

## **Guidance Notes for Applicants: Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)**

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) supports rural businesses in Huntingdonshire through capital investment projects, aiming to improve rural productivity, encourage business diversification, and enhance visitor experiences.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. **Location:** Operate within Huntingdonshire's REPF area (use the Defra Magic Map to confirm eligibility).
2. **Business Type:** Be a small or micro-enterprise (1–249 employees). Eligible entities include limited liability companies, partnerships, sole traders, franchises, or similar.
3. **Grant amounts:** A minimum of £5,000 and a maximum of £20,000.
4. **Matching Funds:** No contribution if project is less than £12,500 however will be a contribution of 25% of the project costs if it is less than £20,000.
5. **Operation:** Actively trade and pay business rates in Huntingdonshire.
6. **Project Timeline:** Ensure funds are spent by 28 January 2026.
7. **Expenditure Timing:** Grants cannot fund projects that have already started or incurred costs before the grant agreement is signed.

### **Eligible Projects**

The grant can fund capital investments such as:

- **Fixed Assets:** Construction, buildings, machinery, and commercial equipment.
- **Tourism Enhancements:** New or additional on-site accommodation for tourism purposes.
- **Farm Diversification:** Conversion of agricultural buildings to non-agricultural use (for example, wedding venues or workshops).

### **Exclusions: The grant cannot fund:**

- Salaries, utilities, stock, or running costs.

- Retrospective costs (expenses before the Grant Funding Agreement is signed).
- Repairs, maintenance, or replacement items.
- Agricultural machinery, IT equipment, or domestic items.
- Land purchases or non-capital landscaping (e.g., hedging, plants).

## Application Process

1. Eligibility Check: Confirm eligibility and review funding priorities at [www.investhuntingdonshire.co.uk](http://www.investhuntingdonshire.co.uk)
2. Request Form: Contact [ruralgrants@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:ruralgrants@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) to request an application form.
3. Submit Application: Provide the completed form with supporting documents (for example, project plans, quotes, and evidence of matching funds).
4. Review: Applications are evaluated by the REPF Panel based on strategic alignment, value for money, contribution to net-zero goals, and broader economic, environmental, and social benefits.

## Grant Claim Process

1. Complete the Supplier Form and provide a recent bank statement.
2. Receive a Purchase Order Number (PO Number) from Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC).
3. Submit an invoice quoting the PO Number to claim the grant.

## Monitoring Requirements

Grant recipients must provide:

- Bank statements verifying payment of invoices.
- Photographs and an asset register of funded items.

## Application Tips

- Submit two quotes for each item or service; justify if not choosing the lowest quote.
- Include detailed project plans highlighting economic, environmental, and social benefits, including alignment with net-zero and nature recovery goals.

- Provide evidence of permissions, consents, and licenses if applicable.

## **Additional Requirements**

1. Company Details: Provide your Companies House number, VAT or Unique Tax Reference, Business Rates number, and industry classification code.
2. Subsidy Control: Declare all grant funding received in the last three years. Ensure the total subsidy allowance does not exceed £315,000.
3. Permissions and Consents:
  - Ensure statutory permissions (e.g., planning permission, building control, licenses) are in place before commencing the project.
  - If working on a leased property, provide evidence of leaseholder agreement and freeholder consent.
4. Funding Evidence:
  - Match funding must be secured before application submission. Provide supporting documentation (e.g., bank statements, loan agreements).
5. VAT:
  - VAT-registered businesses must exclude VAT from grant requests.
  - Non-VAT-registered businesses can include VAT in the grant amount.

## **Finance Section**

- Provide the name, account number, and sort-code of your business bank account.
- Payments will only be made to a business account and will undergo credit and fraud checks.

## **Project Delivery**

- Explain your project timeline, from purchasing grant items to project completion.
- Submit evidence of completed purchases (e.g., invoices, bank statements).

## **Business and Project Description**

1. Describe your current business activities and services/products offered.
2. Explain the project, its objectives, and its anticipated economic and environmental impact.

3. Justify the need for the project and how it aligns with REPF priorities.

## Example Projects and Outcomes

### Case Studies:

- Farm Diversification: Glamping facilities on a farm, creating jobs and supporting local businesses.
- Manufacturing Expansion: New machinery for a furniture-making business, resulting in job creation and increased contracts.

### REPF Investment Priorities:

- Create and safeguard jobs.
- Increase private sector investment.
- Expand rural tourism and visitor experiences.

### Outcomes to Include:

- Jobs created or safeguarded.
- Improved productivity or growth.
- Increased customers or tourism.
- Adoption of innovative processes or technologies.

## Declaration

By submitting the application, you declare that you:

1. Agree to and meet REPF requirements.
2. Are authorised to submit the application.
3. Will enter into a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA).
4. Will complete the project within the agreed timeline.
5. Retain documentation for six years and provide it upon request to ensure compliance.

For further assistance, contact [ruralgrants@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:ruralgrants@huntingdonshire.gov.uk).