



RENEWABLE ENERGY FUND CRITERIA

Annual community benefit payments are currently received from the following windfarms: - Whitelee, Whitelee Extensions, Harehill Extensions, Galawhistle and Afton.

Communities in the East Ayrshire area are eligible for REF support. The availability of funds will vary depending on project location. Please refer to the **Settlement Eligibility Summary** for further advice on the availability of funds in your local area.

Eligible Applicants

The following groups are eligible to apply for REF funds:

- **Properly constituted Voluntary and Community Organisations** including Community Councils, Community Led Action Plan steering groups, trusts and organisations with charitable status where the project can demonstrate wider community benefit.
- **Social Economy or Social Enterprise projects** where the project may be a Company Limited by Guarantee and/or have Charitable Status. Profits made by the project should be reinvested in the project to create wider grassroots community benefit.
- **Local Authority and other Agencies** where the proposal is community based, is new and does not represent a substitution of core business activities. These type of projects must evidence significant community support and provide cross settlement community benefit.

Note: The Renewable Energy Fund will not be used to benefit specific individuals or businesses or to promote any political purpose.

Available Levels of Support

Applicants to the Renewable Energy Fund will require to demonstrate that they have also applied for project funding from other sources to support their project. For larger capital projects, applicants should try to source around 50% external funding to support their application to the Renewable Energy Fund.

The Renewable Energy Fund will not routinely provide 100% grant funding to any project although the Grants Committee does have discretion to consider a higher intervention rate for appropriate projects in exceptional circumstances, for example projects which are of strategic importance and where there is evidence that match funding from other sources has been unsuccessful or a valid reason why it has not been sought.

Note: Applications seeking less than £1,000 of support are not eligible for support from this fund.

Eligible Projects

The following types of project are eligible to be considered for funding through the Renewable Energy Fund. **However it should be noted that as projects should provide a lasting community legacy, REF's main focus will be to support capital projects.**

- **Community Renewable Energy Projects:** For example, community recycling centres, insulation projects, installation of wind turbines/solar panels/bio fuels for community owned facilities.
- **Environmental Projects:** For example, woodland planting and maintenance, town/village streetscape projects, community allotments, community gardens, environmental art projects, environmental education projects, landscape schemes, cycle tracks, paths networks.
- **Environmental Education Projects for Schools:** For example, school sensory gardens, weather stations, woodland planting, environmental education packs for local nature reserves (such as River Ayr Way and Weavers Tales and Trails) and only when this is additional to the outdoor learning curriculum.
- **Community Led Service Provision:** For example, new initiatives that help improve the environment such as rural community transport initiatives where there is demonstrable case that the project will reduce the carbon footprint and/or improve the environment.
- **Feasibility Studies and Business Plans:** For example, Feasibility Studies to identify renewable energy options or to undertake the detailed planning for eligible projects and/or support for the preparation of associated Business Plans.
- **Community Based Social Enterprises:** Capital and revenue support is available for new or existing social enterprises to develop their project or expand their operation/geographical area of operations. ***Initial contact should be made with the Council's Business Development team and other local business support agencies to investigate available support prior to consideration of REF funding. The project must demonstrate the delivery of clear grassroots local community benefits.***
- **Employability and Training Programmes:** Employability support and small business up-skilling programmes co-ordinated by East Ayrshire Employability Forum to enable members of the local community to access jobs either in renewables, engineering or other sectors of the economy where there are local job opportunities.
- **Community led sports and leisure:** For example, capital projects such as improvements to sports/community land or buildings, pitch improvements, floodlighting, new sports related initiatives.
- **Income Generating Projects:** Support for community projects whose main focus is income generation to support community activity.
- **Community run events that are advertised:** Events within the eligible settlement areas which attract visitors from outwith East Ayrshire and deliver a quantifiable economic benefit to the local area.

Please see Considerations and Definitions for more information in relation to the above categories, (attached).

RENEWABLE ENERGY FUND: Considerations and Definitions

Community Renewable Energy Projects: Please note that due to legislation introduced by the Department of Energy and Climate Change the Council is unable to award a grant for capital equipment for projects also anticipating income from government funded feed-in tariffs.

