

REPORT TO:	EXECUTIVE BOARD
DATE:	WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2024
SUBJECT:	COMMUNITY BUILDING DECARBONISATION PILOT
PURPOSE:	TO SEEK MEMBER APPROVAL TO ACCEPT A FUNDING AWARD OF £162,500 AND TO AMEND THE REVENUE/CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2024/25 ACCORDINGLY.
KEY DECISION:	YES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR GRAHAM MARSH
REPORT OF:	GROUP MANAGER - CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	SARAH BAKER
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL
EXEMPT REPORT?	NO

SUMMARY

National Gas made contact with East Lindsey District Council, via IPB Communications, in June 2023 in relation to upgrade works being undertaken at Hatton Gas Compressor Station.

As part of social and community commitments, funding of £162,500 has been made available to support a project that would provide a legacy in the local area.

A proposal has been developed to support a pilot programme to deliver energy efficiency improvements to community-led assets within a 10-mile radius of the Hatton area and to provide an opportunity to both upskill Council officers and train local volunteers to become green community champions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Executive Board agrees to accept the funding award of £162,500 and approves delivery of project as set out in the report

2. Executive Board approves amendment of the revenue budget for 2024/25 to include the £37,500 and amend the Capital programme for 2024/25 to include the £125,000.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable acceptance of the funding award and to start work on the programme in 2024/25.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not to accept the funding.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) has been delivering a successful programme of grant works to domestic properties for energy efficiency improvements for over two years through a dedicated in-house team. Increasingly however, enquiries have been received from those responsible for community assets – in particular village halls – keen to understand what funding might be available to help make buildings warmer and reduce rising utility costs.
- 1.2. There has been limited funding available to date to support community assets and there is a need to understand what levels of investment are needed to make a real difference. The process of retrofit for a community building will differ to that of a domestic or commercial property and an understanding of the process is needed.
- 1.3. Community buildings are often volunteer-led so it is important to ensure the right support is in place to help them make informed decisions about how best to maximise the potential of any available funding and to ensure they see a return on that investment.
- 1.4. The funding award for this programme will enable a pilot project to be undertaken to explore all of this further and provide an evidence and knowledge base for potential future rollout subject to other funding sources in the future.

2. REPORT

- 2.1. The project funding will be used to undertake a pilot programme, working with a number of community assets within 10 mile of Hatton Gas compressor station as stipulated by the funders, National Gas. The area this encompasses can be viewed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. Expressions of interest will be invited from community groups and initial assessments made of what each site requires. There may also be potential to tap into some additional funding via the Government's voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) Energy Efficiency Scheme.

- 2.3. Once initial assessments have been undertaken, groups will be invited to apply for a grant share of the capital funding available and will be fully supported from start to finish as works are undertaken.
- 2.4. Criteria for ensuring that both EOIs and grant awards are considered fairly and equitably will be drawn up prior to any programme launch.
- 2.5. It is anticipated that around 8-10 assets could be surveyed initially all of which will be provided with details of what the assessments recommend. Depending on the levels of funding required, it is expected that in the region of 5-8 assets could be supported through the capital works element.
- 2.6. Capital works may include a variety of measures such as fabric upgrades to wall, roof and floor insulation, heating controls, LED lighting, renewables and even low carbon heating solutions.
- 2.7. Training will also be provided to a number of officers and volunteers in non-domestic energy assessments and fuel poverty/energy efficiency advice as part of a programme to upskill people which can then impart that knowledge to others.
- 2.8. The legacy of the training will be to establish a network of green champion volunteers.
- 2.9. Delivery of the programme will be supported by a part-time officer on a fixed term one-year contract.

Table 1: Costings

Training costs	£12,500
Revenue/staffing costs	£20,000
Capital retrofit costs	£125,000
Survey/assessment costs	£5,000
TOTAL	£162,500

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Recent increases in utility costs have continued to put pressure on community building such as village halls which are often reliant on local fundraising and events for support. To date, there has been very limited funding available to help these facilities improve their energy efficiency.
- 3.2 Community buildings are different to domestic and commercial properties and a better understanding is needed of how to treat these facilities and the costs involved in doing so.
- 3.3 This funding award will enable a pilot programme to be undertaken to provide a learning opportunity on how best to support community facilities and the extent of the funding required to do so to inform future work.

