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## Staffordshire Moorlands Rural Business Development Grant

**Application Deadline: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

All applications for the next round of the Rural Business Development funding need to be submitted before midnight on the advised date.

Applications submitted after this time will not be considered in this round of funding.

### **Overview and Guidance**

**Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.**

The objective of this grant is to support the creation, diversification and expansion of rural businesses.

**Funding is available to support all areas of rural business development leading to the creation of new jobs, products, services and markets, and to help boost community cohesion.**

Funding may be used for projects looking to: undertake innovation, adopt new technologies, improve carbon footprint, diversify into new markets, develop and promote the visitor economy, develop local tourist attractions and/or enhance local visitor experiences.

Grants are offered **between £1,000 and £15,000** to Rural Businesses located within Staffordshire Moorlands who are looking to grow or diversify their businesses.

**Established rural businesses (over 12 months) can apply for any amount between £3,000 and £15,000 to further develop their business.**

**Newly formed businesses (under 12 months) can apply for any amount between £1,000 and £3,000 to help launch/grow their businesses.**

New businesses must register with Companies House or have a Unique Tax Reference number from HMRC prior to any funding being awarded and hold a business bank account.

Grants are available at a **maximum of 80% of the total project costs** i.e. to achieve a maximum £15,000 grant, project costs would need to be in excess of £18,750 exclusive of VAT.

All grant funding will be paid in arrears via claim process i.e. Grant is claimed on completion of all works and evidence of paid invoices.

Grants will be funded from the Rural England Prosperity Fund.



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## Who can apply?

Grants are available to Micro and Small Rural Businesses located within Rural areas of the Staffordshire Moorlands who are looking to grow their businesses.

Grants are only available to businesses who are located within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) defined Rural boundaries.

To check if you are in an eligible area, you can search DEFRA's MAGIC Map system here - <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm>  
(instructions for searching the map can be downloaded here)

Alternatively, please contact please email [ukspf@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk](mailto:ukspf@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk) with your full address and we will be able to confirm eligibility.

To be defined as a micro/small business, enterprises need to meet the following criteria:

1. Turnover of less than £10m
2. Balance sheet total of less than £10m
3. Fewer than 50 employees.

\*Evidence of eligibility will be checked as part of any grant offered

If you are not currently an eligible business or are looking for any support in starting or growing your business, please contact Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub (<https://stokestaffsgrowthhub.co.uk/>) where complimentary support is available.

All eligible organisations need to provide evidence of not being insolvent and comply with the Minimal Financial Assistance rules of the UK Subsidy Control requirements.

## Who cannot apply?

We cannot accept applications from:

- Community based organisations.
- Businesses based outside Staffordshire Moorlands.
- Business not located within a DEFRA's defined rural area.

## Project Activity

The objective of this grant is to support the diversification and expansion of rural businesses **leading to the creation of new jobs, products, services & markets, and to help boost community cohesion.**

Funding may be used for projects looking to: undertake innovation, adopt new technologies, improve their carbon footprint, diversify into new markets, develop, and promote the visitor economy, develop local tourist attractions and/or enhance local visitor experiences.

**All Rural Growth Projects need to demonstrate how they can support/contribute to the following REPF outcomes:**



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## Outcomes

- Number of jobs created.
- Number of jobs safeguarded.
- Number of new businesses created (diversification of farm businesses/buildings outside of agriculture)
- Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes.
- Number of businesses with improved productivity.
- Number of businesses experiencing growth/increasing their turnover.

The project must clearly demonstrate how the funded element will provide additional benefit to any previous or ongoing work/activity.

The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed activity would not be possible without this funding.

Grants are available at a maximum of 80% of the total project costs for example:

**Minimum grant = £1,000 (project cost at least £1,250)**

**Maximum grant award per newly formed businesses (under 12 months) = £3,000 (project cost at least £3,750)**

**Maximum grant award per established organisation = £15,000 (project cost at least £18,750).**

All successful project applicants must have completed their project, spent, and claimed all the grant and reported on project outputs/outcomes by 31st January 2025, at the latest.

## Eligible Expenditure

Grants are available for Capital costs only.

By Capital items we mean - lasting assets such as a building improvements or equipment – you must spend grants on assets such as a building or equipment which are expected to be used for a period of at least one year.

This may include enhancements to existing assets which:

- Significantly lengthen the life of the asset.
- Significantly increase the value of the asset.
- Significantly increase usefulness of the asset.
- It will not include minor repairs and routine maintenance.
- Labour costs can only be funded if they are contributing directly to creating the assets e.g. builders, IT developers.

## How to Apply

Applicants are required to complete the online application form by the advertised deadline for funding.

The application form can be found [here](#)



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All successful project applicants must have completed their project, spent, and claimed all the grant and reported on project outputs/outcomes no later than 31st January 2025.

## Evaluation Criteria

All Applications will be assessed on their own merit, against the key criteria below:

1. The impact this funding will have on the business.
2. The level/type of innovation to be developed.
3. The impact this funding will have on the rural community (if applicable)
4. The amount/number of REPF Outcomes the project will provide.
5. Value for money.

## Additional Information

Applicants should note that if successful in a grant award they will be required to procure any items required in compliance with UKSPF/REPF procurement guidelines, which are as follows:

<u>Value of contract</u>	<u>Minimum procedure</u>
£0 - £2,499	Direct award
£2,500 - £24,999	3 written quotes or prices sought from relevant suppliers of goods, works and / or services
Over £25,000	Formal tender process

Any items purchased not meeting these requirements will not be eligible for funding.

The grant award will not cover or include any recoverable VAT incurred by your organisation and you should make your own enquiries of HMRC as to the recoverability of any VAT your organisation incurs.

Applicants will be paid in arrears for the work on completion and payment to your suppliers.

All eligible organisations need to provide evidence of not being an undertaking in difficulty and comply with the Minimal Financial Assistance rules of the UK Subsidy Control requirements.

Farm based enterprises will also need to comply with the [Concordat on the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Agriculture \(Domestic Support\) Regulations 2020](#) which requires the Council to report on aid granted to Defra.

Applications should not duplicate funding from other Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) sources.

Applications will be assessed by Council Officers/UKSPF Partners and if supported, recommendations made to the Staffordshire Moorlands UK Shared Prosperity Board for final decision.

The UKSPF Board's decision is final, and applicants have no right to appeal.



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Further information including accounts, bank details, insurance documents and operating policies will be required if your application is approved, as part of a due diligence.

A Grant Funding Agreement will then be sent, setting out the terms and conditions and required outcomes.

Where work is to be conducted on a building, evidence of ownership or authorisation of the owner will be required.

All building works will need to be completed in accordance with any planning requirements.

For further information please contact [UKSPF@StaffsMoorlands.gov.uk](mailto:UKSPF@StaffsMoorlands.gov.uk)