



HM Government

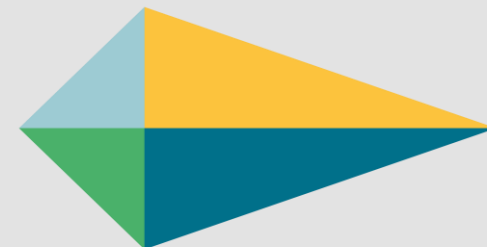
LEVELLING
UP



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



East Suffolk Rural Prosperity Fund



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

About the REPF funds

East Suffolk Council is using the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to provide capital grants to small businesses and community organisations through two grant schemes:

1. Rural Business Investment Fund
2. **Rural Business and Community Hub Fund**

Grants of between £15,000 - £30,000.

Both funds are available to micro, small and medium sized businesses / organisations in the rural areas of East Suffolk.

*Capital means assets that have monetary value, such as equipment, real estate, and inventory. This fund **cannot** be used to purchase a property.*

Rural Business and Community Hub Fund

The Rural Business and Community Hub Fund is aimed at constituted voluntary, community and social enterprise groups and SMEs that:

- Provide (or could provide) a modern, multi-purpose facility that is (will be) a hub for the local community
- Want to make upgrades and improvements to enable access to a range of activities and services

The fund is not for ongoing maintenance and repairs

The fund, is a 100% capital grant to tackle one, two or all of the following three priorities - we are keen to receive applications that cover multiple priorities and take a holistic approach:

- 1. Digital upgrades and infrastructure*
- 2. Capital improvements to create suitable space for community and business use, including circular economy, volunteering and social action projects*
- 3. Net zero upgrades*

Types of projects

Digital upgrades

Digital improvements/upgrades that support modernisation of facilities, upgrades to equipment and improvements to connectivity. Examples of eligible project include:

- access for community members to engage with a range of digital devices (laptops, tablets, iPads, smart-phones, etc.), such as a community loan facility, etc.
- enhanced connections with others, such as a community-use internet hub, or internet café, etc.
- internet installation/connection/line upgrades in community facilities for community use.

Capital improvements to create suitable space for community and business use:

- space for community shops, pantries and/or fridges,
- to enable local voluntary groups e.g. youth charities, carers groups or refugee support groups,
- setting up community-led repair cafes or Men's Sheds or mend workshops,
- enhanced meeting space,
- new health or well-being activities,
- educational activities,
- skills and employment training,
- sports and fitness activities,
- other arts or cultural activities,
- community cafés,
- accessibility improvements,
- co-working spaces.

Types of projects (continued)

Net zero upgrades:

This fund can support the following projects that enable a move to net zero or improved energy efficiency to support overall carbon reduction of the organisation:

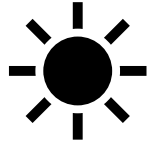
	Example(s)
Purchase of capital investment to make small adaptations to businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase of equipment to allow new operating processes, such as a move to digital services, optimisation of resources or enhanced waste management• E-cargo bikes
Energy efficiency improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing to a low carbon heating system• Installation of low and zero carbon generating technologies, such as solar PV, biomass or micro-wind• Insulation, replacement windows, doors etc. to improve energy efficiency of buildings• Heating e.g., Biomass, ASHP/WSHP etc. but not fossil fuel alternatives• Solar Panels (building regs and planning permission may apply)
Building fabric upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insulation• Energy efficient lighting• Draught-proofing
Machinery upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energy efficient plant and machinery

Key Questions

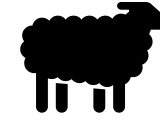
- What unmet needs are there in your community?
- How could your building be adapted to meet those needs?
- Could changes to the building layout and/or access help meet the needs of specific groups within the community, for example young people or residents with disabilities?
- Could your building offer more in terms of access to services for residents, for example Citizens Advice or Turning Point outreach, fitness classes, or condition-specific health groups like dementia or carers support?
- What about those who are struggling with the cost of living – could you create space to set up a community pantry or fridge or a uniform bank?
- Could you make the building more energy efficient and sustainable (and also make it a warmer and more attractive space to be)
- Could the space be used for skills development, for example cooking classes or digital skills groups?
- Could businesses or home workers use the building as a co-working space?



Faster Broadband and a set of laptops for digital skills training



Solar Panels on the roof



Better insulation in the roof



A small extension for the community pantry/uniform bank



An EV charging point



Replacement doors and windows

Room dividing system to enable two activities to be held at once



Computer desks and chairs to create a co-working area

Revenue Funding to enable projects

- A small revenue funding pot is also available (funded through the Community Partnership Board) to enable projects
- Applicants are asked to set out in their application:
 - How much revenue funding the project requires
 - Why the business/organisation is not able to meet these costs
 - What the funding will be used for
 - Evidence of need for this element of funding
- **We can support a maximum of £7,500 per application.**

Revenue funding is for the purchase of non-lasting assets. For example, this could be digital platforms, consultancy, and project management resource.

Match funding (intervention rate)

Applicants need to provide **at least 20% match funding**, although **up to 10% of the 20% match can be in-kind funding** such as through staff and volunteering hours.

You must provide evidence within your application about what other funding has been secured / you are seeking and how you will fund the remaining costs of the project.

You will need to demonstrate in the application form that your business / organisation has explored other finance options and why this was not feasible.

Other things to be aware of...

- For all expenditure over £5,000, evidence of three quotes is needed. Expenditure over £75,000 will require a formal tender process.
- For physical upgrades or improvements that require planning permission (and other permissions or licences), grants will only be approved if this is in place or currently being sought
- If a project will take place on rented / leased / tenanted land or premises, applicants must submit a letter of authority from the land / premises owner
- Applicants will be asked to provide evidence of the need and what research has been undertaken to support this.
- All applicants are expected to complete the subsidy declaration within the application form.
- There are a list of exclusions e.g. core running costs, retrospective costs, statutory obligations/services
- We can't fund projects that have already had funding from other DEFRA schemes e.g. Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund
- Projects must be able to start within 6 months of grant award

Deadline for applications: Business and Community Hub Fund

Round	Round dates (applications open and close)	Dates of Appraisals	Panel Meeting
Round 1	31 July 2023 – 29 September 2023	2 October 2023 – 27 October 2023	w/c 6 November 2023
Round 2	4 December 2023 – 26 January 2024	29 January 2024 – 23 February 2024	w/c 4 March 2024
Round 3	1 April 2024 – 31 May 2024	3 June 2024 – 28 June 2024	w/c 8 July 2024
Round 4	5 August 2024 – 27 September 2024	30 September 2024 – 25 October 2024	w/c 4 November 2024
Round 5	2 December 2024 – 24 January 2025	3 February 2025 – 21 February 2025	w/c 3 March 2025

Rural Business and Community Hub Fund:

https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Rural_business_and_community_hub_fund