- 3.4** Crucially, it will also help to provide an ongoing legacy to communities in building a network of volunteer green champions that can help provide energy advice and support in their local area.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

The South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership is already recognised as a leader in terms of retrofit delivery due to the success of its Home Energy Advice and Retrofit Team. This programme will add another string to its bow in terms of improving knowledge and understanding of what our communities need to be able to secure the future of key assets for the longer term.

This pilot programme will help to provide a framework for retrofitting community-led facilities in our area and provide an evidence base for the challenges, funding requirements and benefits that investment in these facilities can have to inform future funding opportunities.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

The key implications arising from this report for the Partnership are that this funding award could carry reputational implications of any failure to deliver – not only amongst the local communities but with National Gas who may have future funding opportunities we could tap into in the future.

We do however have a proven track record and strong foundations to build this programme on.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The programme contributes towards the ambitions outlined in the Sub-Regional Strategy specifically in terms of the Environment and reducing carbon emissions alongside building resilience and more sustainable lives. Community assets can be at the heart of towns and villages providing a crucial space for social interaction and engagement. If these facilities can't afford to keep running it could have much wider social implications for our residents in the longer term.

STAFFING

As outlined in this report, the external funding includes provision for a part-time officer fixed for 12 months to deliver this programme working alongside the existing Home Energy Advice and Retrofit Team.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

None. This programme comes with additional funding for officer resource to support delivery.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The works will need adding to the capital programme as per the recommendations in this report. All external funding is to enable revenue funding for the project to be supported.

There will be a requirement to procure contractors to deliver works on the scheme and discussions are underway with the Procurement Team to ensure this is undertaken compliantly.

DATA PROTECTION

Data Sharing Agreements will be established between the Council, contractors and anyone else as required which the Data Protection Officer will provide advice on to prepare and assess. Sharing of any personal data will be done using a secure data sharing platform.

FINANCIAL

Funding for the programme is from external sources and as such does not require any financial contribution from the Council.

As outlined in report, the funding will need to be added to the appropriate revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk implications from this report are relatively low. The main risks are reputational rather than financial should delivery of the scheme fail.

A Risk Register for the programme will be developed and will be reviewed regularly with any concerns addressed and/or escalated as appropriate.

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

Consultation has taken place with relevant portfolio holders and the Procurement Team.

REPUTATION

There is a potential reputational risk should the Council fail to deliver the programme by the required deadlines to the scale and quality it demands.

CONTRACTS

The Council will need to enter into contract to deliver capital works and surveys on the programme.

CRIME AND DISORDER

None.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

This programme will help to tackle the inequalities associated with fuel poverty through training green champions in our communities who can help fellow residents with home energy advice and support.

The Home Energy Advice and Retrofit Team has strong links with referral partners for a wide range of further issues and can signpost support where it is needed.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The health and wellbeing benefits of the scheme are secondary because the works are not directly delivered to domestic properties. However, the importance of keeping community buildings open to provide social networks and therefore improved wellbeing outcomes for residents should be noted.

The volunteer green champions can also help to advice and signpost residents to forms of support for their own properties which may lead to warmer, more efficient properties which also benefits both mental and physical health.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The programme will have a positive impact on the carbon footprint of the District through reducing the carbon emissions from community buildings.

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

MISSIONS	
This paper contributes to the follow Missions outlined in the Government’s Levelling Up White paper.	
Wellbeing	Ensuring that community facilities are support to reduce their running costs will help avoid challenges such as reduced opening hours or even closure which would have an impact on local communities, impacting on the wellbeing of local residents who may rely on these facilities for social interaction. The programme of community green champions training will also support upskilling local residents who are able to help others in their area with home energy advice tips and wider signposting which may also have a positive impact on the wellbeing of residents.
Pride in Place	The programme will engage with local communities, recognising the importance of assets such as village halls in supporting thriving local events and cultural opportunities as well as social inclusion.

ACRONYMS

SELCP – South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

APPENDICES
Appendix 1 – 10 miles radius of Hatton Compressor

BACKGROUND PAPERS
No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT
None

REPORT APPROVAL	
Report author:	Sarah Baker

	Group Manager - Climate Change and Environment
Signed off by:	Christian Allen
Approved for publication:	Christine Marshall