

Greener Schools pilot fund

Guidance for funding applicants

Key information

Publication type: General

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1. About the pilot programme

The Mayor wants to help schools in London reach net zero as part of his ambition to make London a net-zero carbon city by 2030.

The [Greener Schools](#) pilot programme provides capital grants up to £500,000 for London boroughs and their schools to trial net zero interventions, such as installing solar panels, heat pumps and retrofitting buildings.

This new funding builds on previous and existing Greater London Authority (GLA) funding schemes to help schools and communities deliver climate action and healthier environments. Including programmes such as Climate Kick-Start Prize, Climate Resilient Schools, Future Neighborhoods 2030, Grow Back Greener Fund, Green Finance Fund, Healthy Schools London, London Community Energy Fund, School Air Filter Project, School Superzones, Trees for London and Zero Carbon Accelerator.

The pilot aims to identify scalable approaches to net zero initiatives in schools. It emphasises engaging young Londoners through education initiatives and providing students with opportunities to engage in the design, promotion and evaluation of net zero interventions.

Programme outcomes

This Greener Schools pilot scheme will:

- Identify scalable, repeatable approaches to school decarbonisation, through engagement with students, local authorities, communities and technical partners.
- Demonstrate what interventions can generate financial savings for schools, which can be reinvested in their education mission.
- Identify a pipeline of projects and solutions that could be rolled out with additional funding and financing.
- Generate a pipeline of activity and jobs for Londoners and London based SMEs.

As well as these objectives, with additional funding, the programme could achieve these outcomes in following years:

- To reduce London's emissions from the non-domestic sector and accelerate progress towards the Mayor's Net Zero 2030 target.
- To create a blueprint for the decarbonisation of London schools – including appropriate business models – that can be replicated at scale across London and in the UK, informing the design of future national government schemes.
- To deliver environmental, financial and educational benefits for schools, through improving learning environments, reducing schools' carbon footprints and cutting energy bills.
- To lead by example, with schools acting as catalysts for change and for inspiring future generations to take action to tackle the climate crisis.

2. Who can apply for funding

Maintained schools are eligible for this first round of funding.

London boroughs will lead on selecting local schools to take part in the Greener Schools pilot grant scheme. Partnerships between boroughs and local organisations such as community groups and third sector organisations are strongly encouraged.

Boroughs (local authorities) must submit one application on behalf of all the schools they select.

This means you cannot apply to the fund as a:

- individual school not working with your local authority
- non-borough maintained school
- local authority not based in London.

3. How much you can apply for

Up to £2 million in capital grants is available to support net zero interventions.

Local authorities can apply for up to £500,000, with a limit of £100,000 per school.

Applicants are also expected to show how they are strategically leveraging other available funding to roll out these net zero interventions and broader climate measures in schools. [See assessment criteria for more details.](#)

4. What this pilot will fund

We want to support innovative and integrated approaches to decarbonising schools, including measures such as:

- solar PV
- ground, water or air source heat pumps
- building fabric retrofit, for example roof, walls, window and floor insulation
- battery storage
- energy systems controls and management
- secondary heating sources, including water and sewage, solar thermal and more
- LED lighting
- connections to heat networks.

Other decarbonisation interventions may also qualify for funding. To check whether a particular intervention is eligible, email greenerschools@london.gov.uk.

Proposed net zero interventions will need to show financial savings for the schools.

5. Assessment criteria

All applications will be scored by assessors from the GLA. We'll use a range of criteria to assess applications. This will ensure projects selected cover many different ways to deliver net zero interventions in schools. This will then help to inform future programme phases by identifying approaches with higher impact and potential for scaling up.

Essential criteria

- **Project readiness:** projects have completed feasibility studies and are ready to move onto implementation or installation.
- **Financial savings:** projects show they save money for the schools, such as lowering school energy bills.
- **Carbon savings:** we'll prioritise projects that reduce carbon emissions.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion:** we'll prioritise schools where students face higher disadvantages – for example, more of their students are eligible for free school meals, Special Needs Education settings and Pupil Referral Units.
- **Outreach and engagement:** projects show established relationship with school community and capacity to mobilise students, teachers and parents quickly throughout the programme.
- **Level of co-funding and timeline for securing it:** we will assess applicants co-funding plans. This includes in-kind support, other government funding streams, community or private sector investment or

grants, carbon offset funding and other grants.

Desirable criteria

- **Contribution to new renewable energy capacity in London (where appropriate):** this pilot's key aim is to support uptake of new renewable energy generation capacity in schools. But we'll also support schools that have already delivered on-site renewable energy generation projects and are ready to implement further decarbonisation measures, such as heat pumps.
- **Partnerships with community groups:** applicants should include on how they will engage with community groups, for instance community energy groups, in the delivery of their net zero school interventions. You can find more information on which community energy groups are active in your area on [Community Energy London](#).
- **Holistic approach to decarbonisation and data driven approaches to net zero delivery:** this programme aims to ensure net-zero interventions are designed holistically to maximise financial and carbon savings. Applicants are encouraged to include information on their schools decarbonisation plans and to integrate multiple decarbonisation interventions into their projects.
- **Integration of other climate interventions:** applicants should include how net-zero interventions are included in broader school climate action plans and linked to other climate interventions – for example, covering adaptation measures such as resilience and air quality.
- **Exposure to climate risk** – we will assess the proposed schools' vulnerability to climate impacts like flooding or heatwaves, and prioritise schools that are in areas of higher climate risk. This assessment will be performed using the 'Overall Risk' indicator from the [GLA's Climate Risk Map](#).

