

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

# Business Climate Action Grant

Application Guidance

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May 2026



## Contents

Business Climate Action Grant .....	1
Definitions .....	3
1. Purpose, Background & Funding .....	4
2. Eligibility Criteria .....	4
3. Awards.....	5
4. Excluded Businesses .....	6
5. The Effective Date .....	6
6. Grant Distribution.....	6
7. Subsidy Control .....	7
8. Decision Making .....	7
9. Complaints.....	7
10. Taxation .....	8
11. Managing the risk of fraud.....	8
12. Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid .....	8
13. Data Protection and use of Data .....	8

# Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document:

**Business Climate Action Grant:** the name of the grant, providing grants to businesses to decarbonise their operations.

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

**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 2026.

**End Date:** refers to the final deadline for project completions, being 31 January 2027.

**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.

# 1. Purpose, Background & Funding

1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine your eligibility for the Council's Business Climate Action Grant.

1.2 This grant has been developed by the Council in relation to our commitment to invest in business across Tunbridge Wells. 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 This purpose of the Business Climate Action Grant is to provide local businesses with dedicated funding to support them on their decarbonisation journey. Businesses are eligible to use funding on decarbonisation interventions such as:

- LED installation
- Solar PV installation
- Insulation installation
- Replacement of gas heating and cooking appliances
- Bespoke energy efficiency improvement solutions
- Double glazing
- Water saving measures
- Emissions reporting services
- Decarbonisation plan development
- EV charge point installation
- EV purchase (only for business purposes e.g. taxi or staff pool vehicle)
- Replacement of fossil fuel powered tools.

1.4 Tunbridge Wells has allocated £20,000 to go towards this grant scheme.

1.5 The Scheme will provide grants of up to £2,500 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 Applications will only be considered if the name registered on companies house matches the name provided on the application form.

2.4 Applicants must either own or have a long-term tenancy agreement (minimum 2-year lease) on the property where the project will take place.

2.5 Homebased businesses are not eligible. No works to a residential property will be considered for funding under the Scheme.

2.6 Applicants must set out what their project entails and how it improves energy efficiency / reduces the carbon footprint of their premises.

2.7 No grant shall be paid for any work carried out prior to an award having been made – grants cannot be awarded retrospectively.

2.8 Projects must have received all necessary permissions before applying for the Scheme.

2.9 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 and new staff costs and salaries.
Contingency costs.
Costs related to any permissions secured for the project (i.e., Planning).
Existing fixed overhead costs.
Research costs (unless the development of a decarbonisation plan).
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 Climate Action Grant is a one-off award specifically to support the eligible and successful proposals set out by applicants.

3.2 Under the grant, businesses and social enterprises are entitled to apply for up to £2,500 towards their eligible project costs.

3.3 Applications will be reviewed and a decision on funding will be made within 1 month of the application window closing. This timeframe will be extended where additional documentation and clarifications are required.

## 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.
Town and Parish Councils.
Businesses / Social Enterprises that are in administration, insolvent or subject to and/or have previously received 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 2026. That is applicant will need to have been trading in the borough before this date to be eligible for this Scheme.

## 6. Grant Distribution

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 Climate Action Grant, together with the Schools Climate Action Grant Scheme and the Community Climate Action Grant Scheme represent a significant intervention from the Council to support businesses, schools, 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 Climate Action Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received in the Council's Sustainability Inbox at **[sustainability@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@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 Climate Action Grant.

6.4 The council will conduct its due diligence (e.g., cross referencing with companies house), thus 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 not 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 own fund allocation for 2026/27.

## 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- financial 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. It is **your responsibility** to 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 Climate Action 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 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has approved the Business Climate Action Grant.

8.2 Sustainability Officers will administer the Scheme and make recommendations for the consideration of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, and Head of Service / Director. These recommendations will be based on a scoring matrix linked to the outputs, outcomes and deliverability of proposals.

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 12 June 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 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 Business Climate Action 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.