

Climate and Nature Grant Scheme

Aims

Herefordshire Council's new Climate and Nature Grant Scheme will seek project applications from community groups, organisations and parish councils to deliver carbon reduction and ecological enhancement projects across the county

Outcomes to be achieved through the grants scheme are as follows:

- Reduction in CO₂
- Increase in biodiversity
- Community engagement in action on climate and nature

This grant scheme seeks to support the delivery of the following key commitments within the Council Corporate Delivery Plan

- EN3.1: Create a new countywide climate & ecological emergency partnership, strategy and action plan to improve biodiversity and achieve countywide carbon neutrality by 2030
- EN7.1: Develop & implement a new nature strategy to enhance and protect biodiversity across the Council's estate

Applications will be invited for projects under three main themes –

- Carbon reduction – eg Community buildings, sustainable & active travel, waste reduction.
- Nature
- 'Other' smaller general theme for bold and ambitious projects outside of these categories.

Applicants are welcome to apply for more than one project, although it should be noted that allocation of funding will take into account the aim of achieving a good spread of funding across the county.

Project proposals will be scored and prioritised for funding based on how well the answers to the questions fulfil the objectives given for each theme.

Additional weighting will be given to projects that demonstrate how they are part of a wider carbon reduction/nature enhancement programmes and/or parish and neighbourhood plans.

Carbon reduction

Objectives:

1. Reduced use of fossil fuel energy in community buildings.
2. Reduction in transport emissions and promoting the use of sustainable and active travel (walking cycling, public transport etc.) modes in local communities.
3. Leveraging additional value (e.g. funding contributions or contributions in kind, e.g. volunteer time/expertise from other sources, collaboration between organisations, and/or evidence of local support).
4. Achieving wider and inclusive community engagement and behaviour change around climate change.

The value of a community building project will be greater if it can be used to raise awareness in the wider public about improvements which can be made to homes and other building e.g. by holding an open event and advice session.

Examples:

Energy conservation measures

- Draught proofing, insulation of walls, ceilings, roofs, floors and pipes and the replacement of doors or windows.

Energy efficiency measures

- Lighting upgrades, smart heating control units or infrared heating. We will prioritise these where they have been recommended on an energy survey.

Solar PV and/or battery storage system for solar PV

Solar PV and/or battery storage systems for solar PV where you can show that feasible energy conservation and efficiency measures have already been undertaken or you have a plan to undertake these, (e.g. funded by savings from the solar PV scheme). We will prioritise schemes where a significant proportion of electricity generated will be used on-site (either through daytime use of the building or through battery storage). *Buildings must be open to the whole community, for example village halls. Multi-purpose church halls and Scout and Guide buildings are eligible where clearly advertised as multi-purpose. Applicants should have a freehold or leasehold interest in the hall in place. If there is a lease in place there must be at least 21 years left to run on the lease.

Community car clubs

A local initiative that provides access to self-service, pay as you drive, low-carbon vehicles.

E-cargo bike loan scheme

A community asset that allows local people to 'try before they buy'.

Cycle parking

Reducing the barriers to the uptake of cycling in localities.

Nature

Objectives:

1. Reduced CO2 in the atmosphere, carbon sequestration and/or new or enhanced habitats for wildlife.

2. Additional value (e.g. funding contributions or contributions in kind, e.g. volunteer time/expertise from other sources, collaboration between organisations, and/or evidence of local support).
3. Achieving wider and inclusive community engagement and behaviour change around climate change.

This can include a variety of tree-planting and other nature-based solutions to help combat climate change and increase biodiversity.

Examples:

- Creation of wildlife corridors
- Tree planting
- Community orchard project
- Community allotment project
- Creation or enhancement of a community nature area
- Hedgerow planting and management

Applicants will need to demonstrate how their organisation has the capacity and resources to deliver your project and the plans for its long-term sustainability. Applicants will be encouraged to inform their local community about the project and incorporate ideas where appropriate.

Other Projects

Objectives:

1. Additional value (e.g. funding contributions or contributions in kind, e.g. volunteer time/expertise from other sources, collaboration between organisations, and/or evidence of local support).
2. Achieving wider community engagement and behaviour change around climate change.

This theme is for projects not fitting into our three main themes. Of interest are bold, ambitious and imaginative projects that are able to fulfil the above objectives to a high standard.

Examples:

- Community initiatives and events that promote sustainable lifestyle choices
- Waste reduction projects

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a non-profit organisation based in Herefordshire OR a Herefordshire parish council.

Non-profit organisations could include registered charities, companies limited by guarantee, unincorporated associations or clubs, community interest companies, charitable incorporated

organisations, community benefit societies, social enterprises, established voluntary sector organisations and community shops with an appropriate legal structure (i.e. not profit-making).

Schools can apply for a grant for a project which is accessible to the community and not just for educational purposes.

Applications from informal community groups and local organisations are also encouraged provided they partner with an eligible non-profit organisation as listed above. The lead applicant must be the non-profit organisation and as such will be required to demonstrate an appropriate level of involvement in the project. Commercial businesses are **not** eligible to apply.

Applicants will need to:

- Have a written constitution or mission statement.
- Have an elected committee or representative steering group.
- Have a bank account.
- Be able to provide an up to date copy of their accounts and any relevant protection policies. Parish councils can signpost us to relevant online documentation and do not need to submit hard copies.

All applicants will need to join the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership in order to be eligible for grant funding. The Partnership is free to join and open to all Herefordshire-based individuals and organisations who share the vision of a zero carbon and nature rich county by 2030 and commit to action to help achieve it.

Funding

The Climate and Nature Fund will be funded by Herefordshire Council.

The funding allocation will be notionally split evenly between carbon reduction and nature enhancement projects however the Council reserves the right to reallocate this across the themes based on applications and uptake.

Administration

The scheme will be administered by Herefordshire Council's Delegated Grants Team in consultation with the Project Management Office, Finance and the Sustainability and Climate Change team.

Advice for applicants

The Sustainability and Climate Change team can advise applicants on completing their application.

Grant Applications

Applicants will typically be able to apply for a grant of up to £15,000.

Grants of up to £5,000 will be able to include 100% of the project costs.

Grants of over £5,000 will be expected to demonstrate a level of match funding or in-kind contributions.

Assessment & Decision Making

Project applications will be assessed by a dedicated grant appraisal panel comprising officers from the Sustainability & Climate Change, Built & Natural Environment, Delegated Grants team, Finance team and a representative from the Climate & Nature Partnership Board.

Applications will be reviewed by the Delegated Grants (DG) Team before being circulated to the grant panel for assessment. Panel meetings will be held to discuss the applications and recommend a decision. The Grant Appraisal Form will be used to support the decision making process which is delegated to the interim Director for Economy & Place.

Offers

All terms and conditions of the grant will be included in a grant offer letter.
Applicants that have made an unsuccessful application will be notified in writing.

Monitoring

An end of project report with photographs must be submitted to the Council within three months of project completion.