
Leicester City Council

Green Business Energy in Leicester and
Leicestershire (Green BELLE)

Summative Assessment Report



July 2023



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1.0 Introduction

In December 2022, Focus Consultants 2010 LLP was appointed by Leicester City Council to undertake an independent Summative Assessment of the Green Business Energy in Leicester and Leicestershire (Green BELLE) project. The project is funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with match funding from Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and beneficiary businesses and completed at the end of June 2023.

Phase One operated between October 2016 and December 2019. Following a successful bid for further funding to extend the project for three years, Phase Two of the project commenced in January 2020 and was due to complete in December 2022. However, a Project Change Request was submitted in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which extended the project end date to June 2023.

This evaluation report involves a desk-based evaluation of existing documentation, an output and progress review, telephone and face to face interviews with the project team and key stakeholders, consultation with project beneficiaries as well as an assessment of the impact of the project. As outlined in the brief, the summative assessment includes:

- Policy and sector context of the project.
- Analysis of the design and performance of key activities, using case studies to highlight areas of good practice or recommendations. This data includes reference to performance against outputs and outcomes and notes evidence of good practice.
- A review of the nature of the project governance and delivery
- A survey to gather qualitative data and feedback from SMEs who participated and received grants from the scheme and a control set who did not.
- Case studies of businesses who received a grant.
- Value for money assessment and benchmarking.
- Project delivery and best effective practice recommendations for consideration as well as key lessons learnt.
- Evaluation Report: the presentation of the findings, all drawn together into a cohesive report, followed by a presentation where key conclusions and recommendations are drawn out.

Due to budget constraints, the Summative Assessment was undertaken jointly between Focus and the Green BELLE project team. The team specifically led on the beneficiary and control group questionnaires and the case studies. The Summative Assessment was originally completed in March 2023 and some of the analysis within the report reflects this. Some updates were made in July 2023 to reflect the outputs and expenditure achieved by the end of the project, but a full reanalysis has not been undertaken.

There is a requirement for all ERDF grant recipients to undertake an evaluation. The Summative Assessment Report follows the intended structure and covers each of the elements outlined in the ERDF Project Summative Assessment Guidance Appendices (June 2020). This requirement is fixed and applies to all projects irrespective of the nature or scale of the ERDF projects.

Focus has taken every care to conduct the study professionally, openly and thoroughly, to retain an objective stance, to balance the opinions expressed and explore the justification for the comments made. It must also be recognised that there are inevitable budget and time constraints, which limit the resource available for the evaluation.

2.0 Project Context

This section considers the context in which the project was designed, including the project's objectives and the rationale for the delivery approaches.

2.1 Background

2.1.1 Background

The Leicester and Leicestershire Low Carbon Sector Growth Plan which was first published in 2015 reported that many enterprises are aware of energy/resource efficiency but lack financial and personnel resources to implement solutions. The report goes on to state that where an enterprise has previously received financial support to implement a low carbon solution that enterprise is more likely to continually invest in low carbon solutions.

The Low Carbon Leicester and Leicestershire research study, carried out by Sheffield Hallam University in 2014, explained that SMEs, despite accounting for around 60% of UK emissions from the industrial sector, had little engagement with business service providers relating to energy efficiency.

The Green BELLE project which commenced in 2016 aimed to help address this by providing capital grants to SMEs in Leicester and Leicestershire for the installation of low carbon and energy efficiency measures.

The project has awarded capital grants of £1,000 to £10,000 to SMEs with an intervention rate of 50% grant and 50% SME match-funding throughout the project. Any additional cost above the grant maximum (i.e., above a total cost of £20,000) also need to be paid for by the SME. A minimum grant amount of £1,000 also applies, so the minimum total cost of the measures, with the SME's match funding, is £2,000.

The project total value is £3,076,833 which includes ERDF funding of £1,538,416 as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020.

