

Climate Challenge Fund: Process and Governance

Process:

1. Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Applicants:

- Community groups (including Churches, schools, environment groups, clubs, small charities etc.) social enterprises, and small businesses.
- Applicants must operate within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- Applicants must demonstrate a direct impact on any of the following: climate change mitigation, adaptation, carbon reduction, biodiversity, health and well-being in nature at the community level.

Ineligible Applicants:

- Applicants that have received funding from this grant scheme within the past 12 months.
- Applications from individuals

2. Application Process

On the proposal Form:

- What the project is
- Where it will be based
- Duration of project completion
- The expected outcomes of the projects
- How the project will aim to become sustainable after funding ends
- Challenges expected and mitigation planned
- Community involvement

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

Supporting Documentation (not necessary, but can be used to support application):

- Relevant environmental impact assessments or carbon savings estimates.

3. Assessment, Review Process and Risk Management

Initial Screening (by Climate Partnership Coordinator):

- Ensure all applications meet the basic eligibility criteria (e.g., correct documentation, local impact, climate or health and wellbeing and biodiversity relevance).

Steering Group Review:

The steering group reviews applications in detail based on:

- Innovation: How novel is the solution proposed?
- Feasibility: Is the project realistic and well-planned?
- Scalability/Replicability: Can this idea be scaled or replicated in other areas?
- Community Benefit: Does the project support diverse communities or have the potential for wider social impact?
- Impact: Measurable impacts both soft and hard measurables to be considered.

4. Decision-Making and Funding Allocation

Steering Group Decision:

- The steering group makes funding decisions based on the highest-scoring or most impactful projects.
- Discussions and decisions should be minuted for transparency.
- Decisions should aim to balance innovation with inclusivity (e.g., ensuring a mix of small business and community group applications are funded).

Governance Stipulations:

Annual Limit: each group can only receive funding once per year (to ensure fairness).

Maximum Grant: each grant is capped at £5,000, but partial funding is an option (e.g., offering less than the full amount requested if the project budget is deemed excessive).

- The steering group has the discretion to break the £5,000 cap for **exceptional projects** that demonstrate a high degree of innovation, significant potential for carbon reduction, impact on biodiversity, health and wellbeing and scalability.

Criteria for breaking the cap could include:

- A groundbreaking or novel approach to climate change mitigation.
- A demonstrable and potentially transformative impact on carbon reduction, increase of biodiversity or positive community action on health and wellbeing in nature.
- The ability to scale up or replicate the project at a larger community or regional level.
- Investment opportunities – the Steering Group would be interested in investing in some larger projects that generate an income – then money can be returned to the Climate Partnership in order to fund other projects.

Partial Funding:

- If the Steering Group feel they can contribute helping lowering costs partial funding will be offered along with support from Steering group members.
- If the Steering Board want to help support a particular aspect of a larger project.

Conflict of Interest: Any steering group member with a vested interest in an applicant must declare this and recuse themselves from decision-making on that application.

- During online meetings they can be placed in a waiting room and return when the verdict has been made.

5. Grant Disbursement and Monitoring

Grant Disbursement:

Once a project is approved, issue an email outlining:

- Grant amount.
- Reporting requirements (e.g., project updates, report on completion).
- Support ongoing.

Monitoring and Reporting:

Require successful applicants to provide progress reports, including:

- How the grant funds have been used.
- Measurable outcomes, including climate, carbon, biodiversity, health and wellbeing impact.
- Final project evaluation: At the end of the project, require a final report summarising outcomes and learnings. This could help in assessing future projects.
- Site Visits/Follow-ups (if appropriate)

6. Communications and Feedback

Transparency:

- Publish a list of successful applicants and their projects in minutes and an annual report

Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants:

- Provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants so they can improve and reapply.

Annual Review of the Fund:

- Annually review the grant scheme to assess its effectiveness, ensuring it meets its goals.

7. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Total tCO₂e carbon reduction achieved

- Green spaces created or extended
- Number of community members engaged
- Successful project completion rate
- Fund distribution across different project types

8. Knowledge Sharing, Networking and Collaboration

- Facilitate networking events for grant recipients to share experiences and best practices
- Encourage partnerships between different funded projects to maximise impact
- Create a platform or repository for sharing project outcomes, lessons learned, and best practices
- Encourage grant recipients to contribute to this knowledge base

As part of this include Capacity Building elements to the memberships:

- Offer workshops or training sessions for potential applicants to improve their project planning and application skills
- Provide resources on best practices

Should the Steering Group need to consider it as part of the project please find more governance outlined here:

Further Risk Management:

- Outline a process for identifying and mitigating potential risks associated with funded projects
- Include contingency plans for project failures or unexpected challenge

Long-term Impact Assessment

- Implement a system for tracking the long-term impact of funded projects beyond the initial grant period
- Conduct follow-up assessments 1-2 years after project completion

Appeals Process

- Establish a clear procedure for applicants to appeal funding decisions
- Define the grounds for appeal and the review process

Ethical Considerations

- Include guidelines on ethical practices in project implementation
- Address issues such as data privacy, community engagement, and environmental justice

Diversity and Inclusion

- Explicitly state commitment to funding diverse projects and applicants
- Include metrics to track diversity in funded projects

External Audit

- Schedule regular external audits of the fund's processes and impact
- Use audit findings to continuously improve the program

Alignment with Broader Climate Goals

- Clearly link the fund's objectives to local, national, or international climate targets

Show how funded projects contribute to these broader goals

- Media and Public Relations
- Develop a strategy for promoting successful projects and their impacts
- Use case studies to inspire more climate action in the community

Volunteer Engagement

- Create opportunities for community members to volunteer with funded projects
- Establish a system to track and recognise volunteer contributions

