



Green Business Grants Scheme
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Guidance Notes
January 2026



PLEASE READ THESE GUIDANCE NOTES BEFORE COMMENCING THE APPLICATION FORM. AN INCOMPLETE SUBMISSION WILL CAUSE UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN DECIDING YOUR APPLICATION.

1. Introduction

The purpose of these guidance notes is to help you through the application process – from the initial contact stage with the Council, your submission of the application, completion of the works and to the final payment of the grant.

This scheme is part-funded through the Business Rates Pool (Shared Growth Fund) Programme, which aims to support economic growth in the Borough.

2. What is the scheme?

This scheme is for capital projects for businesses based in the Tonbridge and Malling area that are looking to reduce their carbon footprint.

This grant scheme is a key initiative supporting our economic development and climate change strategies.

3. Who can apply?

All independent businesses based in the Tonbridge and Malling borough that operate from commercial premises.

The Council has decided that the following sectors will be given priority and will receive preference if the scheme is oversubscribed. These are:

- Food production
- Tourism and hospitality
- Distribution and logistics
- Construction
- Independent retail

General Information

Please note that all grants are discretionary and subject to the availability of funds. Once all the funding has been allocated, this programme will close. The inclusion of a business/building within an eligible area does not give any automatic entitlement to a grant.

The scheme will not support any works that have already been undertaken or any works which are started prior to a formal offer of grant funding being made and accepted.

Multinational businesses, national chains or franchises will not be eligible to apply, nor will business that have more than five properties irrespective of locations.

If you are unsure of whether your business is eligible to apply for a grant, please contact economic.regeneration@tmbc.gov.uk

4. How much is the grant for?

The Green Business Grant is a one-off capital grant specifically aimed at supporting the proposals set out by the applicant.

Local independent businesses can apply for a grant towards projects on their site which increase energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of their premises. The grant covers 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum grant contribution of **£5,000**.

The contribution provided through this scheme will always be 'up to 50%' (with the maximum individual grant being £5,000). Whilst the administrators of the scheme will seek to offer a 50% contribution to most agreed proposals, there may be occasions where this is not possible. For example, if the proposal exceeds £12,500, or if the remaining funds left in the scheme do not stretch sufficiently to offer 50%.

If a business is VAT registered, the Green Business Grant will not include VAT when calculating the grant offer. For example, if a proposal is agreed for £4,000 + VAT (total £4,800), the grant would be a maximum of £2,000 not £2,400.

5. Excluded businesses

The following businesses **will not be eligible** for the Green Business Grant:

- Businesses that are **not** based in Tonbridge and Malling Borough. To check which local authority your business is based in, go to <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-Council>
- Businesses that have started or entered any form of administration or insolvency process (including CVA/CVL)
- Multinational businesses, national chains or franchises, and business that have more than five properties irrespective of locations
- Businesses that have already received Public Subsidiary Grant payments that equal the maximum permitted subsidy allowances
- Businesses that do not operate from commercial premises

6. How do I apply?

To apply for the scheme, make sure that you have read the guidance notes and, where required, contacted Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in the first instance for any additional information or support.

Having gathered the required information, you will then need to apply online at www.tmbc.gov.uk/forms/green-business-grants-scheme ahead of the specified deadline.

7. What do I have to supply with my application?

To consider your proposal, the following is required:

1. Complete the online application form – this contains basic information about your proposals together with confirmation of any public subsidiary received over the last three years. An example application form is provided on the Green Business Grant webpage to help you prepare
2. Latest bank statement
3. Evidence that you have sourced **at least three quotes** from contractors. You should state which contractor is preferred and why
4. Include cost estimates including quotes and professional fees
5. The following information must be obtained in any quote:
 - A cost breakdown of each individual element of the scheme
 - Total price of the whole scheme for the purpose of grant calculation and monitoring. Remember to also include project support costs and VAT as separate items in addition to any ineligible works
 - A programme of works from the contractor

Please note that any grant offer is usually based on the lowest quotation received.

8. Planning and other permissions

If an applicant intends to carry out works that change the exterior of buildings it is likely that planning permission will be required, and there are additional requirements for Listed Buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas.

