



**Corporate Policy and
Resources Committee**

21st September 2023

Subject: Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD)

Report by:

Sally Grindrod-Smith Director of Planning
Regeneration and Communities

Contact Officer:

Veronica Edwards
Senior Homes, Health and Wellbeing Officer.
01427 675 187
veronica.edwards@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

To provide information on funding secured in Central and South Lincolnshire through the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator scheme and to seek approval to enter into a Service Level Agreement with North Kesteven District Council for the delivery of the scheme.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Committee note the receipt of £304,000 of funding to deliver the Local Energy Advice via the Demonstrator Scheme in Central and South Lincolnshire.
2. Approval is given to enter into a Service Level Agreement with North Kesteven District Council for the delivery of the scheme and receipt of funding
3. That the following fixed-term roles are approved and recruited to following completion of (2) above:
 - a. 1 x Home Energy Advice Manager
 - b. 2 x Home Energy Advisors
 - c. 1 x Administrative Support Officer

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO

Midlands Net Zero Hub have entered into a grant funding agreement with North Kesteven District Council (appendix 2) as accountable body, to the Central and South Lincolnshire Consortium.

West Lindsey District Council will lead the delivery of the Local Energy Demonstrator Scheme.

North Kesteven District Council will issue a Service Level Agreement to West Lindsey District Council to secure the delivery of the scheme.

Financial : FIN/48/24/MT/SST

This project relies on the allocated grant funding via Midland Net Zero Hub (MNZH) of £304,000. This is a revenue grant only, to be used to fund staff costs to provide an advisory service. As host authority West Lindsey District Council will receive £10,000 as a contribution to management overhead and administrative costs.

Funding can be adjusted or withdrawn if satisfactory progress towards targets is not demonstrated, but this is not thought to be a significant risk.

Funding is to be spent across the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The table below shows the estimated costs based on a start date of September 1st for the 4 new posts with an estimate pay award of £1925 in 2023/24 and 3.5% in 2024/25. JD's and PS have yet to written so these costs may change but will remain within the allocated grant funding.

Post	SCP	Salary with oncosts £ 2023/24	Salary with oncosts £ 2024/25
Home Energy Advice Manager	9c	29,900	53,100
Home Energy Advice Officer x2	7f	48,800	86,600
Administrator	5b	19,400	33,300
		<u>98,100</u>	<u>173,000</u>
TOTAL COST FOR SCHEME			271,100

Staffing :

(N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref

The scheme will be delivered by the following:

- 4 New posts funded by LEAD allocation, hosted by WLDC. The posts to be created and recruited to are as follows:

- 1 x Home Energy Advice Manager
- 2 x Home Energy Advisors
- 1 x Administrative Support Officer

The Team Manager will be managed by the current Senior Homes, Health and Well-being Officer.

It is anticipated the new Energy Efficiency Project Officer for HUG2 will be in post early September, freeing up sufficient capacity of the Senior Homes, Health, and Wellbeing Officer to integrate the new service into the team and manage the home energy advice manager.

HR Ref: HR HR200 -7-23

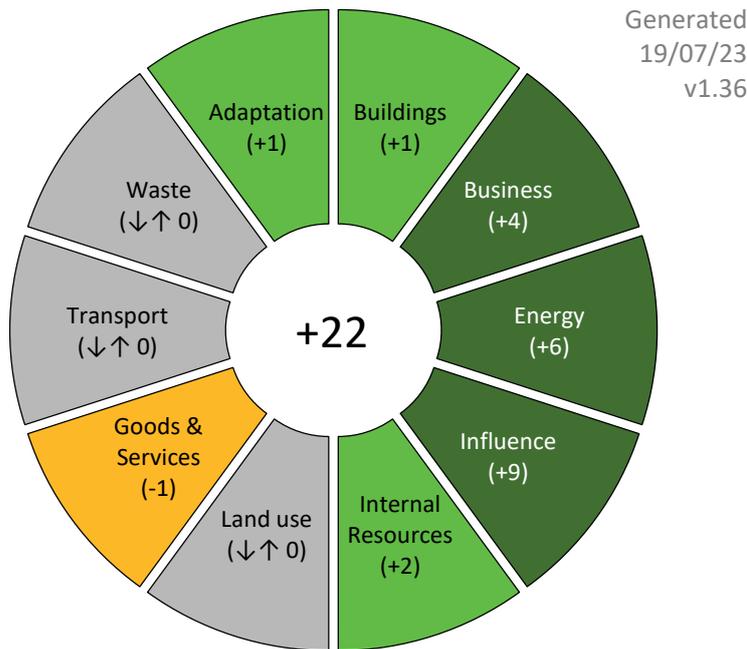
Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

N/A

Data Protection Implications :

Data Sharing agreements to be in place with relevant partners.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:



West Lindsey District Council will be net zero by 2050 (26 years and 5 months away).

