

Report for: Economy and Assets PDG

Date of Meeting: 19 September 2024

Subject: Green Enterprise Grants Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Regeneration

Responsible Officer: Richard Marsh, Director of Place

Exempt: N/A

Wards Affected: All wards

Enclosures: N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To update Members on the Green Enterprise Grants and overview of post project evaluation.

Recommendation:

- 1. That members note the contents of the report.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Green Enterprise Grants Scheme, which was open for applications between April and June 2024.

2.0 Green Enterprise Grants

- 2.1 Following a successful bid to the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (Local Growth Fund), we ran a Green Enterprise Grant Scheme

offering small capital grants (between £500 and £5,000) to carbon reduction projects that could be delivered by 31 December 2024.

- 2.2 Given the programme’s short timescale, the relatively small amount of funding and unknown demand, the Scheme was run as a pilot to enable us to explore demand and to learn from the process.
- 2.3 In total, we awarded £24,484.66 funding (£24,245.00 funding from the LEP and £239.66 from the Economic Projects budget). The funding was able to support five businesses with carbon reduction projects as follows:

Business	Project	Grant Amount	kgCO ₂ e avoided pa
Dolphin Stairlifts	Solar panels	£5,000.00	1,275.00
Swallow Court Devon Ltd	Energy efficient lighting	£5,000.00	1,951.00
Moore Inns Ltd T/A The Globe Inn	Solar panels	£4,541.66	6,200.00
Kirton Kayaks	Energy efficient lighting	£5,000.00	2,126.76
Thunderflower Ltd	Solar panels	£4,943.00	1,849.48
		£24,484.66	13,402.24

3.0 Performance and Evaluation

- 3.1 Our targets committed with the funding bid are as follows:

Objective	Target	Actual
Enterprises receiving grant support	5	5 (achieved)
Kg CO ₂ emissions avoided	1,000	13,402.24 (projected)
Match spend	£24,245.00	£51,132.74 (projected)

- 3.2 A post-project evaluation highlighted feedback on the scheme including:

- **Business Engagement:** There was a sensible level of interest in the scheme with 14 enquiries and others on a funding alert email list. However, businesses that had proactively engaged with the programme team (asking questions and seeking advice) were more likely to proceed to full application.
- **Timescales and Lead-in Times:** Businesses need considerable time to bring together the required information for their application as well as to schedule in delivery / works at a time that is convenient for the business and their supplier / installer. The short delivery timescale required by the LEP meant that a few businesses experienced some difficulty obtaining the required quotes.
- **Statutory Compliance (Planning):** The application criteria made it clear that if planning consent is required for the project / development, then consent must be obtained prior to submitting an application. However, there is the potential for risk where some projects (such as solar panels)

could either fall under Permitted Development Rights or require Planning Permission. We had one unsuccessful funding application where due to the proximity to a Listed Building, the solar panels required Permission, which had not been secured.

- **Scale of Scheme:** The maximum grant of £5,000 was appropriate for this small-scale scheme, particularly given that businesses are likely to make energy / cost savings and there are a number of grant schemes that could potentially match fund as well as, in some circumstances, payment schemes for the generation of renewable power.
- **Commercial Property Ownership:** We noted that the majority of the applicants either own or are in the process of purchasing their properties. We are aware that across the District, some businesses have short lease terms or licence agreements and whilst these provide a business with flexibility, it is not necessarily a basis upon which a business might consider investing in energy efficient solutions for a property. Therefore, it is important that for any future schemes, property owners are aware and support grant investment in their commercial properties. In the case of our applicants, one was a commercial landlord providing small business suites. In that instance, the project benefit (reduced energy bills) is enjoyed by the occupying tenants but would not have been achievable without the landlord's direct intervention and support.

3.3 Overall, the grant scheme is viewed to be a successful pilot project. The PDG is asked to note that there is the potential to run a second phase to follow the pilot, subject to securing funding. The team is in liaison with the Council's Climate and Sustainability Specialist and finance colleagues looking at options for a possible extension to the scheme, or a Phase 2 and further information will be presented in due course. .

Financial Implications

The report is an information report and does not of itself have any financial implications and require any decisions.

It is hoped that the report demonstrates that the Economy and Growth team is achieving in line with expectations in terms of the successful utilisation of grant monies and other financial resources.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this information report.

Risk Assessment

There are no further risks associated with the updates in this report that have not already been reported.

Impact on Climate Change

The Green Enterprise Grants Scheme seeks to reduce carbon emissions through capital investment.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The Grants Scheme is supported by equality and risk assessments. As outlined in the report, there is a lower application rate from businesses without secure long-term tenures therefore we are highlighting the need to engage with landlords / property owners in any future scheme to ensure all businesses can access the funding opportunity.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The work of the Growth, Economy and Delivery team supports the corporate objectives for the economy:

- Bringing new businesses into the District
- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 11.9.24

Statutory Officer: Maria DeLeiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 11.9.24

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh

Agreed by Corporate Director

Date: 11.9.24

Performance and risk: Dr Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 11.9.24

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Zoë Lentell, Economic Development Team Leader

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Background papers: