Commercial Rates Energy Discount
BUSINESS PLEDGES FOR A GREENER CLEANER WATERFORD

Guidelines 2025

Climate Action
A Smarter, Greener Waterford

Waterford
Find your future

As part of our commitment to addressing climate change, Waterford City and County Council is working to reduce emissions by 51% by 2030. Given that businesses are responsible for 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in Waterford, the Council is keen to support them in reducing both their emissions and operational costs.
Since 2022, businesses across Waterford have been rewarded for their efforts in improving energy efficiency through **The Commercial Rates Energy Discount – Business Pledge for a Cleaner, Greener Waterford Scheme**.

Waterford is the only county in Ireland delivering such an initiative and businesses and the Council working together in the coming years will hopefully make Waterford the most sustainable place in Ireland to do business.

This year **The Commercial Rates Energy Discount – Business Pledge for a Cleaner, Greener Waterford Scheme** is open for applications from 05/08/2025 till 19/09/2025 and the council is inviting all SMEs and hospitality businesses to commit to two specific pledges and submit the required evidence within the deadlines outlined in this guideline. In return, they will receive a 9% discount on their commercial rates.

Commercial Rates Energy Discount - BUSINESS PLEDGE FOR CLEANER GREENER WATERFORD

GUIDELINES 2025

Dear applicant,

Please read this guideline until the end before applying.

Thank you for being part of the change towards a greener Waterford, you will be one of over 1000 businesses in Waterford who will take the pledge to make their business greener in the coming 12 months. The Climate Action Team is here to support you every step of the way as you work towards your goals. We wish you a successful journey achieving your sustainability goals.

The purpose of this guideline is to provide information that can be used in implementing your pledge and to clarify the evidence that Waterford City and County Council needs from you to verify the actions outlined in the pledge. To ensure that your efforts are accurately recorded, please submit proof of at least two actions. **Only businesses that completed at least two of the actions will be eligible for a 9% discount on their rates. Please be aware that your business might be selected for an in- person audit.**

By August you will receive a reminder email with a link instructing you to upload your evidence through Submit (the council system where you completed your application).

Remember that you must apply each year to avail of the Commercial Rates Energy Discount and to fulfil your Pledge.
Be aware that this scheme is subject to council approval annually.

The details of pledges are listed below along with the evidence that can be submitted next year to show the pledge has been fulfilled.

	Pledge	Evidence
1.	**Training:** you can choose between these courses At least one member of staff to complete one of these training sessions. All of these training courses are free and could be of benefit to your business: • **SEAI Academy, Energy Management Training** https://www.seai.ie/plan-your-energy-journey/for-your-business/steps-to-energy-efficiency/training • **Enterprise Ireland sustainability courses for Business (check eligibility).** https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/sustainability • **MODOS circular economy training.** https://mywaste.ie/dispose-waste/in-your-workplace/modos-circular-economy-training/ • **Business for Biodiversity webinars.** https://businessforbiodiversity.ie/register-track-one-discovery/ **If you are unsure of your training needs you can avail of support from the Chamber of Commerce. Waterford Chamber of Commerce is developing a self assessment tool for training needs as part of the EXCURS EU projectIf businesses would like to do a sustainability course outside of those listed above that relates directly to their business, the Climate Team would be happy to assess its relevance to this Pledge.**	Certification of completion
2.	**Energy-Saving Campaigns and staff induction** Engage your employees in making your SME more sustainable by launching a targeted energy-saving campaign. Start by educating staff about the biggest energy consumers in your business. Make this a two-way conversation—regularly gather ideas from staff on how to improve efficiency and reduce waste in business processes. To boost engagement and visibility, weave your energy-saving messages into your existing internal communications. Here are some effective strategies: • **Emails**: Keep messages short, focused, and consistent to maintain interest and encourage action. • **Posters**: Refresh poster designs regularly and rotate their locations to keep the campaign visible and top of mind. • **Internal Newsletters**: Share updates on progress, new ideas, and success stories to highlight impact and build momentum.	A description of the campaign, photos, screenshots, and any other materials that you believe can support the evidence. A copy of the induction pack given to new starters

