



<b>Report to:</b>	Grants Advisory Committee	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2024
<b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr John Williams – Lead Cabinet Member for Resources	
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Bode Esan – Head of Climate, Environment and Waste	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No	

---

## Net Zero Villages

### Executive Summary

1. South Cambridgeshire District Council has been awarded an allocation of £402,831.00 by the CPCA under the Net Zero Villages programme. 10% of this funding can be used for programme management costs.
2. The Grants Advisory Committee is asked to review the proposal for the delivery of the fund.
3. This report outlines the proposal for a grant scheme for the delivery of the funding.
4. This paper outlines the operational delivery options specifically for the grant scheme, which includes:
  - Proposed grant funding levels for the grant scheme.
  - Governance arrangements.

### Recommendations

5. The Grants Advisory Committee is asked to consider the following recommendations and give authority to proceed with proposal of fund delivery.
  - i) Allocate £362,547.90 to a grant scheme available for communities and businesses to apply for in financial year 2024/25.
  - ii) Agree governance arrangement and the grant funding level outlined in the report.

## Details

6. SCDC has a Net Zero Villages funding allocation of £402,831.00.
7. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is providing funding to enable its constituent districts to support rural communities to deliver capital projects to deliver reductions in greenhouse gases, towards achieving the objective of Net Zero emissions by 2050.
8. The fund is for capital projects on **community assets**, for example projects relating to buildings, land, indoor or outdoor equipment or other capital-related expenditure intended for community use. This includes upgrading, extending or improving facilities or purchasing capital items for community use spaces and places.
9. Projects will be accepted under three categories:
  - a. Tackling energy use and/or supporting energy efficiency or generation retrofit to community buildings.
  - b. Enabling access to public transport or access to local services through low carbon transport.
  - c. Nature based solutions to tackle overheating of community buildings.
10. The funding is designed for projects which:
  - a. demonstrate value for money;
  - b. encourage behaviour change within the community;
  - c. encourage wider community participation; and
  - d. offer solutions that can be replicated elsewhere.
11. Projects are eligible if they are in a location that excludes areas classified by the ONS as part of the Cambridge built-up area using the 2021 Census figures ([Built-up Areas Web map | Open Geography Portal \(statistics.gov.uk\)](#)). This means that the areas of Milton, Histon and Impington, Orchard Park, Girton, Trumpington, Great and Little Shelford, Fulbourn, Teversham and Fen Ditton are excluded.
12. The scheme is for CAPITAL expenditure only.
13. The spending of the fund is profiled over two years. 50% is allocated up front (upon signing of the grant funding agreement) and 50% at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, providing that 80% of the initial funding payment has been approved by South Cambridgeshire District Council. 10% of the funding can be treated as revenue for programme management. The funding split is thus set out below.

Year 1 (24/25)	£181,273.95
Year 2 (25/26)	£181,273.95
Programme management	£40,283.10

<b>Total</b>	<b>£402,831.00</b>
--------------	--------------------

14. The grant scheme will be open from December 2024. This will be dependent on having a Grant Funding Agreement in place with the CPCA as the lead authority prior to launching the grant scheme (we do not yet have this agreement signed).
15. The grant scheme will be open to community groups, parish councils and businesses to apply for funding for projects which align with the grant criteria and eligibility (Appendix 1).
16. The grant scheme is designed considering lessons learnt from the delivery of previous grant schemes, including the Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme and the Rural England Prosperity Fund scheme.
17. The proposed operational delivery of the grants scheme is as follows:
  - i) Will consist of a Grant Criteria and Guidance (Appendix 1)
  - ii) An Officer Panel with Lead Cabinet Member will review eligibility of every application using a scoring matrix. Once deemed eligible, applications will then be submitted to the Grants Advisory Committee.
  - iii) The Grants Advisory Committee will then review and recommend applications to the Lead Cabinet Member (grants under £25k) or Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Finance Member (grants between £25k & £125k) for final determination.
  - iv) The CPCA does not require match funding, however, it does encourage projects which deliver value for money.
  - v) Due diligence will be carried out on all applications and will include a range of fraud checks, ensuring businesses are registered on Companies House and are registered and operate in South Cambridgeshire. We will also be working with colleagues from the internal audit and fraud teams to ensure that all due diligence is carried out on both business and community group applications.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

18. The Net Zero Villages grants scheme provides an opportunity to offer much-needed funding to support communities in their efforts to reduce carbon emissions.
19. The grant scheme will offer larger funding amounts to communities for projects which meet the grant criteria, than those which have previously been available through grant schemes, such as the Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme.

## **Options**

1. To proceed with Capital project and grants scheme as outlined in the report.

2. Do not accept outlined proposal, and do not proceed with the Net Zero Villages Funding

## **Implications**

20. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

- i) Financial implications - 80% of the initial payment must be approved by the end of f/y 24/25 for South Cambridgeshire District Council to receive the following 50% funding. There is therefore a risk that if this initial funding is not allocated (due to poor interest), the following 50% will not be received.
- ii) Legal implications - currently we do not have any Grant Funding Agreement in place with the CPCA, however we are in the processing of agreeing this for sign off.
- iii) Time constraints - there is a year-end spending deadline for 25/26. Any funds not spent at this time must be returned.
- iv) Reputation Implications – If the Council cannot spend the funding required within this financial year, it may impact on the reputation of the Council to deliver this and similar funding streams through the Combined Authority.

## **Consultation responses**

21. No organisations have been consulted due to the short lead-in times of this funding programme.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **Being green to our core**

22. This funding supports the Green to our Core priority in supporting communities to reduce their carbon emissions and in doing so, advance towards the Council's target of supporting the district to reach net zero by 2050.

## **Background Papers**

Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Wednesday 31 July, 2024 – Climate Programme

<https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/documents/s982/Climate%20Programme.pdf>

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Draft Grant Criteria and Guidance

**Report Author:**

**Eleanor Haines** - Climate and Environment Development Officer

Telephone: 07980781438