

Proposal to MORE Renewables to fund Lancaster Sustainability Hub

Introduction

Green Rose CIC is a social enterprise based in North Lancashire which helps households reduce their energy bills and carbon footprints. Since late 2019 we have supported over 500 households of all tenures through several practical programmes:

- The **LEAP** energy advice programme for low income households (funded by AgilityEco)
- The **HEAT** project in the West End of Morecambe (funded by West End Morecambe Big Local)
- The '**Ask Rose**' energy advice service which is available to anyone in Lancashire (and which has been supported by MORE Renewables and Electricity North West)
- The **Winter Survival Project**, helping vulnerable women with practical outreach advice and training (in partnership with the Growing Club CIC)
- **Energy Champions** training, delivered to organisations who work with vulnerable stakeholders, including CAB, LCC Housing Team and Christian's Against Poverty

In 2022 we received additional support from Lancaster and Morecambe college and Harmony with Nature to run 'pop up shops' in empty units in shopping centres in Lancaster and Morecambe. These were very successful and allowed our staff and volunteers to provide the 'Ask Rose' service face to face, rather than just over the phone or via email. It also allowed members of the public to get up close with low carbon technologies, such as a heat pump, solar panels and insulation materials.

Our ambition in 2023/24

Green Rose has been offered a free long-term let of an empty shop unit in Lancaster's Marketgate from March 2023 onwards. We have accepted the offer as we are keen to make the pop-up shop a more permanent fixture, allowing people to visit during the day for 121 energy advice and training. This will

- help households to identify what support they are eligible for based on their circumstances
- support them to access grants to make home improvements including heating, insulation & glazing
- make them aware of trusted local installers that have the appropriate qualifications and quality assurance processes to undertake grant-funded works
- assist them to lower their energy bills and switch to green energy tariffs
- signpost them to additional support such as fuel debt advice and benefits checks

We have also been in talks with the Food Futures team from LESS who would also like an accessible space for local people to access their materials and to run events. And we would like to encourage other local organisations working to make Lancaster District more sustainable to 'set up shop' at the Hub, increasing the offer available to visitors and helping to cover some of the ongoing costs, which will include utilities and insurance.



Proposal

We would like to request that MORE Renewables invest **£6,000** of community Benefit funding in 2023/24 in order to support the development and running of the Lancaster Sustainability Hub. This would include:

- **£5,400** contribution towards Hub Manager staffing costs (0.2 FTE)
- **£600** towards overheads (heating and insurance)

This would deliver the following outcomes:

- A Sustainability Hub that is a safe, warm, friendly space where local residents can drop in for 121 advice and support, and hands-on experience with low carbon technologies
- Capacity to support other local third sector organisations to use the space for sustainability initiatives (especially those focused on energy, food and transport)
- Appropriate administration of the Hub, engagement with the landlord, Marketgate Shopping Centre and Lancaster City Council in order to secure the Hub's long-term future
- Promotion of the Hub via social media and local businesses and partner organisations
- Follow up customer satisfaction with a sample of service users to understand impact and secure case studies of how the Hub has affected change

Reporting

We will report back outcomes to MORE Renewables in a manner that the MORE Directors see fit – we can provide a monthly update on the use of the Hub, or could deliver an interim report after 6 months and a final project report in early April 2024.