	• **Team Meetings**: Make energy efficiency a standing agenda item to reinforce its importance and prompt ongoing discussion. • **Suggestion Schemes & Competitions**: Spark participation by inviting ideas and offering small incentives or recognition for the best contributions. Recognition could be given to the most mindful person when it comes to energy or the most efficient driver. If you have a committed group, you might also consider setting up a Green Team to deliver sustainable change in the organisation. Green teams can help make every part of your business more sustainable. • **Notice Boards**: Use high-traffic areas to display tips, metrics, and updates that remind staff of their role in saving energy. • **Induction Pack**: Put together information for new starters that covers your company's practices to reduce energy and waste. As well as your information about your company's involvement in the Pledge for a Cleaner, Greener Waterford. By embedding energy awareness into your workplace culture and communication channels, you increase the likelihood of sustained behaviour change—and meaningful energy savings.	
3.	**Conduct Energy Audit** An energy audit by a certified Energy Auditor can be used to identify areas where energy can be saved, and it is a requirement of some funding programmes. If you are a business with an energy cost of more than €10,000 a year you can avail of SEAI's audit support scheme to get €2,000 towards the cost of your audit and micro businesses can speak to the Local Enterprise Office. **For more information:** https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants/energy-audits	Report of the energy audit or the first page of the invoice.
4.	**An Environment policy on your website** Create and publish on our website an Environmental Policy for your business setting out your goals for saving energy, reducing waste, and avoiding wasting water. This policy should also be communicated to staff regularly as should the achievement of your goals. Inspiration on how to draft an Environmental Policy can be found here in this guide.	Link to the environmental policy on the business website.

5.	**Replace aging equipment.** Replace aging equipment with energy efficient alternatives - the Accelerated Capital Allowance scheme allows businesses to receive a tax incentive for buying efficient equipment. **For more information:** https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants/accelerated-capital-allowance. Speak to your Local Enterprise Office on what support they could provide. SEAI also provide grants for heat pumps, pumps, air handling units and building management systems see Pledge 27.	Receipts of the equipment, including a detailed description of each item. If possible, please include an analysis of the improvement in energy efficiency.
6.	**Invest in energy efficient lights or lighting controls.** LED lights, timers, occupancy sensors in intermittently occupied spaces and daylight sensors on outside lights, can all save you money and avoid lights being left on that aren't needed. Staff should also be made aware of the importance of switching off – Pledge 2 **For more information:** https://www.seai.ie/sites/default/files/publications/SEAI-Energy-Efficient-LED-Lighting-Guide.pdf	Receipts of the equipment, including a detailed description of each item.
7.	**Invest in water saving equipment.** Install equipment to save water such as tap aerators, water butts or retrofitting toilets with low flush devices. **For more information:** https://www.water.ie/conservation/home/water-saving-devices	Receipts of the equipment, including a detailed description of each item.
8.	**Change electricity supplier to a high renewable energy supplier.** Changing your electricity to a provider with a lower cost per kW and a high amount of renewables in their energy mix can be good for you and for the planet. Renewable energy must provide more than 50% of the energy mix to qualify as achieving this pledge.	Bill for the last and current provider, including details of much of the electricity provided will be from renewable sources. The percentage needs to be above 50%.
9.	**Waste audits:** Several waste management businesses in Ireland provide free, no-obligation waste audits to businesses, making it easier to assess their waste management practices and identify areas for improvement Check with your waste disposal provider.	Record that proves the completion of the waste audit, along with results of the audit and plans for improving segregation or reducing waste produced

10.	**Reduce waste produced.** Reduce the amount of waste produced by your business by at least 15%. In reducing waste, you will save money and reduce the amount of space in your establishment occupied by waste. **For more information** on how to manage your business waste: https://mywaste.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/MyWaste-Brochure-Single-pages-2023-no-crops.pdf https://mywaste.ie/dispose-waste/in-your-workplace/	A copy of the waste collection bill for September 2025 and September 2026.
11.	**Initiatives to reduce food waste.** Food waste costs a business twice, when the food is purchased and not used fully and when it is disposed of. All organic matter, including food, release methane as they degrade, reducing food waste reduces methane in the atmosphere. For more information: https://foodwastecharter.ie/resources/ https://mywaste.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/MyWaste-Brochure-Single-pages-2023-no-crops.pdf	A copy of the organic waste collection bill for September 2024 and September 2025 and photographs of any system you have put in place to reduce food waste.
12.	**Food businesses only:** **Facilitate your customers' own refillable mugs and containers**, make it easy to make the more sustainable choice and move away from disposables. Businesses should expect to reduce the disposables they buy by at least 25%.	A comparison of how many disposables your company has bought in 2025 versus 2026, a photo of where your cups are in your establishment (If the cups are in a prominent place they are likely to remind people) and a photo of how you advertise any discount you offer reusable cup or container users.
13.	**Allow the public to refill their water bottle in your premises and add your business to the Tap Map to let people know.** **For more info:** https://refill.ie/the-tap-map/	Link that proves that your business is on the Tapmap.
14.	**Install Solar panels on your roof.** Solar Panels can reduce your energy costs and provide you with a reliable source of energy. There are two ways to get solar power for your building, you can purchase the panels and have them installed with a grant of approximately 30% of the cost or you can use a solar company that will pay for install on your building and you buy the energy from the company. This second method is referred to as Energy as a Service and provides an option for businesses who do not have the capital to invest in solar.	The invoices for the purchase or details of energy agreement, including the location address and a photo of the installed solar panels.

