



**West Devon
Borough
Council**

**West Devon Borough Council
Decarbonisation Grant Programme**

Guidance for Applicants

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Introduction

The UK Government, via their Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), have created the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant. West Devon Borough Council will be using this allocation to make the awards. This guidance document is designed to help potential applicants to shape their applications to the Decarbonisation Grant programme.

If, after reading this guidance and our policy document, you still require clarification with the application process, please contact the Council's grant team at businessgrants@swdevon.gov.uk

The Purpose of the Grant

This grant fund aims to support businesses in their transition towards decarbonisation, helping to mitigate their impact on the climate, while reducing their overall expenditure on energy. Projects should facilitate the following objectives:

- Delivery of solutions identified within the business decarbonisation plan.
- Demonstrable reduction of the carbon footprint associated with the business.
- Reduction in business expenditure related to energy / fuel.

Eligible Organisations

Businesses who have been through the free-to-access [South West Devon Decarbonisation Plan](#) project, to have a decarbonisation plan developed for their business, will be eligible for support.

Businesses who have been through another project to develop a decarbonisation plan will need to provide the details of the organisation that developed it with them, so that the grant team can determine its legitimacy.

All organisations must upload a copy of their decarbonisation plan.

This project will support:

- Limited Companies, including social enterprises and CICs
 - Must be registered with a company number on Companies House
- Sole Traders / Partnerships
 - Registered with HMRC and with a Unique Tax Reference Number
- Charitable Organisations
 - Registered with the Charities Commission, with a Charity Number

Other organisations of a type not listed above may be considered, at the discretion of the council. Organisations will be asked for proof of being registered to pay tax in the UK before any grant can be approved.

Grant Awards

The programme will provide retrospective grants of between £2,000 to £10,000 for **capital costs only**. Grants will be limited to a maximum of 50% of the project's total eligible costs.

For clarity, capital expenditure results in the acquisition of, or the construction of, or the addition of subsequent costs to an asset, which could include upgrading existing systems, improvement works which significantly extend the life of an asset, or its service potential e.g. completely replacing a roof or upgrading the heating system to a new efficient boiler.

Projects must be self-funded up front by the organisation. Only on completion of the proposed project will grant awards be released to reimburse the costs.

Applicants will have 3 months from the project approval date to complete their projects and claim the award. If you believe your project will **not** complete during this timeframe, (e.g. due to seasonality, procurement/supply chain issues, product/service availability) please explain why in the relevant space on the Application Form. Flexibility may be given to certain projects.

All costs must be evidenced, more information about evidence requirements [below](#).

The following are **not** eligible costs for the Decarbonisation Grant Programme purposes. This list is not exhaustive.

Any costs incurred before the project start date proposed.
Any items which you have already had EU or other public funding for (or intend to get EU or other public funding for)
Recoverable VAT
Proposals that are carried out only to meet a domestic legal requirement
Bad debts
Costs of arranging, financing or securing additional grants and funding streams
Existing staff costs and salaries
Contingency costs
The cost of getting any permissions or consents, such as planning permission
Relocation costs – if the business needs to relocate in order to expand, it can only apply for funding for the cost of the expansion
Costs associated with the provision of housing
Existing fixed overheads of the business
Costs in relation to research activities
Existing staff costs and salaries
Repairs and maintenance of existing buildings, equipment and machinery
Like-for-like replacement of existing items (such as buildings, equipment and machinery)
Purchase of land
Purchase of buildings for a commercial project
Generic development of workspace or offices within a redundant building. For example, where there is no end user specified at the start of the project
Computers, software and printers used in the general running of the business, like processing orders or accounts, not solely necessary to run the project
Advance payments
Insurance policy costs

Working capital
Financial charges, such as bank charges, fines and interest

Has your business already received public funding?

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.