We expect to make final funding decisions on all applications within 4 weeks of the application form being submitted. During the assessment process, we may contact you to clarify points in your application, or to ask for more information.

The funding panel will prioritise those applications that most closely meet the assessment criteria. They will also consider the types of projects to ensure representation of a diverse pool of school building types and support a balanced Greener Schools pilot scheme.

Any funding offer will be made subject to you accepting a Funding Agreement, which must be signed before procurement can start.

6. Key dates

Applications for the pilot fund closed on 12 January 2025.

We aim to assess all applications within a month of submission to award grant funding and start projects as soon as possible.

If your bid is successful, funded projects should be completed by 31 December 2025.

7. How to apply

Applications are now closed.

The application form is used the completed form to assess project suitability for GLA support.

You must enter all costs without VAT. We've asked for the total project cost to understand what level of co-funding will be provided.

Supporting documents

You should also provide the following documents alongside your application:

- Feasibility studies, where relevant.
- Schools decarbonisation plans and/or climate action plans, where relevant.
- Any other documentation providing additional background on existing borough-level climate action or net zero strategies and school support schemes – for example, evaluation report or prospectus about borough-led programme(s) supporting climate action in schools.
- A short, signed letter of support from the project sponsor, such as a director-level officer or staff member responsible for approving this bid. This letter should confirm that support is in place from the councillor with the relevant portfolio.

8. Contact us

We are happy to answer questions about the application process, your project, eligible support and more. Get in touch with us by emailing greenerschools@london.gov.uk

9. Support for successful grantees

Successful applicants will be expected to lead engagement with schools. They will also benefit from extra support for public engagement and monitoring and evaluation activities from the Greener Schools strategic partner (to be appointed) and the GLA (Greener Schools team).

Successful applicants will also be able to mobilise other GLA support schemes where appropriate – for example, [Zero Carbon Accelerator](#), RE:FIT framework and more.

10. Funding terms

Funding allocation

We expect high demand for this funding and the GLA may not be able to fund all good projects that meet the criteria in this pilot.

To ensure that we're funding a diverse range of school buildings and approaches to delivering net zero in schools, as well as a balanced programme across London, it may be necessary to reduce some requests for funding.

This may mean that we decide to fund your project but might exclude one or more of the schools you have proposed in your funding bid. We'll be clear when we notify you of our decision which parts of your application we are supporting.

Eligible costs

Only capital costs (excluding VAT) are eligible for funding. This includes the cost of:

- installations – such as solar PV or heat pumps
- school buildings improvement – such as retrofit measures, smart energy systems, LED lighting.

All costs should show value for money and deliver the aims and objectives of the pilot.

Ineligible costs

The grant will not cover costs (revenue expenditures) related to management of the net zero interventions, public engagement activities, or monitoring and evaluation.

This includes:

- any procurement costs incurred by beneficiary
- time and expenses incurred by the recipient to deliver the project. The recipient must account for and demonstrate capacity and capability is in place, such as a project sponsor and manager
- public engagement activities to support the delivery of the project
- monitoring and evaluation of the project
- project work that has already been completed and/or awarded full funding from other sources
- VAT costs – the provision of the funding amounts to a conditional gift and is therefore not subject to VAT.

Payment

Funding offers will be made subject to successful applicants or funded recipients accepting and signing a Funding Agreement.

Up to 40 per cent of funding shall be provided upfront. The remainder will be provided once the projects have been completed.

You must provide the following documents for an upfront payment:

- evidence that the procurement process has been completed
- confirmation of delivery timetable for each recipient school.

The GLA will pay the net amount of the beneficiary invoices, not including VAT, according to the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement.

Data protection, freedom of information and transparency

You must ensure you meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and our [data protection policy](#).

As a public authority, we are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. That means unless a relevant exemption applies, we will release any information we hold about this programme to those requesting it.

We are committed to openness and transparency openness and transparency at City Hall. That means we will publish a range of information held by us relating to this programme.

This includes grant agreements, targets, performance and spending information and other data. Successful bidders should meet this commitment too, by making available information to us so we can publish it and respond to specific requests.

11. Other formats and languages

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please [contact us](#) at the address below:

Greater London Authority

City Hall

The Queen's Walk More London

London

SE1 2AA

Telephone **020 7983 4000**

You will need to supply your name, your postal address and state the format and title of the publication you require.

If you would like a summary of this document in your language, please call us or write to the address above.

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