

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Business Decarbonisation Grants Scheme Policy June 2024

Contents

Contents	1
Definitions	1
1 Purpose of the scheme, background and funding	3
2 Eligibility Criteria	3
3 Awards.....	4
4 Excluded Businesses	5
5 The Effective Date	5
6 How will the grants be provided to businesses	5
7 Subsidy Control.....	6
8 Decision Making.....	6
9 Complaints	7
10 Taxation	7
11 Managing the risk of fraud.....	7
12 Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid	7
13 Data Protection and use of Data	7

Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document:



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This Scheme is funded by Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Business Decarbonisation Grant Scheme: the name of the Scheme, providing grants to businesses to decarbonise their operations.

Climate Emergency: refers to the climate emergency declared by the Council in July 2019

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC): refers to the Government department delivering the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Economic Development Strategy: refers to the Council's Economic Development Strategy for the period 2023 – 26.

Effective Date: That is businesses / social enterprises will need to have been trading in the borough before this date to be eligible for this Scheme. For this Scheme that date is 01 April 2024.

End Date: refers to the final deadline for project completions, being 31 January 2025.

Levelling Up: refers to the Government's programme to increase prosperity across the various regions of the United Kingdom.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: refers to the Government scheme, which is providing the funding for this project, as part of its Levelling Up programme.

UK Subsidy Control Regime: refers to the framework published by the Department for Business and Trade in September 2022 which dictates the rules around public subsidies to businesses.



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1 Purpose of the scheme, background and funding

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine your eligibility for the Council's Business Decarbonisation Grants Scheme.
- 1.2 This grant scheme has been developed by the Council in relation to our commitment to invest in business decarbonisation as part of our Tunbridge Wells UKSPF Investment Plan. This commitment aligns with our 2019 climate and biodiversity emergency declaration and our focus on supporting sustainable growth as part of our Economic Development Strategy.
- 1.3 Tunbridge Wells has allocated £25,000 through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to spend on business decarbonisation. This aligns with intervention E29 which focuses on decarbonisation and growth.
- 1.4 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda, focusing on a number of missions to increase prosperity across the United Kingdom in the period from 2021 to 2030.
- 1.5 The Scheme will provide grants of up to £2,499 towards the costs of a business decarbonisation project, subject to terms and conditions.

2 Eligibility Criteria

- 2.1 Applicants must operate a business with a registered address in Tunbridge Wells borough.
- 2.2 Businesses must be a (1) limited company, a (2) sole trader (registered with HMRC and with a Unique Tax Reference Number) or (3) a social enterprise / CIC.
- 2.3 Applicants must either own or have a long-term tenancy agreement (minimum 5-year lease) on the property where the project will take place.
- 2.4 Homebased businesses are not eligible. No works to a residential property will be considered for funding under the Scheme.
- 2.5 Applicants must set out what their project entails and how it increases energy efficiency / reduces or offsets the carbon footprint of their premises.



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- 2.6 No grant shall be paid for any work carried out prior to an award having been made – grants cannot be awarded retrospectively.
- 2.7 Projects must have received all necessary permissions before applying for the Scheme.
- 2.8 The Scheme **will not cover any of the following costs:**
- Any cost incurred prior to the completion of a funding agreement with the Council to receive a grant for a successful application
 - VAT
 - Statutory works or duties
 - Costs related to arranging, financing, or securing additional funding for a project
 - Existing staff costs and salaries
 - Contingency costs
 - Costs related to any permissions secured for the project (i.e., Planning)
 - Existing fixed overhead costs
 - Research costs
 - Repairs and maintenance work
 - Like for like replacement of existing items
 - Purchase of land or buildings
 - Advance payments
 - Insurance costs

3 Awards

- 3.1 The Business Decarbonisation Grant is a one-off award specifically to support the eligible and successful proposals set out by applicants.
- 3.2 Under the Scheme, businesses and social enterprises are entitled to apply for up to £2,499 towards their eligible project costs.
- 3.3 Applications will be reviewed and a decision on funding will be made within 1 month of a completed submission. This timeframe will be extended where additional documentation and clarifications are required.



