

Lewisham Community Energy Fund 2025/2026



Guidance for applicants

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October 2025



Contents

1	Overview	1
2	Programme details	1
	Priorities	
3	What the fund will cover	2
	Stream A - Feasibility and business case development	
	Stream B - Capital support/Project implementation	
	Stream C -Training, events and engagement grants	
4	Eligibility	3
5	Assessing applications	4
	What we are looking for in projects	
	Selection criteria	
6	Funding terms	5
7	Application requirements	6
8	Timetable for funding	6
	Appendix A: Terms and conditions	7/8



Community Energy Fund Guidance

1. Overview

Lewisham's Community Energy Fund is a key part of the Council's commitment to climate action. The Fund supports local initiatives that contribute to decarbonising the borough and help communities become more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate and aims to encourage innovative, community-led solutions that address a wide range of environmental challenges—from energy efficiency and renewable technologies to sustainable transport and climate adaptation measures.

A future with affordable clean energy can only be achieved with all parts of society working together and community energy initiatives will be a vital part of achieving that ambition. Lewisham's Community Energy Fund is intended to encourage new local opportunities for community energy projects and to help build capacity across local community and voluntary groups in delivering carbon reduction and fuel poverty projects.

This guidance sets out the funding available through the third round of Lewisham's Community Energy Fund and explains how local groups can apply.

2. Programme details

The Fund aims to support the community in overcoming challenges associated with implementing carbon reduction projects in the borough.

The objectives are to:

- Support delivery of renewable energy projects that deliver community benefits.
- Find new ways to support vulnerable residents at risk of fuel poverty and a just transition to a low carbon Lewisham.
- Build capacity and knowledge across community and voluntary groups to engage in climate and energy initiatives.
- Provide funding and inspiration that can leverage wider funding and resources into the delivery of local community energy projects across the Borough.

The Lewisham Decarbonisation Fund has three streams of funding:

- Stream A – Feasibility and business case development. Capped at £10,000 with the application value reflecting the stage of project development.
- Stream B – Capital Projects – Capped at £25,000 up to 1/3 of the total project value.
- Stream C - Training, Engagement, Events & Capacity Building – Capped at £5,000.

Priorities

When considering applications, the Fund will prioritise:

- Collective action to reduce Carbon and generate energy.
- Community-led development and delivery of carbon reduction projects which provide direct benefit to the local community.
- Increasing community awareness and action on energy efficiency.
- Projects which focus on households affected by fuel poverty, for example: older people, low-income families, disabled people or those with long term health conditions.
- New approaches that will provide additionality in terms of outcomes for the borough.
- Activity that fits within and complements existing work in the borough.
- Projects with the potential to be scalable and to bring in wider funding into Lewisham.

3. What the fund will cover

Projects are expected to reduce carbon emissions. This can be through generating renewable energy, reducing consumption of energy through retrofitting activities or encouraging energy saving activity by others.

Stream A – Feasibility and business case development grants of up to £10,000 per project supported.

This funding will support a range of works associated with developing a project to the point where it is ready for implementation. This could include:

- Technical feasibility assessment (for example structural surveys, assessing the feasibility of grid connection).
- Stakeholder consultation.
- Assessment of planning issues.
- Getting permissions from the site landowner.
- Support to complete applications for permits, licences and consent.
- Financial viability or business case assessments.
- Legal advice.

The funding can be used to provide initial assessments of the potential a building might have for carbon saving measures. These 'pre-feasibility' assessments are not expected to exceed more than £5,000 grant funding. More detailed technical studies for specific interventions are able to seek up to £10,000.

Stream B - Project implementation and delivery grants of up to a third of the capital value of the project, capped at £25,000 per project supported.

This funding will support a range of works associated with implementing projects, capped at a maximum of £25,000 or up to one-third of the total cost, whichever amount is the smaller.

This could include:

- Capital costs (to support the cost of a renewable installation or deep retrofit).
- Core costs (e.g. staff, office costs).
- Project costs (e.g. venue hire, project worker).

- Project management costs.

Stream C - Training, Engagement, Events & Capacity Building grants of up to £5,000 per project supported.

This can be used by community energy groups to provide training; and engage and partner with new community groups. It can also be used to work with residents and other local stakeholders to support community-led climate action.

Innovation

The Council recognises that there may be ideas for reshaping local energy systems that go beyond the funding streams above. This call for community energy projects is also an opportunity to identify wider opportunities for partnership and collaboration that could support the wider objectives of the Fund. The application form includes an open section at the end designed as an opportunity to harness the creativity, skills and experience that exists across the borough in seeking community-led ideas on community energy whether through new technologies, business models, or social innovations.

Pressures on Council funding mean there is no defined budget allocated for this strand, but we are looking to explore opportunities to work in partnership that would aim to access funding from external sources.

