



Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee	Agenda Item
11 September 2023	11

Title:	GSE Net Zero Hub Board Decisions
Report of:	Maxine Narburgh
Lead Member:	Councillor Bridget Smith
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

Recommendations:

A	To note the decisions made by the Executive Director of Resources & Performance based on the recommendations of the Greater South East Net Zero Hub Board
---	---

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

X	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
	Achieving good growth
	Increased connectivity
X	Enabling resilient communities
	Achieving best value and high performance

The GSE NZH provides technical assistance and grant administration to support decarbonisation and net zero. Objective 4, Place & Connectivity Business Plan is to deliver the Local Net Zero programmes of work to: i) achieve good growth ii) ambitious skills and employment opportunities and iii) resilient communities.

1. Purpose

1.1	On the 26 July 2023 the CPCA Board delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources & Performance (or substitute) to make decisions on behalf of the Combined Authority when sitting on the Net Zero Hub Board(s). All decisions are to be reported to the Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee and/or Combined Authority Board.
1.2	This report sets out the decisions made at GSE NZ Hub Boards since the delegation was approved.

2. Proposal

2.1	To note the decisions made by the GSENZ Hub Board.
2.2	The decisions made will support the strategic priorities through i) supporting public sector organisations to develop decarbonisation projects ii) the acceleration of net zero projects to commercial investment iii) developing retrofit skills and supply chain and iv) administering grant schemes to further community owner energy projects and provide advice to households on retrofit.

3. Background

3.1	On the 26 July 2023 the CPCA Board delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources & Performance (or substitute) to make decisions on behalf of the Combined Authority when sitting on the Net Zero Hub Board(s).
3.2	<p>The Executive Director of Resources & Performance made decisions on behalf of the GSENZ Hub Board. The decisions made were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allocation of £66,988 to support projects with external technical consultancy funds to enable bids into the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund in October 2023. These projects are on the shortlist pipeline, receiving Hub support and are detailed in 3.3• Allocation of £445K technical consultancy funding to support the acceleration of Net Zero shortlist projects to commercial investment. The funding was made available from staffing underspend. These projects are on the shortlist pipeline, receiving Hub support and are detailed in 3.4• To establish the Greater South East Regional Training Network Steering Group and update the Terms of Reference following the first inaugural meeting. This network has been allocated £150K to pump prime activity across the region and has representation from each sub region in the greater south east. The Retrofit Academy have been commissioned to develop the network and undertake research.• To agree to the Hub administering £2million Community Energy Fund, this is a £10million fund across England to support community energy projects through feasibility grants of up to £40K and development grants of up to £100K. The fund will be open to March 2025. This follows the successful delivery of the Rural Community Energy Fund and is open to urban and rural areas.• To agree to the Hub delivering the Regional Retrofit Skills Pilots and the route to market for applications. 8 applications were received, with 3 being shortlisted for support and another 2 subject to additional funds being made available by the Department for Energy Security & net Zero. These are detailed in 3.9• An interim Net Zero Hub Board Terms of Reference were agreed to align with the Net Zero MoU and the transition of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) functions into Local Authorities. The new Hub governance structure and Terms of Reference will be adopted by the Hub Board by 31st March 2024 to align with the closure of LEPs.
3.3	<p>The following decisions were made at the July Board meeting:</p> <p>Approve the Public Sector Decarbonisation skills funding budget for local authority projects with a value of £45-£200k, to provide technical consultancy support to make these projects bid-ready for the autumn 2023 round of the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme fund. Due to the autumn 2023 deadline for Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund (PSDF) submissions, this decision will be taken through Nick Bell, the CPCA GSENZH SRO, using the Local Partnerships evidence base, and reported back to the GSENZH Board meeting.</p> <p>Following support from the Hub and Local Partnerships 2 projects were supported with technical consultancy funding, the value of the 2 applications to PSDF is £9.05million:</p>

Organisation	Project Description	Sites	Value
Cherwell District Council	Detailed investment-grade surveys across 1 leisure centre building and 2 pavilions. OnGen surveys already undertaken for leisure centre.	1	£16,988
North Herts District Council	Strategic heat decarbonisation plan created for 6 sites: District Council Offices, North Herts Museum, Hitchin Town Hall, North Herts Leisure Centre, Royston Leisure Centre, and Hitchin Swim Centre (indoor pool only). OnGen surveys already undertaken for 4 sites (District Council Offices, North Herts Museum, Hitchin Town Hall, and Hitchin Swim Centre).	6	£50,000

16 applications in total were supported by the GSENGH team for the Autumn round of PSDS funding.

3.4 The following decisions were made at the September GSENGH Hub Board meeting:
Net Zero Technical Consultancy Support:
To approve the funding allocations for strategic project proposals:

Total value				£445,000
Project	Lead organisation	Appraisal score (Minimum 57%)	LEP	Budget
Community Energy Pathways	Community Energy South	68%	SELEP and Herts LEP	£35,000
Campus decarbonisation - University of Sussex	University of Sussex	72%	C2CLEP	£30,000
Fleet Decarbonisation - Cherwell District Council	Cherwell District Council	77%	OxLEP	£30,000
The SHELF heat network detailed feasibility - Mid Suffolk DC	Mid Suffolk Council	65%	NALEP	£25,000
Colchester Northern Gateway micro-grid de-risking research - Colchester City Council	Colchester Amphora Energy Limited (Colchester City Council)	72%	SELEP	£20,000
Neighbourhood solar PV business model - Brighton and Hove ESCO	BHESCO	76%	C2CLEP	£45,000
Gateway 14 Power storage options - Mid Suffolk DC	Mid Suffolk Council	64%	NALEP	£35,000

