

GSE ENERGY HUB PROJECT ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

STAGE 1: Project Planning & Development

Strategic Project Identification & Development

The Local Energy Strategies set the strategic direction for the respective LEPs and provide the basis for identifying, developing and prioritising local energy investment in the region. The Hub will develop a project pipeline aligned with these strategies and the objectives set by BEIS, the funding body for the Hub.

The objectives of the Hub are to:

- Increase number, quality and scale of local energy projects being delivered
- Raise local awareness of opportunity for and benefits of local energy investment
- Enable local areas to attract private and/or public finance for energy projects
- Identify working model for teams to be financially self-sustaining after first two years

The operational team will identify and prioritise local energy projects for support, undertake initial stages of development for priority projects and programmes and take a collaborative and coordinated approach across multiple LEPs.

This Programme will play an important role in delivering aspirations for sustainable and low carbon energy outlined within the Energy Strategies, Strategic Economic Plans and Local Industrial Strategies of the [no. of] LEP areas across the GSE Energy Hub and through the Hubs direct contact with stakeholders.

The GSE Energy Hub Board will prioritise projects that demonstrate:

- Strategic benefit across the Hub area
- clear strategic fit to LEP plans and objectives
- achievement of a balance of breadth of projects
- achievement of a balance of risk (routine/ambitious)
- clear additionality and not duplicating, competing with or replacing existing initiatives
- contribution toward the Hub KPIs including value of projects, funding secured, energy saved/generated, carbon saved, increased GVA, new jobs and skills
- deliverability
- consideration of ability to contribute financially, where appropriate, to support long term sustainability of the Energy Hub
- an acceptable risk register/profile

Each individual partner LEP and the Energy Hub Delivery Team is responsible for overseeing the identification and development of strategically important projects over a 2 year programming period.

Processes

Pipeline Development

Potential projects will be identified through Local Energy Strategies, partner LEPs and direct contact with stakeholders. Project information will be collated and sent to the Energy Hub.

First Sift

Project Review: All projects will go through an initial sifting process, being assessed to check whether they meet the minimum criteria:

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- **Strategic fit** – the objectives and impacts need to be aligned with the LEPs Local Energy Strategies, Strategic Economic Plans and/or Local Industrial Strategies.
- **Resource Required** – the type of support or resource required from the Hub is aligned with project type and stage and available Hub resource. Requests for support from the Hub can include human resource and technical support funding.
- **Financial Requirement & Funding Sources** – Details of funding sources identified for the project. Where projects are stalled due to lack of resource or technical expertise to deliver, the project promoter should demonstrate senior officer support for the project.
- **Deliverability** - The project should be affordable and deliverable within a clearly defined timescale.

The initial sifting process will be undertaken by the Hub's Energy Project Managers. Any projects that do not have strategic fit and perform poorly against the criteria will not be taken further, with feedback being given to the project promoter. Projects meeting the minimum criteria does not guarantee that Hub support will be approved.

Projects that meet the minimum criteria will be allocated to the project pipeline relating to the type of project, project stage, timescale and type of resource required. Energy Project Managers will identify clear opportunities for collaborative projects, where opportunities are identified these projects will be developed into a draft thematic programme for the GSE Hub region. Synergies will then be assessed with the other four Energy Hubs at a national level, with the objective of maximising effective deployment of resources.

Strategic Prioritisation

This will include, but is not limited to:

- Alignment with Energy Strategies from multiple LEPs in the GSE region.
- Projects that are beyond the capacity of individual LEPs to deliver e.g. projects that are currently not economically viable, for example, due to technologies or business practices.
- Projects that demonstrate achievable benefits that are aligned with the Hub objectives.
- Projects that address common market failures, for example, where energy investment would unlock economic development opportunities.

Projects that require technical support (external consultancy) will be sent an Additional Information form. The Hub will endeavour to make resources available to assist with the compilation of information. Where opportunities have been identified to group projects with common needs and themes into programmes, the Hub team will work with project promoters to develop a potential Hub offer. The level of detail required will be proportionate to resources and funding required.