Focus areas: innovation on local energy generation, energy efficiency, community-based energy and climate action.

4. Eligibility

The Fund is targeted at small organisations with charitable aims operating in Lewisham. You do not have to be an energy or environmental group to apply. If you are a smaller organisation that may not have the capacity to deliver your project proposal, you can partner with an organisation independent of the council that does have the capacity to receive a grant.

Individuals are not eligible.

The following groups are eligible to apply:

- Community and Voluntary Groups
- Co-operatives
- Company Ltd by Guarantee
- Registered charities
- Faith and Equalities Groups
- Social Enterprises
- Schools
- Community interest companies
- Community benefit societies
- Tenants' and residents' associations, or tenant management organisations
- Other / constituted
- Other / un-constituted

All projects must benefit the local community in some form and have the London Borough of Lewisham as its primary focus. If equipment or retrofit measures are to be installed as part of the project, then the property / land where measures will be installed must be located within the London Borough of Lewisham. All applications should consider equal opportunities of access to the project.

Applications are welcomed which show your organisation is working collaboratively with, and involving, other local groups. However, you must nominate a single lead organisation to submit the grant application.

Individual personal bank accounts **will not** be accepted for receipt of money. For organisations that have been set up within the last 12 months and do not have a Constitution/ Terms of Reference or bank account the organisation can either:

- Make an arrangement with either a charity commission registered organisation that has been in existence for **12 months plus** to act as a bank to 'hold' and manage the funds or
- Use an online service like 'Accountable', which acts like a bank and holds money on behalf of your group. Accountable is run by the Social Change Agency CIC and is designed specifically to help community groups who don't have a bank account. Your group can simply and transparently manage your money using their online platform.

<https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/supplier/accountable-money-management/>

Successful applicants will be required to complete a formal agreement as part of the grant conditions.

We are not able to fund:

- Individuals – if you are an individual with an idea you could link up with a local organisation (contact us if you would like help with this).
- Activities that promote political views or religious beliefs.
- Commercial or business-related activities.
- Spending that has already taken place.
- Projects already funded by other sources or services we provide.

5. Assessing applications

An evaluation panel will assess the applications received. The evaluation panel will include employees of Lewisham Council. Provisional recommendations will be forwarded to the Executive Director for Place who will make the final decision on successful applications.

What we are looking for in projects

The number of projects which receive support will depend on the number and quality of applications received. Projects will be assessed based on the information provided by applicants in the application form.

Funding should support as many projects as possible. Applications which outline additional funding sources (public or private) to complement the Lewisham Community Energy Fund will be looked upon favourably. Please refer to the below resources that outline successful community energy projects and case studies:

- The Greater London Authority past [projects](#).
- Community Energy London [case studies](#)

Proposed projects should:

- Set out a clear timetable for delivery and demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity to complete the work by the proposed timetable.
- Propose efficient use of funding, such as leveraging other funding sources, joint procurement opportunities, partnerships, and working with others to maximise impact through knowledge sharing.

- Demonstrate the additional benefits the proposed project will bring to the Lewisham community.
- Capital projects should include a clear KPIs and milestones.

Selection criteria

Applications will be based on the following selection criteria:

Category	Criteria	Questions
Planning a successful project	Research	What degree of work has already been undertaken to help establish the viability of the proposal and how it fits with existing work in the borough?
	Project plan	To what extent is there a clear project plan in place supported by a timetable of milestones to develop the project? Have risks been identified and are they manageable?
	Community Support	To what extent is existing community support demonstrated? (Is their matched funding, partnership organisations etc)
	Project budget	Is the proposed budget and the associated costs reasonable? Have quotes been sought and provided? Are there any sources of external funding? Are there sufficient resources in place to deliver the project?
Empowering people	Empowered and responsible	Is the community actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities?
	Local support	Has the project obtained support amongst a variety of local community groups and other interest groups?
Impact of Intervention	Impact on the community	What is the anticipated impact on the community?
	Vulnerable community	To what extent will vulnerable communities be impacted by the intervention? Will this include fuel poor households? What are the estimated bill savings?
	Carbon emissions	What is the anticipated energy and carbon emissions savings from the intervention?
Applicant Experience	Relationship with the local community	What experience do the applicants have working with the local community of the proposed project?
	Developing energy projects	What experience does the applicant have delivering community energy projects? Please provide details of any previous installations.
	Working in partnership	To what extent has the applicant investigated opportunities for working jointly with key stakeholders, including local authorities and sector experts?

6. Funding terms

Any award(s) of funding will be made subject to the acceptance of Lewisham's standard funding terms, set out in Appendix A. The terms are non-negotiable and attempts to, and proposals for, changes will result in the application being rejected.

