • Need to ensure fits with local industry needs and needs from employers
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision can be targeted across a range of sectors but with a customer service focus. Sectors include hospitality, retail, visitor economy, other service sector. • Will need to clearly demonstrate how provision to compliment and enhance and not duplicate existing provision.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to level 1 and 2 • Open to applications that can clearly demonstrate gaps in provision not being covered by the other sector or current local / national provision • Support to include elements of digital support • Need to ensure fits with local priorities and clear demand and need

Capital Grant Application

Alongside the revenue call details outlined above a Capital Grant Application Form can be submitted separately for organisation that need capital funding to enhance their training provision or training facility.

Applications will need to demonstrate clear demonstration of current training provided, how the funding will help to and delivery new / additional courses/training.

Total budget available is £250,000 capital. Applications will need to be over £10,000 to be considered for the Capital Grant Application and will need to complete the Capital Grant Application Form.

We are keen to see applications from organisations that can demonstrate how support will help the delivery of the UKSPF programme.

For both provisions

We will not be looking to support any basic skills provision that was commissioned from the People & Community call previously advertised.

To help understand local delivery, please review Annex 1. This spreadsheet provides details of some of the courses / training available across Leicester and Leicestershire but is by no means exhaustive.

All applications will need:

- To demonstrate and provide justification in relation to the demand and need in relation to proposed course/training
- Demonstrate how proposed activities will enhance and not duplicate existing provision
- Demonstrate what additional support will be in place to support individuals with mental health issues, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups
- Demonstrate how the proposed training / skills will help and support the individuals and what achievements they will gain
- For training/courses to employees, demonstrate current employer demand for delivery of courses even if a bespoke pilot is proposed

Application Requirements

Please note the following when responding to the call:

- Applicants can apply for funding to deliver activity across UKSPF interventions but will need to clearly split the amounts in respect of finance, outputs and outcomes.
- Applicants will need to clearly demonstrate how they will record their client journey through the support being provided from initial engagement to the individual leaving their project.
- All applicants supporting individuals into employment will need to demonstrate how they will refer / link to the employment hub service for job-ready individuals and include how they propose to undertake this within the application form and client journey.

For revenue funding, applicants can apply for funds from either or both Investment Priorities, however the total amount applied for cannot be lower than circa £75,000 in total or above circa £400,000 in total. Minimum level of grant for the Capital Grant application is £10,000.

Leicester City Council anticipates awarding between 5 and 7 grants through this Open Call.

Please note - Grant funding allocations are indicative and subject to change and/or approval at the discretion of the Government and/or Leicester City Council (LCC).

UKSPF Interventions

The table below shows the outputs and outcomes associated with the UKSPF interventions and attributed funding amounts as detailed in Tables 1a.

Table 2a: People & Skills Open Call – People and Skills: Outputs and Outcomes

People & Skills Outputs	People & Skills Outcomes
No. of people receiving support to gain a vocational licence	No of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills
No. of people socially excluded accessing support	No's of people in employment, including self-employment, following support
No. of people supported to gain a qualification	No's of people in education/training following support
No. of people retraining	No's of people sustaining employment for 6 months
No. of people in employment engaging with the skills system	People gaining a qualification or completing course following support
No of people access mental and physical health support leading to employment	No of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills funded by UKSPF
No. of people attending training session	
No of people receiving support to gain employment	

No of people receiving support to sustain employment	
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What costs can be attributed to the grant?

The purpose of the grant is to deliver the interventions for each Investment Priority. The amount available in each Financial Year is given in Tables 1a and 1b of this document.

Revenue funds can be used to contribute to the costs of ongoing operational expenses required in the running of the project, including:

- Staff salary costs (including Employer NI and Pension contributions).
- Overheads related to employing staff involved in delivering activities funded through the grant.
- Cost of business travel.
- Marketing and publicity costs*.
- Participant costs / hardship support.
- Small items of equipment (less than £5,000).

Note: Expenditure incurred prior to the approval date will not be approved

**There is an expectation that successful applicants will work closely with Leicester City Council's Marketing and Communications/ Press Team to develop all promotional resources and events e.g. programme/project promotion, launch events, celebration events, etc.*

Capital: this is linked only if completing the capital grant application form. Capital costs can include:

- Infrastructure improvements linked to training provision
- Digital enhancements – large software packages
- Digital equipment to enhance training provision (not general laptops/pcs for staffing)
- Minor capital refurbishment costs that directly relate to training provision

How will applications be assessed?

As the lead authority, Leicester City Council will assess all grant applications submitted by **Midnight on Friday, 8th March 2024**

Assessment will involve four stages; Gateway, Scoring, Moderation and Further Moderation (if required), including sign off of shortlisted applications. Questions that are to be scored have been weighted.

Further information regarding the assessment criteria can be found in Appendix A: UKSPF Leicester Assessment Criteria.

Following assessment, Leicester City Council will inform all applicants of the outcome of the assessment.

Successful applicants will enter into a grant agreement with Leicester City Council.

