

# **NORTH NORFOLK RURAL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITIES GRANT**

## **Introduction**

The North Norfolk Rural Business and Communities Grant is delivered by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (New Anglia) on behalf of North Norfolk District Council.

Funding is through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) from the UK Government.

Beneficiary projects must be located within the boundaries of North Norfolk District Council.

There is a limited pot of funding available to support projects across the eligible areas within the boundaries of the Local Authority so we are looking for companies and to bring forward capital investment projects that will have a significant impact on their business and local communities, and grant applications will be considered on “first-come, first-served” basis.

## **Funding Available**

### **Rural Businesses**

Businesses can come forward to apply for grants between £10,000 and £100,000. The maximum grant intervention through the programme will be for 50% of eligible capital costs, up to a maximum value of £100,000.

### **Rural Community groups**

Community Groups can come forward to apply for grants between £10,000 and £50,000. The maximum grant intervention through the programme will be for 75% of eligible capital costs, up to a maximum value of £50,000.

### **Time Restrictions**

Your project must be ready to proceed immediately and be fully completed by 31/12/2024. You must check with your proposed suppliers that this is achievable before submitting a grant application. All grants must be paid out, on or before 31/03/2025, following receipt of a fully completed claim form. Works undertaken after this date will not, under any circumstances receive grant funding.

### **Support Provided**

North Norfolk Rural Business Capital Grants provide 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.

## **CAPITAL GRANTS FOR BUSINESSES IN RURAL AREAS**

You must be classed as a SME to be eligible for this funding. Please see table below to determine your business size.

This grant pot provides capital funding opportunities to support new and existing SMEs to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy.

This includes projects such as: farm businesses looking to diversify income streams; businesses seeking to invest in more productive and efficient operational equipment and to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions; conversion of farm buildings into other commercial or business uses; creation and expansion of rural leisure and tourism businesses; purchase of equipment for food processing for non-farmer-owned businesses; and funding for resilience infrastructure and nature based solutions to protect local business and community areas from natural hazards.

We can only support farming businesses with non-agricultural projects. (Further support for farmer-owned businesses is available under the [Farming Investment Fund \(FIF\)](#)).

### **Example projects**

**Creation and expansion of rural leisure and tourism businesses** by, for example creating event venues or farm tourism facilities such as accommodation, wedding venues and leisure facilities, provision of facilities for pets and equines such as kennels, livery and pet health venues

**Purchase of equipment for food processing for non-farmer-owned businesses**, for example purchasing new process and packaging machinery such as brewing equipment and onsite vending machines, equipping development kitchens, or modernising existing kitchen equipment for increased energy efficiency or increased productivity through automation

## **SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES**

**Capital grants are available to strengthen social fabric and to foster a sense of local pride and belonging.**

Possible projects include the provision of gigabit capable digital infrastructure at rural hubs. (Projects must align to the government's [Project Gigabit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk))  
Local civil society and community groups can apply for capital grants for net zero projects, such as EV charging points, biomass, heat pumps or solar.

Capital Grants can be used to provide for the following community projects:

To create kitchens in community hubs to support food and drink entrepreneurs to get accreditation for food production.

To establish or enhance community gardens, green spaces and watercourses. For the greening of streets and paths and to incorporate natural features into wider public spaces.

To develop, restore or refurbish local natural, cultural and heritage sites to improve visitor experience and accessibility that goes beyond statutory requirements.

To enable local art galleries, museums and libraries to provide space, or alter premises to support artists to showcase work.

To enable cultural, creative and heritage events through the provision of venues for music, theatre film performances, tours, author events.

To create or upgrade footpaths or cycle paths.

To set up or enhance rural community led repair cafes or mend workshops through the provision of premises and equipment.

To enable people to develop volunteering and social action projects (such as youth charities, carer groups or refugee support groups) through purchase of equipment and improvement to premises.

**The following gives examples of what we cannot fund:**

- Core routine overheads, staff costs, stock purchases
- Non-commercial vehicles
- Solar panels and EV chargers for businesses. (Can be considered for community group projects)
- Any costs incurred before a grant offer is made;
- Items that are not directly needed to deliver the proposed work;
- The replacement of items and consumables
- VAT, unless this cannot be recovered;
- Repeat applications, including from linked companies.
- Projects which have received funding from other DEFRA schemes.

**Planning permission and other dependencies**

With the nature of the projects, it is anticipated that many of them will require planning permission, change of business use, landlord's permission and so on. We are unable to offer a grant where permissions are not yet in place, or unknown.

You will need to provide documentary evidence that all permissions are in place when you submit your application and you should contact your local planning office at the earliest opportunity.

**Paying for your project**

If your project is supported you must not proceed with ordering, paying deposits, or any payment until you have formally accepted the Offer.

You will need to pay your suppliers and contractors directly from your business bank account.

This means that cash, credit card, asset finance or hire purchase are not acceptable methods of paying for your project through this scheme.