Technical Support Project Appraisal

Projects that are allocated to the project pipeline will be prioritised according to the Hub's Assessment Framework. This includes, but is not limited to:

Strategic Fit

- Clear strategic fit to LEP plans and objectives.
- Reflect common themes/challenges/opportunities from across the Hub region which could benefit multiple areas.
- A clearly identified challenge to delivery which the Hub can support the resolution of.

Deliverability

- A clear governance structure and delivery capacity.
- Sufficiently advanced to deliver in the relevant timeline.
- A clear case should be made for Hub support, identifying what barriers the Hub could help overcome. A business case will include a strategic case, economic case, commercial case, financial case and management & legal case.

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- Senior commitment from the LEP/LA.
- An acceptable risk register/profile.
- State Aid compliant.

Additionality

- Hub intervention will improve the likelihood of delivery and/or the quality of the project.
- A clear process to achieve metrics and contribute to the Hub's Key Indicators.

Economic, Environmental & Social Benefits

- Demonstrating how impact will be maximised across LEP area, particularly in employment and economic growth as well as environmental impact and in other relevant aspects.
- Unlocking further investment and/or access to other funding streams.
- Provide Value for Money (carbon/energy).
- Drive demand for further economic, environmental and social objectives.
- Consideration of ability to repay funding, where appropriate.

Priority projects will be agreed with the Energy Hub Manager for further development.

Project Recommendations:

A report setting out the Hub's recommendations will be submitted to the Hub Board. The Hub Board will consider and recommend projects to be supported directly by the Hub and/or to enter subsequent due diligence. The Hub Board will also make recommendations for further action for projects that cannot be supported directly by the Hub but may be eligible for support from another delivery partner.

All projects recommended by the Hub are subject to the Hub's project appraisal and approval and procurement processes.

The Hub as delivery body takes responsibility for ensuring effective delivery including where subcontractor delivery bodies have been appointed.

The Hub Board reserves the right to decide not to include a project in the prioritisation process if key information is missing or it is not based on a robust set of assumptions.

Stage 2: Due Diligence & Project Approval

The Hub Board will consider the recommendations for both support to individual projects and collaborative commissions led by the Hub at six weekly Board.

Any decision made by the Hub Board which is made in contravention of the process will be invalid on the basis of non-compliance unless the Board has given prior approval for variation in the decision-making process.

Recommendations approved by the Hub Board that require due diligence will require the project promoter to complete a due diligence form, following satisfactory due diligence by the CPCA Section 73 officer and approval from the Hub Board the project will proceed to Funding Agreement.

Project Funding Agreement

Where technical funding support has been approved, decision plus conditions (if relevant) will be conveyed to the applicant through legal grant award letter issued by CPCA as Accountable Body.

The Hub will procure and sign off collaborative projects through CPCA as Accountable Body.

Stage 3: Delivery, Monitoring and Evaluation

Individual project managers will oversee project delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

CPCA will oversee monitoring and evaluation of the GSE Energy Hub programme and report to relevant stakeholders as necessary.

The Hub Board will receive updates on progress and recommendations.

Stage 4: Project Closures

The Hub Board will receive and agree project closure reports.

CPCA will oversee Hub Board agreed project closure reports (financial and practical) provided by the Regional Hub Manager.

A programme evaluation will be performed towards at the end of the initial funded phase of the Energy Hub.

Governance

All project support enquiries, pro-forma support and casework is delivered through Energy Project Managers and support staff employed by CPCA. The EPMs are supported by the Regional Hub Manager.

The Regional Hub Manager will review projects, identify synergies and make recommendations to the Hub Board.

The Hub Board are the decision-making body for the approval (or otherwise) of recommendations made by the Regional Hub Manager.

Project approvals are only made through a majority decision by the Hub Board which comprises one representative from each LEP.

Due diligence of grant applicants is completed by the Hub and CPCA Section 73 Officer.

