

South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction – Please read

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that the Council are meeting its legal duty, demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) as below:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Methodically consider and assess the impacts of proposals across the [nine protected characteristics](#)
- Allow the Council to develop and implement high quality proposals that maximise positive outcomes for all.

EqIAs should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. Further support and guidance, [including a video on how to fill out EqIAs](#), is available on Insite or you can contact the Policy and Performance Team.

Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1 Officer completing EqIA:
Orla Gibbons
- 1.2 Team and Service:
Climate and Environment Team. Climate, Environment and Waste.
- 1.3 Title of proposal:
Zero Carbon Communities Grant Scheme
- 1.4 EqIA start date:
28/02/2025
- 1.5 Proposal implementation date:
05/05/2025
- 1.6 Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal (Officer and/or Team):
Orla Gibbons, Climate and Environment Project Officer

Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1 Type of proposal:
Other - Please specify
If other, please specify
Grant scheme
- 2.2 Is the proposal:
Review of existing
- 2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):
N/A
- 2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Max 250 words)

The Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme (referred to often as the ZCC grant) funds community-led climate action in South Cambridgeshire. Grant awards of between £2,000 and £15,000 are available to parish councils and community groups to complete projects that provide a measurable reduction in carbon emissions, or achieve wider community engagement around climate change and sustainable behaviour change. The grant money has been used for projects such as improvements to cycling infrastructure and e-bike rental schemes, food waste education, community building retrofits, repair cafes, thermal imaging camera loan schemes and electric vehicles for charity operations. These projects make progress towards district-wide decarbonisation in line with the Council's 2050 target for a net zero district. The grant scheme affirms the Council's 'Green to Our Core' commitment by supporting communities as they make the transition to low-carbon living.

2.5 Which of the Council's equality objectives (as detailed in the Council's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- ☐ Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community
- ☐ SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings.
- ☐ Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district.
- ☒ None.

2.6 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- ☒ Service Users ☐ Councillors
- ☒ External Stakeholders ☐ Other
- ☐ Employees

If other, please specify [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.7 Broadly speaking, how will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later in the form) (max 250 words)

The impacted groups can be broadly be characterised as 1) members of external stakeholder organisations (e.g. local charities, parish councils) receiving the grant and delivering the funded project, and 2) the beneficiaries of the grant-funded project (members of the public, not affiliated with the delivery group). Organisations will be affected in that they receive financial assistance to meet a self-identified need in their community, for instance the retrofit of a community building, reducing its running costs and improving its thermal efficiency. Though the grant principally covers capital spend, it can also cover staffing and some other revenue costs to support the delivery of the project in a non-profit organisation. These groups are frequently volunteer-run and so can experience capacity challenges and poor resilience to increased project costs. Members of the public will experience varied effects according to the project type and outcome – for instance, improved community spaces and green spaces, access to climate education, community events or borrowing schemes, or even reduced parish precepts due to lower building running costs. The impacts of the projects funded by the ZCC grant tend to be felt very locally, however some projects have a broader geographic scope such as the repair café network run by Cambridge Carbon Footprint.

2.8 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how the Council will ensure that they will meet equality standards? (Max 250 words)

The projects are delivered in every instance by external partners including parish councils, community groups, CICs and registered charities. In their application, applicants must demonstrate that their project will benefit the wider community (rather than individuals); they must demonstrate that no profits will be generated for private gain, and where religious organisations wish to receive funding they must ensure the project provides benefit for the wider community and contains no religious activity of content that would preclude the participation of other faiths or groups. However, organisations are not currently asked to provide an Equal

Opportunity Policy so this could be introduced in the application process as a necessary document, along with a question e.g. 'Please detail what steps your organisation or group will take to ensure equality of access to the project.'

Section 3: Evidence and Data

- 3.1 Describe any work you have done (this could include consultation) to understand any effects on groups of people, including those within [9 protected characteristic groups](#)? Please list any key sources (e.g. web-search, previous versions of document, customer feedback etc) that you used to reach your conclusions.

(Max 250 words)

ZCC grant funding has been running since 2019 and has been consistently oversubscribed. Considerations around the development of the grant and wider engagement programme can be viewed here: [Report to CEAC Zero Carbon Communities Programme.pdf](#). The Climate and Environment team publicises the grant heavily to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. Informal feedback has been offered by recipients and other members of the public which has been considered in the design and implementation of subsequent rounds of the grant. However, no work has been done specifically to understand the impacts of the current grant application and award process on those within the 9 protected characteristic groups.

- 3.2 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place.

(Max 250)

N/A

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 Please select all characteristics that may or will be impacted (positive or negative). When providing details of the impact please consider the following questions

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. (both the number of persons affected and the severity of the impact)
- you will be asked to set out actions to manage these impacts in the following question (4.2)

☒ All - general to all protected Characteristics.