2.1.2 Objectives

The ultimate aim of the project is to reduce carbon emissions from small and medium-sized enterprises in Leicester and Leicestershire, contributing to the overall carbon reduction targets for the area. The specific objectives are to:

- Support local SMEs to shift towards a low carbon economy.
- Support SMEs with a capital grant to install energy efficient or low carbon measures.
- Reduce annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as a result of installing Green BELLE measures.

2.1.3 Meeting ERDF Requirements

The Green BELLE project was formulated in response to the requirements set out under Priority Axis 4: 'Supporting the Shift Towards a Low Carbon Economy in All Sectors' and specifically Investment Priority 4b 'Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises.

The project supports the aims of the Priority Axis through providing grant funding to SMEs to invest in energy efficiency measures and therefore support the local economy to move towards a low carbon model. A copy of the project's logic model is set out overleaf.

Project - Green BELLE

Test Project

Click on the arrows to navigate around the model. Tables can be edited directly in the model. To edit free text, click Edit under each title

Context

Edit
 The industrial sector is currently responsible for 49% of all emissions in Leicester and Leicestershire (LLEP Sector Growth Plan).
 Economic clean growth through energy efficiency and low carbon technologies is one of the greatest industrial opportunities of our generation (UK's Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy).
 Leicester City council declared a Climate emergency in 2019 and has an ambition for the city to be net zero by 2030.
 There is a need for further support to SMEs for low carbon and energy efficiency advice and solutions (Clean Growth Strategy and the Operational Programme).

Market Failure Assessment

Edit
 The feedback we have received, from our previous projects (including the ERDF Carbon Management for Leicester SMEs project and Green BELLE phase 1) and other business support projects, is that without a capital grant, SMEs would not be able to install low carbon measures or engage with the sector at all.
 Enterprises, and in particular SMEs, continue to be worried by high energy costs and still lack the expertise in how to address this issue. The Leicester and Leicestershire Business Survey 2017 shows that energy costs are the second largest worry for local enterprises (<https://www.llep.org.uk/our-economy/research-reports/business-survey/>).

Project Objectives

Edit
 To support local SMEs to shift towards a low carbon economy
 To support SMEs with a capital grant to install energy efficient or low carbon measures
 To reduce annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as a result of installing Green BELLE measures

Rationale

Edit
 Green BELLE will meet the need of financial support to install low carbon and energy efficient measures, and will provide advice about energy efficiency and referrals to other suitable projects.
 Green BELLE aims to meet the needs of those SMEs interested in Green BELLE and improving their energy efficiency, but who may have missed out on phase 1.

Inputs

| What | Value |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| ERDF | 1,538,416 |
| Private Match Funding | 1,199,429 |
| Public Match Funding | 338,988 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Intended Impacts

| What |
|---|
| Reduction of GHG emissions from Leicester and Leicestershire SMEs |
| |
| Increased awareness of sustainability issues in SMEs |
| |
| Investment in the low carbon sector |
| |
| Contribute to the city wide target of carbon emissions |
| |

Outputs

| ID | Intended Outcome | How is it Measured? | Level | Baseline | Value |
|----|---|---|---------|----------|-------|
| 1 | Number of Enterprises Receiving Support | Minimum of £1,000 ERDF grant for low carbon and energy efficient measures. SMEs are counted towards this target once the process is complete and defrayal of the Green BELLE grant amount has occurred. | Project | | 212 |
| 2 | Estimated Annual Decrease of GHG | GHG emissions are calculated - either from comparison of energy bills one year before and after installation of the measure(s), or from comparison of wattages and usage times - and are recorded as tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO ₂ e) | Project | | 1,583 |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |

Outcomes

| What | Value |
|---|-------|
| SMEs engaged with the low carbon and energy efficiency agenda | |
| | |
| SMEs implement low carbon measures | |
| | |
| SMEs invest in their premises for long term improvements and benefits | |
| | |

Activities

| What |
|---|
| Carry out basic energy audits at SME premises |
| |
| Offer energy efficiency advice, including encouraging positive behaviour change |
| |
| Support SMEs with Green BELLE grant applications |
| |
| Provide capital grants to SMEs |
| |
| Calculate carbon emissions reduction |

