LEP Green for Business Mentoring Application

CATEGORY: Business Support Programme

Information for Applicants

LEP Green for Business Mentoring Application Form Guidance Notes

Version Number	Author	Purpose/Change	Date
1.0	Economic Development	Guidance Document for Mentoring	16 October 2026

SECTION 1 – APPLICATION GUIDANCE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to businesses wishing to apply for Mentoring under the Local Economic Partnership, Green for Business Programme ('the Programme').

1. INTRODUCTION

The Local Economic Partnership (LEP), supported by the Department for the Economy's Regional Balance Fund, brings together Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Invest Northern Ireland and key economic stakeholders to support local economic development.

The Green for Business Programme provides practical sustainability consultancy and mentoring to help eligible local businesses improve environmental performance, reduce operating costs, improve resilience and develop realistic projects for potential future implementation.

2. SUPPORT OFFERED

Support will be tailored to the size, activities and needs of each business and normally follows three stages:

- Business Sustainability Review: proportionate assessment of operations, environmental performance, energy/resource use, challenges and opportunities.
- Specialist one-to-one mentoring: technical advice and evaluation of practical opportunities, including renewable energy, building improvements, waste, water, carbon reduction and resource efficiency.
- Bespoke Green Action Plan: prioritised short, medium and longer-term actions and at least one priority project proposal. As appropriate, the proposal will set out anticipated benefits, indicative costs, possible savings, implementation issues, potential funding routes and recommended next steps.

Each successful business may receive up to 10 hours of consultancy and mentoring support in total. This allowance includes the Business Sustainability Review, meetings and any site visits, relevant research and analysis, and preparation of the bespoke Green Action Plan. The work undertaken will be proportionate to each business's needs and the available allowance.

Mentoring is advisory. It is not a guarantee of detailed design, statutory approval, contractor quotations, grant funding or project implementation.

3. WHO CAN APPLY

- Businesses registered and actively trading from commercial premises within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.

- Businesses that have been actively trading for a minimum of six months at the time of application.
- Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including eligible sole traders, partnerships, limited companies, social enterprises and CICs.
- Applicants with an identifiable environmental or resource-efficiency need which mentoring can help address.
- Businesses willing to fully engage with the mentoring process, including making relevant staff available, providing access to premises and sharing the business information and data necessary to support the Sustainability Review and development of the Green Action Plan.

4. WHO CANNOT APPLY?

The following businesses are not eligible for mentoring support:

- Businesses not actively trading.
- Businesses not operating from commercial premises within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.
- Businesses operating within the following excluded sectors, in accordance with programme funding conditions and applicable State Aid and Subsidy Control requirements:
    - Primary agricultural production
    - Forestry
    - Fisheries and aquaculture
    - Steel
    - Coal
    - Shipbuilding
    - Synthetic fibres
    - Transport and related infrastructure
    - Energy generation, distribution and infrastructure
- Businesses currently in insolvency, liquidation or subject to enforcement action
- Businesses unable or unwilling to provide appropriate evidence of active trading

Where the LEP Team cannot verify eligibility using publicly available information, businesses will be required to provide supporting evidence before mentoring support can be approved.

5. EVIDENCE OF REGISTRATION AND ACTIVE TRADING

The Council may verify business registration using publicly available records or request further information where necessary. Examples include:

- **Sole traders:** HMRC self-assessment registration evidence or UTR confirmation; trading invoices or redacted business transaction evidence.
- **Companies / CICs:** Companies House or CIC registration details, plus evidence of active trading if required.

- **Partnerships and other organisations:** appropriate registration and trading evidence.

Only information reasonably necessary for eligibility checks should be submitted. Sensitive information in submitted records should be redacted where possible.

6. APPLICATION CALLS

Call	Opening Date	Closing Date
Call 1	19 October 2026	2 November 2026
Call 2*	3 November 2026	17 November 2026
Call 3*	18 November 2026	2 December 2026

NOTE: Calls 2 and 3 will be subject to available places, funding and programme delivery timescales.