Requests for payment are submitted by the applicant/Hub as formal claim process, reviewed by the Hub and payment is approved by Section 73 Officer at CPCA.

Accountability

CPCA is the Accountable Body for the Hub.

CPCA provides the legal support to prepare suitable grant documentation for each approved project.

CPCA provides the procurement support to prepare suitable specifications for works commissioned directly by the Hub.

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Project Stage	Steps	GSE Energy Hub Role
STAGE 1 Project Planning & Development	GSE Energy Hub Project Managers	First sift of project applications/pipeline to identify energy projects of interest to the GSE Energy Hub using the Decision Tree. This includes but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic fit with LEPs Energy and Economic or Industrial Strategies Resource requested meets the Hubs objectives and available resources Funding or finance identified or demonstration of senior management support Project delivery timeframe Projects that meet the minimum criteria will be added to the project pipeline spreadsheet. Projects that are not suitable will be given feedback and signposted to other sources of support.
	GSE Energy Hub Team	First sift, using decision tree, of low carbon projects that meet the minimum criteria to identify clear opportunities for collaboration and efficiencies of scale.
	Energy Hub Manager	Projects prioritised for internal Hub staff support will be approved by the Hub Manager and allocated a lead Energy Project Manager.
	Regional Energy Hub Leads	Where practicable, projects passing first sift process and identified as high potential for cross Hub collaboration and efficiencies will be discussed with Hub Leads to identify opportunity for collaboration over multiple Hubs.
	Energy Hub Manager	Projects that meet the minimum criteria and require technical support will be sent an additional information form for completion. This will include an indication of the type of support that may be expected from the Hub, for example where projects are identified for a collaborative approach the Hub is likely to commission consultancy on behalf of multiple projects.
	GSE Energy Hub Manager	Scoring of technical support projects using the GSE Assessment Framework. The GSE Energy Hub Programme Manager will consider and recommend projects to be supported directly by the GSE Energy Hub. The GSE Energy Hub Manager will also make recommendations for further action for projects that can not be supported directly by the GSE Energy Hub. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy projects that are aligned with the Energy Strategies from multiple LEPs within the GSE Energy Hub Energy projects that demonstrate opportunity deliver [SMART] benefits Projects that are beyond the capacity of individual LEPs/LAs/private sector to develop e.g. due to resource constraints, lack of technical knowledge, funding gap Energy projects that address common market failures for example where energy investment would unlock economic development opportunities, or supports innovation
	GSE Energy Hub Board	The GSE Hub Board will consider and make decisions on the project recommendations of the GSE Energy Programme Manager.
STAGE 2: Due Diligence & Project Support Agreement	Due diligence	Project Managers will undertake due diligence of projects and owners to assess key challenges to development and likelihood of achieving a successful outcome
	Project Support Agreement in place. Project is able to proceed.	A standard Agreement will be used, reflecting specific project conditions to be signed by all parties. This will detail the support to be provided, timeline, requirements of each party, monitoring and process when support ends.
STAGE 3: Delivery, Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitoring includes claims and verification checks and progress update reports.	GSE Energy Hub delivery team will oversee project development, monitoring and evaluation.
	Monitoring includes claims and verification checks and progress update reports.	GSE Energy Hub Programme Manager will oversee day to day delivery of the Programme. Additional monitoring and evaluation of the GSE Energy Hub programme will be aligned to the approach used by Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority reporting to relevant stakeholders as necessary. A GSE Energy Hub Communications Plan will ensure key progress and delivery updates are given to stakeholders.
	GSE Energy Hub Board	Will receive updates on progress and recommendations
	GSE LEP Chairs	Will receive updates on progress and recommendations
STAGE 4: Project Closure	This includes closure on both financial and practical matters.	GSE Energy Hub will oversee both financial and practical closure of the current programme. A Programme Evaluation will be performed at the end of the project.

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		In order to effectively evaluate the GSE Energy Hub programme, an initial baseline will be developed.
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