

DECC Local Authority Funds

ANNEX A

Application Form

APPLICATION FORM

Please note: completed bids should be submitted by 5pm on 30th November 2012 by email to la.funds@decc.gsi.gov.uk

SECTION 1: To be completed by all applicants

1.1 Applicant Details	
Lead Local Authority	
Name of Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Name of contact within the Local Authority	Nicole Cook
Address	Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods Floor N Town Hall Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council BB1 7DY
Telephone number of contact	01254 588863
Email address of contact	nicole.cook@blackburn.gov.uk
Other participating Local Authorities (add rows as needed)	
Name of Local Authority	Burnley BC, Chorley BC, Fylde BC, Hyndburn BC, Lancaster CC, Pendle BC, Preston CC, Ribble Valley BC, Rossendale BC, South Ribble BC, West Lancashire BC & Wyre BC
Name of contact within the Local Authority	Mike Waite, Martin Sample, John Cottam, Sarah Whittaker, Dan Wood, Gill Dickson, Andrea Howe, John Barber, Adrian Smith, Pradip Patel, Laura Lea, Mark Broadhurst
Address	All contact details can be provided on request.
Telephone number of contact	
Email address of contact	

1.2 Proposal Summary

Describe the proposal and how it will be delivered. What will it achieve? Who will it benefit? (max 300 words)

The fuel switching project will use the existing Lancashire Energy Officers Group as the delivery mechanism. The Group was established over 10 years ago and acts as a best practice forum as well as a delivery mechanism for joint home energy projects.

Within the bid timeframe and processes it is considered to be prudent to adopt the Oldham procurement process. An expression of interest for the Lancashire authorities has already been made to Oldham's procurement team who are leading on behalf of AGMA authorities. The Lancashire Group would normally include Blackpool Council, but on this occasion, because the authority is already very advanced with a procurement exercise they will be continuing independently.

It is proposed to undertake a comprehensive marketing campaign to engage residents across the County in an energy supplier auction. The target is to reach as broad a spectrum of socio-economic groups as possible, but there are also a range of mechanisms, databases and delivery partners within the individual Councils who will work alongside the authorities to target the vulnerable and fuel poor. The partnerships include those already formed to deliver *Warm Home Healthy People* projects.

If successful It is intended to get a critical mass by the beginning of March with the expectation to reach a minimum initial target group of 15,000 residents to participate in the first auction. There is an aim that at least 25% of residents of the overall group would be considered "fuel poor".

Promotional activity will encompass a broad range of marketing techniques, from radio, bus shelter advertising, leaflets, posters, website as well as through the emerging media of Facebook and Twitter. Additionally through partner organisations and networks, promotion will be carried out in Doctors surgeries, schools, supermarkets, community and faith groups.

1.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Describe how your proposal has been developed and will be delivered with local partners – to ensure that delivery of measures reflects local conditions on the ground. (max 200 words)

Lancashire has some of the worst housing stock in Britain. Problems with dampness, cold and poor maintenance make it difficult to maintain good health and well-being particularly for the most vulnerable members of society.

Addressing affordable warmth has been established as one of the initial priorities of the Lancashire Health & Wellbeing Board, we have strategic support for our bid from a broad range of agencies and partners with influence.

Existing partnerships and engagement mechanisms are in place. A clear example of this are our successful Warm Homes Healthy People partnerships operating across a broad range of statutory, voluntary and third sector agencies.

The continuing upward trend in energy prices, coupled with varying levels of customer “know how” in terms of their understanding of how to switch supplier exacerbates these problems.

A gap in the provision of advice relating to fuel switching was identified previously within Winter Warmth workshops throughout Lancashire and this project would seek to fill that gap.

In several districts, key housing associations and Council for Voluntary Service have been involved in developing the plans, and are committed to engaging with their tenants and service users to promote fuel switching. Third sector and voluntary partners have indicated that they will assist in helping register vulnerable residents.

1.4 Value for Money

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Demonstrate how the proposal will ensure value for money and generate net benefits.

The proposed initiative will establish a collective energy switching scheme for the County to enable households across Lancashire to easily engage with the gas and electricity markets and get the best deal for the energy they use.