	For more information: https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants/commercial-solar-pv	
15.	**If leasing vehicles or buying new vehicles choose sustainable alternatives - electric vehicles or biodiesel** Depending on the journey type and load, electric or biodiesel vehicles may make sense for your business. While there may be a higher up-front cost for electric cars, they are cheaper to operate than internal combustion engines and they can also be used to advertise your sustainability credentials. Grant support is available for businesses changing their fleet to electric vehicles. Biodiesel can be used in existing vehicles. The source of the Biodiesels such as Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil should be verified to ensure that no palm oil is in the product and the product has sustainability credentials. The harvesting of palm oil destroys rain forests. **For more information:** https://www.seai.ie/plan-your-energy-journey/for-your-business/ev-for-business/grants-and-supports - EV fleet assessment grant | SEAI	Receipts for the purchase or lease of a more environmentally friendly alternative.
16.	**Provide Eco Driving training to staff who drive regularly as part of their job.** The concept of eco-driving is based on the idea that simple changes in driving habits can save fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The primary goal of eco-driving is to maximise the efficiency of the car's engine and minimise unnecessary fuel consumption. Eco Driving can save a company 10% on fuel costs and reduce insurance claims as Eco Driving reduces the risk of an accident. Check with your insurance company whether Eco Driving training will reduce your premium.	Certification from a driving academy confirming course completion.
17.	**Native tree planting on business premises.** Businesses with large sites are welcome to plant a minimum of 5 native trees. Trees will provide shade and a home for nature, reduce run off on the site and could provide an area of amenity for staff. Organisations like Crann can provide assistance to businesses.	A photo of the trees and a record of their sourcing i.e. a receipt or record from Coillte.
18.	**Participate in the Business for Biodiversity Campaign** Depending on the business location, there is lots that can be done to accommodate nature in towns and in the countryside. The Business for Biodiversity Campaign will walk your business through what changes you can make to make a space for nature.	A record of registration
19.	**Reducing heat loss - Increase insulation on tanks, pipework, in attics or install Reflective Radiator Panels.**	Invoices of the insulation and installation.

	Correctly applied insulation will reduce heat loss and save energy. Businesses can avail of a grant to improve building insulation. Reflective Radiator Panels will reflect heat from an unblocked radiator out into a room	
20.	**Join the Green for Business Program – Micro businesses less than 50 staff .** Green for Business is a FREE program that helps small businesses take the first step towards becoming more sustainable, giving you access to a green consultant who'll show you the small changes that can have a big impact on your company. **For more information contact your Local Enterprise Office.** https://www.localenterprise.ie/Waterford/	A record of involvement in the programme provided by the LEO
21.	**Use refillable packaging* (Micro business pledge)** Bottles of cleaning and care products can be sourced in refillable containers. Sourcing refillable reduces plastic waste.	Scan or photograph receipts upon refill.
22.	**Incentivising or rewarding employees for carpooling, cycling and for taking public transport** Over a quarter of all emissions come from transport in Waterford. Helping your staff to travel sustainably reduces emissions, saves them money and improves wellbeing your business can facilitate this by providing priority parking for those who carshare, by joining the Cycle to Work Scheme and by encouraging staff to use the buses.	Photo of prioritised parking and any promotion campaign you run to partner commuters. Registration of your company on cyclescheme.ie and evidence of promotion.
23.	**Run a Climate Café or hold an event in partnership with your community focussed on Energy saving** 79% of Waterford people are worried about Climate Change and yet we rarely sit and speak with neighbours and friends about the challenge and what we can do. Climate Cafes are local events that allows people to come together, and you can host a Café where you work. The Climate Team will help to run an event at your premises please contact climateaction@waterfordcouncil.ie	Record of how you promoted the Climate Café. A photo of the event.
24.	**Join and use the Too good to go app to reduce food waste.** https://www.toogoodtogo.com/	Registration on the app and a screenshot of at least 5 interactions on the app.
25.	**Donate at least four times annually to FoodCloud** Foodcloud is an Irish social enterprise and global food donation platform tackling the twin issues of food waste and food insecurity by partnering with leading retailers, food companies, non-profit organisations, government and the wider business community to redistribute surplus food and help drive progress towards a circular	A record from Foodcloud of how regularly you donate to the scheme