West Lindsey District Council has set an ambition to become a Green Council. The Council has set a net-zero carbon target across its operations by 2050.

Installing energy efficiency saving measures within the home can help reduce emissions, and support the council's Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

LEAD project is expected to have strongly positive impacts relating to its core focus of engaging households around energy efficiency and renewable energy. It also provides wider benefits such as skills development, partnership working, and developing the low carbon economy. Some additional use of council resources will be required, and staff travel may increase slightly. But overall, the project aligns extremely well with climate goals – helping to decarbonise hard to reach household. Monitoring data on installations and behaviour change will indicate impact.

LEAD will link in closely with Initiatives such as HUG2/ ECO tackling households in fuel poverty.

Becoming a net-zero carbon Council is very important for the Council; it will help protect the natural environment that so many of us enjoy.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

N/A

Health Implications:

Living in a cold, damp home is harmful to physical and mental health. Installing household energy efficiency measures, will not only reduce carbon emissions, but will make it easier and more affordable for residents to maintain a warm, comfortable environment, thereby reducing cold-related illnesses and associated stress.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

LEAD bid

Midlands Net Zero Hub Grant Award letter

Programme guidance available at following links:

[LEAD Call for Projects](#)

[LEAD Programme Guidance](#)

Risk Assessment :**Call in and Urgency:****Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Executive summary

Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) - Pilot funding grant for new approaches to providing local in-person energy advice.

The purpose of this report is to provide Corporate Policy and Resources Committee with a comprehensive overview of our Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) grant application, the funding of £304,000 awarded, and the proposed new energy advice service to be established as a result.

The funding will be used to employ dedicate advisors to provide advice and support to people living in hard-to-modify homes and increase uptake of other government funding initiatives, such as the Great British Insulation Scheme, Home Upgrade Grant, Energy Company Obligation and Boiler Upgrade Scheme that already exist.

The report covers:

- Background on the LEAD programme (Section 2)
- Rationale for our consortium bid (Section 3)
- Details of our bid proposal (Section 4)
- Funding amount awarded (Section 5)
- Overview of the new energy advice service to be created (Section 6)
- West Lindsey District Council's roles and responsibilities (Section 7)
- Key performance indicators and targets (Section 8)
- Recommendations for formal approval

2. Background on the LEAD Programme

2.1 In March 2023 it was announced that Midlands Net Zero Hub would be working with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the four other Net Zero Hubs to deliver a Local Energy Advice Demonstrator programme. This programme will fund innovative projects piloting new approaches to providing local in-person energy advice. The funding we have received is to fund advice to residents not deliver programme expenditure

2.2 The national programme provides funding of up to £2 million to individual projects to be delivered over between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2025.. The focus of the local energy advice pilots is to test various approaches to delivering in-person advice, particularly for harder-to-treat properties and digitally excluded consumer groups.

2.3 The pilots have two main objectives. Firstly, they aim to address the complexities of hard-to-treat buildings. Secondly, they are seeking to support hard-to-reach consumers who may benefit from local, in-person advice. The reasoning for this is briefly set out below;

- **Hard-to-treat buildings** – the UK has the oldest building stock in Europe. In-person visits better capture the complexities of these building types, which are harder to address through digital and telephone advice.
- **Hard-to-reach consumers** – local, in-person advice may extend the service to certain consumer types, e.g. the elderly, disengaged, those with limited internet access, minority ethnic groups, etc.

- 2.4 Funding bids from Councils submitted prior to the deadline on 21 April 2023 were accepted on a competition basis with the successful submissions going through an element of co-design supported by the Midlands Net Zero Hub for this demonstrator programme.
- 2.5 Local energy advice pilots are intended to be an integral part of the multi-channel home energy advice service being developed by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. In addition to this programme, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) have launched a [new energy retrofit advice service](#) on GOV.UK to help people better understand how to make energy efficiency improvements to their home. As well a free retrofit phonenumber service, providing easy access to expert advice about retrofit technology.