	Snetterton Business Park Net Zero Investment Plan - Breckland Council	Breckland Council	62%	NALEP	£50,000
	Oxfordshire Solar Projects - securing private wire Offtakers	Oxfordshire County Council	75%	OxLEP	£50,000
	Council solar farm feasibility	East Sussex County Council/Essex County Council	68%	SELEP	£75,000
	Solar farm PPA analysis and business models	GSE Net Zero Hub	71%	Various	£50,000
3.5	<p>Greater South East Regional Training Network</p> <p>a) To approve the establishment and membership of the Greater South East Regional Training Network Steering Group</p> <p>b) To delegate updating the Terms of Reference to the GSE Regional Head</p>				
3.6	<p>Community Energy Fund</p> <p>a) To agree to the GSENZH administering the Community Energy Fund in the GSE</p> <p>b) To accept the Memorandum of Understanding (when received)</p> <p>c) To procure services to provide additional capacity into the Hub</p> <p>d) To set up a Funding Panel to make recommendations to the CPCA to award grants</p> <p>e) To execute corresponding grants, contracts, and agreements.</p>				
3.7	<p>Regional Skills Pilots</p> <p>a) To accept the Memorandum of Understanding (when received) and approve budgets for the GSENZH allocation of funding estimated at £1.1m for a Regional Skills Pilot for the Greater South East.</p> <p>b) To agree the preferred option 3 for delivery model as set out in the GSENZH Board Paper</p> <p>c) To note the guidance notes and terms of the scheme, including the timescales as set out in the GSENZH Board paper.</p> <p>d) To agree to the Hub procuring services advisory/consultancy and research and executing corresponding grants, contracts and agreements as required to deliver the pilot.</p>				
3.8	<p>The following decisions were made at the October GSENZ Hub Board meeting:</p> <p>GSENZ Hub Terms of Reference</p> <p>a) To agree and adopt the interim Terms of Reference, subject to the amendments agreed and clarifications obtained from the CPCA Monitoring officer, as discussed at the GSENZH Board meeting.</p> <p>b) To agree the set up and membership of a Hub Board governance transition working group</p> <p>c) To note that the governance structure should be aligned with local priorities and reflect the breadth of stakeholders in the region, that there will be a transitional period, however, a new governance structure should be approved and new Terms of Reference adopted by 1 April 2024.</p> <p>d) To note that the proposed governance structure will be shaped by DESNZ requirements, views of the Hub board, recommendations from evaluations and the evidence based provided by Local Partnerships.</p> <p>e) To agree that the new governance framework & terms of reference are adopted at the February 2024 Hub Board meeting.</p>				
3.9	<p>Regional Skills Pilots – Project Funding Requests</p> <p>a) To approve projects 1 to 3 in Table 1, referred to in the GSENZH Board Pack 17.10.23, which have passed internal assessment and have been recommended for unconditional approval or approval based on the conditions outlined in Appendix A (confidential.)</p>				

- b) To approve projects 4 & 5, referred to in the GSENZH Board Pack 17.10.23, subject to additional funds being made available by DESNZ, which have passed internal assessment and been recommended for unconditional approval or approval based on the conditions outlined in Appendix A (confidential.)
- c) To agree to Hub providing staff resource to support the process and individual projects as required (recharged to the Skills MoU)
- d) To agree the procurement of a consultant to provide a synopsis of the individual plans into a single document.

Table 1: Application summary table

	Project Title	Funding Request	Project Lead Organisation	Assessment
1	Retrofit Skills East Sussex	£244.5k	East Sussex County Council	Shortlisted
2	Retrofit Challenge South London	£417k	South London Partnership	Shortlisted
3	Hertfordshire Retrofit Opportunities	£340k	Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Shortlisted
4	Surrey Retrofit Skills Pilot	£430k tbc	Surrey County Council	Shortlisted subject to additional funding
5	Retrofit Agenda for Skills in Bucks (RAS/B)	£95.1k - Phase 1	Buckinghamshire Business First	Shortlisted subject to additional funding
6	Retrofit Infrastructure Partnership Programme	£504k	Greater London Authority	Not shortlisted
7	County-based Retrofit skills Understanding of Net-zero Capacity Harnessing (CRUNCH)	£247.4k	Anglia Ruskin University/ Essex County Council	Not shortlisted
8	Retrofit Building Fabric Skills	£160k	Colchester Institute	Not shortlisted

4. Appendices

4.1 None

5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1 The GSENZH programmes are fully funded and the cost of all support is entirely chargeable to the grants and thus will not increase the Combined Authorities net staffing costs.

Legal Implications

6.1 The Combined Authority Board has the power to delegate its functions, which are not reserved to it, to committees, sub-committees, officers, joint committees or other local authorities pursuant to section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000 and regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

6.2 Chapter 4 Rule 4.6.1 of the Combined Authority's Constitution provides that the Combined Authority Board has the power to delegate its functions, which are not reserved to it, to Committees, Sub-Committees, Officers, Joint Committees or other Local Authorities. The Board cannot delegate its functions to individual members of the Board.

6.3	In addition, the Combined Authority Board may delegate functions in accordance with a standing scheme of delegation (adopted and updated from time to time) and by specific delegations given in relation to certain matters.
Public Health Implications	
7.1	The report recommendations will have a neutral impact on public health.
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
8.1	The report recommendations have positive implication for the environment and climate change, Accelerating public sector decarbonisation projects and the progression of retrofit skills development.
Other Significant Implications	
9.1	All delegation decisions are compliant with the Combined Authority processes and procedures.
Background Papers	
10.1	GSENZH Board Agendas and Minutes: Structure and Governance - Greater South East Net Zero Hub (gsetzerohub.org.uk) CA Board Paper – GSENZH Delegations: CPCA Board Meeting - 26 July 2023