If an applicant is unsure as to whether their proposal would require planning approval, then they are strongly advised to contact the Planning Department

planning.applications@tmbc.gov.uk. More information can also be found at

<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/planning-applications-appeals/planning-pre-application-advice>

Whilst very minor works often do not require the submission of a planning application, Building Regulations approval will need to be obtained if any of the proposed changes are structural or involve moving or altering entrances. Further information can be found at

<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/planning/find-building-control>

Where an applicant requires planning or building regulations approval to deliver their proposal, but has not yet secured it, any award from this scheme will be subject to securing the necessary permissions. In summary, no grant funding will be paid out until all necessary permissions have been obtained and the required proof provided.

As part of the application process, applicants will initially be required to comment on their permission requirements and, subsequently, will need to provide proof that all permissions have been received prior to the grant payment being made.

For further information, please visit <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/planning-applications-appeals/apply-planning-permission>

9. How long does it take to decide on my application?

We aim to decide on your application within four weeks after the application deadline has passed, providing that the submission has been fully completed and all additional information provided.

If planning approval is required and has not been granted by the time a decision on your grant application is made, then any offer will be conditional on securing the required permissions.

If your application is submitted without all the necessary information, then this delays the process and may result in the applicant not receiving an award.

10. Who decides whether my application is approved?

The grant scheme is administered by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

Applications are initially checked by a panel made up of Council officers - from planning, building control, licencing, environmental health, business rates and counter fraud teams.

Once checked, the applications are then scored independently by Economic Regeneration and Climate Change Officers. These then form the recommendations to the Council's Member Decision Panel.

11. What conditions apply to the grant?

All grant offers are made in writing setting out conditions, including a timeframe of a **maximum of nine months** from the date of the grant offer letter to deliver the project. Full details of the conditions that apply to the grant are set out in the grant offer letter.

All grants are conditional on securing appropriate planning consent where required. The scheme operates independently of the planning process and as such, securing planning permission does not imply in any way that a grant application will be approved or vice versa.

12. When is the grant paid?

Grant contribution payments are made retrospectively and on production of:

- Receipted invoices from contractors showing a detailed breakdown of costs
- Pictures of the finished project
- Satisfactory proof that, where required, planning and any other permissions have been obtained
- Completion of all works

In exceptional circumstances, the Council will consider providing stage payments to help with cash flow.

The application process

1. Where required, in the first instance contact Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council with any questions or for areas that require clarification in connection with the project idea and with completing the application form.
2. Fully complete the application form online and submit for consideration ahead of the deadline www.tmbc.gov.uk/forms/green-business-grants-scheme
3. Once the scheme has closed to applications, the individual submissions are considered by the panel (in accordance with Section 10) and a decision made.
4. If approved, a formal Grant Offer Letter is issued giving the applicant 9 months to complete their project (if planning permission is required but not yet secured, the grant offer will be conditional on achieving the required permission).
5. If declined, the applicant will receive feedback explaining the decision of the panel.
6. As stated in Section 8, advice should be sought from the Planning Department if you are uncertain as to whether permission is required. This can be done through the submission of a Lawful Development Certificate proposal. Please note, this service is subject to a fee.
7. If permission is required, prepare the planning/other permissions application(s) (including appropriate plans, application forms and relevant fees) and submit to the relevant Planning Dept. (Please note, there is a duration of at least 8 weeks for determining the planning application).
8. Before work starts on site, please advise us of the planned commencement date.
9. Work starts on site.
10. Works complete.
11. Submit evidence of completion, including photographs, receipted invoices, and confirmation of permissions together with bank details.
12. Checks are made by the Council to verify the works have been completed and that the documentation provided is correct and in order.
13. Council Officer approves the works.
14. Grant paid retrospectively (unless stage payments have been agreed).
15. Post-completion visit to view the project, discuss outcomes and gain feedback on the scheme.