–

3. Rationale for our Consortium Bid

- 3.1 In considering whether to submit a bid, Greater Lincolnshire districts recognised both the challenges and opportunities that LEAD funding presented for our region:

Challenges:

- Lincolnshire has high levels of fuel poverty due to low incomes, inefficient housing and lack of mains gas access.
- Deprived rural communities can be isolated with limited digital connectivity.
- Ageing population increasingly vulnerable to cold homes.
- Many dwellings are old, solid wall or listed so difficult to insulate.

Opportunities:

- Build on our previous experience running energy efficiency schemes.
- Utilise our strong partnerships across councils, charities and health sector.
- Leverage expertise of trusted community organisations to engage target groups.
- Develop innovative approaches to assist hard-to-reach households.
- Catalyst for a sustainable countywide energy advice model through the proposed Good Homes Alliance.

3.2 A consortium was formed to submit a joint bid comprising:

- North Kesteven District Council (lead applicant)
- West Lindsey District Council
- City of Lincoln Council
- South Kesteven District Council
- Lincolnshire County Council (support)
- YES Energy Solutions (Proposed delivery partner)
- Age UK Lincoln and South Lincolnshire (support)
- NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (support)

3.3 Several of the partners make up Greater Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Network (GLEEN.) GLEEN have met regularly for a number of years and have a track record of delivering projects in this sector. This cross-sector collaboration of trusted partners would allow us to maximise the expertise, resources and reach of the programme across Central and South Lincolnshire.

4. Details of our Consortium Bid Proposal

4.1 Prior to deadline on 21 April 2023, North Kesteven District Council submitted a joint proposal to establish a new energy advice service focused on deprived urban and rural areas across Central and South Lincolnshire.

The key elements of their bid were:

Target cohorts:

- Hard-to-reach: low income, vulnerable, digitally excluded, elderly.
- Hard-to-treat: solid wall, off gas grid, listed, poorly insulated homes.

Service model:

- Team of in-home advisors providing personalised advice and support.
- Localised engagement via mobile vans, pop-ups, existing community venues.
- Partnerships with health, councils, charities to identify and reach households.
- Practical assistance to access grants, benefits, tariffs, install measures.
- Complement national services through enhanced in-person support.

Innovative approaches:

- Energy cafes to provide informal group advice sessions.
- Digital skills training to increase online access.
- Recruit community volunteers as local energy champions.

Outcomes:

- Increased engagement and awareness amongst target groups.
 - More households receiving energy efficiency improvements.
 - Reduced bills, warmer homes, improved health for residents.
 - Blueprint created for wider replication nationally.
- 4.2 The proposal was specifically tailored to the needs and opportunities in our region while meeting the LEAD programme's aims around trialling intensive in-person models of advice.

5 Grant Funding Amount Awarded

5.1 Officers have now been notified that our consortium's proposal has been successful and North Kesteven acting as accountable body will be paid £304,000 to deliver the energy advice service. Expenditure must be incurred by 31 March 2025.

5.2 The funding is provided by DESNZ, administered through Midlands Net Zero Hub, and will flow to partners as follows:

- DESNZ – Midlands Net Zero Hub – North Kesteven District Council – Consortium members

North Kesteven District Council will distribute the funding to each consortium partner in line with the planned budget and delivery responsibilities.

5.3 A draft Grant Funding Agreement has been received setting out the formal terms and conditions. It has been reviewed by Lincolnshire Legal services with no significant risks or issues identified.

6. Overview of New Energy Advice Service

6.1 As per the bid (attached as appendix 1.) The funding will be used to establish a new energy advice service covering Central and South Lincolnshire.

6.2 The core purpose is to provide tailored advice and support to hard-to-reach and vulnerable households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

6.3 The service will focus on engaging target groups within deprived urban and rural areas known to have high levels of fuel poverty.

6.4 To achieve this, the grant will fund the recruitment of the following new staff:

- 1 x Home Energy Advice Manager
- 2 x Home Energy Advisors
- 1 x Administrative Support Officer

6.5 These advisors will be line managed and hosted by West Lindsey District Council. Their role will be to provide intensive individual support including:

- Home energy assessments and personalised advice.