Environmental Projects: Items such as hanging baskets and small planters will not be eligible for REF funding under this heading. Grant funding for these items is currently available from Community Grants and/or a variety of external funders.

Community Based Social Enterprises: Priority will be given to applications that are income generating. Please note that revenue funding will only be awarded for a maximum period of three years and where the need is clearly demonstrated in a Business Plan or other appropriate justifications accompanying the application to support a new or additional substantial capital project. In addition each project must consider how revenue costs can be met beyond the maximum three year period and be able to demonstrate longer term sustainability measures. Funding for routine running costs for existing social enterprises will not be eligible.

Employability and Training Programmes: Applications for funds will only be considered where the company or beneficiary is referred through the Councils Economic Development Service or other appropriate agency.

Community led sports and leisure: Support will generally be for projects supporting the development of community led sports and leisure facilities and programmes on condition that they are located within the eligible areas and are accessible by all members of the local community. Priority will be given to capital projects and general running costs for sports and leisure clubs will not be considered as these should be met from fundraising, subscriptions, donations and other income.

Note: Football strips, Christmas lights, hanging baskets, trips and outings, and events that are not of regional or national importance such as gala days, firework displays will not be eligible for REF funding under this heading. Grant funding for these items is currently available from Community Grants and/or a variety of external funders.

Income Generating Projects: Applications must be accompanied by a business plan covering a medium to long term projection and detail how any income received will be used to benefit the community.

Community run events that are advertised: All anticipated income for ticketed events should be detailed as part of the funding package and complimentary ticket allocation practises detailed in the application.

Note: Funding for events that are not of regional or national importance such as gala days, Christmas fairs, firework displays and local community events will not be eligible for REF funding under this heading. Grant funding for these items is currently available from Community Grants and/or a variety of external funders.

GENERAL CONSIDERATION FOR ALL ELIGIBLE CATEGORIES

Council Owned Assets: Please note that Renewable Energy Fund monies cannot be used for improvements to/refurbishment of Council assets unless the asset is leased, managed and maintained by a local community group or social enterprise.

Acquisition Costs: These may be considered as eligible for consideration *only in very exceptional circumstances* such as where all other avenues have been explored and where the land/property values have been independently verified. Projects must also fall within the broader eligible REF criteria.

Capital and Revenue Costs: The Renewable Energy Fund can provide both capital and revenue support if considered appropriate. Revenue funding will be for a maximum period of three years and will only be awarded where it is in support of a significant capital project and the need is clearly demonstrated in a Business Plan or other appropriate justifications accompanying the application. In addition each project must consider how revenue costs can be met beyond the maximum three year period and be able to demonstrate longer term sustainability measures. *Salary and running costs will generally only be considered for projects linked to the delivery of a new income generating capital project where the costs can be met by the project longer term.*

Community Led Action Plans: Funding is available to support projects within Community Led Action Plans that meet the foregoing eligibility criteria.

Recognition of Grant Support: Applicants will be required to give appropriate recognition to the fund by all or some of the following methods:

- Prominent signage during works.
- Permanent plaque on premises.
- Acknowledgement in all press and media releases.
- Acknowledgement in all project documentation.
- Acknowledgement on applicant's website.

For further information please contact: -

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APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE

The Grants Committee will consider applications in May and September each year. Application submission dates may vary depending on project location. Please refer to the **Settlement Eligibility Summary** for submission and decision dates relevant to your application.

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered until the next scheduled meeting.

The following should also be considered prior to the submission of your application: -

- Failure to submit properly completed applications along with all relevant core documentation may result in the application being returned to you and delay the consideration of your application.
- Applications for larger capital projects, where the activity is new, require to be accompanied by a business plan and cashflow statement. Applications of this nature should be submitted as soon as possible to allow the completion of the assessment process.
- All projects must commence within 12 months of the date of funding award. Accordingly any preparatory and investigatory works to inform the viability of the project should be undertaken prior to submission of application. This includes consideration of the need for planning permissions, landowner or leaseholder permissions, the submission of applications to other funders to support the project, community engagement, fundraising, etc.
- Groups are encouraged to consider a variety of funding providers to support their application as REF will not routinely support 100% project funding.