# Chichester District Council

Rural England Propserity Fund Grant for SMEs Guidance Notes



Chichester district council has been awarded further funding from the Government from the Rural England Prosperity fund for 2025/26 (REPF)

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 includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams; and

This funding is intended to help address the extra needs and challenges facing rural areas and must be used for capital projects only, i.e. on lasting assets such as a building or equipment.

We welcome proposals that demonstrate substantial economic impact on the rural economy, with particular emphasis on employment creation or retention, innovation and diversification, and long-term resilience

Grant funding **up to 80%** **is available to a maximum value of £25,000**, with a minimum requirement of **20% match funding** from the applicant.

The deadline for submitting a completed on-line application is **midnight on** **Monday 9th June 2025.** It is expected that applicants will be advised if they have been successful by mid July 2025.

To comply with the requirements of the scheme, projects must demonstrate they can be completed by **20th March 2026.**

Please note the following key points due to the rural focus for the funding:

* Rural England Prosperity Fund cannot be used on projects in Chichester city, Southbourne or Westbourne.  Further details on specific locations of eligibility are in the links provided.
* Rural England Prosperity Fund cannot be awarded to any projects which have already benefitted from other DEFRA funding.
* There is specific criteria set by Government, which Chichester District Council will be required to adhere to and we will be asking grant recipients to sign up to a grant agreement to ensure that the requirements of the funding streams are met.
* Projects will need to follow our Procurement process as set out in the Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant policy.

Allocation of funds will be undertaken through a competitive process, and we will not be able to meet all requests.

Please note the requirement that applicants must discuss the project with a Funding Advisor prior to submission of an application, there is a link on the website [Grants programmes - Chichester District Council](https://www.chichester.gov.uk/grants)

**Important Point Relating to Timescales** – Please note that there is a fixed end date of Friday 20th March 2026 for completion and claiming reimbursement of this grants awarded via this programme.

All applications must be submitted online with all relevant information attached. Applicants will have until **midnight on Monday 9 June 2025** to apply.

**Any applications received after the above date will not be considered.**

To apply, for **Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)** your business must meet all the following requirements:

* Be in Chichester District (and based in business registered premises)
* Be within the catchment area for REPF
* Be registered with Companies House or HMRC
* Applications will only be considered from individual Small and Medium Business based in commercial premises which have between 2 and 75 paid staff (full time equivalents)
* Able to meet the match funding requirement: Minimum 25% of total
* Be able to evidence how the project will help your business achieve its projected outcomes
* Be able to evidence your projects can meet the deadline for delivery timescales
* Be able to evidence how your approach has considered the impact of your proposal on the environment

**Can I use REPF funding retrospectively?**

No, a **REPF** grant cannot go towards project expenditure that was spent prior to the date of application.

**I’ve received grant funding grant before, can I apply again?**

Previous grant recipients can apply and relevant grant history will be a consideration in the evaluation process.

Only one **REPF** grant can be accessed per business.

**Can I include VAT?**

No, we are unable to reimburse VAT.

**What types of projects can a REPF grant be used towards?**

The Rural England Prosperity Fund is purely to support **capital** projects with no revenue expenditure permitted. Expenditure must be on assets such as buildings or equipment and cannot fund any running costs or promotional activity. Projects will also not be funded where they have already benefitted from other current DEFRA funding.

**What project expenditure is ineligible?**

REPF grants CANNOT fund towards ‘business as usual’ expenditure, , salaries, overheads, premises/equipment maintenance, rent or stock or subscription services.

**Mandatory Requirements**

All applicants must ensure they take note of the following requirements or applications will not be validated and progressed.

* Applications must be completed online, with all sections completed and all relevant quotes attached.
* Complete applications must be submitted by **midnight on Monday 9th June.** Incomplete or late applications will not be validated and will not be progressed to decision stage.
* All applications require at least one quote and should clearly state the cost of equipment or service being requested. Quotes should be valid for at least 3 months.
* Quotes must be on formal letter headed paper. Quotes for capital equipment can be a screenshot but the supplier details and product description and cost must be clearly evidenced.
* **As we wish to encourage the use of local supply chains, wherever possible, the supplier/provider must be based in the Chichester District**. Applicants will need to provide compelling reasons for using suppliers outside West Sussex. If you are not sure whether or not the supplier is in the district, please use this postcode checker to see which local authority they are located in [Find your local council - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council).
* If the supplier/provider is a family member or has an interest in your business, this must be stated on the application form and a further quote must be provided by another supplier/provider.
* An applicant/business must have no disputes with the Council.
* A completed Grant Agreement must be signed and returned prior to any work being undertaken or expenditure being incurred.
* **In order to receive grant payment reimbursement, all successful applicants will be required to submit their BAC’s details on the Chichester District Council website. Details of this will be given in the grant agreement issued to successful applicants.**
* Payment of the grant is made upon completion of the project. We will require evidence of work carried out and submission of paid invoices invoices/receipts. We will need to see proof that the invoice(s) have been paid.
* The Council’s Economic Development Officers may visit/contact to verify details of the project.
* Though the Council will consider a variety of applications, they must meet the criteria as above and the Council reserves the right to reject any application.
* Upon completion of your project, you will be asked to provide a summary report on what your project has achieved.

**How Do I Apply for REPF funding**

Please note the requirement that applicants must discuss the project with a Funding Advisor prior to submission of an application, there is a link on the website [Grants programmes - Chichester District Council](https://www.chichester.gov.uk/grants)

**Submit your application using our on-line form**

In your application you will need to include the following:

* Details of the project you are applying for and how it will help establish or future-proof your business and achieve your business ambitions.
* Details of how the project has been designed to reduce its impact on the environment
* The timescale of the project you are intending to use the funding for. Please note that successful applicants will be given until 20th March 2026 .
* A breakdown of how you will use the grant, plus your own financial contributions.
* Up to date quotes for equipment / works you are seeking funding contribution towards in your application

Please note – If applicable, applications must be accompanied by evidence that the applicant will secure the necessary permissions to enable the work to be completed within the above timescales.

**When are applicants notified of a decision?**

We aim to notify applicants of a decision by mid July

**Will I be reimbursed if my projects isn’t completed on time ?**

No - There is a fixed end date of Friday 20th March 2026 for completing your project and claiming reimbursement of grants awarded via this programme. It will not be possible to extend the timescales or claim the grant if this deadline is missed.

**Stay informed**

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