

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Net Zero Villages Project Proposal, 2024/25

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) Panel, 5th December 2024

Executive Portfolio: Councillor Lara Davenport-Ray, Executive Councillor for Climate Transformation & Workforce

Report by: Harriet Robinson, Climate Coordinator, Parks, Countryside and Climate - Operations

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Net Zero Villages (NZV) funding has been provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to enable Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) to support rural communities to deliver capital projects deemed appropriate to deliver reductions in greenhouse gases, towards achieving the objective of Net Zero emissions by 2050.

The NZV Grant Scheme project aligns with the following goals within our corporate plan and climate strategy:

- Corporate Plan – Enable - support of community projects and plans that reduce carbon emissions. It
- Climate Strategy – Encourage - Work with communities and partners to support climate action across the district
- Climate Strategy – Enabler – Support schemes that help communities and businesses reduce emissions and use renewable energy

The CPCA have provided a budget of £285,974 for this project, which is required to be launched by 31st December 2024. Applicants will have the opportunity to request between £5,000 - £50,000 in grant money. The grant is for capital projects only for community assets e.g. buildings, land, equipment or other capital-related expenditure. This includes upgrades, extensions and improvement of facilities or purchasing of capital items for community use spaces and places. The project must demonstrate a reduction in carbon emissions.

HDC has been given the flexibility to decide which capital projects it selects and the methodology it uses. It is recommended that it follows the course of previous grants, such as Huntingdonshire Futures and Community Chest grants. Once the application deadline has passed, they will be considered by the Grants Panel with relevant Officer support, with the successful applications being announced on the 14th March 2024. HDC will be responsible for managing and monitoring the

progress of each project, reporting back to the CPCA and ensuring projects are all completed by 28th February 2026.

RECOMMENDED

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to note the contents of the report and Net Zero Villages Grant Scheme.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline how the Net Zero Village Grant Scheme will be run.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 HDC has been offered funding of £285,974 from the Combined Authority. Titled 'Net Zero Villages' this grant will enable rural villages to make effective changes towards reducing their carbon emissions. The funds must demonstrate that they match one of the descriptions in the key categories, demonstrate carbon reduction impact and show that the projects will be value for money. The total pot of money across all Districts totals £1 million. Please see Appendix 4 for further information concerning eligible and ineligible criteria.
- 2.2 All District Councils within the Cambridgeshire area have been offered funding with exception areas as detailed below:

Council area	Excluded areas
East Cambridgeshire District Council	Ely, Soham
Fenland District Council	Chatteris, March, Wisbech, Whittlesey
Huntingdonshire District Council	Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Those areas classified by ONS as part of Cambridge built-up area.
Peterborough City Council	Excluding Peterborough City area

- 2.3 Consideration has been given into other forms of applications include expressions of interest and subsequent application but given time constraints it is recommended that the current method of the grant schemes we have in place is an effective way to manage the NZV scheme as well.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 It is proposed that the NZV scheme will run in a similar vein to the Community Chest grants with final approval made by the Grants Panel.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 4.1 Risks include: projects overrunning, inaccurate carbon emission reduction measurement, inadequate monitoring of project and failure of project delivery

5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 The timetable for implementation will be as follows:

Title	Responsibility	Due Date
Project Plan Completion	Climate Coordinator	20/12/2024
Hire Project Support Coordinator	Climate Coordinator	December 2024 - January 2025*
Launch Scheme	Climate Coordinator, Comms Team and Additional Stakeholders	31/12/2024
Grant Application Period	Applicants	Between 31/12/2024 through to 28/02/2025
Application Consideration Period	Net Zero Villages Board	Between 01/03/2025 and 12/03/2024
Successful applications announced	NZV Project Team	14/03/2025

*subject to candidate availability and notice periods

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

[\(See Corporate Plan\)](#)

- Corporate Plan – Enable - Support Of Community Projects And Plans That Reduce Carbon Emissions.
- Climate Strategy – Encourage - Work With Communities And Partners To Support Climate Action Across The District
- Climate Strategy – Enabler – Support Schemes That Help Communities And Businesses Reduce Emissions And Use Renewable Energy

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The scheme must launch by 31st December 2024. Projects must be submitted in line with the grant criteria by 28th February 2025. Successful

projects will be announced on 14th March 2025. The projects must complete by 28th February 2026.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The breakdown of costs is as follows:

Total Budget	Admin Allocation (10%)	On Costs from Admin Spend (31%)	Budget for New Staff Hire	Remaining Spend for Projects
£285,974	£28,597.40	£8,885.19	£19,732.21	£257,376.60

9. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The work that shall be undertaken for this project will directly contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon emissions.

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There will be a requirement for HR resource during the recruitment of the Net Zero Villages Project Support Officer

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

11.1 The NZV grants scheme provides an opportunity to offer much-needed funding to support communities in their efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 –the CPCA Net Zero Villages Application Criteria

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Net Zero Villages Programme Grant Funding Agreement

CONTACT OFFICER

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Appendix 1 – Eligible and Ineligible Criteria as provided by the CPCA

Projects are eligible if they are in a location that excludes the urban areas as shown below:

Council Area	Excluded Areas
Huntingdonshire District Council	Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives

Using the ONS definition of built-up areas, Census 2021 figures

Criteria	Description
Project categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackle energy use and/or support energy efficiency or generation retrofit to community buildings Enabling access to public transport or access to local services through low carbon transport Nature based solutions to tackle overheating of community buildings
Measure and impact as appropriate from this list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Emission reduction Reduction in energy consumption Reduction in running cost of community facilities Reduce overheating of a building Demonstrator project that can be replicated Number of the community engaged or changes in behaviour
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project represent value for money – is there a significant impact for the amount of money requested?

Ineligible projects

- Funding of Electric Vehicle charge points (as their alternative Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding coming)
- New gas or oil boilers
- Projects solely seeking to repair, maintain or renew due to normal wear and tear
- Projects that are not intended for community use

- Projects that have the potential to cause detrimental impacts upon the wider determinants of health
- Organisations previously awarded funding within 3 years, where the UK Subsidy Control limits will be exceeded.
- Private households, businesses premises or public sector buildings (i.e. local authority or blue light services. Parish Council owned facilities and buildings **are** eligible).