

DCLG Recycling Reward Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

General

1. What are the objectives of the Recycling Reward Scheme?

The Coalition Government is keen to support recycling reward schemes which give incentives for residents to recycle their waste. The purpose of the £5m Scheme is to enable local authorities to drive behavioural change within their communities, rewarding residents for doing the right thing and reducing and recycling their waste.

2. What is the Recycling Reward Scheme's timetable?

Bids should be received no later than 5 pm on 7 November 2014. They will then be assessed and we expect to announce successful bidders by January 2015. We then expect to allocate funding to successful bidders in April or May 2015.

3. Why is the Government spending £5m on recycling reward schemes when some recent research has shown their efficacy can be patchy?

We are aware that some recycling rewards schemes have not led to significant change. The £5m fund is a challenge fund with set criteria to ensure that bids are well thought through and fully expected to lead to recycling improvements.

Eligibility

4. Are all local authorities able to apply for funding under the scheme?

No. Only local authorities with a weekly waste collection in one form or another are eligible to apply.

5. Can a local authority with a residual waste collection that is less frequent than once a week bid for funding from the Scheme?

Yes but only if it provides a free weekly organic and/or food waste collection.

6. Will bids from local authorities with contracted out waste services be treated differently from those that operate in-house waste collection services?

No.

7. Does the bid have to cover the local authority area as a whole or can it apply to a particular part of the area?

A local authority can submit a bid to introduce or enhance a recycling reward scheme in the entirety of their locality, or a bid to improve a particular part of it (for example to try and improve recycling in flats or specific geographic areas). Bids should make very clear the coverage of the project for which they want funding (i.e. the number of households). There is no minimum number of residents that must benefit from the bid. However, the assessment process will take this into account. This is why we ask for information about the number of households in the bid form.

8. Is there a limit to the number of bids a local authority can make?

No. Councils can make as many applications, for as many projects, as they like either individually or as part of a group/consortium so long as no project requests more than £5m. Authorities need to make a choice between submitting a number of individual bids or one overall bid, but they should not submit both an overall bid and individual bids where these are covering the same project. We recommend focussing effort on bids that fully meet the fund objectives and criteria and on quality rather than quantity. Where an authority submits separate individual bids, they need to ensure they don't duplicate elements of another bid, e.g. claiming the same benefits twice, as that would impact on how those bids score. All bids will be assessed independently, based on their own merits.

9. Can partnerships (of more than one local authority) bid for funding from the Recycling Reward Scheme?

Yes, we especially welcome partnership bids between local authorities where this can improve efficiency and lead to greater financial savings. However, all the authorities will need to provide a weekly residual and/or a free weekly organic/food waste collection. In all partnership bids one local authority should nominate themselves as the lead bidder and accountable body.

10. We have already started on our project but have seen that Recycling Reward Scheme funding might be available, can we apply retrospectively?

No, funding cannot be provided retrospectively.

11. Can local authorities bid for revenue or capital funding?

Local authorities will receive revenue funding, however subject to the usual public finance rules, this can be used to support revenue or capital expenditure. There is no preference towards either revenue or capital bids.

12. Can the Fund cover whole costs (e.g. for vehicles) or only proportion of costs?

A local authority is encouraged to bid for the amount of funding required for the scheme to be successful and meet residents' needs. It is acceptable for local authorities to bid for the entirety of the costs for the project proposed in the bid. The application form seeks information about any matched funding arrangements and what these will be used for.

13. How do Public Sector Procurement rules apply to projects funded by the Recycling Reward Scheme?

We expect bidding authorities to set out how they intend to procure goods and services and assure us that UK and European Union procurement rules have been adhered to.

14. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that a bid meets due diligence requirements?

It is the responsibility of the Section 151 Officer in the local authority to sign off and confirm that the bid meets due diligence requirements. We are seeking Section 151 Officer sign off within the bid documentation.