Summary of Scheme

Business	Notes
Eligible sectors	All business sectors are eligible: preference given to the following in event of oversubscription: Food Production, Tourism and Hospitality, Distribution and Logistics, Construction, Independent Retail
Types of eligible businesses	All businesses that trade from commercial premises
Location	Tonbridge and Malling Borough
Tenure	Commercial building owners or tenants with a minimum of 2 years remaining on their lease
Eligible works	Those that reduce the carbon footprint of commercial premises
Grant value	50% of Eligible Costs, up to a maximum of £5,000
Quotes	A minimum of three quotes needed to demonstrate value for money
Planning permissions	Commentary whether planning permissions are necessary for your works will be required before your application can be considered. Upon approval of the grant request the applicant will obtain formal Permission(s) as required
Timeframe to deliver project	If an applicant is successful in accessing a grant, they will have a maximum of 9 months (from the date of the Grant Offer Letter) in which to deliver their project
Payments	Will be made retrospectively on receipt of paid invoices, proof that any necessary permissions have been obtained and photographic evidence that the works have completed. In exceptional circumstances, the Borough/ District Council will consider stage payments

Terms and Conditions

Businesses/organisations accepting grant offers from this scheme are required to abide by and agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. The approval or refusal of a grant is at the absolute discretion of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council ('the Council') and there will be no right to an appeal process.
2. Grants will not be given for expenditure incurred prior to the grant offer being made and the Grant Offer Letter signed.
3. The grant is not payable to an un-discharged bankrupt.
4. The grant must be used for the purpose intended as outlined in the Grant Offer Letter (this will be supported by producing original invoices for the grant claim).
5. In the case of tenants, payment of the grant requires the building owner's approval and providing proof of a minimum of a two-year lease for the building.
6. If the business/organisation ceases trading/operating within two years of the payment of the grant or the building is sold, the applicant must notify the Council within 14 days and in such circumstances the Council may require the applicant(s) to repay, in whole or part of, the grant paid.
7. The grant must not be used for improvements to residential property, external security features, CCTV systems, recoverable VAT or measures that do not lead to carbon reduction or improve energy efficiency.
8. If the applicant is registered for VAT this must be declared on the application form. If at any point the business/organisation becomes VAT registered, the applicant must inform the Council and discuss repayment of VAT expenses claimed.
- 9. The grant will only be paid to proposals which, where required, have been granted all relevant permissions (e.g., Planning/Advertising etc.).** Nothing in the agreement or negotiation of the grant will affect the Council's decision over planning permission. Failure to provide satisfactory proof will result in a delay in payment being made and could result in grant forfeiture.
10. All works are to be undertaken strictly in accordance with the specification and schedule of works agreed with the Council.

11. The Council's written approval must be obtained in advance of any amendments to the approved specification and schedule of works. Amendments include the omission or variation of the agreed works and the execution of additional works. Failure to comply with this condition may invalidate the grant offer even if the additional work is not grant aided.
12. Representatives of the Council must be allowed access to the property to carry out interim inspections of the works in progress, by appointment at any reasonable time.
13. There is no obligation on the Council to increase the grant if the costs of works increase, or if any additional work is undertaken.
14. A proportional reduction will be made in the grant if the actual cost of the eligible work proves to be less than estimated. Payment will be made in arrears upon the production of the grant claim form along with supporting documentation (e.g., paid invoices) subject to the percentage criteria.
15. The applicant must inform the Council of any changes to the business/organisation or changes of business address and/or telephone number.
16. The grant is made on the condition that the property will be maintained to a satisfactory standard for a minimum of two years.
17. Any grant must be taken up within the period stated in the Grant Offer Letter or the offer will lapse.
18. Payments of grants to successful applicants will be made in arrears, in one sum on the receipt by the Council of evidence that the applicant has incurred the expenditure. A supporting statement should show how the expenditure relates to the individual items in the approved schedule of works together with all relevant supporting evidence.
19. Expenditure must be incurred using a debit/credit card/cheque or direct bank payment and evidenced through a bank statement. Payments of grants will not be made towards expenditure incurred using the payment method of cash.
20. The Council reserves the right to publish illustrations, photographs or other details of your project in promotional literature and other documents associated with Council grant schemes.
21. Applicants will need to sign the contract within 21 days from the date offered otherwise the offer will be withdrawn.

22. If the applicant undertakes any work that, in the opinion of the Council, significantly alters or removes any elements of the grant aided work, the Council shall have the right to recover such proportion of the grant as it sees fit. This condition shall apply for a period of five years starting on the day on which the final grant payment is made.

23. Under s58(4) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, if any grant condition is contravened or not complied with, the Council reserves the right to recover the grant, or such part of it as the Council sees fit.