7. HOW TO APPLY AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Applications should be completed via the Council online application form:

https://engagement.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/s/F6FQQN/

When completing your form please provide contact information, business details, sustainability priorities and information about relevant previous support.

- The Council acknowledges receipt and assesses eligibility, requesting clarification where necessary.
- The Council refers eligible applicants to the mentoring company, taking account of their stated business needs.
- The mentoring company contacts the business to agree the initial review and timetable.
- Businesses must actively engage with their assigned mentor, attend agreed meetings, facilitate site visits where required and provide relevant business information and data, such as energy consumption, utility costs and resource usage, to enable the mentor to assess opportunities and develop a meaningful Green Action Plan.

Typical turnaround for assessment and matching is 5–10 working days, subject to demand. This is a target rather than a guarantee.

Note: Failure to engage with the mentoring process or provide the information reasonably required may result in mentoring support being withdrawn.

8. ASSESSMENT

Applications will be assessed on a pass/fail basis against the eligibility criteria set out in Section 3, including confirmation of the business's commitment to fully participate in the mentoring process.

Eligible businesses will be offered a place on the programme, subject to available places and funding.

Successful applicants will be notified and referred to the appointed mentoring provider.

9. ASSIGNMENT OF MENTORS

The Council will manage applications, assess eligibility and refer approved businesses to the appointed programme delivery agent Element. The delivery agent will assign an appropriate specialist from its delivery team according to the business's needs, relevant expertise and availability, and will contact the business to arrange the initial review.

10. DURATION OF SUPPORT

Assignments should normally be completed within approximately 6–8 weeks of allocation where practicable, subject to business availability and programme deadlines. Programme activities are planned for completion by 31 March 2027.

Businesses will be asked to contribute to their Business Sustainability Review, review the Green Action Plan and provide relevant feedback to support monitoring and evaluation. They may also be contacted regarding progress with recommended actions.

11. FUNDING AND FUTURE INVESTMENT

The programme is intended to identify implementable projects that could potentially progress to future capital investment. Participation does not guarantee any grant, subsidy or future Council funding. All potential future assistance is subject to separate eligibility, funding availability, assessment and approval.

The Council may request details of other public funding or subsidised support to establish whether subsidy-control requirements apply. Such eligibility decisions rest with the Council.

12. PRIVACY NOTICE

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is the data controller for personal information collected through the LEP Green for Business Mentoring Programme. This information will be used to process your application, assess eligibility, arrange and deliver mentoring support, monitor programme outcomes and meet audit and funding requirements.

The information collected may include your name, business and contact details, business registration and trading information, details of your business premises, sustainability priorities, previous public funding or business support received, supporting evidence and correspondence records. If your application is successful,

we may also collect information relating to mentoring undertaken, sustainability assessments, Green Action Plans, recommendations and programme outcomes. Relevant information and documentation will be held on the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

The lawful basis for processing your application and information relating to the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the mentoring programme is Article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR, the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Council.

Relevant application and business information will be shared with the Council's appointed mentoring company to enable mentoring support to be delivered. Information may also be shared with relevant Council departments, the Department for the Economy (DfE) and the Northern Ireland Audit Office for the purposes of programme administration, monitoring, evaluation and audit.

You can choose to join the Council's Business Directory and receive information about relevant business support programmes, funding opportunities, events and other business opportunities. This is optional and will not affect your application. The lawful basis for this processing is Article 6(1)(a) of the UK GDPR – your consent. You can withdraw your consent or unsubscribe from these communications at any time.

Where personal information is transferred or processed outside the UK, appropriate safeguards will be in place in accordance with data protection legislation. All information may be subject to audit and will be held in accordance with the Council's retention and disposal schedule.

You have a number of rights in relation to your personal data. Further information is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/individual-rights/

If you have any concerns about how your personal data has been handled, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
Antrim Civic Centre, 50 Stiles Way, Antrim, BT41 2UB
T: 028 94 463113
E: DPO@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).