15. Does the local authority have to monitor the delivery and outcomes of waste services provided by funding from the Recycling Reward Scheme? Does it have to complete an impact assessment?

As stated in the prospectus, we do not propose to performance manage the delivery of projects or track progress against projections in terms of recycling rates or delivering value for money. As is consistent with the Government's commitment to transparency, we expect local authorities that are successful in their bid to monitor and evaluate the performance of their project and to volunteer to make that data publicly available. We think it will improve the feasibility of a bid if there is evidence that on-going monitoring and evaluation will be used to enhance the effectiveness of a project as it develops.

We may ask at the end of 2015/16 for information about progress on the scheme and information regarding the levels of recycling and volume of waste arisings beyond what authorities already produce. This is so that emerging successes of the scheme can be identified and good practice disseminated. The Department for Communities and Local Government reserves the right to ask for information year on year.

An impact assessment is not a requirement on the bidding form and we do not want councils to submit one as part of their bid.

16. Will there be a reserve list or a second round?

We will be looking to announce successful bids by January 2015. We expect to allocate the full £5m at this point. While we have not ruled out the possibility of a reserve list or second round, they are both highly unlikely.

17. Does a local authority need to hold a public consultation before submitting a bid?

No, however we expect the application form to confirm that residents' needs have been considered in the configuration of the scheme being proposed.

Where an authority intends to consult or canvass opinion to shape the delivery of a bid, this should be detailed in the application, especially if some or all of the funding being requested will support the activity being consulted on.

Administration of funding

18. How will funding be administered and will it be ring-fenced?

Payments will be in the form of a Section 31 grant payment which is not ring-fenced. We will, before making payment in 2015, ask for a commitment from successful bidders that the money they are still intending to spend the funding on the proposals as set out in their successful bid.

Where appropriate, the Department for Communities and Local Government will set out a staged payment process linked to milestones and payment made following an authority meeting those milestones. The Section 151 Officer in the lead bidding authority will be personally accountable for ensuring that funding is spent responsibly.

19. Does a local authority have to spend their funding allocation in 2015/16?

All funding has to be allocated in 2015/16. We expect successful bidders to want to get on with delivering their proposals as soon as they can. If a staged payment process is in place it will be for the local authority to ensure milestones are met to enable payment within 2015/16.

20. Do state aid rules apply?

Local authorities need to ensure that there will be no breach of state aid rules and we will ask for an assurance that this is the case as part of the due diligence check. The state aid rules (which are set out in Articles 107 to 109 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union) apply to all public funding within the European Union.

Submitting a bid

21. Will any leeway be given for late bids?

Bids must be received according to the timetable laid out in the prospectus. Should any council have unforeseen and exceptional difficulties in achieving the outline bid deadline they must contact the project team ahead of the deadline to discuss.

22. What support is available to help bidders?

Queries can be directed to: RecyclingReward@communities.gsi.gov.uk. When helpful, we will also continue to update this FAQ list based on the questions received.

If a council chooses to employ the services of external experts to help in the preparation and presentation of a bid then these costs must be met by the bidding authority.

The Local Authority Waste and Network Chairs (WNC), will be looking to share best practice and lessons learnt from both the Department for Communities and Local Government's Weekly Collection Support Scheme and the Defra Reward and Recognition fund, in early October.

23. Will it be acceptable to modify a final bid in light of the outcome of a consultation?

No, it is not possible to amend any final bid that has been submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government as the department will be taking decisions about what projects to fund.

Assessing bids

Criterion 1: Residual waste and free organic/food waste collections frequency

24. Can local authorities who do not have any weekly waste collections bid for funding from the Scheme?

No. A local authority needs to operate a weekly residual and/or a free weekly organic/food waste collection in order to be eligible to bid for funding from the scheme

25. Can a local authority with a residual waste collection that is more frequent than once a week bid for funding from the Scheme?

