

LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL PARTNERSHIP GRANT FUNDING

GRANT GUIDANCE NOTES

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Introduction to Leicestershire Rural Partnership

The Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) is an informal partnership of 24 organisations working across rural Leicestershire. The LRP is working to ensure rural areas continue to be attractive places to live, which are sustained by a strong and competitive local rural economy, and offer a range of services and facilities to local communities.

The LRP co-ordinates and delivers the INSPIRE Leicestershire and Vibrant Villages programmes through Leicestershire County Council's Better Places Team. The programmes provide grants and support to land-based businesses, small accommodation providers, tourist attractions, business partnerships, community spaces and rural retail outlets in market towns and rural areas within Leicestershire. This includes contributing to the development and diversification of existing and new rural businesses, supporting and encouraging the development of entrepreneurs, and supporting the creation of new markets for products of benefit to the rural economy.

These guidance notes provide information on how to apply for an LRP grant, what to do if you have a complaint, and will provide assistance in the completion of the grant application form. In addition, please also refer to the individual scheme guidance notes before beginning to fill in the application form. It is important that all questions are answered fully, as your application will help us to determine the suitability of your project for grant aid.

Application Process – Terms & Conditions

If you have any queries regarding the eligibility of a project please contact the relevant grant officers:

For Vibrant Villages:	Fiona Walker	on Telephone: 0116 305 5673
For INSPIRE Leicestershire:	Tom Fisher	on Telephone: 0116 305 7034

or by email: ruralgrants@leics.gov.uk

- Please note that neither expenditure nor consultancy should start before approval has been given since grant aid cannot be provided on a retrospective basis.
- Applicants may apply to a grant scheme more than once but there are maximum levels of grant available to any one applicant over the life of the grant scheme. Please see individual grant scheme guidance notes for details on funding levels.
- Return your completed application form and supporting material to the officer as stated in the individual scheme guidance notes. The officer may contact you regarding your application and may arrange a visit with you to discuss your proposal further.
- Your application will be submitted to the Rural Assessment Panel, comprising of members from the Leicestershire Rural Partnership, Rural Community Council, Leicestershire County Council and Business Link. The Panel meet every month to assess applications.
- If you want to submit your application for the Panel to consider in the current month please ensure:
 - a) you have completed the application in full and have submitted all the supporting documents
 - b) you have allowed at least 10 working days for the grant officer to go through your application and make necessary visits or discuss the application with you

- The panel will assess applications against the relevant grant criteria and will also consider whether your project provides good value for money, based on:
 - Number of jobs created
 - Number of increased visitors to the county
 - For Shop Front Improvement Grants - whether the project provides a substantial improvement to the attractiveness of a local area.
 - Whether it supports a priority area or sector as identified in the criteria.
 - Evidence of need for the project.
 - Sustainability for the project to provide a long term impact on the rural economy.
 - The overall cost and quality of the project.
- You will be notified of the Panel's decision as soon as possible. If your project is successful an offer letter will be sent to you with relevant terms and conditions, following which you may begin your project.
- Once your project is completed you will need to contact the relevant Officer in order to claim your grant. Grants will be payable upon satisfactory completion of the works and production of paid invoices relevant to the claim. In the case of any physical development an officer will visit you and take photos of the completed work.
- Grants may be payable in instalments related to the progress of the work, provided that not more than 75% of the amount offered by way of grant is paid before completion of the approved work or operations.
- Grants will be reclaimed on a pro-rata basis if there is a voluntary cessation of business activity supported by the grant scheme, or if any item purchased is sold, or if the business is sold, within a three year period following funding.
- If an offer or payment of grant is agreed between Leicestershire County Council and you, it shall neither expressly nor by implication constitute a representation by the County Council that the project is financially viable and you shall be deemed to have relied solely on your own independent expert and professional advice in undertaking the works.
- Any business in receipt of a grant is requested to allow their name to be used in promotional activity. The applicant shall, in agreement with the relevant Officer, acknowledge the contribution of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership in an appropriate way on publicity material and press releases.

Completing the Application form

1 Your Business/Organisation

- 1.1 Please note that the applicant should be the person who has the authority to sign the declaration and grant terms and conditions, on behalf of the business / organisation. Contact details provided should relate to where the applicant can be contacted during office hours. Please include details on the type of business / organisation, what service or product you offer, and who your products/services are aimed at e.g. the public, other businesses. Where we have referred to a Policy (e.g. Health & Safety), we mean documents that you currently abide by and are able to produce when requested.
- 1.8 To approve grant support of £10,000 and above we require a Business Plan to be submitted with the application. A Business Plan may also be requested to support applications for smaller amounts. For assistance with preparing a Business Plan please contact Business Link (contact details within specific scheme guidance notes). A Business Plan does not have to be a complicated document and will help with identifying objectives,

developing strategies and undertaking financial forecasts. It has many functions, from securing external funding to measuring success within your business.