2.2 Project Delivery

Phase One of the project operated between October 2016 and December 2019. This provided capital grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 for energy efficiency and low carbon measures. Phase One of the project also offered SMEs two days of non-financial energy efficiency support and advice. The Summative Assessment of Phase One identified that 'two days non-financial support is not appropriate for standard SME interactions'. One of the main challenges with setting the two days of non-financial support as an output was that if an SME signed off receiving two days support, then it could not receive a capital grant as it was already counted as an output and an SME could not receive both a grant and two days of consultancy support.

The provision of consultancy support was subsequently removed as an output although the Project Officers did still offer advice and support to SMEs through site visits once an Expression of Interest for a grant had been received.

For Phase Two, the maximum grant was initially capped at £7,000 but this was changed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and increased back to a maximum of £10,000.

2.2.1 Project Activities

Green BELLE supports Small or Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Leicester and Leicestershire to increase their energy efficiency, reduce their energy costs and lower their carbon emissions. Grants of £1,000 to £10,000 are available to support the installation of low carbon and energy efficient technologies in local SMEs.

All grants must be match funded with the SME, so up to 50% of the costs can be covered by a Green BELLE grant and the remainder must be met by the SME. Any additional cost above the grant maximum (i.e., above a total cost of £20,000) also need to be paid for by the SME. A minimum grant amount of £1,000 also applies, so the minimum total cost of the measures, with the SME's match funding, is £2,000.

Measures supported through the project should reduce carbon emissions and increase energy efficiency. The types of measures supported include:

- Energy efficient heating systems and controls, such as boiler replacements and heat pumps
- Low energy lighting replacements (LEDs) and controls
- Renewable energy systems – such as biomass, solar panels
- Innovative low carbon measures, such as heat recovery systems
- Replacement Energy Efficient Machinery – such as Air Compressors
- Insulation
- Building Energy Management Systems.

This is not necessarily a full list, and the Green BELLE Grant Panel will consider other measures that can be shown to save energy and reduce carbon emissions. Green BELLE can also support multiple energy efficiency measures, up to the maximum grant amount.

Participating SMEs receive a site visit, carried out by a dedicated Project Officer. The visit is used to discuss the best energy efficiency options for their premises.

Applications are reviewed by the Green BELLE Grant Panel which consists of representatives of Leicester City Council's Energy Project's Team and Leicestershire County Council. Further details on Project Delivery are included at [section 4](#).

2.3 Phase One Summative Assessment

In September 2019, the Summative Assessment of Green BELLE Phase One was completed. This identified a number of key lessons, many of which were built into the delivery of Phase Two.

- 'Number of enterprises receiving support' was only achieved through capital grants in Phase One. The project was not successful at engaging with SMEs through offering two-day support and, therefore, this kind of support did not enable work towards this target. The two-day support element was removed from Green BELLE to focus on the provision of capital grants, which has proved successful.
- Information necessary to calculate carbon savings, such as energy bills (prior to installation) and full details of existing and replacement measures, will be obtained from the SME before grant approval. This will ensure that carbon savings can be considered at the Grant Panel stage and fully evidenced after installation.
- Measures installed in Phase One that have shown poor value for money in terms of carbon savings will not be approved under Phase Two, which may include measures such as computer equipment. This is unless it can be shown that carbon savings are likely to be higher, given the circumstances of the installation.
- Learning from experience allowed the project to focus on the most successful and cost-effective forms of advertising to reach more SMEs. Of the formal and paid-for marketing that took place in Phase One, the radio campaign and the Leicester Mercury newspaper advert were the most effective and advertising in the Leicester Tigers match-day programmes was the least effective.
- When GHG emissions reduction targets for Green BELLE were originally set, in early 2016, the rate at which the grid electricity supply would be decarbonised had not been widely appreciated. We now take account of this when forecasting carbon savings from installed measures.
- Making connections and growing referral networks throughout the project can be invaluable for generating SME referrals. SMEs can also be referred to other relevant projects where required.
- Three Project Officers working full-time are required to achieve the Green BELLE targets.¹