Yes. A local authority that collects residual waste more frequently than once per week is of course perfectly eligible to bid for the Scheme where

it can demonstrate that it meets the other core criteria. It would be seen as being in the top group of the collection frequency hierarchy as set out in the prospectus.

Criterion 2: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

26. Should future waste arising estimates consider economic or household growth?

Waste arisings are typically affected by an increase in number of households in an area and an increase in waste output per household (which is usually linked to economic growth). Local authorities should include their own assumptions about increases in the projected number of households where this is relevant but exclude an estimate for economic growth, when making predictions about future waste tonnages and recycling rates.

27. Should Waste Data Flow figures be used for baseline data? Is it a problem if the data is a year out of date?

The Department for Communities and Local Government is asking local authorities to use the figures they are most confident in as their baseline data. Where they have internal up to date information this can be used, where they believe greater reliability to be found in Waste Data Flow figures, these can be used.

28. If a bid only affects a proportion of the households in a local authority, should they use waste and recycling tonnages related to just this proportion or to all households in the local authority?

The waste figures presented in the bid should relate solely to the households affected by and within the scope of the bid.

Criterion 3: Cost effectiveness

29. How do local authorities separate out costs, for example for communications, which might overlap between multiple bids?

It is up to local authorities to decide how to separate potentially overlapping costs between bids. The important thing is to ensure that information is provided in a clear and well evidenced manner, that they do not bid for the same costs twice and that each bid meets the core criteria.

30. What financial figures should be used?

Actual values and percentages should be used by local authorities.

31. Where a local authority contracts out their waste services and so does not hold details of the breakdown of individual costs of each element (e.g. staff), are they still required to provide it?

An authority should provide as much disaggregated information as is necessary to explain the rational of their bid and demonstrate that a bid meets the core criteria. Information about contracts will be treated as commercially sensitive and confidential.

Criterion 4: Feasibility

32. Why is information about feasibility requested?

The prospectus is clear that the feasibility of bids will be taken into account. This is because we need to be convinced that those bids that we support will deliver the aims that they say they will. The Department for Communities and Local Government is likely to adopt a cautious approach and prefer bids which, for example, are supported by evidence that the approach will work, not those that appear unrealistic or likely to be in a legal “grey area”.

33. How much detail does a bid need to contain about the project plan, project board and milestones within it?

Proportionality is key. A bid needs to contain sufficient evidence that the project has been well thought through and that this will continue throughout its operation. Only brief detail is required on the form for the majority of projects.

Criterion 5: Additionality

34. What is ‘additionality’?

For any bid where expenditure has been committed prior to the announcement of the scheme then that element cannot be genuinely additional.

Assessors will be looking for evidence that funding will support additional activity, rather than activity that would have progressed anyway (for instance through funding from the Weekly Collection Support Scheme). This should be simple, perhaps in the form of council minutes that record the first proposal of such a scheme.

35. How can a local authority already providing a recycling reward scheme demonstrate ‘additionality’?

Enhancing an existing recycling rewards scheme, for instance through the introduction of new rewards for a specific recyclable material (e.g. plastics) or introducing the scheme to a new geographic area, demonstrates additionality.

Other

36. Where a bid comes from a two tier authority, should there be support from the disposal authority?

Yes, this would be preferable and make the bid more feasible. This can take the form of a supporting letter from the disposal authority, a signature from a representative of that authority or simply the name of someone in the disposal authority who can be contacted to confirm support of the bid.

37. How is the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs involved with bid assessment, scoring and overall process of allocating funding?

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is represented on the Project Board which will agree all important decisions during the process, including the assessment and scoring methodology.

38. The Weekly Collection Support Scheme funded around 40 local recycling reward schemes. Will these schemes be able to draw down funding from the new £5m fund?

Yes, if they can demonstrate 'additionality' and show how the funding will enhance their existing recycling reward scheme rather than simply providing duplicative funding for activity that was going to progress anyway.

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