How to Apply

From September 2023, eligible organisations with a relevant project will be able to fill out an online application form. Business support organisations, including Libraries Unlimited and Business Information Point, will be able to assist with the application process on behalf of businesses they are supporting. The application form will require the following information:

- Details about the organisation
- A summary of the project proposal, in less than 200 words, describing the element(s) of the decarbonisation plan they are looking to implement
- Which organisation(s) will be delivering the project for your business, and how they were selected
- Breakdown of total project costs
- Amount of award requested from the Decarbonisation Grant Programme
- A list of measurable outputs / outcomes the project will deliver – you will be asked to select any/all that apply from the list below:
 - Allow your business to engage in new markets
 - Create or improve Tourism, Culture or heritage assets
 - Develop or improve commercial buildings
 - Improve engagement with customers
 - Regenerate premises or sites
 - Result in properties being better protected from flooding and coastal erosion
 - See the installation of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure
 - Support the delivery of local events or activities
 - Support potential entrepreneurs to be business ready

Proposals should focus on:

- What the project is.
- How does the project fit the criteria detailed in the [‘Purpose of the Grant’](#) section above?

Project proposals will be required to provide at least 50% of their total project costs as match funding for the programme. Match funding (the balance of the total project costs payable not including grant funds) must be in place before grant funding can be given. We will need to see proof of match funding as part of your application.

Project Assessment

Projects will be assessed monthly by our panel from the end of September 2023 to the end of November 2024. If all funds are allocated prior to November 2024, the programme will be closed to further applications. If funds are fully allocated prior to the final round of assessment, remaining eligible applications will be added to a waiting list to be reviewed if existing grant recipients drop out of the programme, so that their funding can be re-allocated.

Projects will be scored by the panel against several criteria, including value for money, carbon footprint impact and economic benefit. The panel are also looking for evidence of a sound business case, and for projects that meet our programme aim.

It is important to understand that you will not automatically get a grant.

When you apply for a grant, you are competing with other applicants in the eligible area. We are looking for projects that best meet the programme aim, and that are good value for taxpayers' money. If you can show this clearly in your application, you are more likely to be successful in obtaining a grant.

The funding is limited and will be prioritised to applications that contribute the most to the Programme's aim, as set out in the ['Purpose of the Grant'](#) section.

The panel will meet during the last week of each month, except in December, where the panel meeting will be delayed until early January. These dates may be subject to change, depending on the volume and quality of applications received.

The panel will assess, shortlist and award funds to successful projects on a monthly basis. Due to our internal administration processes, applications will need to be received by the 14th day of any given month for their project to be considered at that month's panel meeting. Otherwise, a decision on the application will not be made until the end of the following month.

If further information is required to clarify elements of an application, this could delay a decision being made, while this information is sought.

Decisions made by the panel are final, there is no appeals process. Please refer to our policy document for further information, which [can be found here](#).

Post-Application Guidance

What happens if my proposal is successful?

Successful projects will be contacted by email, within 5 working days of the monthly panel meetings.

You will be given 3 months from the grant approval date (not the date of application) to complete your project. Failure to deliver your project within this timescale could put your funding at risk and it may be re-allocated to another project. If you believe your project will **not** complete during this timeframe, (e.g. due to seasonality, procurement/supply chain issues, product/service availability) please explain why in the relevant space on the Application Form. Flexibility may be given to certain projects.

Once evidence of project completion has been accepted by the grant team, the project will be forwarded to our payment system so that funding can be released.

The funds should then be released to the nominated bank account up to 5 working days after you get the automated email from our payment system, but they are usually much faster.

Successful applicants are expected to participate in public relations and communications activities directly related to the grant award.

What happens if my proposal is unsuccessful?

You will be contacted about the outcome of your application, even if you are not successful.

Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by email. We are only able to provide a summary of why a project was unsuccessful; decisions are final, and there is no appeal process.

Useful Links

UKSPF homepage - <https://www.westdevon.gov.uk/your-council/budgets-and-finance/budgets-and-spending/uk-shared-prosperity-fund>

Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant homepage - <https://www.westdevon.gov.uk/your-council/budgets-and-finance/budgets-and-spending/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/rural-england>

Libraries Unlimited – www.librariesunlimited.org.uk

Companies House - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>

HMRC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs>

Charities Commission - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>