



**Rural Business Investment  
Programme**

**Application Guidance**

**(23-24)**

**Funded by Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)**



## 1.0 Rural Business Investment Programme

1.1 The Rural Business Investment Programme provides grant funding to micro and small businesses in rural areas in Newark and Sherwood.

1.2 The table below demonstrates the type of projects we may fund:

<u>Projects we may fund</u>	<u>Who can apply</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses e.g. energy saving equipment, energy efficiency measures, electrical vehicle charging points.</li><li>• capital funding for the diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses.</li><li>• capital funding for creating event venues or farm tourism facilities such as accommodation, wedding venues and leisure facilities.</li><li>• capital funding for the provision of facilities for pet and equines such as kennels, livery and pet health venues.</li><li>• capital funding for the purchase of equipment for food processing for non-farmer-owned businesses.</li><li>• capital funding for resilience infrastructure and nature-based solutions that protect local businesses from natural hazards including flooding.</li></ul>	<p>Small and micro established businesses in Newark and Sherwood with less than 50 FTE*</p> <p>*FTE is any employee contracted to 30 hours or more per week. Businesses must have been trading for a minimum of 2 years.</p>

1.3 Any projects should align to the objectives of REPF. This includes:

- the UK's commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050
- wider environmental considerations, such as resilience to natural hazards
- the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) commitments

1.4 We cannot support projects that have received funding from other DEFRA schemes, as listed below:

- [The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme](#) - funding for farmers and land managers to work in partnership with National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty bodies to deliver projects on climate, nature, people and place
- [The Farming Investment Fund](#) - grants to improve productivity and bring environmental benefits, covering 2 funds - the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund and the Farming Transformation Fund

1.5 We are not able to fund the purchase of equipment for food processing for -farmer-owned businesses. Support for farmer- owned businesses is available under the Farming Investment Fund (FIF).

## **2.0 Where in Newark and Sherwood is considered Rural?**

2.1. Not all areas of Newark and Sherwood are eligible to receive rural funding as determined by DEFRA. For clarification, projects that are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for rural funding include those based in Newark Town and Balderton, as well as parts of Clipstone that border Mansfield as they have been defined as 'not rural' for the purposes of the funding. If you are based in these areas, you can contact us directly via email at [UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk) and we can advise further on eligibility.

## **3.0 What costs may be eligible?**

3.1 **The minimum request per application is £10,000, with a maximum request of £50,000 per application.** Businesses may submit more than one application, however the total awarded to a single business will not exceed £50,000.

3.2 Businesses must directly contribute (or secure from another source), a **minimum of 40% funding** towards the total project costs. **This means your request from us should not exceed 60% of the total project costs.**

3.3 The 40% financial contribution may be from any other funding source including grants (excluding those listed in 1.4). This funding must be secured rather than awaiting confirmation of to be considered eligible and you must be able to demonstrate match funding upon completion.

3.4 Grant funding must spent and projects complete by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. We will not fund projects retrospectively.

3.5 **We can provide capital funding only.** We are not able to fund revenue projects or provide revenue funding to support a capital project. Capital funds can be used to acquire, build or upgrade physical assets, including:

- A one-time purchase of a fixed asset.
- Acquisition of land and or buildings.
- Building and construction costs.
- Professional fees associated with building and construction.
- Plant, machinery and equipment.

3.6 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.

#### **4.0 What are the funding arrangements?**

4.1 Successful applicants will enter into a grant agreement with the Council. If we approve your project, you must:

- trade for three years from the end of the grant funding period
- deliver all outputs as detailed in your full application
- supply evidence of expenditure and defrayal.

4.2 Grants are paid in arrears and can only be claimed after the work is finished and has been paid for. This may include payments in instalments in some circumstances. You must demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to pay for the project costs upfront in full or in instalments.

4.3 Applicants must ensure that any project/programme put forward is compliant with the [UK Subsidy Control regime](#) and will be asked to demonstrate this within the application form. 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 when they apply.

4.4 All projects must comply with UKSPF/REPF procurement procedures, this includes 3 quotes for the purchase of any goods or services between the value of £2,500 and £25,000. We will request quotes prior to issuing a funding agreement and a minimum of 1 quote should be submitted with your application. For more information, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-procurement-8>

- 4.5 Funding will be awarded on the basis that applicants have all necessary permissions in place to undertake any planned activity and pass all necessary due-diligence checks. 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.
- 4.6 Applicants must consider how their project may displace or negatively impact other businesses and consider engagement with other businesses where relevant to avoid displacement. Any projects that may result in displacement will not be taken forward.

## **5.0 Grant Funding Timeline**

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

<b><u>Stage</u></b>	<b><u>Expected Date</u></b>
Application submission deadline	Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
Appraisal and award process	July 2023
Applicants contacted regarding outcome of assessment	July 2023
Grant funding agreements issued	July/August 2023
Grant funding period ends	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024

5.2 If you are unsure if your project is suitable or would like further advice before applying, you may decide to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to us by email at [UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk), before completing an application. The EOI helps us to filter any projects which are unlikely to receive funding and saves you time working on a full application unnecessarily. We recommend doing this as early on in the process as possible and you should allow up to 10 working days for us to respond.

5.3 An EOI does need to be any more than 500 words initially, and we will respond with any additional questions we may have. You should explain clearly:

- What the project is and the benefits for rural communities/businesses
- When and where it will be delivered
- The total project costs and the amount of funding you may decide to apply for

## **6.0 How can businesses apply?**

6.1 To apply, please complete and return the following documents to [UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk) by **no later than Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 5pm**. Applications submitted after the deadline or in any other format will not be considered.

- Rural Business Investment Programme Application Form 23-24
- Quotes/links to support request (see application form)
- Copies of financial standing (see application form)

## **7.0 How will applications be assessed?**

7.1 All applications submitted will be assessed against the following gateway criteria to ensure eligibility. Any applications that fail the gateway stage will not be taken forwards for appraisal.

<b><u>Gateway Criteria</u></b>
Application completed in full and on time with all supporting documents
Business & project meets eligibility criteria (size, location, previous project funding, subsidy compliance etc.)
Project does not appear to displace other businesses.
Minimum of 40% match funding detailed in application

7.2 The table below provides an overview of how we will score and assess applications. Each part of the application will be scored 0-5 based on the quality and content of the answers provided, and how well the applicant demonstrates the points below.

<b><u>Theme</u></b>	<b><u>Component</u></b>	<b><u>Weight</u></b>
Justification of funding	What are the rural challenges faced/why is grant funding required?	20%
Strategic Fit	How well does the project address rural challenges/what are the long-term benefits?	20%
	How does the project support environmental sustainability?	10%
Value for Money	What is the match-funded contribution? Minimum contribution – 3 10% or more above minimum contribution – 5	10%
Deliverability	How will the project be funded upfront?/financial viability of applicant?  How will outputs and outcomes be captured, measured and evaluated?  How will risk be managed and mitigated?  What arrangements are in place to deliver on time and in budget?	40%

7.3 The council reserves the right not to 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.

## **8.0 Support**

8.1 For any queries, please email: [UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)

**END**