¹ For Phase Two, Leicester City Council was planning to recruit a third Project Officer but this was then deemed not necessary due to the fall in demand as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.4 Project Management

Green BELLE is managed by the Energy Projects Team and Leicester City Council. There are two full time Project Officers and one Team Leader working part-time on the project. The Project Officers are responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the project. There have been a number of changes in staffing over the period of the project, particularly in relation to the 'Team Leader' role and this is discussed a bit further at [section 4](#).

Applications for funding from Green BELLE are considered by a Grant Panel with representatives from Leicester City Council's Energy Project's Team and Leicestershire County Council's Environment Policy and Strategy Team. Further details on the assessment of applications by the Panel is included at [Appendix 1](#). Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Grant Panel met approximately every six weeks to consider applications. Since the pandemic, these have been held virtually.

2.5 Outputs

2.5.1 Contracted Outputs

The project is contracted to deliver the following ERDF outputs:

| Contracted Outputs | | Project Target |
|--------------------|---|----------------|
| C1 | Number of Enterprises Receiving Support | 212 |
| C34 | Estimated annual decrease of greenhouse gases | 1583.2 |

Source: Green BELLE Claim Report Q4 2022

2.6 Project Budget

The table below shows the projected capital / revenue split and split between ERDF and match funding for the project.

| Project Funding | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Capital | |
| ERDF (Capital) | £1,199,428.76 |
| Private Match (Capital) | £1,199,428.76 |
| Total Capital | £2,398,857.52 |
| Revenue | |
| ERDF (Revenue) | £338,987.71 |
| Public Match (Revenue) | £338,987.71 |
| Total Revenue | £677,975.42 |
| Total ERDF | £1,538,416.47 |
| Total Match | £1,538,416.47 |
| Total Project Value | £3,076,832.94 |

2.7 Strategic Context

2.7.1 Project Rationale and Market Failure

The Low Carbon Leicester and Leicestershire research study, carried out by Sheffield Hallam University in 2014, explained that SMEs, despite accounting for around 60% of UK emissions from the industrial sector, had little engagement with business service providers relating to energy efficiency.

This report stated that many enterprises are aware of energy/resource efficiency but lack financial and personnel resources to implement solutions. The report goes on to state that where an enterprise has previously received financial support to implement a low carbon solution that enterprise is more likely to continually invest in low carbon solutions. It is this lack of engagement with energy efficiency and the lack of resources to implement solutions that the Green BELLE project has sought to address.

The market failure the project has aimed to address is the evidenced inertia of SMEs to engage with and implement the low carbon agenda. Whilst there is evidence that SMEs are much more willing to consider energy efficiency, they are often unsure where to go for assistance.

Prior to the commencement of the project, the market for low carbon solutions in the UK had suffered a great many set-backs due to the withdrawal and lack of government policy and initiatives in the sector. Hence there is little demand for growth in this sector.

2.7.2 Policy Context

Clearly the policy around energy efficiency has evolved significantly since commencement of the project with a shift toward a net zero carbon policy. The project's strategic fit with the government's policy agenda has strengthened over the period of delivery.

The UK's Climate Change Act contains the world's first legally binding national commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Change Act 2008 committed the UK to an 80% reduction in carbon emissions relative to the levels in 1990, to be achieved by 2050. In June 2019, secondary legislation was passed that extended that target to "at least 100%". Doing so would make the UK a 'net zero' emitter.

In 2021, the Government published its 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener'. Net zero refers to achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. There are two different routes to achieving net zero, which work in tandem: reducing existing emissions and actively removing greenhouse gases.

A gross-zero target would mean reducing all emissions to zero. This is not realistic, so instead the net-zero target recognises that there will be some emissions but that these need to be fully offset, predominantly through natural carbon sinks such as oceans and forests.