If you propose to use other grant funding to pay for all or part of your project, please discuss your plans with the New Anglia Growth Hub through the link below.

**Procurement**

All projects will need to demonstrate value for money and there will be a requirement to provide at least three quotes for each category of expenditure. Larger projects with single contracts over £75,000 (inc VAT) will need to go through a formal tender exercise.

You will receive advice and support as required during the application process.

### **Advice and guidance**

As part of the process, an initial in-depth diagnostic exercise will be undertaken by New Anglia Growth Hub Business Advisers to determine eligibility of your business and identify what type of support you require.

### **Examples include advice on:**

- Access to finance – seeking advice on leveraging working capital
- Financial and business planning
- Market appraisal, including overseas markets
- Creating a more efficient business operation by reducing costs
- Diversification into other appropriate sectors
- Creating a pipeline of products or services or commercialisation of a new product
- Collaboration with other businesses or R&D institutions to develop new technology or ideas
- Stabilising losses on contracts by reducing overheads
- Reducing staff in a way that does not affect viability and paves way for longer term growth

**To be eligible for grant funding, applicants must meet the following essential criteria:**

### **Community Group Applications**

- Must be a formally constituted group. As a minimum, must contain a management committee which includes a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. A written constitution document that states your group's name, aims and how you will operate and what will be done with assets if the group finishes.

### **Business Applications**

- Be a trading enterprise. An enterprise is any entity (that is, any person, or group of persons under common control) that is engaged in an economic activity, which means offering goods and services on a market.
- The conditions (see the table below) relate to turnover, balance sheet total and number of employees. An enterprise must satisfy two or more of the relevant conditions to qualify.

<b>Qualifying criteria</b>	<b>Micro enterprises</b>	<b>Small enterprises</b>	<b>Medium-sized enterprises</b>
Turnover	Not more than £632k	Not more than £10.2 million	Not more than £36 million
Balance Sheet Total*	Not more than £316k	Not more than £5.1 million	Not more than £18 million
Number of Employees**	Not more than 10	Not more than 50	Not more than 250

- Be based within eligible rural areas within North Norfolk District Council
- Must not be a company that is ailing or insolvent

- We will not be able to help you if your business falls into one of the following sectors: banking and finance, the provision of statutory services.

### **Subsidy Control**

Grant support will be delivered through Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA).

The maximum support through MFA is £315,000 and this is a cumulative total of all support received over the current, and the last two complete financial years through MFA, EU de minimis and Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance.

If you are offered support through MFA, you will need to make a declaration that you have not already exceeded the £315,000, and/or with approval of the requested support, you will not exceed the £315,000 threshold.

**Please note, grants are awarded on a discretionary basis and are subject to eligibility checks and approval.**

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### **How do I apply for funding?**

Businesses wishing to apply for support should first contact the New Anglia Growth Hub on

[Contact Us - New Anglia Growth Hub](#)

Our expert Business Growth Advisers will work with you to develop your application.

**Please note, the services of the Growth Hub are free and impartial.**

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### **How are grant applications assessed?**

Once you submit your complete application, we will start processing it. We will undertake a detailed assessment of your proposal based on the Application Form and the supporting information (including evidence of value for money\*) that you provide. You may also be asked for additional information during this process in support of your application.

Once assessment of your grant application has been completed, the document along with a relevant report will be submitted to the Grant Panel who will take a final decision on your proposed project. Once your application has been sent to the panel it can take up to 28 days from that date before a final decision is reached.

The grant decision will be relayed to you at the earliest opportunity. Please be aware, full compliance with the eligibility criteria does not guarantee that your application will be successful, as grants are discretionary, and there is no right of appeal against the grant decision. If your grant application is declined, an explanation will be provided.

### **How do I claim the grant?**

If your grant is approved, Suffolk County Council (SCC), our delivery partner, will send you a **formal Offer Letter** that will include information about your grant and eligible project costs, with any conditions of the offer and information on how to claim the grant. A signed acceptance of the Offer needs to be returned to SCC before you can make your claim,

You must not commence your project, or enter any legal contracts, including ordering, payment of deposits or incurring any costs on any supplies, services or works before the formal approval of your grant funding and you have signed and dated the Offer Letter Acceptance.

If approved, the grant can only be paid on satisfactory completion of the claim process and only once all supported expenditure has taken place and the project has been completed in full. This means that you do not receive the grant up front as it is paid in arrears once your project is fully complete and paid for by you.

It is important to note that **costs incurred before the date of the Offer Letter cannot be supported.**

Any project expenditure undertaken before the acceptance of the offer is signed and dated by you is at your own risk.

To claim your grant, you will need to **submit a Claim Form and provide supporting documentary** evidence.

### **Can I re-apply for more than one grant under this scheme?**

If you have already been successful with the North Norfolk Rural Business and Communities Grant, priority will be given to new applicants; however, we may be able to support a new project via this scheme so please stay in touch with your Adviser or contact the Growth Hub directly. If you cannot re-apply, we might refer you to an alternative programme or business support organisation.