



Rural Village Services Group - Best Practice Template

Please let us know about one project which your council has been involved in, which improved the lives of local residents, and which would be of interest to our member councils and rural policy makers. This could be through direct action or by supporting another local project. This doesn't need to be lengthy. Concise and to the point is best!

Project Title		Council Name	Contact name and email
Draughton Action to Zero		Draughton Parish Council	Redacted
Project aim	Why did your Council decide to set up/support this project? What local issues did it aim to address?		
<p>The Council set up our DAZ project, run by a working group of councillors and village volunteers, to explore ways of enabling our community to help achieve national net zero targets and mitigate the effects of climate change in our own area. We were awarded grant funding for an initial feasibility study, which indicated some potential in the idea of installing our own community green energy generator(s), as well as providing us with helpful information on the possibility of introducing electric vehicle charging points in the village, and also with information to help us encourage domestic green energy usage and home retrofitting within the community.</p> <p>We have now got to the stage of carrying out further detailed financial analysis and feasibility studies, working with our accountant and with Northern Powergrid, to assess project viability. This second phase of our project is also grant-funded.</p>			
Project actions	What steps did you take? Have you worked with any other organisations/the local community on this project?		
<p>As above, we took steps in the first instance to line up the grant funding we'd need to embark on the project. We then worked with our consultants and local landowners to firm up realistic proposals, keeping villagers updated as we proceeded with messages on social media, by email, and by means of our regular newsletters. We have worked throughout this part of the DAZ project in partnership with the local church and trustees of our village hall to support their own developing net zero schemes.</p> <p>We have also worked to keep up to date with political and market developments, in particular tapping into local council networks to help influence Govt policy eg towards a "place-based" (ie localised) approach to energy supply. We are following with interest the potential development of "smart" local grids and, with our partner organisations, have applied to take part as an "energy community" in the Northern Powergrid upcoming trials.</p> <p>We are now working with the Grid to ensure there is capacity for the connections our project would need. We are currently engaged on extensive consultation activity within the local community, involving events, talks, exhibitions, newsletters, village emails and use of social media.</p>			

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

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Costs and timescale	When did this take place? Was there a cost and how was it funded?
<p>Our work is ongoing.</p> <p>The costs to date, taking us to end of phase 2, are of the order of £20000, all of it grant-funded (from the National Lottery and from the Govt's SPG fund).</p>	
Outcomes	How has your local community benefitted from this initiative? What went well/not so well?
<p>It is too early to judge! We anticipate that eventual benefits, if we can proceed, will include cheaper power for the village, an extension of the use of green energy suppliers and take-up of electric vehicles, plus an increasing willingness to undertake home improvements by villagers. We aim to reduce our carbon footprint as a rural community, taking the lead by facilitation and supporting the separate projects by our local church and village hall (the 2 public buildings in our village) to work towards net zero targets.</p>	
Key learning	What have you learned from this project that other member rural councils could benefit from?
<p>As above. We think, though, that an important message for other small communities (we are tiny, with a population of about 210 and precept of no more than £10k) might be that we're none of us too small, too rural or too isolated to try.</p>	
Next steps	Are there any plans to develop this project further?
<p>Yes, as described above. We believe that our best and hoped-for outcome will be a community-owned wind turbine, operated by a Community Interest Company, together with our two public buildings becoming self-sufficient with solar panels and heat pumps, and also a village of domestic properties which are largely well-insulated and heated by electricity.</p>	

Please return this form to sally.sargent@sparse.gov.uk

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