

SPF Project Approval Process

Approvals for projects/schemes as part of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan are overseen by the Monmouthshire People & Place Partnership (referred to as 'Strategic Partnership'). The partnership is made up of members from a range of stakeholder organisations and local authority services areas who have expertise linked to the core priorities of the fund.

This document outlines the process undertaken for funding opportunities initiated that are either solely for proposals developed externally of the local authority ('external opportunity') or jointly for externally developed proposals and internal service area proposals ('combined opportunity').

1. Project proposals are submitted via an expression of interest form. In circumstances where no funding is presently available, expressions of interest will be held until such time that a funding opportunity opens, or until the funding programme ends.
2. An initial assessment is undertaken on all proposals to determine the eligibility of the named partner(s) and the proposal itself. Where ineligibility is identified, the lead partner will be informed, and the proposal will no longer be held for future consideration.
3. When an external or combined opportunity is confirmed by the Strategic Partnership, proposals will be assessed and scored on the following criteria. (see appendix 1)

The extent to which the proposal demonstrates:	
An ability to meet UK Government criteria for the programme and deliver outcomes from the programme framework	H
A contribution to meeting the strategic needs of the area as set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28 and other relevant strategies	H
That it represents value for money and that the project can't be funded elsewhere	H
Alignment with local needs that will complement and not duplicate existing provision	M
The experience and capability of the project sponsor	M
Significant local engagement with stakeholders and potential beneficiaries	L
An ability to identify and manage risks effectively	L
That UK Government subsidy control regulations can be complied with	L
They can deliver within the short timeframe for the programme	L
That delivery will take account of equality duties, the Welsh language and environmental good practice	L

H,M,L denote High, Medium and Low criteria weightings respectively.

4. Each criterion is scored 0 to 5 with 5 being the highest score. The overall maximum score achievable is 55. Next steps, dependent on score, are outlined below:

Score:	Next Steps / Recommendation:
0-30	Not considered further
31-45	Partnership to agree provisional approval pending further information, or reject with reasons
46+	Provisional approval

5. Regardless of next steps, a summary of proposal scores is presented to the Strategic Partnership to consider/review. The Strategic Partnership may challenge scores and refer

them back for rescoring where appropriate or request further clarification from the lead partner.

6. Consideration by the Strategic Partnership is essential for ensuring there is no duplication of existing provision, that the proposal will deliver additionality, represent value for money, and align with strategic priorities.
7. Scores determine a recommendation and next steps for a proposal. Following consideration, it is for the partnership agree, reject or defer a decision a subsequent meeting.
8. Agreement of provisional approval by the Strategic Partnership may still be subject to the availability of funding. Proposals will need to fit within the parameters of the local investment plan and can only be considered for ratification of the award when:
 - a. Funding becomes available within the appropriate UKSPF Investment Priority/Intervention(s)
 - b. Funding becomes available that meets the capital/revenue requirement of the proposal
 - c. Funding becomes available to cover the full delivery cost of the proposal
9. When a provisional approval is agreed by the partnership, and on the basis that appropriate funding is available, the decision is referred to the relevant elected member and Strategic Director to ratify.
10. Either whilst a proposal is awaiting consideration, or once it has been approved, officers will contact lead partners to provide relevant documentation as part of due diligence checks. This forms part of the qualification criteria which include:
 - a. Any grounds for mandatory or discretionary exclusions (e.g. criminal activity, corruption/fraud)
 - b. The existence of a legal entity and its financial position
 - c. Any conflicts of interest that may could compromise the conduct of a project
 - d. Organisational eligibility for UKSPF support as set out in the prospectus/additional information pages
 - e. Maximum grant value (if applicable)
 - f. Alignment to the UKSPF Intervention(s) and Priorities
 - g. Other general declarations (e.g. resource availability, timeline availability)
11. Failure to satisfy the essential criteria as part of due diligence checks will determine that a proposal is not considered further. Where a provisional offer of grant has already been made, this will be rendered void.

QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA CHECKLIST	Y / N
There are no identified grounds for mandatory or discretionary exclusions	
A legal entity exists (and can provide details of its financial position) which will be responsible for the delivery of the project as lead partner	
There are no identified conflicts of interest that may compromise the conduct of the project (or partners)	
The lead partner and delivery partners (where applicable) are eligible organisations as set out in the UKSPF prospectus	
The proposal does not exceed the maximum grant value (where applicable)	
The proposal aligns to the fund interventions and priorities	
There are no concerns raised via general declarations	

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

CRITERIA CHECKLIST	Y / N
There are no identified concerns with the performance (financial or otherwise) of any other project(s) or scheme(s) being delivered by the lead partner and other partners through either UKSPF funding or other local authority funding.	

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Proposals are assessed against criteria and scored between 0 and 5, with 5 being the highest score. The 'available' scores within the scale vary by criterion and are outlined in the definitions table. The scales will be one of the following:

- **Full scale of 0 to 5** with definitions provided for every scoring option.
- **Incremental scale** (e.g. 0,1,3,5) where only the defined scores are in use. Failure to meet the lowest score definition results in a zero score.
- **Binary scale** (e.g. 0,5) indicating that the criteria is either met (5) or not met (0)

Where scoring options are not listed and defined against a criterion they are not in use. For all criteria, a score of zero is assigned where there is a 'Failure to demonstrate the criteria can be met.'

The full list of criteria, available scores and supporting definitions is included below:

Appendix 1 – Checklist and Criteria Breakdown

Criteria	Score	Supporting definition
An ability to meet UK Government criteria for the programme and deliver outcomes from the programme framework	5	Demonstrably: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aligns to the target intervention(s), • identified appropriate and deliverable outputs and outcomes from the standard list, • provide context of how the activity aligns to the purpose of the fund, as set out in the prospectus.
	3	Demonstrably: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meets most, but not all, of the above
	1	Demonstrably: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meets at least one of the above
A contribution to meeting the strategic needs of the area as set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28 and other relevant strategies	5	A clear and demonstrable alignment to strategic objectives as set out in the community and corporate plan and other relevant strategies. This may include details of specific strategic objectives and actions.
	4	Broad alignment to specific strategic objectives but less detail than above.
	2	Proposal only demonstrates links to broader strategic context
	1	Minimal alignment to relevant strategies
That is represents value for money and that the project can't be funded elsewhere	5	Demonstrably cannot be funded elsewhere and/or demonstrates very good value for money. This may include details of value for money assessments, the leveraging of match funding or inward investment, or future cost savings.
	3	Cannot be funded elsewhere and provides some details of how it achieves value for money
	1	Alternative funding sources are clearly available, OR poor demonstration of how value for money is achieved
Alignment with local needs that will complement and not duplicate existing provision	5	Addresses an identified local need and doesn't overlap, and/or compliments existing provision
	4	Minimal overlap with existing provision and identifies a local need
	3	Some degree of overlap but identifies a local need
	2	High degree of overlap with existing provision OR lack of identified local need
	1	Clearly duplicates exiting provision

Appendix 1 – Checklist and Criteria Breakdown

The experience and capability of the project sponsor	5	Demonstrable experience of delivering this type of project effectively.
	4	Experience of delivering similar projects of this scale.
	3	Experience of delivering similar projects on a smaller scale.
	1	Very limited experience of capability demonstrated in proposal
Significant local engagement with stakeholders and potential beneficiaries	5	Stakeholders and/or beneficiaries have been effectively engaged in the development of the proposal or through other relevant and appropriate engagement schemes that have helped to shape the proposal
	3	Some level of engagement with stakeholders and/or beneficiaries
	1	Minimal engagement with stakeholders and/or beneficiaries
An ability to identify and manage risks effectively	5	Detailed response detailing risks and appropriate mitigating actions
	1	Very basic risk identification and mitigation
That UK Government subsidy control regulations can be complied with	5	Subsidy control is not relevant to project delivery; OR details of how the project will comply with subsidy control
They can deliver within the short timeframe for the programme	5	The proposal raises little or no concern with deliverability in the timeframe of the programme
	3	The proposal raises some concern with deliverability in the timeframe of the programme but identifies appropriate contingencies/mitigation actions
That delivery will take account of equality duties, the Welsh language and environmental good practice	5	Details provided of how the project will take account of relevant policies and/or reference to organisational policy/procedures that will support compliance