How to apply

To apply for grant funding, applicants must complete and submit the following documents to Leicester City Council using this email address: ukspf.programme@leicester.gov.uk

- UKSPF Leicester – OC3 – Skills Application Form
- UKSPF Leicester – OC3 – Skills Capital Application Form
- UKSPF Leicester – OC3 – Appendix B – Skills – Budget & Performance Profile
- Evidence of Economic and Financial Standing (1.3 of the application form)

Applications submitted in any other format will not be accepted.

Complete applications must be submitted by: **Midnight on Friday, 8th March 2024.**

Timeline of activities

Activities	Date
Deadline for submission of bids. Late submissions will not be accepted	Midnight on Friday, 8 th March 2024
Appraisal and shortlist process - assessments, due diligence checks and shortlisting	March / April 2024
Applicants contacted regarding outcome of assessment	May / June 2024*
Grant funding agreements issued	June 2024

**subject to change dependent upon volume of applications received*

Further information

For any technical queries please email: ukspf.programme@leicester.gov.uk

APPENDIX A: UKSPF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Stage 1. GATEWAY CRITERIA

Criteria	Pass	Fail	Partial
Criteria 1: Application signed, fully completed and returned on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Criteria 2: Economic and Financial Standing*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria 3: Economic and Financial Risk*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria 4: Funding Status for Activities Proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria 5: Prior Contract Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria 6: Provision of Subsidies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria 7: Policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria 8: Liability Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**These will also be assessed via due diligence checks on Equifax and Spotlight.*

Applications that fail any criterion cannot progress to Stage 2. Scoring.

For the questions which have been assessed as partial, progress to Stage 2. Scoring will be allowed with justification from the Assessor.

STAGE 2. SCORING

The maximum score for each question is 5, based on the scoring framework below, but some are weighted through the multiplication of the assigned score. For example, a score of 5 weighted by a factor of 4 will equal a total score of 20. The maximum score and multiplication weightings are shown on the application form in the dark grey box to the right of each question.

SCORING FRAMEWORK

Score	Assessment	Description
0	<i>Unacceptable</i>	<i>Response to the question is unacceptable or no response received. Does not give the Fund confidence in the ability of the bidder to deliver the contract.</i>
1	<i>Poor/Weak Response</i>	<i>Inadequate detail provided or some of the answer not directly relevant to the question. Is supported by none or a weak standard of evidence in several areas giving rise to concern about the ability of the bidder to deliver the contract.</i>
2	<i>Below Expectations</i>	<i>Limited information provided, and/or a response that is inadequate or only partially addresses the question giving rise to concern about the ability of the bidder to deliver the contract.</i>
3	<i>Satisfactory Response</i>	<i>Acceptable response in terms of the level of detail, accuracy and relevance. Is supported by a satisfactory standard of evidence in most areas but a few areas lacking detail/evidence giving rise to some concerns about the ability of the bidder to deliver the contract.</i>
4	<i>Good Response</i>	<i>Comprehensive response in terms of detail and relevance to the question and supported by good standard of evidence. Gives the Fund confidence in the ability of the bidder to deliver the contract. Meets the Fund's requirements.</i>
5	<i>Very Good Response</i>	<i>As Good, but to a better degree in terms of precision and relevance. Is comprehensive and supported by a high standard of evidence. Gives the Fund a high level of confidence in the ability of the bidder to deliver the contract.</i> <i>May exceed the Fund's requirements in some respects, for example, added value such as integration/synergy with other projects.</i>

Scores will be awarded low to high based on the framework and within the scoring range for each question.

Part 2.1 Project Details on the application form will be scored out of 125 (once the weighting has been applied).

Part 3. Quality Assurance on the application form will be scored out of 50 (once the weighting has been applied).

The total score for applications for People and Skills funding will be out of 175 (= Part 2.1 score + Part 3 score).

STAGE 3. MODERATION

Funding will be awarded to the applicants with the highest score. The number of successful organisations will be dependent on the availability of funds.

Leicester City Council is aiming to support a good cross selection of applications covering a range of subject areas and therefore it is unlikely we will support applications delivering to the same subject area unless there is a clear evidence that the training provision is different and delivering different provision. Therefore, if e.g. two applications were received seeking to delivering bricklaying courses, we would potentially look to support only the highest of these scoring one of these applications.

Where applications tie on scores, further moderation criteria will be applied as detailed in Stage 4, or applicants may be invited to discuss/negotiate their total project values.

In selecting projects, overall caps will be applied in line with the maximum total funding available. This may result in applicants being invited to discuss/negotiate their total project values, their planned profiles of expenditure and outputs and outcomes, or the proportions of revenue and capital funding.

STAGE 4. FURTHER MODERATION (IF REQUIRED) AND SIGN OFF OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

Based on the degree of moderation required to end up with a range of Grants which doesn't exceed the maximum funding available in each Investment Priority in each Financial Year, Leicester City Council, at its discretion, will agree an additional ranking or scoring framework (e.g. taking Unit Cost or Value for Money into consideration).

NOTIFICATION OF INVITATION TO BID OUTCOME

Once the outcome of the assessment process has been notified to all applicants, organisations can request feedback on their applications and scoring.