As there is strength in numbers, a collective energy switching scheme on this scale will maximise impact. It is expected that by engaging together across the County, there will be a larger offering to take to auction market which will give a more effective and attractive proposal for the fuel utilities, effectively achieving considerable economies of scale.

The project seeks to engage residents in long term fuel switching by helping them to help themselves. Therefore the value for money is in the long term savings over 20+ years, year on year that residents will achieve through repeatedly seeking the best deal.

The intention is to achieve a long term culture change which produces not only savings made year on year, but will generate "added value" via friends and family being influenced and encouraged to commit to repeatedly pursue the best energy deal for themselves.

There are already delivery mechanisms in place so no new systems require establishing only a new branding message.

It is envisaged the scale of the initial offering and future auctions will impact on the economic well being of residents across the county. The money saved will be either brought back into the local community or invested back into homes to ensure homes are warmer which results in improved health and a reduction on the impact on health services.

The project complements the bid for Fuel Poverty work which will identify the same customer base and reduce marketing costs.

By engaging in this way there is an opportunity to form a customer base for starting to deliver the Green deal and ECO.

Evidence from elsewhere suggests that residents are often paying £200-£300 per year more than they need to for energy costs because they are not on the most efficient energy tariff. It is difficult to estimate the savings that will be delivered, but on the scale we are proposing we aim to deliver fuel bill savings for our residents in excess of £1.5-£3m

1.5 Project Milestones

Please give a brief summary of the key milestones from your project plan (including dates). The project should plan for delivery by **31st March 2013**. Describe briefly who will deliver it and what will have been achieved by that date and an assessment of the risks to delivery.

- 4th December 2012 - Lancashire Energy officers group pre-plan proposed activity, analyse demographic data, detail time frame and critical path analysis, develop the risk plan and Marketing messages
- 17th December-2nd January – Develop training package and associated materials.
- 2nd January-21st January- Train staff and volunteers/begin marketing (including letter)
- 28th January – 9th March Conduct Consumer engagement
- 14th March – Auction
- 18th March- 25th March Evaluate results
- 25th March – Evaluation workshop

Project Risks

Risk	How likely is the event?	How serious would the effect be	Action taken to prevent risk
Failure to deliver training in timescale	L	H	Ensure staff and volunteers are previously identified
Failure to recruit enough customers	M	H	Targeted marketing – volunteers and staff thoroughly trained to manage expectations and respond to concerns
Tight delivery timescales	M	H	Clear project and risk plan developed. Energy Officer Group to act as “project manager” to guide delivery against budget and timescales

1.6a Proposal Funding

DECC has three funds from which Local Authorities can bid for support. Please indicate which fund(s) you would like to bid for (and the amount) in the table below, and continue on to the relevant part of the application form.

Fund	Funding (£000s)			Complete...
	Capital	Programme	Total	
Fuel Poverty Fund				Section 2 + 6
Green Deal Fund				Section 3 + 6
Collective Switching Fund			139	Section 4 + 6

1.6b Other sources of funding (where applicable)

Please provide details of other sources of funding for the project.

Funding source	Capital	Programme	Total
In Kind Local Authority Officer time		20	20

SECTION 2

FUEL POVERTY FUND

2.1 Impact on Fuel Poverty

Describe how the proposal will help to reduce the extent of fuel poverty. (max 200 words)

2.2 Targeting

Explain how the fund will be targeted. (max 200 words)

2.3 Strategic Fit

Describe how your programme is consistent with other aspects of the Government's fuel poverty strategy (and/or local relevant strategic priorities) (max 200 words)

2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

a) Set out how key performance indicators will be monitored during the project.

b) Describe your plan for evaluation of the project.

2.5 Project Costs

Provide brief details of the main costs of the project.

Deliverable	£000s

SECTION 3

Green Deal Pioneer Places Fund (in completing this section applicants should demonstrate how the proposal addresses the primary purpose and desired outcomes set out in the Green Deal fund guidance notes at section 3 above)

3.1 Required information

Green Deal ready plans: LAs would create a portfolio of households ready to enter into Green Deal plans between 28 January 2013 and 31 March 2013.

