

RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND GRANT CRITERIA

Ribble Valley Borough Council has been awarded £433,680 of capital funding from the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) which is to be invested in rural capital projects over the next two financial years. £75,000 is available in the current financial year (2023/24) with a further £358,680 available in 2024/25.

Objectives of the Scheme

This grant scheme intends to improve productivity and strengthen the Borough's rural economy and rural communities by funding capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure.

Amount of grant

Grants of up to £50,000 are available to eligible organisations. Schemes that have secured match funding of up to 50% will be scored favourably.

All successful projects applicants must have completed their capital project and spent all of the grant by 1st March 2025 at the latest.

Project Monitoring

Applicants will be required to submit to requested site visits from Ribble Valley Borough Council officers during and upon completion of the agreed project, and to provide updates on progress towards the achievement of fund/ project priorities, outputs and outcomes at timescales agreed in advance of project commencement.

Who can apply

The following organisations/ groups with legal status can apply:

- parish councils
- registered charity/community association
- charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
- community benefit society (Bencom)
- constituted community groups
- faith groups, where the activity is not promoting religion
- public sector organisations
- higher and further education institutions

The project must be located in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 village settlement as defined in the adopted Core Strategy. A breakdown of the villages in these Tiers can be found [here](#).

Example projects

- Community energy schemes such as scaled up biomass, heat pumps or solar.
- Capital grants for sustainable kitchens in community hubs which can support food and drink entrepreneurs to get accreditation for food production
- Capital grants to establish or enhance community gardens and green spaces
- Capital grants to develop, restore or refurbish local natural, cultural and heritage assets and sites
- Improving visitor experience and accessibility such as providing all terrain wheelchairs
- Capital grants to enable the provision of venues to host creative events
- Creation/improvement of footpaths and cycle paths
- Capital grants to set up community led cafes or workshops including tools and equipment

RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND GRANT CRITERIA

- Capital grants to purchase equipment for local volunteering groups
- Installing EV charging points for the local community
- Installation of superfast broadband infrastructure to communities
- Retrofitting community buildings to reduce energy consumption and emissions e.g., installing insulation, double glazing etc.
- Drainage of playing fields/playing equipment (park)

We cannot support projects that have received funding from other Defra schemes in line with Government guidance. This includes:

- 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
- The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund - grant funding over 3 years (to 2025) to support capital improvement projects for village halls, covering extending buildings and modernising facilities. More details on how to apply will be available shortly
- We cannot support projects or costs where there is a statutory duty to provide them.

What could the local benefits of REPF investment be?

- EV Charging Points
- Visitors or locals using charging points
- Community energy projects
- Improved cycleways or paths
- Increased use of cycleways or paths from improved paths and cycleways
- Local events or activities supported
- Green or blue infrastructure created or improved
- Number of facilities supported or created
- Increased users of facilities or amenities
- Improved engagement numbers
- Volunteering numbers as a result of the support
- Reducing carbon footprint and greater access to charging points

General

- 1) Applicants must demonstrate that they support or develop community action in a way that is sustainable and contributes to local community life.
- 2) Applications will only be accepted from properly constituted organisations. A valid constitution or memorandum and articles of association must accompany all applications.
- 3) Applicants should demonstrate that they abide by the rules of their constitution, they are democratic and make efforts to involve users in a significant way in the decision making process of their organisation. The organisation must be able to demonstrate that membership of their organisation is open to all members of the community and that the organisation does not discriminate unfairly against anyone on the grounds of race, gender, creed, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- 4) Applicants should demonstrate that their organisation is financially sound and well managed and that any project or proposed project is properly planned and organised. Applicants must demonstrate value for money and evidence of their own fund raising

RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND GRANT CRITERIA

activity and ability to attract funds from other sources. Applicants should demonstrate that they have planned for the longer-term financial sustainability of their organisation as a whole and for any specific activity or project that they are applying for, i.e. they should have a business plan.

