

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Rural England Prosperity Fund:

Harborough District rural arts, creative, heritage and cultural activities grant guidance

APPLICATIONS open on 8 April 2024 and close on 26 July 2024.

No applications will be accepted after the closing date.

Introduction

1. 'The Rural Fund supports the aims of the government's Levelling Up White Paper and Future Farming Programme. It funds capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure. This will help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. The Rural Fund is integrated into the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which supports productivity and prosperity in places that need it most. For eligible local authorities, the Rural Fund is a rural top-up to UKSPF allocations. It supports activities that specifically address the challenges rural areas face. It is complementary to funding used to support rural areas under the UKSPF.'
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus>
2. Harborough District Council has been allocated £709,681 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to be spent over two financial years between April 2023 and March 2025.
3. As stated in the prospectus, "The Rural Fund provides capital funding to support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy, and to support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy".
4. £204,681 has been allocated in year 2 by the council to the Harborough District rural arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities grants.
5. The project scope must be to enhance and develop the provision of local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities for wider public benefit and participation in rural communities.
6. This grant is aligned with the Harborough District Rural Strategy, which was approved in 2022 and involved considerable consultation and engagement with key rural stakeholders. It has taken account of the requirements of

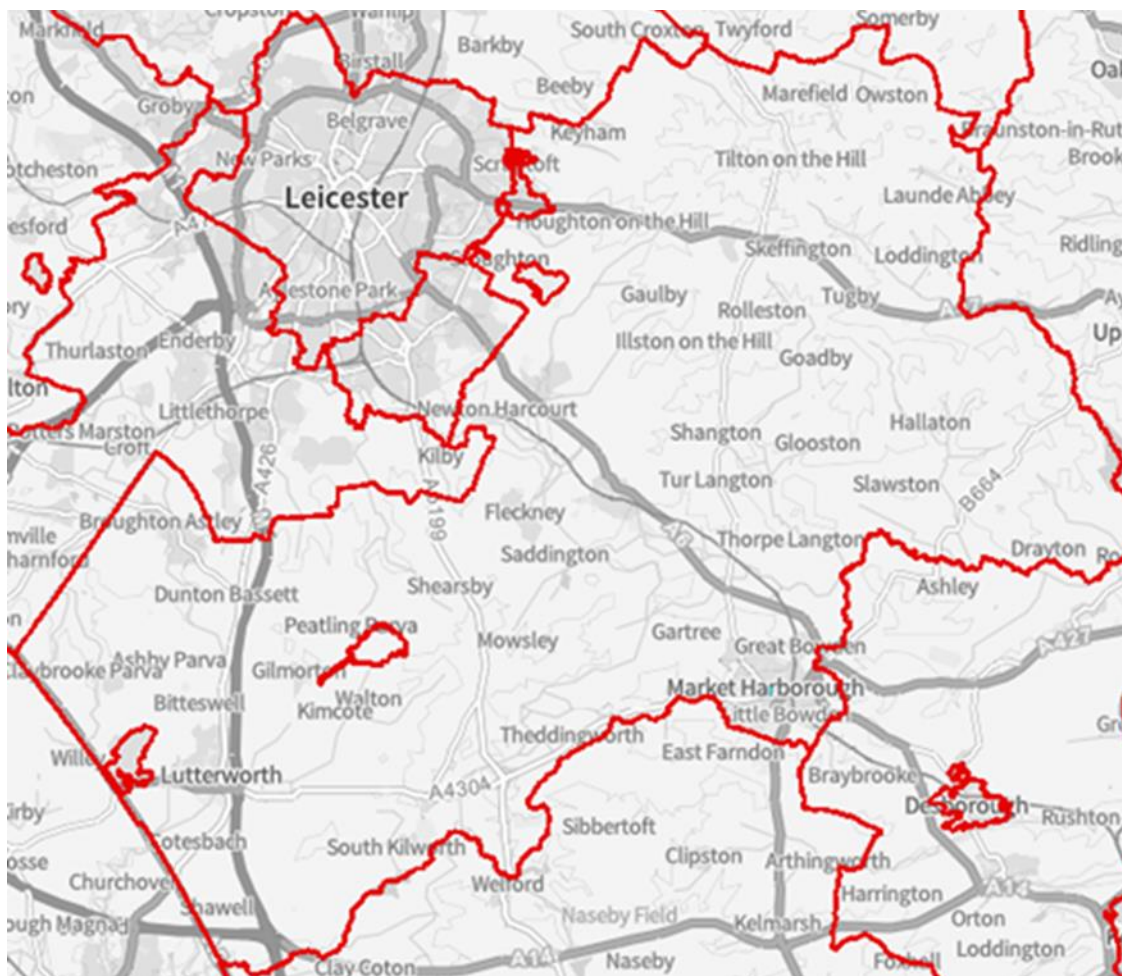
Government (as set out in various links above) and the issues and questions that have arisen locally and nationally through the delivery of past and current business support schemes.

