



**Funded by
UK Government**



**Nottingham
City Council**

Nottingham City Council UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Business Decarbonisation Grant 2025-2026

Applicant Guidance Notes

1. Introduction

This guidance is intended to provide information to applicants to the Nottingham City Council Business Decarbonisation Grant.

The aim of the grant is to assist businesses in Nottingham to transition to net zero. It is designed to help businesses purchase and install new products and equipment that reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, cut utility costs, and improve energy efficiency.

The project will provide up to 50% grant funding for investments. The maximum amount of UKSPF grant that can be awarded per business is £10,000. The balance of the investment must be provided by the applicant.

Priority will be given to those applicants that can best demonstrate how the investment will have a positive impact on carbon emissions, business growth and productivity.

Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), the grant operates over two stages – an expression of interest followed by a full application. Projects will be invited to the full application stage if they pass eligibility checks. The scheme will remain open to applications until all funding has been committed.

2. Background

Nottingham City Council is committed to delivering a clean, green economic future for our city and is looking to support our economy to move towards this goal. We have launched our own commitment to a low carbon future through our CN28 initiative which aims to make Nottingham a carbon neutral city by 2028. We recognise that the current economic climate is a challenging one and support for small businesses to reduce their energy consumption needs to be made to achieve our goal.

The Business Decarbonisation Grant is available to businesses in Nottingham to support them in reducing their energy related costs whilst also seeking to reduce the city's CO2 emissions. This will allow businesses to increase their profit margins and protect employment. Its aim is to support those businesses to invest in technologies, products and services that will directly reduce their energy consumption, reducing operating costs and CO2 emissions by offering financial incentives directly to support and promote these investments. This grant scheme is designed to allow businesses to invest in the short term for their longer-term sustainability and support Nottingham City Council and the UK government to achieve a Net Zero economy.

3. Grant amount and match funding

The minimum grant available is £1,000

The maximum grant available is £10,000.

Grants are available to fund 50% of the total project cost (excluding VAT). See below for examples of eligible projects.

You will be expected to fund and evidence 100% of the project cost upfront from your own resources, 50% will then be reimbursed to you by way of a grant award. Ultimately, you will have match funded 50% of the total project cost, excluding VAT.

There is no maximum project cost, but the maximum grant will be capped at £10,000. However, there is some flexibility to award a larger amount of grant (up to £15,000) if an applicant has a compelling business case that demonstrates significant impacts on carbon emissions, the business and the local economy.

All grants are made at the discretion of Nottingham City Council and are subject to availability.

4. How will the project work?

The grant is competitive, inviting businesses to apply for grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 to support capital investment projects that will lead to clearly evidenced reductions of carbon emissions and business operating costs.

Businesses must have been trading for more than 12 months to apply for the grant. Grants are available only towards capital investment. Revenue funding is not available through this grant

The grant will remain open until all of the funding has been allocated.

5. Eligible projects

The Business Decarbonisation Grant can be used to contribute to one or more of the following activities:

- Energy production infrastructure – solar panels biomass boilers etc.
- Energy efficient products – LED lighting and associated energy saving technologies.
- Building Improvements – Replacement inefficient boilers to more efficient boilers, air or ground source heat pumps, improving insulation etc.
- Energy efficient manufacturing equipment – air compressors, upgrading to energy-efficient motors, gearboxes, and actuators

Typical projects could be:

- Installation of LED lights throughout the business premises
- Installation of solar panels for renewable energy generation
- Replacement of an inefficient heating system with a modern, efficient system

6. General eligibility criteria

Grants are available for capital projects and the purchase of capital equipment where this meets the eligibility criteria.

Grants are not available for items or services which would be considered part of normal business operations.

To be eligible to receive a grant your business **must**:

- Be located within the administrative area covered by Nottingham City Council
- Have been trading for at least 12 months at the time of application.
- Have a lease agreement with a minimum of 12 months remaining
- Be registered at Companies House OR have a Unique Tax Reference number from HMRC if you are a sole trader or partnership.
- Fund and evidence 100% of the project cost upfront from your own resources, ultimately providing 50% of the project cost yourself.
- Not make any project purchases using Paypal, personal credit cards, cash or cheques as these are not eligible payment methods
- Be eligible for funding under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- Not have any outstanding arrears or debts with Nottingham City Council

7. Ineligible businesses

The following types of business are ineligible to apply for the grant:

- Pawn brokers/money shops
- Adult/private shops
- Betting shops,
- Vape shops
- Shops licensed to sell alcohol for consumption off the premises,
- National chain stores.

8. Procurement

For purchases under £25,000 net, applicants need to provide one written quote.

For purchases of £25,000 net and over we require applicants to have obtained three quotes based on a written specification that you have produced to define your minimum requirements for the item/service, and which has been sent to each supplier (evidence of this should be provided e.g. copies of emails).

