

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - CCC655770531

Which service and directorate are you submitting this for (this may not be your service and directorate):

Directorate	Service	Team
Place and Sustainability	Climate and Energy Services	Climate and Energy Staffing Budgets

Your name: Christopher Parkin

Your job title: Community Energy Manager

Your directorate, service and team:

Directorate	Service	Team
Place and Sustainability	Climate and Energy Services	Climate and Energy Staffing Budgets

Your phone: 01223715909

Your email: Christopher.Parkin@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Proposal being assessed: Community Energy Action Plan

Business plan proposal number: 2024/084

Key service delivery objectives and outcomes: To facilitate a Just Transition to a clean energy system in support of Council Ambitions 1 (Net Zero by 2045), 5 (alleviation of poverty) and 6 (Places and communities prosper) by mobilising and supporting communities to: develop, own and operate their own community energy projects e.g. rooftop solar on community buildings, a community solar farm or wind turbine; promote uptake of existing central government grants for: domestic heat pumps; and for insulation, heat pumps and solar PV on low income, low energy efficiency homes; raise awareness of innovative energy tariffs that can save residents money; encourage neighbourhood domestic retrofit initiatives; raise awareness of climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency.

What is the proposal: To adopt an Action Plan setting out how the Council will support communities to benefit from the transition to a clean energy system.

What information did you use to assess who would be affected by this proposal?:

Stakeholder engagement workshops. Consult Cambs stakeholder engagement exercise from 8th July - 16th September 2024

Are there any gaps in the information you used to assess who would be affected by this proposal?: No

Does the proposal cover: All service users/customers/service provision countywide

Which particular employee groups/service user groups will be affected by this proposal?:

Cambridgeshire community energy and environment groups developing or interested in developing

local clean energy initiatives. Residents living in these communities.

Does the proposal relate to the equality objectives set by the Council's EDI Strategy?:Yes

Will people with particular protected characteristics or people experiencing socio-economic inequalities be over/under represented in affected groups: About in line with the population

Does the proposal relate to services that have been identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics/who are experiencing socio-economic inequalities?: Yes

Does the proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?:No

What is the significance of the impact on affected persons?:The proposal relates to EDI Strategy objectives 6 & 7. The Action Plan aims to increase connection with Cambridgeshire's communities, encourage people to actively participate in community energy and domestic energy efficiency retrofit and to enable residents to reduce their energy bills (by reducing demand and accessing cheaper electricity) whilst also reducing their carbon footprint. The proposed actions include facilitating the set up of a county-wide community energy co-op which can provide expertise to support communities across the county to develop their own community energy projects. The Action Plan also includes an Education & Awareness raising action. In line with comments received from the Consult Cambs stakeholder survey one focus of this action will be to ensure communities in areas with high Indices of Multiple Deprivation are included in Education & Awareness raising activity and that opportunities open to such communities are shared with them.

Category of the work being planned:Policy

Is it foreseeable that people from any protected characteristic group(s) or people experiencing socio-economic inequalities will be impacted by the implementation of this proposal (including during the change management process)?: Yes

Please select: Socio-economic inequalities

Research, data and /or statistical evidence:The Action Plan aims to benefit those experiencing socio-economic inequality and fuel poverty by providing support to reduce their energy bills by uptake of Government grant funded energy efficiency upgrades and by accessing cheaper electricity tariffs (where available). The actions also aim to support communities by setting up a county wide community energy co-op who will have the expertise and resource to support communities who lack the skills to develop community energy projects unaided.

Consultation evidence: An open stakeholder engagement exercise was run from 8th July to 16th September 2024 on Consult Cambs. 140 responses were received. These were primarily from individual residents although 5 parish councils, 4 voluntary groups and 2 businesses responded. 82% of responses supported the Council adopting the Action Plan. Support for the individual actions proposed ranged from 72% to 85% with 11% to 20% opposed. The highest level of support was for promoting uptake of domestic energy efficiency grants.

Based on all the evidence you have reviewed/gathered, what positive impacts are anticipated from this proposal?: Reduction in energy bills; increased investment from Government grants and residents; reductions in energy consumption via domestic energy efficiency retrofit; reduction in bills via energy efficiency measures and access to cheaper electricity tariffs; increased deployment of renewable electricity generation; accelerated decarbonisation of

domestic heating.

Based on consultation evidence or similar, what negative impacts are anticipated from this proposal?: None. The risk of the Council's support being disproportionately taken up by more affluent communities was raised by stakeholders and is noted. Community solar and wind turbine projects are generally funded by investment from residents in the community. This is likely to be less viable for residents in less affluent areas. However, opportunities for these areas exist including a higher level of eligibility for Government grant funded domestic energy efficiency retrofit and via more socially enlightened commercial energy developers e.g. Octopus Energy's Fan Club scheme which offers residents near one of their wind turbines a 20% discount on their electricity increasing to 50% whenever the turbine is generating. We will ensure that the Education & Awareness raising action has differentiated offerings tailored to individual communities.

How will the process of change be managed?: Engagement with community energy and domestic retrofit is entirely voluntary. The draft Action Plan proposes supporting communities including with training, route maps and materials for making local residents aware of available grant funding etc. Utilising community groups to engage with their residents aims to ensure sensitive engagement. Training can include consideration of protected characteristics/socio-economic inequalities.

How will the impacts during the change process be monitored and improvements made (where required)?: One of the proposed actions is to employ a Council Development Officer to support community groups. This officer will monitor implementation of the Action Plan and serve as a contact point for complaints and concerns about any negative impacts. Monitoring will include recording number of projects supported, number of residents engaged, feedback on Education & Awareness raising events, projected bill savings delivered and projected carbon savings delivered.

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan:

Details of negative impact (e.g. worse treatment/outcomes)	Groups affected	Severity of impact	Action to mitigate impact with reasons/evidence to support this or justification for retaining negative impact	Who by	When by

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Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a risk that more affluent communities will be more engaged with community energy and domestic retrofit and capture more benefit than more deprived communities	Socio-economic inequalities	Low	The Action Plan aims to mitigate the above by: using community groups to promote uptake of means-tested government grants, specifically targeted at the less well-off; bringing together expertise in developing community energy projects into a county-wide community energy co-op that can support communities who might otherwise struggle with the skills and resource to develop their own community energy projects; education and awareness raising activity to make communities aware of the benefits others are realising and boost confidence in engaging in energy projects; tailored education and awareness raising activities for communities with high Indices of Multiple Deprivation.	Community Energy Development Office	31/03/2027

Head of service: Sheryl French

Head of service email: sheryl.french@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Confirmation: I confirm that this HoS is correct