

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

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Report title: Bicester Green Deal	
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report on the Bicester Green Deal Pioneer Places Project as part of the Government's Green Deal Programme.

2. Project Summary

- 2.1 Cherwell District Council (CDC) successfully bid to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) 'Pioneer Places Fund' for £282,550 in December 2012.
- 2.2 The project aimed to kick-start Green Deal locally in Bicester, by playing a major part in building a network of local, high quality and reliable Green Deal assessors and installers through 2013. The project also aimed to raise awareness and build confidence in the Green Deal in the local area. The target groups were residents, businesses and potential Green Deal installers and assessors. It was also intended to:
- Stimulate the local market for Green Deal packages in the longer term
 - Sustain and create small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and jobs
 - Improve the housing stock and
 - Save residents and local businesses money by cutting their energy bills.
- 2.3 Cherwell District Council worked with sustainability charity BioRegional to project manage the project and United Sustainable Energy Agency (now part of the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to manage the installation phase.
- 2.4 The project aimed to deliver the following objectives as stated in the DECC funding bid:
- Early Green Deals - Domestic:** 100 Green Deal (GD) plans and 5 completed demonstration homes by 31 March 2013. Benefits: reduced utility running costs and better comfort.
- Early Green Deals - Non-domestic:** 5 business GD plans. Benefits: reduced utility running costs.
- Legacy for future demand:** A portfolio of 650 (5% housing stock) potential GD ready plans with demand indicators including: signed GD ready plans and completed GD assessments.
- Green Deal supply chain:** A Community Interest Company to be created as a Green Deal Provider and will be launched as Green Deal Together in 2014. It will be led by the NEF and

CDC is one of the founding local authority members. Its purpose is to build a network of local assessors and installers. It will train residents associations, community groups and builders on GD basics as part of a referral network.

3. Progress against original funding bid objectives

Early Green Deals – Domestic

101 Green Deal assessments were completed by four different Green Deal assessor organisations.

14 properties received a selection of Green Deal measures installed. The aim was to have a variety of property types, ages and tenures to be able to showcase the assortment of measures available through the Green Deal. Overall 17 different measures were installed throughout the 14 properties located in a variety of neighbourhood areas around the town. Six of these properties were part of a Green Open Doors event held on Saturday 1st June to members of the public and those that had Green Deal assessments, 78 visitors attended. A further property, which is in the Bicester Conservation Area and a Listed Building, received a grant towards installing Green Deal measures.

Early Green Deals - Non-residential

Seven non residential Green Deal assessments were completed on businesses in Bicester, located both in the Town Centre, business parks and residential areas. Again, the project wanted to assess a selection of types of properties as well as owner/occupier, tenant and community building.

Four of these properties are currently in the process of having a variety of measures including installation of PV system, cavity wall and loft insulation and replacement LED lighting.

Legacy for future demand

During the Bicester Green Deal project a series of engagement activities and resources including drop in sessions were produced to:

- Explain the process
- Sign up residents for an assessment
- Sign up assessors
- Explain the project at community meetings
- Liaise with key community groups to take part in a referral incentive
- Explain to residents the next steps
- Promote projects through social media and on the Cherwell District Council and Eco Bicester websites
- Provide information through case study sheets
- Showcase retrofitted properties and Green Deal measures (the “Green Open Homes” event)
- Promote the Bicester Green Deal using information stands at local events.

This engaged a vast amount of local residents who are now knowledgeable about Green Deal could turn their assessments into Green Deal Plans in the future.

Green Deal supply chain

The United Sustainable Energy Agency (USEA), now part of the National Energy Foundation (NEF) led the creation of a Community Interest Company known as “Green Deal Together” made up of local authorities and acting as a Green Deal Provider. During the project, before receiving full Green Deal Provider accreditation, USEA project managed the installation process of the project by building a network of local assessors and installers. Approximately £167,000 of installation work was awarded to eight local installers to carry out the retrofitting of the 14 demonstration homes. USEA supported the project by attending Green Deal assessor workshops and local resident drop-in sessions to understand what the different stakeholders needed from a local Green Deal provider.

4. Future plans

- 4.1 CDC will continue to promote the Green Deal and Green Deal Together as and when possible with the help of the organisations and networks set up for the Bicester Green Deal.
- 4.2 The information sheets on each of the retrofitted properties will continue to be made available during community events and on the Bicester Green Deal pages of the Cherwell District Council and Eco Bicester websites.
- 4.3 In the short term, a further Green Open Doors event will take place during the winter 2013/2014 in association with an Oxfordshire-wide open homes network set up by the Low Carbon Hub, after they were awarded £20,000 of funding from Centre for Sustainable Energy.
- 4.4 Two of the demonstration homes with the most work done to the fabric of the building will be taking part in a Building Performance Evaluation (BPE) study by Oxford Brookes University in late 2013 to look at the realistic improvements the installed measures have achieved.
- 4.5 In the long term, a possible third open homes event could take place in autumn 2014 as well as a series of retrofitting workshops where residents from the retrofitted homes can share their Green Deal experience.

5. Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 As described above some important learning has taken place and the Pioneer Places Pilot Scheme in Bicester has provided some useful experience of the Green Deal programme. The Green Deal remains in its early stages and take up has probably been lower than the Government expected. However the Bicester Green Deal has provided some important data on the housing stock in Bicester. For example, the Open Homes Day in June 2013 included six homes and 78 visits in total. For future events, it is suggested that more responsibility is placed on the householder to invite their network of family, friends and neighbours, and possibly support with a coffee-morning type event and a brief introduction from a specialist.
- 5.2 An assessor and contractor network has been established with four different Assessor companies and eight different contractors used. The whole process was very useful in building a local network, and it was the local assessors who performed best. One Green Deal assessor company based in Bristol was the first to commit to the project (which was important to starting the project on time). There were particular problems associated with revisiting properties to pick up on errors in some original assessments, and where assessors were local this proved much easier to arrange. For the future, it is suggested that work is directed to those assessors and contractors in the immediate area.

5.3 Of the four Drop-In Events that were run it was very clear that while it was hard to get people to attend, those that did benefitted hugely for example by being talked through the options. The Green Deal Reports were quite technical and not easy to understand, and did not really set out alternative ways to finance the works – which is the decisive factor for most people. For the future, it is suggested that the Green Deal cannot be left to its own devices and that face-to-face contact with people considering works to their home is key to delivering an actual investment.

6. Recommendations

- (i) To note the contents of the report; and
- (ii) to continue to support future retrofit programmes in Eco Bicester.