Rural areas

7. To ensure that the funding addresses rural issues and contributes to the delivery of the council's Rural Strategy, this grant is restricted to all areas of the district other than Market Harborough and Lutterworth and those areas identified as not eligible on the government's map. An exception to this may be made if a project specifically demonstrates how, it directly benefits the rural areas of the district, rural residents, communities or businesses.

In addition to Market Harborough and Lutterworth, areas in the Harborough District not identified as a rural area for the purposes of REPF (Rural England Prosperity Fund) are:

- Magna Park Logistics Park
- Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground (to be confirmed on application)
- Leicester Airport
- Stoughton Lane
- The parishes of Thurnby/Bushby/Scraftoft, which are classified as part of the Leicester Principal Urban Area as identified on the map.



Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm>

What projects can be funded?

8. The grant funding must only be used on capital projects which means it must be spent on lasting assets such as a building or equipment purchases.
9. The grants must support new or existing rural businesses and organisations to develop new arts, creative, heritage and cultural services or enhance existing sector facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy and communities. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams. Examples may include, but are not limited to:-
 - Funding for local art galleries, museums, or community libraries to refurbish premises and improve exhibition spaces.
 - Funding for works to provide creative maker spaces.
 - Purchasing or altering premises to create spaces for arts, cultural, heritage or creative activities.
 - Purchasing equipment that enables locally-led music, theatre or dance performances, art exhibitions, tours, author events or film screenings.
10. All applicants must provide assurances that they have all the necessary permissions, such as planning approvals, building consents and licences etc, in place prior to applying.
11. Grants must be used for business and community purposes. They cannot be used for domestic property improvements or for private vehicles.
12. All projects must consider how the project can work with the natural environment to achieve objectives. At a minimum, you need to consider the project's impact on our natural assets and nature. Projects that deliver the greatest economic, environmental, and social benefits will be prioritised.
13. Grant applicants must submit a robust project delivery and management plan. This will include the scope of the project, evidence of its viability, a timeline schedule, project resources including budget and delivery team, delivery requirements and how success will be measured, communication methods, procurement and risk management.
14. This funding may only be used for a new project. Work must not start before grants are approved.

How much funding can I apply for?

15. Grants towards project costs will start at £5,000 minimum up to a maximum of £20,000.
16. Applications are required to demonstrate that they have a minimum 10% match funding from other sources, with the maximum funding from the Harborough Rural Grants Scheme being up to 90%. Projects with a higher

percentage of match funding from own funds or other sources, may be more likely to be supported, as they demonstrate that the applicant has received more support and commitment from elsewhere.

Total project cost	Maximum grant 90%	Minimum applicant match 10%
£5,556	£5,000	£556
£22,223	£20,000	£2,223

Eligibility criteria

17. The applicant organisation must be located in a rural area as identified above (7).
18. A micro/ small/ medium sized enterprise employing between 1 and 249 staff.
19. As part of their application process for the grant, all applicants will be required to self-certify that they meet all eligibility criteria.
20. Grant amounts given to individual businesses and organisations will be subject to subsidy allowances. Therefore, applicants will be asked to state any grants they have received within the application.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/23/enacted>
21. Applicants can be businesses or organisations with a legal status including sole traders, partnerships, limited companies, community interest companies, social enterprises, local parish councils and registered charities.
22. Businesses must be trading for 12 months prior to applying for the grant. New or start-up businesses need to get in touch to discuss their project to determine eligibility before applying. For the purposes of this grant scheme, a business is trading if it is engaged in business activity. This should be interpreted as carrying on a trade or profession or buying and selling goods or services in order to generate turnover. Fully constituted businesses in liquidation, dissolved, struck off or subject to a striking-off notice are not eligible under these conditions.
23. Only one grant per applicant is permitted across all REPF schemes, within any one financial year.
24. The council requires the following information for all applicants:
 - A. Name of business/organisation
 - B. Business or organisation trading address including postcode
 - C. Unique identifier (preferably Company Reference Number (CRN)) if applicable. If not applicable, VAT Registration Number, Self-assessment/Partnership Number, National Insurance Number, Unique

Taxpayer Reference, Registered Charity Number will also be acceptable)

- D. Nature of business/organisation
- E. Date established
- F. Number of employees
- G. Business rate account number (if applicable)

25. The Local Authority must confirm with the applicant that in accepting the grant, it confirms that it is eligible. If the applicant ceases to meet the eligibility criteria, it is required to let the Council know.

