

Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant Guidance Notes for Applicants

The Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant is funded by the UK Government's Local Growth Fund. It is a grant funding programme specifically for community energy efficiency projects and continues the success of the Reach programme, with the aspiration of developing Bridgend's communities into thriving places to live, visit and work.

"The Local Growth Fund will enable targeted investment that responds to local opportunities and challenges, maximises value for money, and contributes to a more resilient, sustainable and prosperous Welsh economy."

The aims of the Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant are:

- Support projects that look to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change.
- Support capital work that would look to reduce energy costs and improve energy efficiency.
- Support sustainable locally led projects that make a positive difference to the communities they serve.
- Continue from the legacy of work from the previous Community Feasibility Fund and subsequent recommendations from the Bridgend Energy Efficiency Project.
- Support projects that look to future-proof locally owned/leased assets, for example, community venues and local sport clubs.
- Encourage projects that will demonstrate value for money and offer a range of sustainable community services.
- Provide match funding for larger scale capital projects and work alongside Welsh Government, National Lottery and other major funding capital grants.

Eligibility Criteria

- Grants from this fund are awarded to groups who are involved in community-based projects and initiatives that will benefit the local area within Bridgend County Borough.
- Projects will be assessed on their ability to contribute to the achievement of the Council's Local Area Energy Plan, Net Zero Carbon 2030 strategy, UK & Welsh Government's Net Zero strategies.
- All projects funded by the Local Growth Fund in Bridgend must contribute to the outputs and outcomes associated with the Programme. A full list of outputs and outcomes can be viewed in Appendix A, at the end of this document.
- To be eligible for funding all successful applicants must:
 - Be self-governing, nonprofit distributing, be for community/public benefit and have appropriate signed constitution/governing document/rules.
 - Have a bank account with at least 2 signatories in the name of the organisation applying for the grant.
 - Demonstrate sound financial management, in particular authorising and recording expenditure.
 - Able to provide 3 years of your latest financial accounts, signed as being audited or independently inspected (according to the level of income and expenditure) or in the case of recently formed organisations, a forecast of income and expenditure for the next 3 years.
 - Where appropriate have in place effective policies, regulations and the required authorisation to carry out the proposed project e.g., safeguarding procedures, licenses, accreditation, etc.
 - Show evidence of community support.
 - Accept the terms and conditions of this funding.
 - Where relevant have the required BCBC permissions already in place e.g. planning, highways, parks and property consents and approvals.
 - Ensure that the enclosed Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) Notification and Certificate of Acceptance are signed and returned to the Council as soon as possible.

WHO CAN APPLY

- Constituted community groups or volunteer organisations
- Registered Charities
- Town and Community Councils
- Third sector organisations
- Community Interest Companies
- Social Enterprises

If you are unsure of your eligibility, please contact reach@bridgend.gov.uk who will be able to advise.

HOW MUCH YOU CAN APPLY FOR

The Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant is **capital only** and provides **100%** of eligible project costs. The minimum available is **£2,500** and the maximum **£25,000** (including irrecoverable VAT).

The Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant will be **awarded on a first come first served basis**, all forms must be completed and contain the relevant information.

All successful projects must be completed by the **28th of February 2027**. A progress assessment will be undertaken during the lifetime of the project to determine whether it is on track to meet the agreed completion date. **Please note that, given the limited timescales, the findings of this assessment may result in the grant being withdrawn.**

WHAT CAN BE FUNDED

The Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant can support community focused capital energy efficiency projects. Examples include:

- Renewable energy solutions for improving energy efficiency to combat climate change, e.g. solar PV panels and battery banks, air source heat pumps, air to air heat / cold pumps, insulation, low energy lighting etc.
- Projects that will reduce the long-term running costs and carbon footprint of the community organisation.
- Irrecoverable VAT is eligible to be included in the grant claims, provided your organisation is not VAT registered. If the organisation becomes VAT registered during the timeline of the project before the final claim, then BCBC reserve the right to cease funding the VAT element.
- Projects that can be completed by the deadline of the 28th of February 2027.

Please note this list is not exhaustive and applications are appraised on a case-by-case basis.

WHAT CANNOT BE FUNDED?