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4 Excluded Businesses

4.1 The following is a non-exhaustive list, and it is at the discretion of the Council which businesses **will not** be eligible for funding under the Scheme:

- Businesses / Social Enterprises that are not based in or trading in Tunbridge Wells borough
- Businesses / Social Enterprises that are in administration, insolvent or subject to a striking off notice
- Businesses / Social Enterprises that have already received public funding equal to the maximum permitted subsidy allowance
- Businesses / Social Enterprises that do not operate from a commercial premises (including home-based businesses)

5 The Effective Date

5.1 The effective date for eligibility is determined as 1 April 2024. That is businesses / social enterprises will need to have been trading in the borough before this date to be eligible for this Scheme.

6 How will the grants be provided to businesses

6.1 The Council is fully aware of the importance of these grants to assist local businesses and social enterprises to reach net zero. The Business Decarbonisation Grant Scheme, together with the West Kent Rural Grants Scheme and the UKSPF Community Grant Scheme represent a significant intervention from the Council to support businesses and communities in their efforts to be more sustainable.

6.2 In all cases, businesses and social enterprises will be required to confirm that they are eligible to receive the grant via the application process. An application for a Business Decarbonisation Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received in the Council's Business Inbox at business@tunbridgewells.gov.uk.

6.3 Applicants are under an obligation to notify the Council should they no longer meet the eligibility criteria for the Business Decarbonisation Grant.



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- 6.4 The Council reserves the right to request supplementary information from applicants, and they should look to provide this, where requested, as soon as possible.
- 6.5 Grant contribution payments will be made retrospectively. As such, only on production of evidence that the proposals have been delivered, such as via receipted invoices from contractors and photographs of completed works, will grant funding be paid out.
- 6.6 All monies paid under this scheme will be funded by the Council and allocated from the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for 2024/25.

7 Subsidy Control

- 7.1 If you have had previous public funding, it is important that you let us know so we will check that you are within the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) limits. The current threshold for MFA (subsidy) is £315,000 in a three-year rolling period. If you have received funding over these limits, we may need to limit the amount of the funding you can get, to comply with the state aid rules. You must notify us if you are close to or above the threshold.
- 7.2 Compliance with Subsidy Control rules and regulations is a requirement for receipt of a Business Decarbonisation Grant. To ensure your business / social enterprise is compliant, please visit the Government's website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime>

8 Decision Making

- 8.1 The Council and the Tunbridge Wells Local Partnership Group have approved the Business Decarbonisation Grants Scheme.
- 8.2 Economic Development and Sustainability Officers will administer the Scheme and make recommendations for the consideration of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Cabinet Member for Carbon Reduction, Sustainability and Transportation and Head of Economic Development and Property. These recommendations will be based on a scoring matrix linked to the outputs, outcomes and deliverability of proposals.



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8.3 All decisions made by the Council shall be communicated to the applicant in either writing or by email. A decision will be made as soon as is practicable after the 8 July deadline for applications has passed.

9 Complaints

9.1 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any Complaint received about this Scheme.

10 Taxation

10.1 The Council does not accept any responsibility in relation to the applicant's tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position.

11 Managing the risk of fraud

11.1 The Council will not accept the deliberate manipulation of the schemes or fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money, proceeding without the necessary permissions, or failing to declare entitlement to any section of the Grant Scheme will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them.

11.2 For the avoidance of doubt, the Council will undertake pre- and post-payment checks for all Green Business Grant applications in order to ensure the monies distributed by the Council have been allocated to the intended initiatives.

12 Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid

12.1 If it is established that any award has been made incorrectly due to error, misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to the Council by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

13 Data Protection and use of Data

13.1 All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, which are available on the Council's website.



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