Cost Information	Capital	Programme	Total
Total Cost			
Cost breakdown from DECC fund: <i>[provide details below on how the DECC fund would be utilised]</i>			
Estimated funding from Green Deal Providers/ECO			
Required Funding Deliverables	Number	Capital	Programme
Total expected number of households to sign up to a Green Deal plan as a result of the programme			
Total expected number of businesses to sign up to a Green Deal plan as a result of the programme			
Expected demand legacy: (# GD plans from city events/show homes/Health Links)			
Further useful metrics			
Number of households to have solid wall insulation			
Number of businesses to have solid wall insulation			
Total Assessments (30% conversion from assessment to Green Deal – see Annex B)			
Number of local show homes and planned events			
List, where appropriate, of local partners			

3.2 Delivering Green Deal and driving future demand

How will the DECC funding be used to deliver Green Deal and stimulate/drive more demand in the future? Is there a legacy plan in place? (max 400 words)

3.2 Delivering Green Deal and driving future demand

3.3 Leveraging additional funding

How will the DECC funding be used to lever in additional funding to support the proposal? (max 200 words)

3.4 Innovation & local partnerships

3.4 Innovation & local partnerships

Summarise how the proposal demonstrates innovative plans for building demand for the Green Deal and how you propose to involve local partners? (max 300 words)

3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

a) Set out how key performance indicators will be monitored during the project.

b) Describe your plan for evaluation of the project.

3.6 HECA

How would your proposal link with your HECA report for March 2013? (max 200 words)

SECTION 4

'Cheaper Energy Together' Scheme

4.1 Engagement with Vulnerable Consumers

Describe how the proposed scheme will effectively engage with vulnerable consumers and the approaches that will be taken. Describe who the customers are and how many you expect to engage with. (max 200 words)

By using a wide range of innovative community engagement methods in the various towns and cities for example the Citizen Zone in Preston which offers a staffed, mobile technology centre and can be used by residents in various locations across the county as a promotional aid and will be used to “sign up” residents in hard to reach areas.

The project will also actively target individuals and households who are classified as being in or vulnerable to fuel poverty. This will be done via a range of Third sector organisations who deliver work within the County as well as the local councils. Councils will target residents via a review of housing benefit data, by targeting those impacted by welfare reform, targeting known areas of deprivation and from information being compiled to support ECO..

Housing associations and the CVS have also been involved in developing the plans to promote the switching. The project will be publicised through www.feedbackonline.org.uk.

Particular work will be done to engage with vulnerable, hard to reach groups including face to face sessions and discussions through voluntary sector organisations. “Community Champions” will be trained to deliver these sessions.

Evaluation of the successful community engagement methods will be shared across the country.

4.2 Innovation in Design of Scheme

Describe how the proposed scheme will demonstrate innovation – in the design of the scheme and in the ways of engaging with consumers. (max 200 words)

By trialling a wide range of innovative engagement methods across different areas of the county it is proposed to identify the best methods of engaging with hard to reach residents.

By using Facebook and Twitter it is proposed to engage with a different range of residents. By using a mobile technology centre, which can be staffed with trained volunteers and located in areas across the county which have been identified as fuel poor and contain some of the more traditional hard to reach groups. These groups often have no access to technology and may be more reluctant to grasp the opportunity to fuel switch unless they are given support.

We are also proposing to market fuel switching in doctor’s surgeries using “life channel” which is a tv channel running information adverts in surgeries and chemists.

We are proposing to undertake a face to face contact campaign in Pendle utilising existing community initiatives to prepare and support vulnerable residents with the switching process whilst also promoting energy efficiency measures in the home.

4.3 Strategic Fit

Describe how the proposed scheme will take a holistic approach to reducing consumers' energy bills. (max 200 words)

The project will see a collaboration between the district, unitary and county council using a targeted grass roots approach to engage with the most fuel poor individuals/households. The project will spearhead a range of activities that the councils are leading on to develop a cohesive and inclusive approach to the energy agenda.

The project seeks to complement the work being undertaken using Warm Homes Healthy People Fund and will enable various messages to be re-enforced.

The project partners see the investment by DECC as the first step in a long term approach to addressing fuel poverty and encouraging a community wide behaviour change to ensure further households do not fall into fuel poverty in the future.

The project fits with the Affordable Warmth Strategies developed across Lancashire, as well as the Draft Integrated Strategic Needs Assessment together with Lancashire's Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

This project will also complement the Lancashire bid for Fuel Poverty Insulation measures as well as the Blackburn bid for the pilot specialist insulation measures.