Details: We will not monitor applicants (or grant beneficiaries) by protected characteristics and this will not affect any decision-making. However, we appreciate that the application process can be time consuming and ability to participate may be influenced by socio-economic status, retirement status and the level of agency or inclusion individuals feel in their community. We will promote the grant as widely as we can to encourage as broad a demographic of applicants as possible, and will offer support to all applicants according to their needs. Projects funded by this grant are likely to have a positive impact across the protected characteristic groups, as they build equitable communities that are more collectively resilient to the adverse effects of climate change. Community building retrofits reduce reliance on fossil fuels (and therefore vulnerability to the effects of volatile fuel prices), ensuring community spaces can be affordably maintained, comfortable for all users, and available as respite spaces during adverse weather events (for instance, extreme heat). Projects that increase tree cover or employ other land management methods for carbon sequestration not only help prevent further global warming, but can also create better quality green spaces, aid cooling in built up areas, and mitigate the effects of flooding. Projects that promote active travel in lieu of car use can have positive impacts on local air quality by reducing the levels of harmful particulates. To



summarise, the projects funded by the ZCC grant are likely to have positive benefits across protected characteristic groups, with further benefits to those groups less able to adapt to the changing climate.

☒ Age

Details: Funded projects are likely to have a positive impact across ages. The young and the elderly are two groups particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and poor air quality so these groups will further benefit from the projects (see above).

☒ Disability

Details: Support is offered to all potential applicants to make their application. This is the case with all SCDC grants. Anyone having difficulty completing the form can contact us for assistance via email. I don't believe there is a phone number currently available on the website so we will remedy this and ensure the phone number will be in a format so it can be read by a screen reader. There are also charities that can offer support to people with disabilities with making applications. Furthermore, members of this group are frequently less resilient to the adverse effects of climate change, which this grant looks to mitigate.

☐ Gender reassignment

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Marriage and Civil Partnership

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☒ Pregnancy and maternity

Details: Those who are pregnant and breastfeeding can be particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, which this grant looks to mitigate.

☐ Race

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Religion and belief

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Sex

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Sexual orientation



Details [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ None of the above

4.2 Other characteristics

Some characteristics are not yet protected in law, but the Council has made declarations it will consider them in policy making.

☒ Digital inclusion ([what is this?](#))

Details: The application process is online and support is offered to all applicants. There is a contact email address on the main ZCC webpage and on the webform. The Climate and Environment team can help with technical queries and signpost to organisations such as digital buddies and Cambridge Online who can provide support and equipment for completing applications.

☐ Care experience ([what is this?](#))

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☒ Rurality

Details This grant supports assets such as village halls and pavilions, which are vital hubs in rural communities. As a result, the effects on this characteristic are likely to be positive.

☐ Socio-economic

Details [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.3 Considering the above impacts you have identified above, please detail any actions (specific or general) which may help to enhance or mitigate impacts.

Please include the timescale for completing the action.

Action and timescale	Officer
Adding phone number to the ZCC grant web page in a screen reader friendly format. By launch of next round (May 2025)	Project Officer (OG)

Require all applicants to have an acceptable equal opportunities policy. Include in grant guidance for launch of next round in May 2025	Project Officer (OG)
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4.4 How will you monitor that the above actions have been completed and that this proposal, once implemented, is impacting fairly on everyone it affects? In answering this question, please include information about feedback you will seek and/or data you will collect and analyse, and how often you will do this

Officer responsible for the grant will monitor that the above actions have been completed, and will explore the potential of designing a feedback survey for all grant applicants.

Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding how to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Max. 250 words)

The Zero Carbon Communities grant is open to applicants of all backgrounds and officers support is available to ensure no one is prevented from applying on the basis of a protected characteristic. Feedback will be considered to ensure the ongoing improvement of the grant application experience. Applicants will be required to provide a suitable Equal Opportunities Policy if they are to deliver a ZCC-funded project. Projects themselves are likely to have a positive impact across the protected characteristic groups as climate change mitigation benefits all.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

☒ Proceed with the proposal (with any actions identified as required within Section 4 of the EqIA). Analysis demonstrates that the proposal is robust, we have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

☐ Reject the proposal: Analysis demonstrates that the proposal will cause unlawful discrimination and it must be removed or changed

Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Orla Gibbons

6.2 Date of completion:

28/02/2025

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be? (when in doubt 3 years minimum)

28/02/2028

6.4 Approving officer signature *, this should be your Head of Service, Service Area Manager, or Project Sponsor:

Ellie Haines

6.5 Date of approval:

04/04/2025

Please send the completed document to Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk for publishing on the website.

**in the event that this EqIA is completed by Head of Service, then no additional approving signature is required.*