Unfortunately, The Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant **cannot** support the following costs and activities:

- Any costs incurred prior to formal approval.
- Any revenue costs.
- Other projects funded by the Local Growth Fund.
- Recoverable VAT.
- Bank / finance charges & loan repayments.
- Legal costs being carried out as a statutory requirement.
- Routine or ongoing running / revenue costs (including rents, rates, insurances, salaries, ongoing rentals).
- Fundraiser's fee.
- Vehicles.
- Membership of Professional Bodies.
- Refinancing of bad debts of any kind, or company liabilities not associated with the project.
- Insurance.
- Financial support to third parties.
- Works carried out on a domestic property, either new build or refurbishment or extensions/garden rooms/log cabins.
- Schemes for the use of an exclusive group.
- Maintenance costs i.e. paint works, servicing, or any equipment that will be used for asset maintenance purposes.
- Unlawful expenditure.
- Religious promotion.
- Political promotion.
- Projects / schemes aimed at making a profit.
- Replacement of facilities subject to an insurance claim.
- Statutory duties.
- Projects relating to activities outside of Bridgend County Borough.
- Project payments made by cash or through personal bank accounts.
- Capital works without clear alignment to the grant aims.

HOW TO APPLY

Complete and sign The Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant application form and submit along with the following documents:

- Provide **two comparable quotes** relating to each element of eligible spend. The cheapest quote provided will determine the grant amount. Quotes should be provided by suppliers on the competent persons register and hold relevant accreditations e.g. FENSA, Gas Safe Register, NICEIC.
- Include additional reports that evidence community need.
- Include a copy of your lease agreement and a letter of consent from the Freeholder (if the building or land is leasehold).
- Provide a copy of your latest annual accounts or financial statement.
- Include the latest 3 months bank statements.
- A copy of your Public Liability Insurance.
- Provide proof of match funding secured for the sole purpose of the project.
- If planning permission or change of use relating to a premises / building is required for the project, then planning approval evidence is to be provided before grant approval is made.
- The full application is submitted to the BCBC Grant Approval Panel for review and approval.
- The Applicant must accept the terms and conditions of the grant by completing and returning the Certificate of Acceptance which will issued if your grant application is successful. Do not proceed with your project until you have returned the Certificate of Acceptance.
- All projects must be **completed by 28th of February 2027** and all evidence including payment evidence, must be provided within this timeframe. If the project doesn't go ahead within the time given in the offer letter, the grant will automatically end.

No expenditure should be incurred before grant approval, as the grants cannot be awarded retrospectively.

We will only support one application per organisation for funding under The Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant.

SUBSIDY CONTROL

Under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, a subsidy is where a public authority provides support to an enterprise that gives them an economic advantage, meaning equivalent support could not have been obtained on commercial terms. It can take the form of a grant, a tax break, a loan, guarantee or equity investment on favourable terms, or the use of facilities below market price, amongst other kinds of support.

The Council will assess grant applications to determine any potential Subsidy Control implications. Each application will be considered on the basis of its specific circumstances. All applicants must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control rules and work with the council to provide any additional information that is deemed to be required. Further information on the Subsidy Control rules can be found under the UK Government guidance available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime>

Should any proposal be determined to amount to a subsidy the Council will consider whether the proposed intervention is consistent with subsidy control principles and whether any exemptions or other treatment options are applicable.

One general exemption that the Council will consider is the award of Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA). MFA allows public authorities to award low value subsidies without needing to comply with the majority of the substantive subsidy control requirements prescribed by the Subsidy Control Act 2022. MFA has a financial threshold so no recipient can receive more than £315,000 over the applicable period. The applicable period is a rolling three-year period which runs from:

- The elapsed part of the current financial year (i.e. from 1st April) and
- The two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.

The following should all be taken into account when calculating the amount of MFA your business has received during the current and previous two financial years:

- Other MFA
- Services of Public Economic Interest (SPEI)
- Aid given under the EU State aid de minimis regulations before the end of the implementation period of 31 December 2020 and
- Subsidies given as small amounts of financial assistance (SAFA) under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement prior to the Subsidy Control Act 2022 coming into effect.

If you are unsure how any previous financial support you have received was awarded please contact the organisation that provided the support.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please email: reach@bridgend.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.bridgendreach.org.uk>

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.

Bridgend Council has absolute discretion over the terms, eligibility and decision making of The Resilient Communities Energy Efficiency Grant and reserves the right to amend the criteria at any time.

APPENDIX A

| Output/ Outcome Code | Output Indicator for Reporting | Unit of Measurement |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Community Assets | | |
| OP19 | New or improved amenities/facilities. | Number of amenities/facilities created/improved. |
| OC17 | Reduced costs and/or income generated as a result of capital investment. | £ saved in cost reduction and £ gained in income generation. |