**Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant Policy**

Chichester District Council has also been allocated funding through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The Rural England Prosperity 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. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams. £107,754 has been allocated to this in grant funding for 2025/26.
* Support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy. £107,754 has been allocated to this in grant funding for 2025/26.

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.

**General Guidance for Rural England Prosperity Fund**

Through preparing CDC’s initial Investment Plan for the Rural England Prosperity Fund, themes, sub-themes, outputs and outcomes were selected. These were selected based on understanding of projects which would have the greatest impact in our district and that can be delivered by either CDC, partner organisations or community groups. A list of the selected themes, sub-themes, outputs and outcomes is provided at the end of this document.

Grant applicants will be required to set out how their project meets the theme, sub-theme as specified and how the outputs and outcomes will be measured against the baseline. For example, an organisation requesting a grant to fund a social action project will need to provide a baseline for their engagement numbers and monitor them throughout the life of their project, with the project activity contributing to an overall increase. Chichester District Council will also collect other evidence to show improvement brought about by REPF projects including photographs, enrolment registers, planning and completion documentation.

Grant recipients will be required to submit data, evidence and narrative progress updates on a quarterly or six-monthly basis (depending on the nature and scale of the project) through the life of the project. This is to allow CDC to complete the required information returns for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The frequency and nature of required reporting will be confirmed to grant recipients.

Should grant recipients consider that their project might not meet the stated theme, sub-theme, outcomes or outputs or will be deviating from the original application, this must be advised immediately to CDC. In most cases these requests are required before the change is made to the project. Grant recipients must allow sufficient time for CDC to consider and process these changes.

CDC will be required to demonstrate that any funding is spent during the financial year in which it has been allocated. Fund recipients must ensure that their projects meet the timescales for delivery. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are able to claim back any underspend should projects not be completed by 31st March.

Grant recipients should be aware that randomised sampling of use of the Rural England Prosperity Funds may be undertaken. This could include surveys, case studies and control trials.

Grant recipients will be required to use the branding and publicity of the REPF scheme across all stages of the project and all communication methods. This can include logo use, plaques on physical assets, website links, social media promotion, print and digital materials. Evidence of compliance should be kept for audit purposes.

All Lead Local Authorities and applicants for grants from the REPF must consider whether the funding will be used to provide a subsidy and whether that subsidy will contravene obligations. Sufficient time should be built into the programme to enable consideration to be given to this. If a subsidy is identified, lead local authorities must explain through the reporting mechanisms how the subsidy has been provided compliantly.

CDC will undertake a check of any other grants which applicants have applied for or been awarded through the district council.

It is expected that grant recipients follow the minimum procedures as set out below in relation to procurement. Grant recipients will be required to submit evidence of compliance with these in order that CDC can monitor and report:

* Contract value up to £2,001 – direct award
* Contract value between £2,001 and £24,999 – 2 written quotes or prices from relevant suppliers
* Contract value £25,000 or more – Formal tender process

CDC is required to adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and work within the duties placed on us through the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requirement covers the work undertaken by CDC Officers in administering and coordinating the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds.

Projects will require match funding of a minimum of 20% and individual grants will not generally exceed £25,000 unless in exceptional circumstances.

Grants cannot be sought retrospectively for projects that have already started (or completed). Applicants will be required to wait for written confirmation of the decision and complete the grant offer agreement before undertaking any associated works.

The programme is likely to be competitive and we will not be able to support every project.

For Rural England Prosperity Fund, the following approval arrangements will be in place and will be subjected to a financial assessment to cover liabilities:

* Grants up to £10,000 – Officer delegation
* Grants between £10,000 and £25,000 – Leader of the Council in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Community services and ward members.

**Rural England Prosperity Fund Investment Priorities, Example Projects, Outputs and Outcomes**

The REPF Priorities, Themes, Sub Themes and forecast spend are shown in the table below.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Theme** | **Sub-Theme** | **Forecast spend** |
| Communities and Place | Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities | Improve Health and Wellbeing | £35,918 |
| Communities and Place | Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities | Bringing Communities Together, Tackling Homelessness | £35,918 |
| Communities and Place | Thriving Places | Development of the Visitor Economy | £35,918 |
| Supporting Local Businesses | Support for Business | Advice and support for Business | £107,754 |

Grant applicants will be expected to demonstrate how their project will deliver the outputs and outcomes as specified in the table below for the proposed project. Information relating to baseline data must be provided at grant application stage, along with details of the measuring and monitoring processes in place to provide evidence of the output and outcome being achieved.

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| **Outputs** |
| ROP1 Amount of green or blue space created or improved (m2) |
| ROP6 Number of enterprises receiving grants |
| ROP13 Number of organisations receiving grants |
| ROP10 Number of micro businesses supported |
| ROP13 Number of organisations receiving grants |

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| --- |
| **Outcomes** |
| ROC1 Increased use of cycleways or foot paths |
| ROC2 Increased users of facilities / amenities |
| ROC4 Jobs created as a result of support |
| ROC5 Jobs safeguarded as a result of support |
| ROC11 Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support |