All supplier quotes must clearly specify if VAT is applicable, and state the price including and excluding VAT.

If your chosen supplier is not VAT registered, we will require an email verification from them to confirm this.

You will need to detail all proposed purchases in question 5a of the full application form.

You need to be able to explain how you will ensure value for money from your proposed purchases e.g. explain why you think your preferred supplier represents the best choice for price and quality. You should provide your answer in Appendix A of the full application form for each item.

9. Ineligible project costs

Below is a list of excluded costs. This isn't an exhaustive list and the UKSPF Project Team have the discretion to omit costs if they deem them ineligible and/or not within the scope of the project:

- Reimbursement of goods / services already purchased prior to the date of a grant agreement
- Recurring revenue costs (including: salaries, pensions, stock, rent, utility charges, service charges subscriptions, insurance, tax, recruitment fees, website hosting etc.)
- Repairs and maintenance to existing equipment
- Like-for-like replacement of existing items
- Accredited training or the development or implementation of accredited training materials
- Installation of energy saving measures on property for residential use (i.e. commercial property development activities)
- Enterprises subject to an outstanding order for the recovery of illegal State Aid
- Activities that may bring Nottingham City Council into disrepute
- Costs associated with gaining statutory permissions or consents
- VAT
- Vehicles

10. Paying suppliers

You must use a payment method that evidences the payment to your suppliers.

If you pay by cheque you must take a photocopy of the cheque before you pass it on to the supplier, this will enable us to cross reference the cheque number to your bank account.

Payments by debit card and bank transfer, clearly stating the supplier name, are the preferred payment methods, as they provide us with the required evidence.

No cash transactions will be accepted as evidence of payment.

IMPORTANT

- No claims will be paid for activity carried out and paid for prior to the issue of the Grant Offer Letter and Grant Agreement.
- Grant claims will only be paid to reimburse you of works carried out by the approved suppliers. If you change your supplier you will need to submit a new quote and get prior approval from us. We reserve the right to reject any claims for works carried out by non-approved suppliers
- No claims will be paid where supplier payments were made by cash, by a third party or by cheque without photocopy evidence.

11. UK subsidy control regime

This grant scheme will be administered under Minimal Financial Assistance rules. You are allowed up to £315,000 in Minimal Financial Assistance over any rolling period of 3 financial years. Information on the scheme can be found at the Gov.UK Subsidy Control Website.

Any aid awarded to you under the Business Growth and Productivity Grant will have to be declared if you apply, or have applied, for any other public funding. Therefore, if successful, the offer letter must be retained and shown to any other public body to which you apply for funding for the three years following the offer.

False declarations will lead to the recovery of the value of the assistance provided plus interest.

Note that where a business is part of a group, the £315,000 limit applies to the group as a whole for public sector support within the United Kingdom.

12. Timeframe

The Business Decarbonisation Grant will remain open to applications until all funding has been committed.

Projects awarded funding will be required to claim their grant award by the date or timeframe stated within the Grant Agreement.

However, all projects funded through the Scheme **must be** fully completed and all grant funding **claimed** by applicants by 6th March 2026

13. Application Process

The grant has a 2-stage application process

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest

The first step is to submit an Expression of Interest form. This can be downloaded from www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ukspf or you can request a copy by emailing ukspfgrants@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Once submitted a project and item eligibility check will be undertaken.

If your business or project is not eligible at this stage of the process you will be advised accordingly.

Stage 2 – Full application

If your project is eligible for support through the Business Decarbonisation Grant, you will be invited to submit a full application.

Alongside the application form you must submit your supplier quote(s).

On receipt of the completed full application and supporting documentation, Nottingham City Council will conduct due diligence and compliance checks on the application.

Any issues or queries including requests for missing / additional information will be raised with you.

Applications passing the due diligence check will undergo a quality appraisal and will be assessed against the following:

- How the project will support carbon reduction in the applicant business
- How the project will enable the applicant to grow the business, including turnover, profitability and productivity.
- Value for money
- Deliverability in proposed timescales / milestones, including contingency arrangements and the capacity of the organisation to manage and monitor the work.

All grant applications will then be considered by a grant panel and the applicant informed of the outcome in writing. The decision of the panel on all full applications for funding is final and there is no process of appeal.

NB You must not enter into any financial or contractual arrangement with any supplier prior to a project being approved, and not before the date that the Grant Agreement is signed by Nottingham City Council. To be clear, any expenditure prior to the date that the Grant Agreement is signed, dated and returned cannot be claimed.

Nottingham City Council reserves the right to withhold, vary or reclaim funding if any information supplied through the application and approval process proves to be inaccurate, misleading or incomplete.