When the amount of carbon emissions produced are cancelled out by the amount removed, the UK will be a net-zero emitter. The lower the emissions, the easier this becomes.

The government's Net Zero Strategy recognises that businesses account for 18% of UK territorial emissions and so encouraging them to take action to reduce their emissions is important. It also highlights that the approach to supporting businesses to deliver this change will need to be differentiated by business size and sector, as these factors will influence the ease with which a net zero target and other relevant actions can be adopted.

Locally Leicester and Leicestershire's Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030 makes a commitment to building sustainability principles into everything we do. Leicester and Leicestershire's local authorities have both declared a climate emergency and have set out plans to move towards net carbon zero. Leicestershire County Council is committed to achieving net zero carbon by 2030 for its own operational emissions and will work with its partners and the government to achieve net zero carbon for Leicestershire by 2045 or before.

Leicester City Council has also made zero carbon commitments for the city of Leicester, which encompass the council's activities, organisation and estate becoming carbon neutral by 2030 or sooner. The City Council published a Climate Emergency Strategy and an accompanying Action Plan in 2020 which includes a commitment to work with partners, including universities to help SMEs address the Climate Emergency.

During the period of Green BELLE Phase Two, the world has also faced an energy crisis. As countries began to recover from the pandemic, demand for gas started to increase again and could not be met due to a shortage in supply, causing gas prices to increase in 2021. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has threatened supplies and driven up prices further. This has further increased the demand for investment in measures that will help mitigate the increase in energy costs through improving energy efficiency.

It is clear that the project's strategic fit has become even stronger since inception in 2016 with the commitment to net zero carbon and the global energy crisis.

3.0 Project Progress

This section outlines Green BELLE's progress towards achieving the output and spend targets.

3.1 Output Targets

3.1.1 Contracted Outputs

| Contracted Outputs | | Target |
|--------------------|---|---------------|
| C1 | Number of Enterprises Receiving Support | 212 |
| C34 | Estimated annual decrease of greenhouse gases | 1583.2 |

3.2 Progress Towards Targets

3.2.1 Outputs

The table below details the progress made against the identified ERDF output targets.

| ERDF - Project Outputs | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Output | Contracted Output | Progress Against Targets | % |
| C1 | 212 | 205 | 97% |
| C34 | 1583.2 | 1497.58 | 95% |

Source: Green BELLE Project Team

The shortfall in the C1 outputs is as a result of seeing a higher-than-average grant request from SMEs in the later phases of the project which means fewer SMEs could be supported. Discussions with the project team suggest this higher grant request is believed to be due to rising costs as well as SMEs applying for more ambitious or expensive measures.

The project team have indicated that as of July 2023, the total decrease in greenhouse gases, is 1497.58 tCO₂e which is 95% of the original target.

The achievement of the GHG savings target has been particularly challenging. Reasons for this have included where meter readings have not been taken regularly enough, the SME has not kept copies of their energy bills and has not been able to obtain copies.

In a few cases, in Phase One of the project, SMEs did not comply with requests from the team to send energy bills for the 12-month period following payment of the grant. These difficulties in calculating the GHG reductions meant that the project was unable to claim towards the C34 targets for five SMEs awarded grants in Phase One of Green BELLE. Therefore, the actual savings will be higher than reported by the project.

3.2.2 Project Expenditure

The table below shows the contracted expenditure compared with actual expenditure at the end of the project. As of the final claim, the project has claimed 100% of its capital and revenue budget.

| | Contracted | Actual Expenditure | Percentage of Expenditure Achieved |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Capital | £2,398,857.52 | £2,398,856.10 | 100% |
| Revenue | £677,975.42 | £677,975.42 | 100% |
| Total | £3,076,832.94 | £3,076,832.94 | 100% |

3.2.3 Leverage

Because the maximum grant is £10,000, often SMEs have provided more than 50% of the total cost of measures. The total cost of measures installed through Green BELLE is shown in the table below:

| | Total cost of measures |
|---|------------------------|
| Phase One | £1,162,448.37 |
| Phase Two (as of analysis in March 2023) | £1,740,064.00 |
| Total (as of analysis in March 2023) | £2,902,512.37 |

This total is more than the total ERDF capital grant amount allocated to measures of £2,340,889.42 because the maximum Green BELLE capital grant amount is limited to £10,000. The matched funding contributed by the SME is therefore higher than 50 per cent for SMEs receiving a maximum grant. The difference of £561,622.95 represents the total additional outlay (above 50 per cent), from SMEs that have received this maximum grant amount, towards the cost of their measures.

