

Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee



11 December 2017

Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP)

Joint report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Local Services

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide background information to members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) prior to a presentation by Calum Baker, Business Energy Efficiency Project Manager.

Background

2. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of its work programme receives progress reports on ESIF low carbon funding and detail of various initiatives in the county as a result of this funding. The last report was provided to the committee at the meeting on 18 November 2016.
3. The progress report contained detail of the BEEP and members at that meeting requested that as part of the future work programme of the committee arrangements be made for a presentation on this project. It was also suggested that members may also want to include in their future work programme a visit to some of the local businesses who have benefitted from this project.
4. At the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 14 July 2017 members agreed the work programme of the committee for 2017/18 which includes a visit on the 15 February to various local businesses who have benefitted from the BEEP.
5. Arrangements have been made for Calum Baker, Business Energy Efficiency Project Manager, to attend the meeting on the 11 December 2017 and deliver a presentation providing a holistic view of the project including project specific branded materials, economic benefits and outputs, and an update on several developments which are expanding the reach of BEEP into national best practice and leading a national level trial

Business Energy Efficiency Project

6. This DCC led project bid was submitted in September 2015 and the Funding Agreement was signed in August 2016, making this the very first low carbon

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project in the North East LEP region and one of the very first in the UK.

7. BEEP provides an intensive package of support for SMEs on energy efficiency, renewable energy and business resilience to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and bottom line costs, enhancing competitiveness and supporting business growth.
8. One to one best practice support, and expert technical advice will be provided, backed by an interactive website, social and print media promotions and a programme of peer to peer business events.. Bespoke and in-depth SME energy audits and financial support package in the form of Grant support encourages and enables SMEs to take up no/low cost measures and to install appropriate technologies. The key outputs are: 240 SMEs supported and a reduction of greenhouses gases.
9. BEEP has been structured to provide direct support to each SMEs that participates. Each team member takes the time to build a relationship with the SME, to learn about their business operations, their requirements (and future requirements) and their energy related pressures.
10. BEEP has proved particularly popular since launching. An up-to-date breakdown of current performance and expenditure will be provided during the presentation. We have a close working relationship with Business Durham and their EU funded SME project the Durham Business Opportunities Programme (DBOP). This relationship allows the projects to cross refer participants and increases the promotional and engagement range of both projects.
11. The Project also works with promotional support from the NECC and FSB.
12. BEEP is currently leading an engagement enhancement trial. The trial has brought together projects who all target SMEs within County Durham, and who are mostly time limited. We have joined with Durham Savers, DBOP, the Better Health at Work Awards and Durham Works to build a structure where all projects have access to a handout which provides introductory information (and contact details) about all other projects. The principle is that as all projects push forward delivering their outputs, they automatically promote the other projects through the handout, hopefully this will result in SMEs choosing to participate in projects they may not otherwise have, and access support packages they may have otherwise have missed. The trials success is being monitored as to its cost effectiveness.
13. BEEP is in operation until September 2019 when EU funding support ends.
14. Seen as a regional leader, the Project was asked to support the other local authorities in the NE LEP area to build their own version of BEEP. Their combined project was submitted in July 2017. BEEP provided guidance and supported through lessons learned to their bid team.

Recommendation

15. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the content of the report and presentation.

Background papers:

EU Funding – progress report- Environment OSC – 16 November 2016

Contact: Calum Baker, Business Energy Efficiency Project Manager

Tel: 03000 265548

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Not meeting output targets will result in clawback resulting in less EU funds received by DCC

Staffing – None. All officers except Project Manager are on time limited contracts financially supported by incoming EU funds

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights - None

Consultation - None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications – None