



**West Devon
Borough
Council**

West Devon Borough Council Grant Scheme Policy 2023

**Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)
Agri-Tech Adoption**

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Version	Version date	Revised by	Description
1	11/10/23	AE	REPF Grant Policy

1.0 Purpose of the scheme

1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine eligibility for a payment under the Council's REPF Grants Scheme.

1.2 The new REPF Grant Scheme has been developed by the Council to support businesses with projects that provide a benefit to the local community or economy.

1.3 The awarding of grants will be at the total discretion of the Council, based on the benefits delivered for the grant awarded, supporting Council priorities, and wider business and local economy aims.

1.4 This document sets out the information which the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have required to be submitted for funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant, the funding allocation the Council will be using to make the awards. It also outlines the approach the Council will take in determining whether an award should be paid or not.

1.5 The general principals of the scheme are:

- **Flexibility;** to target grants towards business proposals that provide the greatest benefit to the local economy or community;
- **Efficiency;** to issue grants as quickly as possible whilst meeting democratic, eligibility and technical requirements;
- **Simplicity;** the application process will be based on the philosophy of self-assessment and be as streamlined as possible;
- **Economic Benefit;** grant award levels shall be set to make a difference to those projects, such that the most economic advantage is provided from the REPF grant programme.
- **Fraud;** the process will capture evidence such as certified accounts/HMRC self-assessments and bank statements that can be used to identify fraudulent applications. A self-declaration that the information provided is a true reflection of the facts, will also be required. The Council will also be applying post application checks as well as sharing data with Central Government and across other grant schemes as necessary.

2.0 Funding

2.1 Central Government has provided the Council with REPF capital grant funding of £843,000. Of this funding, £300,000 is allocated for improvements to active travel infrastructure while the remaining £543,000 is available across these grant schemes. These figures may be moved between schemes, to maximise the benefit of the programme, but the total budget will not change. Funding is designed to meet several

interventions which were agreed with Government through our REPF investment proposal. These interventions are:

- Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- E11 Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups
- E17 Development & promotion of visitor economy
- E26 Growing the local social economy

2.2 The Council investment proposal agreed to meet these interventions through the delivery of four grant programmes:

- Decarbonisation Grants
- Community Resilience Grants
- Agri-Tech Grants
- Clean Diversification Grants

3.0 Eligibility criteria of the fund

3.1 Applicant organisations must be:

- Registered in the UK for tax purposes
- Based in West Devon
- Actively trading or engaged in business activities in West Devon

Applicant organisations must also have participated in our free-to-access [Agri-Tech Alliance Project](#), and/or be operating in the agricultural sector.

3.2 Applicant organisations must not be:

- In administration
- Insolvent
- Subject to a striking off notice
- In breach of state-aid limits

3.3 Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon, and grants can only be awarded to activities taking place within the Local Authority area.

3.4 Given that funding is restricted to capital expenditure, grants will only be awarded against projects which meet this criteria.

3.5 Any business failing to meet the criteria or failing to provide the Council with sufficient information to determine whether they meet the criteria, will not be awarded a REPF Grant.

3.6 All businesses are required to submit a standard set of information for fraud and tracking purposes. These include:

- A unique tax identifier such as a company number, unique tax reference number or charity number.
 - In the case of community organisations that are not registered for tax purposes, a National Insurance number will be required
- Number of employees at time of application (if applicable)
- Name of the organisation
- Type of organisation
- High level Standard Industrial Classification code
 - [Click here for information about SIC codes](#)
- A nominated bank account, in the name of the business or main applicant.
 - A bank statement showing address, sort code, account number and account name is required

4.0 Definitions – Eligibility Criteria

4.1 For the sake of clarity, the following definitions are provided:

- Applicant organisations must be mainly based in West Devon
- Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon
- Businesses providing support to the scheme can be in the wider South West area but projects providing more benefit in the local area will score more highly.
- Applicants agree to supply evidence of spend and completion of the project they are requesting support for within a maximum of 3 months from the confirmation of grant. They also agree to take part in communications and public relations activities if requested.

5.0 Local Priorities

5.1 The Council has decided they will only accept applications from businesses and organisations that meet the eligibility criteria as set out in [section 3.0](#).

5.2 The Council has determined that this grant fund should support businesses who have been through our [Agri-Tech Alliance Project](#), piloting new technologies and products on their sites. Businesses will be referred to the scheme by our delivery partners for capital grants to adopt the technologies which have been trialled on their sites.