	economy for our food systems. Since 2013, it has redistributed more than 272 million meals or 114,000 tonnes of surplus food, through solutions in Ireland and internationally. Find out more here: www.food.cloud/	
26.	**Install Cycle Parking that is accessible to the public.** If your business is in a busy urban area, you can install cycle parking for the public in a spot that is easily visible. The Council's Active Travel Team have funding for appropriate sites. Contact climateaction@waterfordcouncil.ie if you would like to make this pledge.	A photo of cycle parking and a record from the Council's Active Travel team
27.	**Business energy upgrade** Introduce energy efficient and renewable measures into your building. For example, building fabric updates, solar panels, heat pumps, and others related. Business Energy Upgrades Scheme (BEUS) is available to small and medium sized businesses to carry out energy efficiency upgrades. The scheme will provide substantial support to the SME sector to address energy costs and reduce emissions in their buildings, making them healthier, more comfortable and cheaper to run. **For more information: https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants**	A screenshot of the approval email and photos of the upgrades.
28.	**Wedding venues and caterers – Green Wedding Commitment** With simple changes wedding venues can reduce food waste and energy. The Climate Team will work with wedding venues over the coming year to improve sustainability. Contact climateaction@waterfordcouncil.ie to participate	Waterford Green Wedding Recognition with the Waterford Council
29	**Install heating controls** Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRV) or zonal controls with thermostats will ensure that heat is appropriately distributed in your business and areas that do not need to be heated to as high a temperature (corridors and storerooms) are not wasting heat.	Invoices of the equipment and installation.
30.	Thermal Imaging Assessment of your property Have **a Thermal Imaging Assessment completed to identify the areas of heat loss in your property and to allow you to remedy that heat loss** Please find a register provider here: https://www.seai.ie/grants/find-a-registered-professional	Scan of the report

If none of these pledges are suitable for your business, please contact climateaction@waterfordcouncil.ie for advice.

Important information before you go...

Do you want more information? are you experiencing issues with the application process? Unsure which pledges are most suitable for your business?
The Climate Action Team is here to help! We will be hosting workshops both online and in person, so you can choose the format that best fits your schedule.

Webinar Content:
- Overview of the application process
- Explanation of the pledges and the evidence required

In-Person Workshop:
- Overview of the application process
- Explanation of the pledges and the evidence required
- One-on-one support available

Join us to get the assistance you need!

Location	Date
Webinar	**Tuesday – August 12th at 10am** **Join Zoom Meeting** **https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85893698788?pwd=UyaNFqr2bPRflbVpik2DdobNozUWvg.1** **Meeting ID: 858 9369 8788** **Passcode: 553014**
In person	**Thursday – August 21st from 10am – 1 pm** (Central Library- Waterford City)
Webinar	**Thursday – August 27th at 3pm** **Join Zoom Meeting** **https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87539213697?pwd=pjhfd53ADLemDhzyQaIOUfBdkhBtjs.1** **Meeting ID: 875 3921 3697** **Passcode: 629098**
In person	**Saturday - September 6th from 10am – 1 pm** (Dungarvan Library)
Webinar	**Thursday – September 11th at 7 pm** **Join Zoom Meeting** **https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83236130727?pwd=pmwMH2MJypk953k5magI2oR49eYeGw.1** **Meeting ID: 832 3613 0727** **Passcode: 703630**

We are looking forward to seeing you!!

Climate Action
A Smarter, Greener Waterford

Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge
Waterford City & County Council