3.2.4 Geographical Analysis – Grants Awards

The tables below provide an overview of the geographical spread of grants for Phase One and Phase Two as well as the combined totals from both phases.

Phase One

| Phase One – Number & Value of Grants by Local Authority Area | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Local Authority Area | Number of Grants | Value of Grants |
| Blaby | 8 | £45,903.19 |
| Charnwood | 8 | £38,809.10 |
| Harborough | 10 | £48,531.55 |
| Hinckley and Bosworth | 7 | £27,849.40 |
| Leicester | 42 | £270,274.64 |
| Melton | 5 | £18,563.10 |
| North West Leicestershire | 7 | £37,293.78 |
| Oadby and Wigston | 5 | £22,077.02 |
| Total | 92 | £509,301.78 |

Phase Two

| Phase Two – Number & Value of Grants by Local Authority Area | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Local Authority Area | Number of Grants | Value of Grants |
| Blaby | 17 | £111,279.58 |
| Charnwood | 13 | £88,959.94 |
| Harborough | 8 | £41,946.12 |
| Hinckley and Bosworth | 12 | £70,099.28 |
| Leicester | 48 | £274,270.58 |
| Melton | 2 | £4,029.56 |
| North West Leicestershire | 11 | £62,465.76 |
| Oadby and Wigston | 2 | £7,903.16 |
| Total | 113 | £660,953.98 |

Combined – Both Phases

| Combined - Number & Value of Grants by Local Authority Area | | |
|---|------------------|----------------------|
| Local Authority Area | Number of Grants | Value of Grants |
| Blaby | 25 | £157,182.77 |
| Charnwood | 21 | £127,769.04 |
| Harborough | 18 | £90,477.67 |
| Hinckley and Bosworth | 19 | £97,948.68 |
| Leicester | 90 | £544,545.22 |
| Melton | 7 | £22,592.66 |
| North West Leicestershire | 18 | £99,759.54 |
| Oadby and Wigston | 7 | £29,980.18 |
| Total | 205 | £1,170,255.76 |

The table below shows the percentage of total funds awarded to businesses in each local authority area. The following pie chart then shows the breakdown of funds by Leicester and Leicestershire.

