



CheltenhamZero Business Grant – Application
guidelines
2025/26



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CheltenhamZero Business Grant 2025/26

In 2019, Cheltenham Borough Council ("Council") declared a climate emergency and a commitment to be a carbon neutral council and borough by 2030. This ambitious target cannot be achieved without the support of residents, businesses and other organisations within the Borough.

Following the success of the CheltenhamZero Business Fund 23/24, we are delighted to announce the CheltenhamZero Business Grant 25/26. This grant will support businesses on their carbon reduction journey and add a boost to local SME's seeking to reduce their energy and fuel bills.

The Council intends to release a total of £36,655 for use by SMEs toward capital carbon reduction measures. The grant can be used for the purchase and installation of materials and equipment. Projects which save on fuel/mileage will also be considered.

The Council invites applications for funding to support climate reduction activities across Cheltenham.

The funding will be made available to support initiatives that will result in carbon reductions including energy and fuel savings.

The closing date for the first round of applications is midnight on the **30th September 2025**.

Apply here: [CheltenhamZero Business Fund application form](#).

Who can apply?

Businesses which meet all of the following criteria can apply for a maximum amount of £5,000:

- has a registered premises within the borough of Cheltenham
- is signed up to the [CheltenhamZero Partnership](#)
- has claimed their free [Zellar](#) account (provided free of charge for CheltenhamZero members)
- has measured their building(s) and energy emissions
- has conducted a carbon/energy and/or fuel audit to determine the most advantageous projects for your business.
- [Carbon audit grants available here](#).
- [Modeshift STARS calculator for transport emissions](#).
- has fewer than 500 employees and a turnover of less than €50 million (approximately £42 million).



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How much can be applied for?

Any business may apply for a single award up to a maximum of **£5,000**. Please be aware that there is an available fund of £36,655 in the initial grant pot and the Council will fund those projects offering the highest rate of carbon reduction.

Applications which evidence match funding or part investment will be viewed favourably. Any contributions in-kind and non-cash contributions will also be considered, including staff time etc. Partnerships with energy suppliers are also encouraged.

Implementing projects

The applicant business will be responsible for the project management and delivery of the successful scheme. It is a condition of the application (and will be a condition of the grant) that project works are complete by the end of March 2026. Therefore, the Council will be looking for applications that demonstrate clarity of both planning and delivery of the project, who have identified any permissions required, of which can be approved in time to enable the works to be booked in by the end of December 2025.

What we will fund

Projects must be in support of the [Council's carbon reduction targets](#) and focused on measurement and reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The projects should create a lasting legacy for the business. We will only fund time-limited projects that can be delivered before the end of March 2026.

Applications must be accompanied by evidence that the applicant can secure the necessary permissions to enable the work to be booked in by the end of December 2025 and completed by the end of March 2026. Payment will be released in January 2026 after proof is provided that the works are booked in.

Some examples of projects -

- Initiatives for improved carbon measurement, e.g.:
 - Installation of sub-meters and smart meters
- Energy reduction initiatives, e.g.:
 - Energy efficient lighting and lighting controls
 - Improved heating systems
 - Building controls systems, including building management systems
 - Solar shading, blinds and solar film to reduce heat gain
 - Timers for electrical equipment
 - Draught proofing for doors and windows
 - Insulation for roof spaces, suspended floors, cavity walls and solid walls
 - Installation of renewable energy technology such as solar PV and ASHP
 - Energy efficient / saving equipment



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- Projects resulting in reduced mileage or fuel consumption
For example;
 - Pool bikes or shared vehicles
 - Last mile delivery solutions such as cargo bikes

What we won't fund

- Projects where the carbon reduction cannot be measured.
- Projects solely focused on the production of information materials or awareness raising.
- Political campaigns.
- Projects being delivered outside the boundaries of Cheltenham borough.
- Projects that cannot demonstrate that the necessary permissions will be achieved within the appropriate timescales.
- Projects which can be funded specifically by another funding scheme for example the 'Workplace charging scheme'.

The Assessment Criteria

After the closing date, a small panel including a technical expert, will assess all submitted applications. They will consider the information supplied on the proposals form and assess the following:

- The project's contribution to our carbon reduction targets and the climate emergency agenda
- The project's value for money in terms of its environmental benefits versus the amount of grant requested
- That the project will meet an identifiable need or build on an opportunity
- What will the project achieve
- What the longer-term legacy of this project will be

All licenses and permissions necessary for project delivery should be considered and identified within the application and must be deliverable by December 2025. Successful applicants will be required to evidence that all permissions have been approved.

Applicants must put in place a robust system for collecting, monitoring and assessing the impacts of the project and for reporting and sharing this information, Cheltenham Zero offers a free annual licence to Zellar, for your use.

Where projects involve working with children and young people, we will also ask you about what measures you have in place to safeguard their wellbeing.

Businesses will also need to have current and relevant liability insurance in place before any agreement can be signed and you will be expected to provide copies to prove this. Applicants will be held liable for any damage caused to public property and the Council will not accept any liability for claims of damage, loss or injury resulting from this work.



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How to apply

Can a business make more than one grant application?

Businesses can apply for more than one project if they choose, but no more than one grant will be awarded to any one business.

Making an application

Please complete all pages of the online application form. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Previous grant recipients

Businesses who have previously been awarded a Cheltenham Zero Business Grant **are** eligible to apply, however please note, businesses who have **not** received a grant previously will be prioritised.

Agreements and performance management

The Council and the applicant will enter into a grant agreement detailing the required obligations for both parties including a requirement for inspection and audit to ensure the project is completed in good time.

Grant payments

For successful applicants, grants will be paid in January 2026 subject to the applicant first providing evidence required by the Council, including but not limited to proof that works have been booked in.

The Council reserves the right to reduce, suspend or withhold payments of the grant, or require all or part of the grant to be repaid by the organisation to the Council if satisfactory progress is not made.

CheltenhamZero

Successful Applicants are required to work alongside the Council and Cheltenham Zero to publish case studies of their funded projects. These will be shared publicly online, including on social media.

Other considerations

Please be aware that as this is public money, the funding will be subject to inspection and audit. Any fraudulent activity will be quickly identified and reported to the police.

Any grant funding is subject to Subsidy Control, and the Council will require applicants to provide detail of previous funding received within the last three financial years to assist in its own assessment. If the grant is deemed an unlawful subsidy, the Council shall be entitled to reject a grant application or suspend and terminate a grant agreement.

Completed CheltenhamZero Business Fund applications must be submitted [online](#) no later than midnight on **30th September 2025**.



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