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# **Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant Policy**

**July 2025**



**Stafford**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## 1 Introduction

In April 2025, the latest allocation of the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) was announced by Government, as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus-updates-for-2025-to-2026](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus-updates-for-2025-to-2026)

Stafford Borough Council has been allocated £146,355 to spend between July 2025 and March 2026 on **capital interventions** in our rural communities as part of the REPF.

## 2 Rural Funding

### Rural Locations

Projects must be based in a rural area. For fund purposes, rural areas are defined as the examples below and can be viewed via this link; [magic.defra.gov.uk/](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/)

- Towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000 and the wider countryside
- Market or 'hub towns' with populations of up to 30,000 that serve their surrounding rural areas as centres of employment and in providing services

### Applicant eligibility:

- Must be an independent profit seeking business based in commercial premises, within the local rural authority area of Stafford.
- Must not be controlled by a corporate entity

An independent business can be defined as;

- Privately owned and not a public company (plc)
- Operates autonomously and is not affiliated with larger corporations or chains

Applicants also:

- Must be currently trading and can provide at least 12 months of certified or management accounts.
- Must employ less than 250 full-time equivalent persons
- Must have an annual turnover of less than or equal to £44 million or a balance sheet total of less than or equal to £38million.

- Must not have received more than £315,000 in public subsidies in the current and previous two financial years (financial year being 1 April to 31 March) including the expected level of grant they are applying for.
- Must not have already purchased the service/product prior to grant application approval and prior to receiving a fully signed funding agreement from the Borough Council.

### **Amount of grant**

This initiative offers eligible businesses, grants ranging from a minimum of £5,000 up to £65,000.

This scheme operates on an intervention rate of 80%, meaning the council will cover most of the project costs, while businesses are required to contribute the remaining 20% as match funding.

Successful grant applications from businesses that are VAT registered will receive the grant based on eligible net costs (i.e. excluding the VAT), as this can be claimed back from HMRC. However, successful grant applications from businesses that are not VAT registered, will receive the grant based on eligible gross costs (including the VAT if applicable

We cannot support projects that have already received funding from other Defra schemes. This includes:

- The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme
- The Farming Investment Fund
- The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund

We cannot support projects or costs where there is a statutory duty to provide them.

The Rural Fund can only be used to meet project costs relating to activity that takes place between the 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 (inclusively)

### **Example projects**

Grants for the following will be considered for funding amongst others:

- Creation of event venues or farm tourism facilities such as accommodation, wedding venues and leisure facilities including pet and equine facilities.
- Purchase of equipment for food processing for non-farmed own businesses such as brewery equipment, modernising existing kitchen equipment, onsite vending machines.

- Capital grants for equipment to support showcasing of local food and drink products.
- Capital grants to equip development kitchens or modernise existing kitchen equipment for increased energy efficiency or increased productivity through automation.
- Capital grants to develop local tourist attractions such as information boards and visitor centres.
- Provision of premises for community owned shops.
- Electric vehicle charging points.
- Conversion of farm buildings to other business uses.

### 3 Application Process

Organisations will be invited to complete an application form.

- Applications will be assessed by a panel made up of experienced Officers from Stafford Borough Council and external partners.
- Applications are open until 30 November 2025, subject to funds
- Applications will be assessed on a first come first served basis in terms of those who provide all supporting documentation required.
- A business advisor will make contact to discuss the project further and how the grant will help with developing its objectives.

Outputs and outcomes will be agreed to ensure that the project funded will deliver the required investment priorities.

Supporting evidence required at full application stage include:

- Completed application form - [customers.staffordbc.gov.uk/rural-england-prosperity-fund](https://customers.staffordbc.gov.uk/rural-england-prosperity-fund)
- Latest management or certified accounts (12 months)
- Bank statement clearly showing name of bank, account name, number and sort code for grant payment purposes
- Basic cashflow forecast of 12 months.
- Forecasted trading, profit and loss for the next 12 months.
- Evidence of any company insurance documents.
- Evidence of project funding balance if part of a bank loan or other grant
- Signed Subsidy Control (public subsidies) declaration form
- A company letterhead which includes your business name, trading address, bank sort code and bank account number
- Quotes for the items/services requested that the grant should support:
  - Any single item or items from one supplier submitted as part of this application process cannot be less than £1,000.

- Quotes should not be from people or businesses connected to the applicant business, directors or shareholders.
- For products/services to be funded for one item or the sum of many items from one supplier, quotes required are as follows:

Value	Required
£1,000 to £10,000	Two written/evidenced quotes are required from different suppliers. This can be done by undertaking price comparisons on website.
£10,000 to £30,000	Three written/evidenced quotes are required.
£30,000 to £60,000	Three written/evidenced quotes must be obtained through a formal tendering process.

**For eligible project costs between £60,000 and £65,000, the applicant will be required to seek advice from the Business Growth Team.**

Email [economy@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:economy@staffordbc.gov.uk).