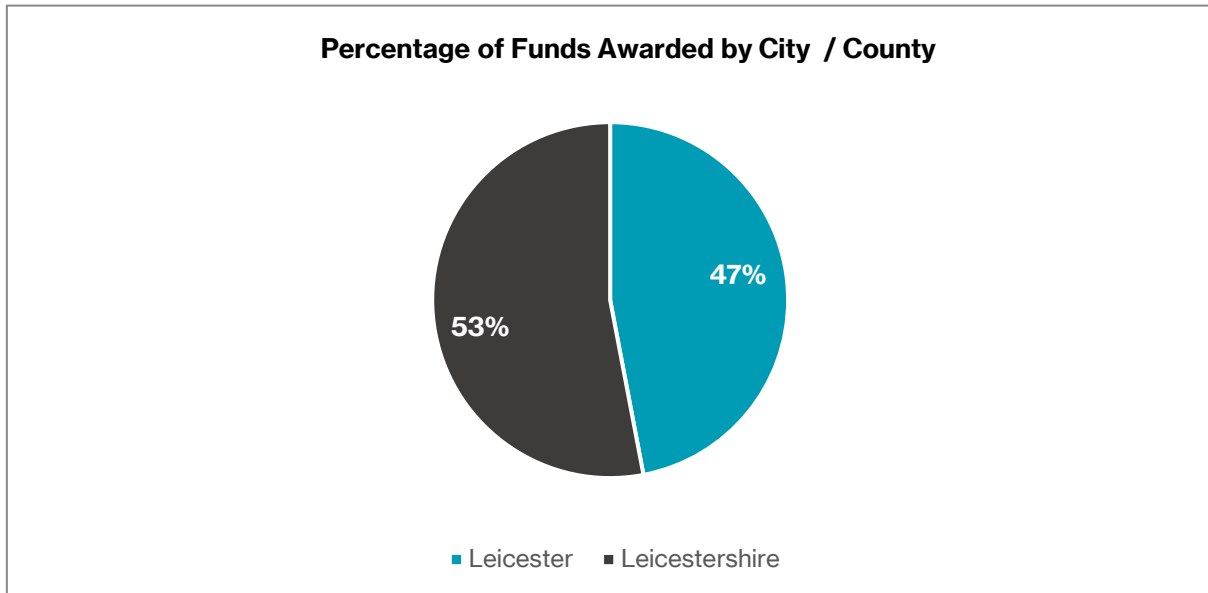
| Percentage of Total Funds Awarded by Local Authority Area | | | |
|---|---------|---------|-------------------------|
| Local Authority Area | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phases 1 and 2 Combined |
| Leicester | 53% | 41% | 47% |
| Blaby | 9% | 17% | 13% |
| Charnwood | 8% | 13% | 11% |
| North West Leicestershire | 7% | 9% | 9% |
| Hinkley and Bosworth | 5% | 11% | 8% |
| Harborough | 10% | 6% | 8% |
| Oadby and Wigston | 4% | 1% | 3% |
| Melton | 4% | 1% | 2% |

(Please note, all percentages are rounded)

In total **47%** of the funds (£544,545.22) have been awarded to businesses in Leicester City with **53%** (£625,710.54) to businesses in Leicestershire.

The districts that have received the highest proportion of funds are Blaby, Charnwood and North West Leicestershire.