Exclusions to grant funding

26. The fund cannot support projects that have received funding from other DEFRA schemes. This includes:

- a. The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme
- b. The Farming Investment Fund
- c. The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund

27. The fund cannot support projects or costs where there is a statutory duty to provide them.

28. Organisations that have already received grant payments that equal the maximum permitted levels of government or public subsidy will not be eligible to receive funding. Applicants will be asked to state any grants they have received within the application.

29. For the avoidance of doubt, organisations that are in administration, insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made, are not eligible for funding under this scheme.

30. Grant funding cannot be used for revenue projects or operational costs.

Will grants be subject to tax?

31. Grant income received is taxable. The grant will need to be included as income in the tax return of the organisation.

32. Payments made before 5 April 2025 will fall into the 2024/25 tax year. Unincorporated businesses will also be liable for tax on any grant income received.

The risk of fraud

33. Various checks including anti-fraud will be made on each application and organisation on the online system where applications are submitted.
34. Applicants falsifying their records to gain grant money face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered, as will any grants paid in error.
35. The Council retains the right to request repayment of the grant funding for non-compliance of the terms of the grant declaration.

Publicity and monitoring

36. Any organisation receiving a grant must agree to publicly acknowledging receipt of the grant, display any logos and agree to participate in any publicity or promotional activities associated with the funding. In addition, they must agree to participate in any monitoring and reporting required by the Council and/ or DEFRA, whether specifically noted in the grant approval notification or not.

Application process and timescales

37. The council will only accept online applications made via the www.grantapproval.co.uk website. It is the responsibility of the applicant organisation to ensure that correct and accurate information is provided.
38. Grants will open for applications on 8 April 2024 and close on 26 July 2024. The council reserves the right to close the scheme earlier or extend if required. Every effort would be made to inform applicants who have registered their interest with the Council of any such changes.
39. Applications will be scored and assessed against this criteria:-
 - **Value for money** – demonstrated value for money with like for like competitive quotes provided, % match funding available and security shown, additional visitors generated.
 - **Strategic fit** - evidence provided of specific needs and current challenges shown, project outcomes clearly demonstrated and aligned with grant scope, jobs safeguarded or created.
 - **Deliverability** – plans shown to manage the project on time and budget, clear processes in place of how risk will be managed and mitigated.
40. Applicants need to answer the following questions in their application:-

- a. Please describe what the overall aims of your organisation are.
- b. Please outline your capital project, providing as much detail as possible including current local need, identified challenges or barriers to public participation in arts, creative, heritage and cultural activities (you will be asked to submit a project delivery and management plan later on in the application).
- c. Explain how you have considered the project's impact on the environment and how your activity will contribute towards achieving net zero objectives.
- d. Will this project safeguard existing jobs or create new jobs? If so, approximately how many and in what type of roles?
- e. How many additional visitors per annum is this project expected to generate, and how have you estimated this forecast?
- f. Please outline the delivery timeline of the project, including expected start and completion dates with key milestones.
- g. How much additional income, if any, do you expect this project to generate?
- h. To what extent will this project be able to be delivered without this grant? Please explain what added value and difference the funding will make.
- i. Do you have all necessary permissions including planning approval and consent from the landlord or freeholder in order to begin the project?
- j. The grant requires funding to be matched with at least 10% of the total project cost being provided by another means. How are you proposing to fund this remaining cost and how secure is this method of finance?
- k. Please outline any grant funding you have received since 2019.

41. Applications received will be considered by the grant panel. Decisions will be made by 20 September 2024.

42. Successful grant awards will be paid on approval. The applicants can then commission the project works to be completed and make the purchases of the project equipment. Work must not start until approval is received.

43. Evidence of spend is required by the applicant by uploading all supplier invoices and images of works carried out to www.grantapproval.co.uk.

44. The project must be completed by the applicant by 31 March 2025 in line with rules of the REPF scheme.

45. Applicants must submit a project review on completion and upload to www.grantapproval.co.uk. This will include evidence of equipment purchases and works completed supported by supplier/contractor invoices and images at the start and conclusion of the project. The project objectives and outputs will also be included along with a summary of the lasting legacy achieved and next steps for development of the project.