**NB: For VAT registered businesses the project value will not include the VAT. For businesses not registered for VAT, the VAT will be included in looking at the quotes/project costs.**

Decisions will be based on schemes delivering a high number of outputs and outcomes, providing value for money, supporting green/innovative elements, encouraging increased private sector investment, boosting community cohesion. The determination of eligible capital spend is the Council's decision

Applicants will be notified as soon as the panel has approved or rejected the application. Notification of the approval will be by the means of an e-mail followed by a funding agreement.

#### **Payment of grant monies following application approval:**

- Following application approval and receipt of a fully signed funding agreement, successful applicants should then take delivery of the relevant products and services and pay for them 100%, before drawing down the grant award from the Council.
- Expenditure incurred prior to the date of the fully signed funding agreement, will be ineligible for consideration.

- Any expenditure committed or incurred prior to accepting and signing a grant funding agreement is entirely at the applicant's own risk.
- Grants monies awarded should be claimed from the Council within 13 weeks from the date of their fully signed funding agreement.
- The eligible grant amount awarded will be reimbursed on production of supplier invoices showing date of delivery. Evidence of payment from a business bank account is also required.
- Should the defrayal evidence above indicate that the project costs were lower than quoted for, then payment will be up to 80% of the actual project costs or the maximum of grant awarded whichever is the least.
- Grant payments will be made in a single payment.

Successful grant applicants will be given three months in which to draw down their grant award; however, the final UKSPF deadline for spend is 31 March 2026. The Business Growth Team at Stafford Borough Council can be contacted for further clarification on the above. Email [economy@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:economy@staffordbc.gov.uk) or telephone 01785 619584.

## **4 Appeals Process**

Grants are paid at the discretion of the Council with awards being determined by the panel.

If an applicant is dissatisfied with a grant determination they may request that it be reviewed by the Head of Economic Development and Planning by emailing [economy@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:economy@staffordbc.gov.uk)

## **5 How we use your personal information:**

The information provided will be used by Stafford Borough Council, as the data controller, to allow us to administer grant applications.

We will only share your information, when necessary, with agencies involved in the processing of grants or where the law requires or allows us to. For further information, please see [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/business-grant-applications-privacy-notice](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/business-grant-applications-privacy-notice)

## **6 Terms and Conditions**

Stafford Borough Council (SBC) has been allocated funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund by Central Government to be used specifically to provide support for the agreed project.

- The recipient shall use the grant only for the delivery of the project and in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in this policy and the funding agreement.
- The grant shall not be used for any other purpose without the prior written agreement of the SBC.
- The recipient shall not make any significant change to the project without SBCs prior written agreement.
- The recipient agrees and accepts that it shall not apply for duplicate funding in respect of any part of the project or any related administration costs that the grant is supporting.
- The recipient shall promptly repay to SBC any money incorrectly paid to it either as a result of an administrative error or otherwise.
- SBC shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, demands or expenses in connection with any non-receipt, reduction or withdrawal of grant funding.
- Successful grant applicants will be given three months in which to draw down their grant award; however, the final UKSPF deadline for spend is 31 March 2026.

### **Monitoring**

- The Recipient shall closely monitor the delivery and success of the Project throughout the Grant Period to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Project are being met and that this offer is being adhered to. The recipient must respond to any requests by the Council for further information
- The Recipient shall provide SBC with a final report on completion of the Grant Period which shall contain a detailed breakdown of all expenditure for the Grant Period and shall confirm whether the Project has been successfully and properly completed.
- Evidence of the defrayal i.e. supplier invoices and bank statements showing payment will be required.

### **Publicity**

The Recipient shall not publish any material referring to the Project or SBC without the prior written agreement of SBC. The Recipient shall:

- Acknowledge the support of SBC in any materials that refer to the Project and in any written or spoken public presentations about the Project, and such acknowledgements (where appropriate or as requested by SBC) shall include the SBC name and logo using the templates provided from time to time.



- Comply with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund branding and publicity guidelines, which can be found at [www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-branding-and-publicity-6](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-branding-and-publicity-6).
- In using the SBC and UKSPF names and logos, the Recipient shall comply with all reasonable branding guidelines issued by SBC from time to time.
- The Recipient agrees to participate in and co-operate with promotional activities relating to the Project that may be instigated and/or organised by SBC.
- SBC may acknowledge the Recipient's involvement in the Project as appropriate without prior notice.
- The Recipient shall comply with all reasonable requests from SBC to facilitate visits, provide reports, statistics, photographs and case studies that will assist SBC in its promotional and fundraising activities relating to the Project.

### **Withholding, suspending and repayment of grant**

SBCs intention is that the Grant will be paid to the Recipient in accordance with the approved application. However, without prejudice to SBCs other rights and remedies, SBC may at its discretion either terminate the offer and/or withhold or suspend payment of the Grant and/or require repayment of all or part of the Grant if:

- Without the express written permission of SBC, the Recipient uses the Grant for purposes other than those for which they have been awarded.
- The delivery of the Project is not completed within the Grant Period and the Recipient has failed to provide SBC with a reasonable explanation for the delay.
- SBC reasonably considers that the Recipient has not made satisfactory progress with the delivery of the Project.
- The Recipient obtains duplicate funding from a third party for the Project.

