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Date: [Click and type]

Dear

**Re: Suffolk Rural Economy Scheme**

Please find enclosed with this letter an application form and grant criteria for the Suffolk Rural Economy Scheme. I would be grateful if you could complete and return the form in order that your application may be assessed.

Once assessed, your application will either be:

- Rejected, but referred to an External Funding Officer at Suffolk County Council who will work with you to seek alternative funding

OR

- Referred to an advisor who will contact you to arrange a visit at a time that is suited to both yourself and the advisor. The advisor will work with you to ascertain if you are eligible for grant funding from the Rural Economy Scheme and provide a detailed review of your business. Please note that refusal to meet with the advisor will result in your application being rejected.

For further details of the scheme please refer to the enclosed grant scheme criteria.

Yours sincerely

**Dawn Turpin**  
Economic Development

## Suffolk Rural Economy Scheme Grant Criteria

1. The objective of this scheme is to:
  - maintain and, wherever possible, create or improve the performance of viable rural shops and post offices
  - improve the rural economy
  - increase access to services to those who are deprived by lack of access to services due to their rural location
2. The scheme will operate in rural areas of Suffolk.
3. Grants cannot be used for:
  - Gambling
  - The benefit of only one individual
  - The payment of endowments, loans, interest payments
  - Obligations that statutory bodies are legally obliged to supply
  - Activities promoting religious beliefs
  - Current expenditure
4. Shops with a turnover of £7500 per week or less may apply for grants to improve premises or to expand their business.
5. This scheme is not intended to be anti-competitive. Hence only businesses, which are the only business of that type in the village, will be able to apply to the fund for grant aid. The purpose of the scheme is to increase economic activity in an area, not displace it. (For example if there are two grocery shops, grant aid will not be given to one shop in order to enhance competitiveness at the expense of the other grocery shop.)
6. Grants may be awarded (in arrears) of between £500 and £5,000 to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs. Therefore eligible project costs must total at least £1,000 as the project will be expected to contribute a minimum of 50%.
7. Only one successful grant application can be made per business per year.
8. A broad range of services and investment items are eligible and they will form part of the plan to improve the commercial viability of the business. The following list is illustrative and is not intended to be exhaustive:
  - Introducing a new service
  - Increasing range of products
  - Introducing/increasing range of locally produced high quality food
  - Improving access
  - Meeting the requirements of legislation

- Providing essential equipment
  - Improving security
  - Modernising the business
  - Marketing
  - A community group creating a viable economic facility, such as a community shop, a community building seeking to diversify income (e.g. a village hall installing a bar) or establishing a regular farmer's market, craft or antique fair
9. General repair work, routine maintenance, running costs, stock purchase or staff costs would not be eligible for consideration for grant aid.
  10. If projects require planning permission this must be gained in advance of a full application being submitted.
  11. The funds must be claimed (and hence project implemented) within three months of acceptance of the grant unless otherwise formally agreed.
  12. Payment will be made in arrears on receipt of invoice.
  13. Wherever possible quotations should be supplied as part of the application form.
  14. Works that have already taken place are ineligible for grant funding.
  15. Businesses that are owned by a national or multi-national chain are not eligible for funding.
  16. If the business is sold within two years of receipt of a grant, Suffolk County Council will seek to recover a proportion of the total grant paid, based on the number of months remaining.