6.0 How will grants be provided to businesses?

6.1 In all cases, an application form is required, and this can be completed online at the Council's website: [Click here to access the REPF Grant webpage](#)

6.2 Supplementary information will also be required, and all businesses should look to provide this where requested to the Council as soon as possible. The application is largely self-certification, but applicants should be aware that the Council is obliged to manage the risk of fraud as outlined in section 16.

6.3 An application for a REPF Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received via the Council's online procedure.

6.4 Projects will be assessed monthly by the Council's panel, from the end of October 2023 to the end of November 2024. If all funds are allocated prior to November 2024, the programme will be closed to further applications. If funds are fully allocated prior to the final round of assessment, remaining eligible applications will be added to a waiting list to be reviewed if existing grant recipients drop out of the programme, so that their funding can be re-allocated.

6.5 Payments will be made to successful applicants once all applications have been assessed. Successful applicants will be advised of their award amount when contacted about their application.

7.0 How much money will be awarded?

7.1 The Council has decided that, for the purposes of this scheme, grants will be awarded at between £5,000 and £10,000.

7.2 The Council will determine the amount of the grant awarded for each business on a case-by-case basis, and may not match the total grant amount requested. Project proposals will be required to provide at least 50% of their total project costs as match funding for the programme.

7.3 Only one REPF Grant will be awarded to any single organisation. This will also apply if more than one Limited Company has the same director(s) or where more than one business has the same proprietor (either sole traders or partnerships).

7.4 An organisation may apply to fund multiple projects, but it is at the discretion of the grant panel to decide which project is funded.

7.5 Applications must be project-specific; a single application should not detail more than one project.

8.0 Limitation of funds and applications

8.1 All monies paid through the REPF Grant scheme will be funded by DLUHC. The funds are limited and, as such, the Council is not able to award a grant where funds are no longer available.

8.2 Any businesses wishing to claim should complete the necessary form on the Council's website, as linked in [paragraph 6.1](#). All claims will be made online, and this will also include the provision of such evidence as required by the Council.

8.3 As there are limited funds available, not all applicants will be successful, and some businesses will be left disappointed.

9.0 State Subsidy requirements

9.1 Any grant awarded is required to comply with the law on State Subsidies. This will involve the applicant declaring to the Council if they have received any other State Subsidies over the past three years.

9.2 If the applicant has not received any other State Subsidy, they are not required to make that declaration to the Council or to complete any declaration statement.

10.0 Scheme of delegation

10.1 The policy has been approved under Part 3(a) of the Council Constitution: Scheme of Delegation. The Head of Paid Service used delegated authority in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

10.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme. The Corporate Director for Strategic Finance and the Director of Place and Enterprise are authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Central Government guidance.

11.0 Notification of decisions

11.1 Applications will be considered by designated officers of the Council.

11.2 All decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant by email. A decision shall be made within 5 working days after the monthly panel meetings.

11.3 If unsuccessful, applicants will be notified of this decision, but specific details about why a proposal is rejected will not be given.

12.0 Reviews of decisions

12.1 All grants will be determined by the Head of Place and Economy, Economic Development Officer and Senior Economic Support Officer.

12.2 This decision will be final, and there is no appeal process.

13.0 Complaints

13.1 If you believe an error has been made, such as a missing payment, in the first instance please raise an enquiry to the grants team using the following link.

[Click here to raise a grants-related enquiry.](#)

13.2 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

14.0 Other scheme conditions

14.1 All grants are taxable. Applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position or liability.

15.0 Successful applicant obligations

15.1 Successful applicants are expected to take part in reasonable public relations, communication and engagement activities directly related to the award.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Press releases
- Social media posts
- Other digital media content
- In-person engagement events (where applicable)

15.2 Successful applicants are required to provide pre-payment evidence of how funds have been allocated and spent.

15.3 Post project outcome analysis, such as surveys, are also desirable, particularly where they focus on local benefit derived from the award funds.

16.0 Managing the risk of fraud

16.1 Neither the Council, nor the Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the scheme and fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or

failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them or their grant offer rescinded if payment has not already been issued.

16.2 Organisations are required to provide the information as detailed in [paragraph 3.6](#) to enable fraud checking which may be conducted through the National Fraud Initiative. Organisations that fail to provide this information will not be considered for a grant and may still be subject to fraud checks.

16.3 Applicants should note that, where a grant is paid by the Council, details of each individual grant may be passed to Government.

16.4 The Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant paid in error.

17.0 Data Protection

17.1 All information and data provided by businesses shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.

17.2 The Council will not make available lists of businesses that have applied or that have been successful for grant payment.

17.3 The Council reserves the right to share relevant information with the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the body overseeing the grant fund allocation.