- Assisting access to grants, schemes and benefits.
 - Support to switch tariffs, manage debts etc.
 - Installation of energy saving measures.
 - Ongoing lifestyle and behaviour change guidance.
- 6.6 The team will work closely with other organisations to maximise the impact:
Councils:
- Identifying eligible households based on indices of deprivation.
 - Making referrals between internal housing, benefits and social care services.
 - Providing links to additional support.
- 6.7 Health sector:
- Targeting vulnerable residents via primary care networks.
 - Offering holistic support across health and housing issues.
 - Monitoring impacts on health outcomes.
- 6.8 Community groups:
- Engaging through trusted local networks.
 - Recruiting volunteer energy champions.
 - Providing grassroots intelligence on needs.
- 6.9 Charities:
- Reaching groups with specific needs e.g. elderly.
 - Embedding advice within existing support services.
 - Enabling joint-up holistic assistance.
- 6.10 The goal is to trial these innovative models of intensive in-person energy advice through practical demonstration, enabling evaluation of what works well before looking to replicate effective approaches on a wider scale.

7. West Lindsey District Council's Role

- 7.1 As part of the consortium, West Lindsey District Council has been proposed as the lead local authority for hosting the new energy advisor roles created by the grant funding. This will involve taking responsibility for:
- Recruiting and line managing the new staff: 1x Manager, 2x Advisors, 1x Support Officer.
 - Providing office accommodation, equipment and administrative support.
 - Ensuring smooth day-to-day operation of the advisory team.
 - Linking the team with other Wellbeing, Housing and Benefits services to identify residents needing assistance.

7.2 In return for hosting the posts, we will receive a proposed £10,000 as a contribution to management overhead and administrative costs.

Being the host authority enables us to:

- Directly shape, influence and monitor the delivery of this service locally.
- Align it closely with our own strategic objectives and existing initiatives.
- Build organisational capabilities in energy efficiency advice.
- Gain insights to inform future service development.

8. Key Performance Indicators

8.1 As part of the grant funding agreement, we have committed to demonstrate achievement of the following key performance indicators including:

Mandatory KPI's	2023/24	2024/25
	Totals	Totals
Number of people provided with in-person advice. KPI 1	298	502
Number of homes with measures installed following advice. KPI 2	108	162
Customer satisfaction with advice and empowerment levels (as a % of all users). KPI 3	75%	75%
Number of off-gas-grid homes with measures installed following advice.	25	37
Number of solid-walled homes with measures installed following advice.	20	25
Number of homes with clean heat technologies installed following advice (e.g., electric storage heaters, air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps).	10	15
Harder-to-treat homes identified locally, and barriers to retrofit identified and overcome. Project KPI 1	25	30
Vulnerable consumers identified locally, and barriers to retrofit identified and overcome. Project KPI 2	25	45

8.2 Performance will be monitored by GLEEN and Housing and Wellbeing Board, which provides important oversight of the service delivery. Regular meetings will be held with MNZH who will provide steering advice and guidance in this area. Funding can be adjusted or withdrawn if satisfactory progress towards targets is not demonstrated, but this is not thought to be a significant risk.

8.3 In summary, this grant funding provides an opportunity to significantly expand the energy efficiency advice and practical support we can provide to vulnerable households across West Lindsey and Lincolnshire.

8.4 The additional service proposed closely aligns with our council's strategic objectives around tackling inequality, improving wellbeing, supporting vulnerable residents and reducing carbon emissions.

8.5 Being the host organisation will allow us to shape delivery, monitor performance, demonstrate leadership and build our capabilities in this increasingly essential area.

8.6 Accepting this funding will highlight West Lindsey District Council's commitment to assisting those most in need while advancing our climate change goals through local action.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Committee welcome the receipt of £304,000 of funding to deliver the Local Energy Demonstrator Scheme in Central and South Lincolnshire.
2. Approval is given to enter into a Service Level Agreement with North Kesteven District Council for the delivery of the scheme.
3. That the following roles are approved and recruited to with immediate effect:
 - a. 1 x Home Energy Advice Manager
 - b. 2 x Home Energy Advisors
 - c. 1 x Administrative Support Officer