2 Statutory Consents

- 2.2 Please provide confirmation that you are the freehold owner of the building or the tenant with a minimum fixed term lease of 7 years. You or your solicitors can supply evidence of your title. Tenants are also required to provide written consent to the proposal from their landlord.
- 2.4 Please provide details, and attach copies, of any necessary planning/listed building and other statutory consents that are needed to implement your project. It is important to note that unless you provide us with evidence that the necessary permissions have been applied for or obtained, we will not be able to take your application any further. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all necessary consents are granted before work is carried out.
- 2.5 Applicants should indicate whether they have been in receipt of assistance from any other public sector body in the last three years to the value of 200,000 Euros in order to ensure compliance with state aid rules. If a grant is offered, it will be made on the understanding that, in the course of making an application, the applicant will have disclosed any financial contributions received, or expected, from any body financed from public funds.

DE MINIMIS STATE AID DECLARATION

It is a requirement that we ensure that we comply with the state aid rules.

You are being offered assistance under the European Commission's De Minimis regulation (Regulation 69/2001). This allows a company to receive up to 200,000 euros (at applicable exchange rate) of De Minimis state aid over a three-year period.

To confirm that you are able to receive this assistance you must therefore declare the full amount of De Minimis aid you have already received over the last 36 months.

The following is not a comprehensive list of the possible forms of aid. However it should give an indication of the most common forms of aid, which you may have been given over the past three years. Potentially any assistance from a public body might be an aid. Should you have any doubts on this matter, please contact the body from which the assistance was received.

- Grants from public bodies
- Loans from public bodies at favourable rates
- Loan guarantees from public bodies
- Differential tax benefits
- Grants from an investment trust (including charities) which may themselves have received the funds from a public body
- Grants from a part publicly funded venture capital fund
- Publicly administered funds, even if the funds were originally not public such as the national lottery
- Waiving or deferral of fees or interest normally due to a public body such as the waiving or deferral of rent or waiver of interest normally due on late payment of taxation or other costs to a public body
- Monopoly licences or guarantees of market share
- Advertising via a public channel such as a tourist board or state owned television

- Consultancy advice provided either free or at a reduced rate
- Training provided either free or at a reduced rate
- Aid for investment in environmental projects
- Provision of a free or reduced rate feasibility study for research and development or other assistance with research and development
- Purchase of public land or property at a less than market rate
- Benefiting from the provision of infrastructure where your organisation was pre-identified as a beneficiary

These types of aid may have been provided under De Minimis (as De Minimis aid) or under another State Aid regulation. If you are in any doubt whether aid received was De Minimis aid or about its value, check with the organisation, which provided it. If they are unable to say or there is any uncertainty, assume that it was De Minimis aid unless its value exceeded €100,000 in which case it cannot have been De Minimis.

Any De Minimis state aid awarded to you under this project will have to be declared if you apply, or have applied, for any other De Minimis aid.

- 2.7 Please state if you have been in contact with any business support organisations in the development of your proposal and if so provide the name of the organisation, date and summary of the discussions.

3 Your Project

- 3.1 Clearly describe the key elements of your project, including the type of work that will take place or the items/services that will be purchased. We would like to know why you think this project is important and what you hope it will help you achieve. Include any additional information to support your application, such as advice from agencies or consultants.
- 3.2 Please tick the box to indicate whether this is a new activity to your business or if it is an improvement or development to something that is already in existence.
- 3.3 The following criteria will be taken into account when assessing your application in addition to the specific criteria and priorities identified in the individual grant guidance notes.
- Expected benefits of the proposal e.g. number of jobs retained or created, additional income generated or the environmental impact. Give details on all the expected outcomes from the project.
 - Benefits and contribution made to Leicestershire's rural economy and community.
 - Overall cost of the scheme and amount being applied for.
 - Time taken for the scheme to be completed.
- 3.4 Please identify the outputs which will realistically be achieved (numerical values required) and outline how you calculated them. Please see the definitions of each output and how we would collect the evidence after the completion of your project (please refer to appendix 1- output form).

a) Number of jobs created: Jobs counted must be:

- Permanent – having a life expectancy of at least one year (at appraisal and when counted)
- Paid posts only (not voluntary work); and
- Full time equivalent (FTE) – where FTE is defined as a person undertaking paid work for 30 hours or more a week. Part time jobs can be converted to

FTE jobs on a pro rata basis or using EC approach – two part time jobs equal a full time job, where no additional information is available

A Job is created and counted when it is:

- New i.e. it should not have existed in the region or with that employer in the UK before the intervention;
- Has a life expectancy of at least
- A post is actually filled
- It is as a result of the LRP/emda's intervention

b) Number of jobs safeguarded: Jobs counted must be:

- Permanent – having a life expectancy of at least one year (at appraisal and when counted)
- Paid posts only (not voluntary work); and
- Full time equivalent (FTE) – where FTE is defined as a person undertaking paid work for 30 hours or more a week. Part time jobs can be converted to FTE jobs on a pro rata basis or using EC approach – two part time jobs equal a full time job, where no additional information is available

A Job is safeguarded and counted when it is:

- The job must exist and be forecast to be lost within 1 year when the project was approved;
- Still in existence at the time of counting; and
- No longer at risk of being lost within a year as a life expectancy of at least
- A post is actually filled
- It is as a result of the LRP/emda's intervention

c) New or Improved rating on an accreditation scheme

This output is relevant to the businesses in Tourism sector providing Tourist Accommodation or providing visitors attraction facilities and are planning to improve their services/facilities in order to join the star rated National Quality Assurance Scheme (NQAS), Quality in Tourism (QiT) or Visitor Attractions Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS).

d) New or Upgraded employment or housing floorspace (m2)

Floorspace for employment is defined as any physical development, carried out directly by the LRP/emda or with the LRP/emda funding, which comprises the creation of floorspace for employment use either through construction of new buildings or the refurbishment of existing buildings. All space intended for B1, B2 and B8 uses are included

Floorspace for housing is defined as any physical development, carried out directly by the LRP/emda or with the LRP/emda funding, which comprises the creation of new housing either through construction of new buildings or the refurbishment of existing buildings.

4 Project Costs

- 4.1 Please list all items of expenditure and remember to attach the required number of quotations for each item listed. For items costing between £250 and £2,500 we require 2 quotations. For items in excess of this we require 3 quotations. Grants will be for net costs only. No VAT element can be included.

- 4.3 Grants cannot duplicate funds from other sources for the same items of expenditure. Please check with individual grant guidelines the maximum public sector contribution to a scheme. Please inform us of how you will make up the balance of costs. Please note that grants are discretionary and any offer may be at a lower level than applied for subject to the merits of the application and the availability of the funds.

5 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 Please identify any key risks that may prevent or delay the project from going ahead. For each risk, estimate the likelihood of it occurring and the impact it might have. Examples of potential risk areas are: how you will fund the balance of the cost of works, obtaining statutory consents (e.g. planning permission), adhering to mandatory guidance (e.g. Health and Safety). Describe what you will do to reduce these risks and provide details of any contingency plans in place.

6 Declaration

Please read, sign and date the declaration to say that all information included is correct to the best of your knowledge and that you agree to the terms stated.

7 Contact Details

- 7.1 For further information about grants please contact Fiona Walker (Vibrant Villages), 0116 305 5673 or Tom Fisher (INSPIRE Leicestershire) 0116 305 7034 or email ruralgrants@leics.gov.uk

Corporate Complaint Procedure

a. Definition of a complaint

A Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a council service that requires a response. It does not matter whether that service is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner.

b. What can be complained about?

Any service provided by the County Council whether provided directly or by a contractor or partner providing it is not covered by other complaints or appeal procedures – see section c) below.

c. Who can complain?

Anyone who uses services provided by Leicestershire County Council or is likely to be affected by our decisions, actions or inactions or the bona fide representative of such a person.

d. Complaints Recording

The procedure assumes that the County Council will be given a reasonable opportunity to provide a service, before a customer's complaint is recorded as a complaint under this procedure.

e. Complaint grading

All complaints will be graded according to seriousness and likelihood of occurrence. This grading will determine the time available for and method of investigation of your concerns.

f. What is not covered by the procedures

Some of the Council's services are covered by separate procedures, e.g., Special Educational Needs, School Admissions, and Parking Charge Notices. It is important that customer's complaints are dealt with effectively and this includes ensuring the correct procedure is used to make sure that the rights of the individual are protected and that there is no interference with another procedure or process that may take precedence.

If your complaint should be handled under separate procedures, you will be advised of this.

Where a complaint relates to services delivered by a contractor or partner, the complaint should generally be directed to that organisation or partner, in the first instance.

g. Equality and Diversity

We aim to make the complaints procedure inclusive and accessible to all by:

- Providing information in alternative formats including Braille, audio tape and minority languages, on request
- Promoting and arranging advocacy or other support needed
- Providing a telephone interpreting service
- Providing access to signing and other interpretative services
- Promoting the procedure to under represented groups

Complainants will be invited to provide information as part of the feedback process, to enable us to monitor use of the procedure and to identify changes to the procedure to improve access to it.

h. How can you complain?

Comments, compliments, commendations and complaints can be made in writing, by telephone, via the County Council website, by email or in person and can be submitted at any County Council establishment. To ensure prompt attention, all complaints submitted by post should be sent to the Corporate Complaints Manager at the address below. Complaints may be submitted anonymously and will be treated seriously but this may affect our ability to investigate the complaint and means we would be unable to liaise with and feed back information to the complainant.

Anyone wishing to submit a comment, compliment, commendation or complaint should do so by one of the following methods:

By writing to:

Corporate Complaints Manager
Corporate Resources Department
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester LE3 8RL

By telephoning:

0800 0968 116 or
0116 305 5875

Via the County Council website (on-line form or email addresses available)

http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/help/contact_us/complain_comment.htm



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Thank you for completing the Equality Monitoring Questionnaire.