- 5) Applications will only be considered if they include a statement showing how much an organisation has in all its bank accounts. If the organisation has significant balances and/or generates significant surpluses then a full justification for the amount of grant being sought will be required.
- 6) Applicants seeking grants will be required to submit the organisation's most recent set of accounts that have either been approved by an independent examiner, or auditor (based on your annual income levels).
- 7) The grant scheme will not normally fund the following:
 - Capital projects on which work has already started or in aid of expenditure already committed or paid.
 - Commercial organisations/businesses (including CICs).
 - Any activity that is designed to promote political party politics or influence government policies.
 - Applications from the County Council or other government agencies.
- 8) Applications should not contravene the policies and principles of this Council. Organisations receiving grant support will have to provide details as to how they will publicise the Council's support.
- 9) Applicants who have received funding from the Council should provide, if required, a year-end report to the Council showing how the grant has been used.
- 10) Applicants who receive funding from the Council agree to notify and repay the Council any unspent grant balances.
- 11) Grant funding is subject to UK subsidy control legislation and as such all applicants will be required to complete and return a subsidy declaration to be considered for the scheme.

Capital Grants

Note: Capital grants refers to buildings infrastructure or equipment with a life expectancy of not less than two years and a purchase value of not less than £1,000.

- 1) The level of grant awarded from the fund for any individual capital project will not normally exceed £50,000. The Council may review these limits under exceptional circumstances.
- 2) Premises, land or equipment in respect of which a grant is given must either be in the ownership of the applicant or secured by a long-term lease (not less than 10 years).
- 3) Applicants must demonstrate that all licences and consents have been obtained, including planning and building control approvals, and that the balance of funding is in place (or soon will be).
- 4) Applicants must demonstrate that provision has been made for ongoing running and maintenance costs once the project has been completed.
- 5) Applicants will need to provide three written estimates of building and/or purchase costs.
- 6) Capital grants will be paid in arrears and net of VAT (where applicants are required to register for VAT with HMRC), following satisfactory completion of the project and submission of receipts or invoices.

RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Outputs

1. Number of businesses supported (Number of businesses)
2. Number of farm businesses supported (Number of businesses)
3. Number of farm diversification projects supported (Number of projects)
4. Number of micro businesses supported (Number of businesses)
5. Number of organisations receiving grants (Number of organisations)
6. Number of facilities supported, created or installed (Number of facilities)
7. Number of EV charging points (Number of charging points)
8. Number of visitors or locals using charging points (Number of users)
9. Number of community energy projects funded (Number of projects)
10. Amount of rehabilitated land (M2)
11. Number of rehabilitated premises (Number of premises)
12. Amount of land made wheelchair accessible/step-free (M2)
13. Amount of public realm created or improved (M2)
14. Amount of green or blue space created or improved (M2)
15. Number of tourism, culture or heritage assets created or improved (Number of assets)
16. Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready (Number of entrepreneurs)
17. Number of events/participatory programmes (Number of events/participatory programmes)
18. Total length of new or improved cycle ways or foot paths (KM)
19. Number of new or improved cycle ways or footpaths (Number of cycle ways or footpaths)
20. Number of people reached (Number of people)
21. Number of projects successfully completed (Number of projects)

Outcomes

1. Jobs created as a result of support (Number of Full time equivalent (FTE))
2. Jobs safeguarded as a result of support (Number of full time equivalent (FTE))
3. Number of new enterprises created as a result of support (Number of new enterprises)
4. Increased number of enterprises supported (Number of enterprises)
5. Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes (Number of enterprises)
6. Number of enterprises with improved productivity (Number of enterprises)
7. Number of enterprises experiencing growth (Number of enterprises)
8. Number of enterprises increasing their export capability (Number of enterprises)
9. Number of enterprises increasing their turnover (Number of Enterprises)
10. Increased users of facilities or amenities (Number of users)
11. Improved perception of facility or infrastructure project (Number of users)
12. Improved perception of facilities/amenities (Number of people)
13. Improved perceived/experienced accessibility (Number of people)
14. Increased footfall (Number of people)
15. Increased visitor numbers (Number of people)
16. Increased use of cycleways or footpaths (Number of cyclists or pedestrians)
17. Improved engagement numbers (Number of people)
18. Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support (Number of programmes)
19. Improved perception of events (Number of people)
20. Number of community-led programmes as a result of support (Number of Programmes)
21. Number of volunteering opportunities created as a result of support (Number of volunteering roles created)