The project also fits with the HECA strategy being developed jointly by Lancashire authorities.

4.4 Evaluation

Describe how the scheme plans to capture and share learning. (max 200 words)

By using a range of methods to engage with local residents and recording the data of residents who have engaged and fuel switched the project will be able to evaluate the best engagement methods for various socio-demographic groups.

Evaluation of the project is critical in order to secure better long term outcomes and assist the process of continuous improvement in delivering energy related advice and interventions.

We are proposing to undertake a review of the project's achievements, lessons learned, areas of added value in a workshop setting that draws together the findings. The information will be drawn together in a case study which can be disseminated nationally. The workshop will also identify the implications for future activity and the potential for participation in the Green Deal and ECO.

It is also proposed to evaluate the social return on investment (SROI) on completion of the project using questionnaires and energy bills in a face to face setting with residents who have participated. It is also proposed to use methodology from Measuring Change Survey to estimate the health and wellbeing cost savings to residents.

4.5 Transparency

Describe how the proposed scheme will communicate transparently to ensure consumers are informed and understand it, and are provided with key pieces of information – such as any expected savings to be made by switching – that are accurate and not misleading. (max 200 words)

The way in which the project can communicate transparency is by using the trusted branding of the local authority to gain trust and secure initial engagement.

Following initial engagement, securing a switch will rely on providing unbiased, transparent advice that genuinely secures a better deal for the resident at that time.

It is expected that Council partners will:

- Provide overall project management support
- Provide communications support/advice for marketing activities and access to Council communication channels
- Highlight/Signpost the scheme to residents who may be interested through frontline services
- Provide support/advice for vulnerable residents who may be interested in the scheme

Part of the issue with fuel switching is the confusion that is associated with what exactly represents the best deal for consumers. It is vital that all communication is in plain English and not biased to any one energy provider. It is also essential that residents especially the more vulnerable and fuel poor are supported to switch.

It is envisaged that after the auction residents will be notified in writing of any savings and will be free to make their own decision as to whether the savings made by switching are substantial enough for them to go ahead.

4.6 Project Costs

Provide brief details of the main activities that funding is requested for and the costs of the project.

Deliverable	£000s
a. Project Management – in kind support from Energy Officers	20
b. Project support/delivery – Face to Face Campaigns	20
C .Marketing	
Press Adverts (4 Newspapers)	12
Bill Boards (2 Town centres)	7

4.6 Project Costs

Bus Shelters (75)	11
Radio adverts (4 stations)	8
Posters	4
Window Stickers	2
Art work & design	2
Leaflets 400,000	16
Direct Mail across Fylde, Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley & Preston & Wyre Councils through benefit database	15
Mass leaflet drops across the county	30
Training for frontline staff and community champion volunteers through Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS	8
Life Channel advert in 18 Doctor's Surgeries	2
Website design and links	2
Total cost of project during 2012-13	159
Total funding contribution required from DECC	139

SECTION 5

Renewable Heat Survey - Optional

DECC is seeking information to inform our policies on support for renewable heating. We have included this short survey to gauge interest levels amongst Local Authorities in developing the local renewable heat market.

Do you have any interest in developing the local renewable heat supply?

YES/NO

If 'yes', please describe any plans you have, **INCLUDING** plans that have not been developed due to lack of funding.

If applicable, what benefits do you aim to achieve through developing local renewable heating? (Please select all that apply)

Tackle fuel poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support for technical innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduce emissions from heating	<input type="checkbox"/>	To engage local people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for local installers	<input type="checkbox"/>	To gain learning about renewables	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please elaborate)	<input type="text"/>		

What funding might be required to deliver these plans?

(This will give us an indication of the scale of your ambition)

If applicable, have you encountered any difficulty securing funds?

SECTION 6

To be completed by all applicants

6.1 Declaration

The project funding that is being applied for is to fund either a new project in relation to which no funding has been allocated or to extend an existing project. The funding will not be used to replace existing funding for a project.

We confirm that local and community organisations are involved in the design or delivery of this proposal, where appropriate.

We confirm that the proposed use of the fund will comply with all relevant requirements of EU law (e.g. relating to procurement and State Aid law).

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