



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

Rural England Prosperity Fund

Rural Services Network

March 2025

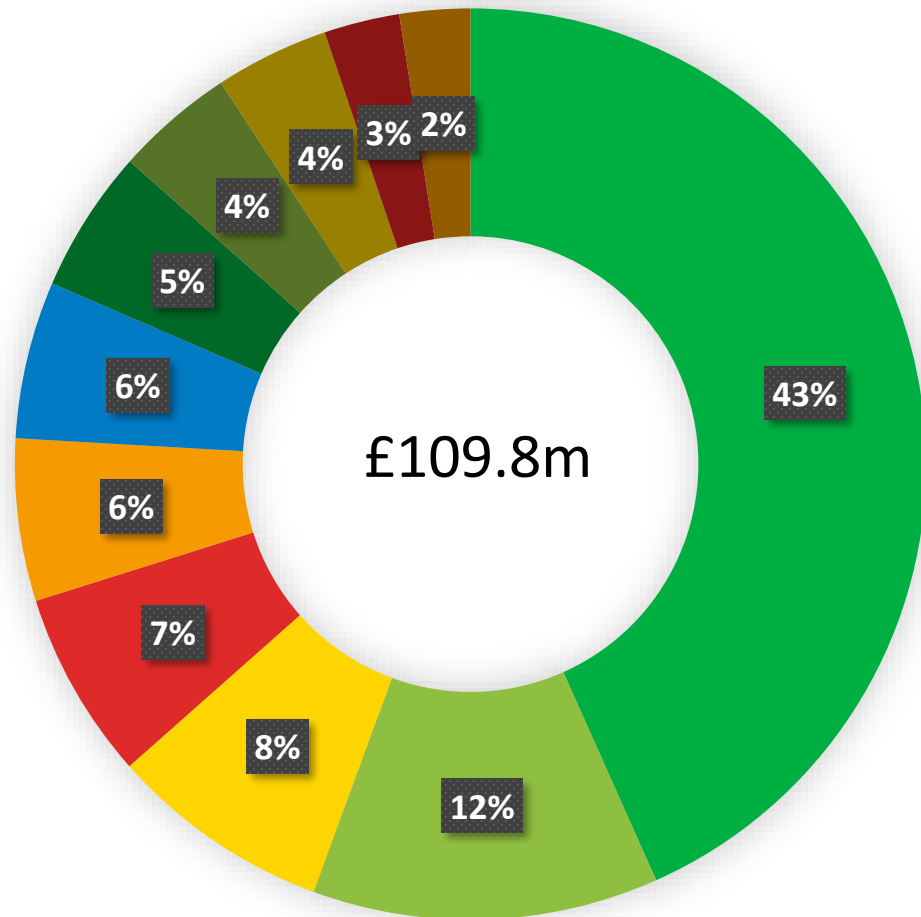
Overview

- The REPF is a rural top up to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), providing allocations for eligible local authorities in England to help address the additional needs and challenges facing rural areas.
- Local authorities have been given responsibility for delivery of REPF – including assessing and approving project applications, processing payments and day-to-day monitoring.
- The REPF supports the aims of the government's Missions agenda in particular its ambition for economic growth. It funds capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure. This will help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities.

Overview

- The REPF provides capital 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.
 - support new and improved community infrastructure that provide essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy.

Fund allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 total £109.8m profiled across interventions as shown



- Small scale investment in micro & small enterprises
- Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups (E11)
- Development & promotion of visitor economy (E17)
- Funding for rural circular economy projects
- Creation of and improvements to local green spaces (E03)
- Support for active travel enhancements (E07)
- Growing the local social economy (E26)
- Enhancing existing cultural, historic & heritage (E04)
- Impactful volunteering and/or social action projects (E09)
- Digital connectivity for local community facilities (E15)
- Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities (E6)

2025/26

- The Rural England Prosperity Fund will continue for a further year with up to £33 million of funding available to eligible local authorities to invest in local growth in England.
- Allocations to individual local authorities will be made in line with the existing allocations methodology.
- Delivery of REPF is integrated into UKSPF and will mirror its delivery geographies. These are set out in the UKSPF technical note for 2025-26.

Next Steps

- Defra will shortly publish an update to the REPF prospectus to reflect allocations for 2025/26 alongside an updated list of outputs and outcomes.
- Future REPF funding (beyond March 2026) will be considered alongside the wider local government funding reforms announced in the Autumn Statement.

Evaluation

- Defra have commissioned Ipsos to undertake an evaluation of the REPF.
- The evaluation aims to:
 - Examine the effectiveness of the administration and implementation of REPF at a department, local authority, and individual project level; and
 - Obtain evidence on the impact of the fund, particularly in delivering policy outcomes.
- The evaluation will help to understand the processes, successes and challenges involved with the REPF. This will inform future policy and funding decisions related to rural development.

Evaluation

- **Survey**

- Ipsos have issued a survey to Lead Local Authorities seeking views on the REPF.
- Deadline for responses: 31/03/2025

- **Interviews**

- Ipsos will supplement survey responses with a series of LA interviews.
- Recruitment is currently ongoing with this on the LAs that have completed their survey.

- **Case studies**

- Ipsos are also undertaking a series of case studies, which will combine site visits and interviews.