14. Help and Support

If you would like to discuss the general eligibility of your proposal prior to submitting an Expression of Interest, please contact the Nottingham City Council UKSPF Team at ukspfgrants@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Applications must be received from the applicant organisation directly and while help and support in completing your application is entirely acceptable, we would encourage you to write the full application in your own words and to have a full understanding of the application if any clarification is requested.

Completing the Expression of Interest and Full Application Forms

Please use the information in this section to answer each question in the expression of interest and application forms as fully as possible.

Expression of Interest Form

Business Details

Please provide details of your business, including details of the primary contact for the project. This should be the person the project team will contact with any questions regarding the application.

All sections should be completed fully.

Your Project

Please provide brief details of the project that will be funded with the grant, the estimated costs of the project and the anticipated benefit/impact to your business. This grant will only fund projects that are located in Nottingham.

Energy Savings

Please provide an estimate of the carbon savings that will be achieved by the project if you are able to.

Costs

Please provide estimated project costs.

Full Application Form

Business Details

Please provide the name, address and contact details of your business.

Project details

Please provide anticipated start and finish dates for the investment being supported by the grant. It would normally be expected that this would be less than three months from receipt of your Grant offer letter and that you will enter into a contract with your supplier within 2 months of receipt of the grant offer letter.

Please state the total project cost and the amount of funding being requested.

Please provide a brief overview of your business and a brief project description (200 words max). This should include an explanation of the challenge your business is facing and provide an overview on what the grant will be funding.

Projects can only be capital. The grant investment must deliver clearly evidenced carbon savings.

Application questions

Q1. About the project

In this section you must:

- outline the need for the grant and how the investment is aligned to the company's carbon reduction plans
- explain what you will purchase with the grant and why grant funding is needed, with reference to the viability of the project with or without grant funding.
- Demonstrate the need for the proposed project
- Demonstrate how the project delivers value for money to the business and to the UKSPF programme

Grant is only payable for costs incurred after the application is formally approved. Grant is only payable to the applicant business and upon production of evidence that costs have been incurred by the same business (not another business in a group structure for example). Grants will not be awarded to applicants who are linked enterprises of the supplier(s).

Any costs which have not been incurred by the applicant business will be ineligible.

Any expenditure which is deemed ineligible will not be paid and any offer of grant will be withdrawn.

Q2. Carbon savings

Here you must provide details of:

- your annual gas and electricity consumption in kilowatt hours
- your current energy tariffs
- your estimated current carbon emissions in kg or tonnes
- the estimated annual carbon emission after the introduction of the proposed carbon saving measures in kg or tonnes
- estimated annual carbon savings in kg or tonnes
- details of how your estimated carbon savings have been calculated

Q3. Outputs and outcomes

You will need to detail the outputs/outcomes resulting from the proposed grant investment. The answer must clearly show how the activity will support carbon reduction and operating cost savings to the business.

Please summarise the outcomes in the table

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Q4. Project milestones

Please list the project milestones. They should show clear progression (with built in contingency plans) and specified timeframes that can be realistically achieved.

Q5a. Details of items to be purchased

Provide a summary of each item or service you wish to purchase in the table and complete Appendix A to provide further details about the supplier(s) you wish to use.

Q5b. Supplier comparison for project purchases of £25,000 net and over.

This only needs to be completed for projects with proposed purchases of individual items costing £25,000 net and over

If any of the items you wish to purchase have a net cost of £25,000 or over, you are required to follow the Public Procurement Regulations in line with the threshold value of your total project cost.

You must provide details of any conflict of interest with the suppliers you have chosen.

You need to attach a copy of the quotation(s) from your preferred supplier(s) to the application form. The quotation must include both the content of the Project Description and the Total Project Cost.

Q6. Previous grants

Tell us about any previous Decarbonisation Grant you have received from Nottingham City Council and how your new project differs from it, particularly that the outputs and outcomes offered are not the same as those offered in the previous grant.

Payment of grant

Please provide your bank details

Subsidy Allowance

If you have received a Subsidy or State Aid of more than £315,000 over the last 3 financial years, please provide details

Declarations

Please sign and date the form

Appendix A

Provide details of the supplier(s) you have chosen for the project and your reasons why.

Submitting your completed application

Completed application forms and supporting documentation should be emailed to ukspfgrants@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Timescales

If your application is successful, you will receive a formal grant agreement. This will inform you how to proceed and what documents you need to keep to claim the grant. Once you have purchased the goods/services in line with your grant agreement, you

will submit a grant claim to evidence the purchase including an invoice and bank statements.

It can take up to 1 month to process your claim and pay the grant to you, and any missing information can delay the payment of grant.

You must not place an order with your chosen provider, commission or purchase any goods/services prior to receiving the grant agreement, as grant payments cannot be made retrospectively against activity that has already occurred.

Projects approved in the financial year 2025/26 must complete by February 2026 as claims must be submitted by March 6th 2026.