Funding is expected to be paid 50% on signature of the funding agreement and 50% on completion of milestones, but it is recognised that in some cases this may vary. The application should identify where this is needed.

7. Application requirement

Applications for funding should be submitted through the Community Energy application form. All applications need to demonstrate clear benefit to the local community and have a clear set of measurable objectives. Project descriptions are to be informative but concise with all supporting information included within the relevant section(s) of the application.

Applications must be received by Lewisham Council by the dates below.

8. Timetable for funding

The timetable for applications and grant funding agreements is set out in the table below. Funding is available for financial year 2025/26 and 2026/27. Applications will need to confirm the start date and end date and key milestones.

Lewisham Decarbonisation Fund opens for applications	Phase 1: Monday, 6 October 2025 *Phase 2: Monday, 12 January 2026
Deadline for submissions	Phase 1: Monday, 8 December 2025 *Phase 2: Monday, 16 February 2026
Successful applicants informed. Feedback to unsuccessful applicants	Phase 1: March 2026 *Phase 2: April 2026
Deadline for project delivery	As outlined in grant agreement

***Note: Phase 2 will only open if sufficient funding remains available**

9. Important information for applicants

Funded organisations must ensure that:

1. A bank account is in operation into which payment can be made please note we will not pay into individual bank accounts. See notes on Eligibility above if you are a group without a bank account.
2. All legal and insurance liabilities associated with the project are fulfilled.
3. Appropriate safeguarding measures are implemented such as DBS checks.
4. A completed monitoring form with appropriate information is provided at the end of the project. Failure to provide this will result in the organisation being ineligible for future funding.
5. All financial evidence, including receipts, is kept for at least two years after submission of monitoring information.

If you have any concerns or questions about the above requirements or anything else related to this application form please contact:

Name: Andrew Karune
Email: Andrew.karune@lewisham.gov.uk
Tel: 020 8314 3306

Appendix A: Terms and Conditions

Applicants will be expected to agree to the following standard terms and conditions when submitting an application to the Lewisham Decarbonisation Fund.

1. The grant will only be spent on the purpose detailed in the application unless otherwise agreed in advance by the Council in writing.
2. On confirmation of the award you will receive an email confirming the final award amount, notification if supplementary documents are required and a bank form for immediate completion. Payment will only be made once this and any required supplementary documents are returned.
3. In exceptional circumstances, the grant can be withdrawn or withheld at the Council's discretion.
4. Any part of the grant that is not required for the purpose approved must be refunded to the Council.
5. Repayment of the grant can be required at the sole discretion of the Council if:
 - The Council finds that any false information has been supplied to the Council;
 - the work undertaken is not the work for which the grant was approved (if the Council has not been informed of, and approved, these changes in accordance with point 1);
 - the grant has not been spent within one year unless otherwise agreed by the Council;
 - your organisation becomes insolvent or goes into administration, receivership or liquidation, and the grant has not already been spent on its intended purpose, or;
 - there is any other breach of any of the conditions in this form.
6. The grant is made on a 'one-off' basis and does not carry any commitment to future funding.
7. The grant cannot be made as "match" funding against any other Lewisham Council funded initiatives.
8. The project shall be required to return a completed monitoring form and financial breakdown of how the grant was used no later than 3 months after the end date of the project. Failure to do so will render the Project ineligible for future grants. A template monitoring form will be forwarded to successful applications as part of the confirmation process.
9. The grant shall be specifically acknowledged within your annual accounts for the year in which it was received.
10. The grant and Lewisham Council will be acknowledged in all printed materials that the organisation produces about your project, and acknowledged appropriately elsewhere.
11. The Council may use your name in any publicity material.
12. The Project shall comply with any legal obligations that may be relevant in order to carry out the scheme, such as planning, licensing, employment, health and safety, insurance and equal opportunities legislation.
13. Receiving a grant from Lewisham Council does not constitute the grant of planning permission, or any other permission, and in no way prejudices future decisions of Lewisham Council or the Local Planning Authority. You must obtain all relevant permissions.
14. Lewisham Council reserves the right to share the information you have provided with relevant parties (e.g. Charity Commission) where appropriate.
15. Any Value Added Tax (VAT) payable by your organisation is your responsibility and Lewisham Council shall not be obliged to pay any additional amount.
16. Lewisham Council requires all organisations signing for an award to hold the following documentation. By signing this form you hold the relevant documents for the project the Council are pledging against, and your organisation agrees to provide these to Lewisham Council if it is deemed necessary.

Required documents:

- Organisation's constitution or governing document.
- Equalities and Diversity policy and procedures.
- Public liability insurance.

Project specific documents:

- Health & safety policy.
- Volunteers' policy.
- Child protection and vulnerable adults safeguarding policy.
- Statement evidencing that all staff & practitioners are DBS checked to the required standards for the project being undertaken.
- Risk Assessment.