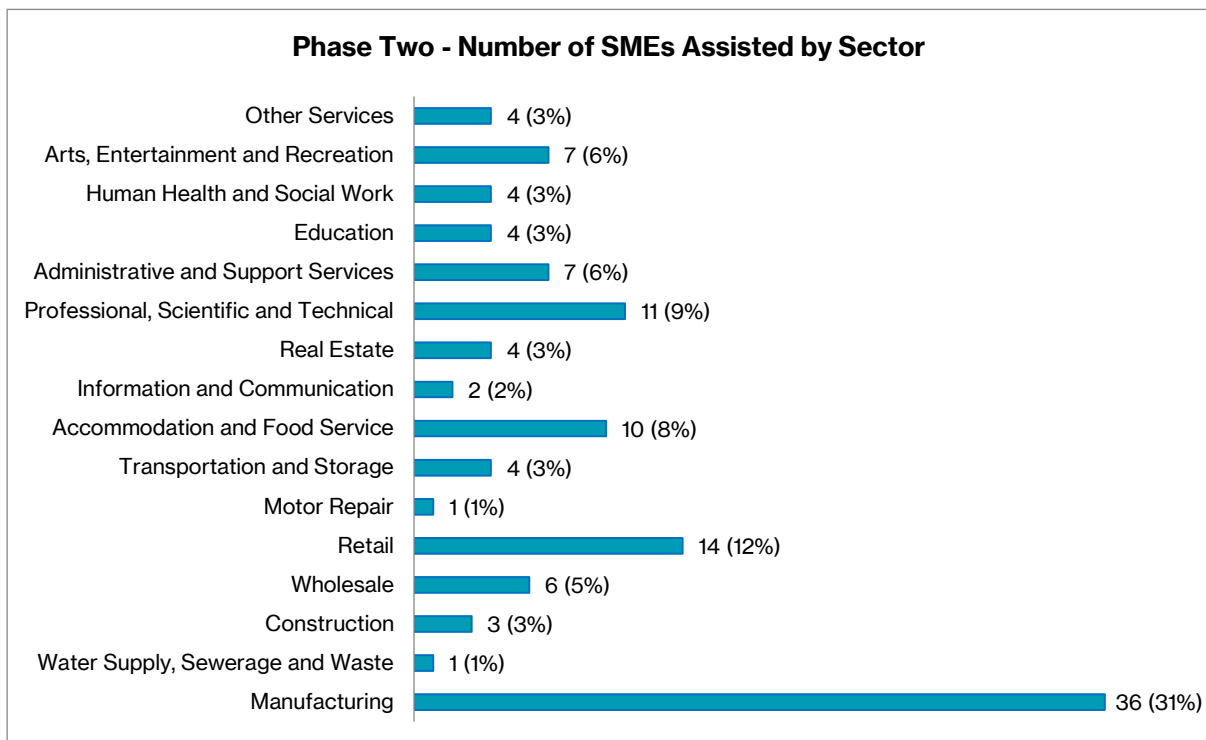
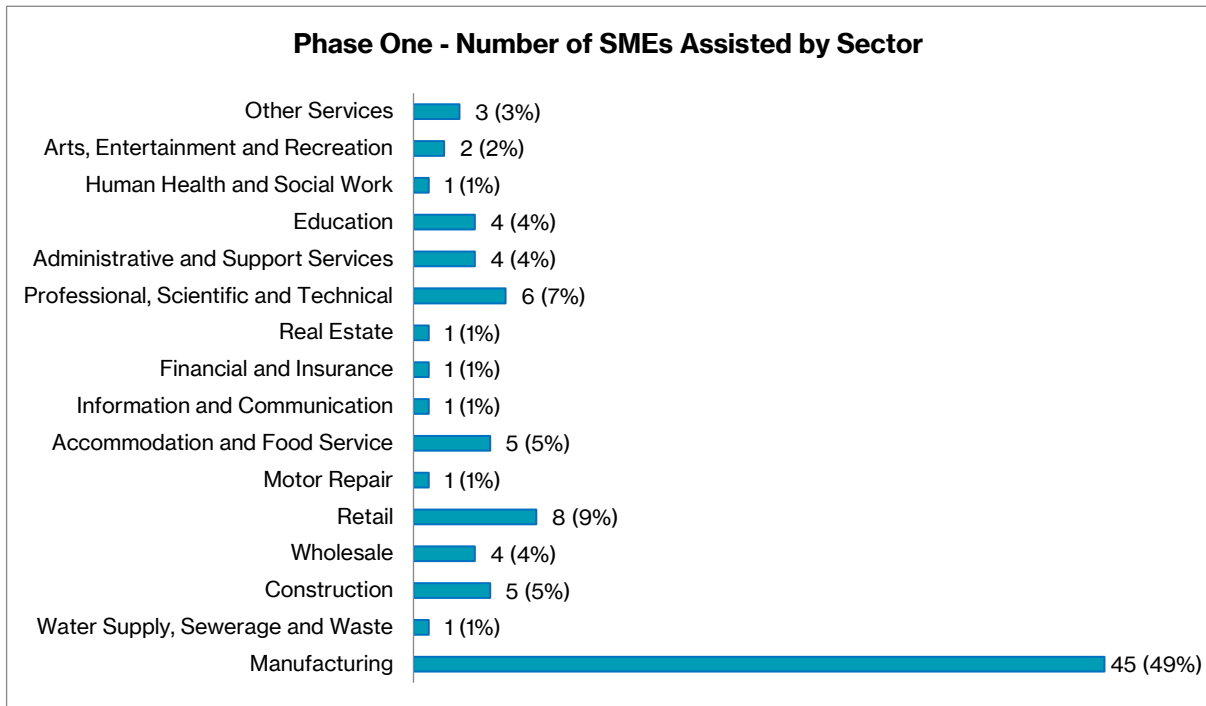
3.2.5 Geographical Analysis – Suppliers

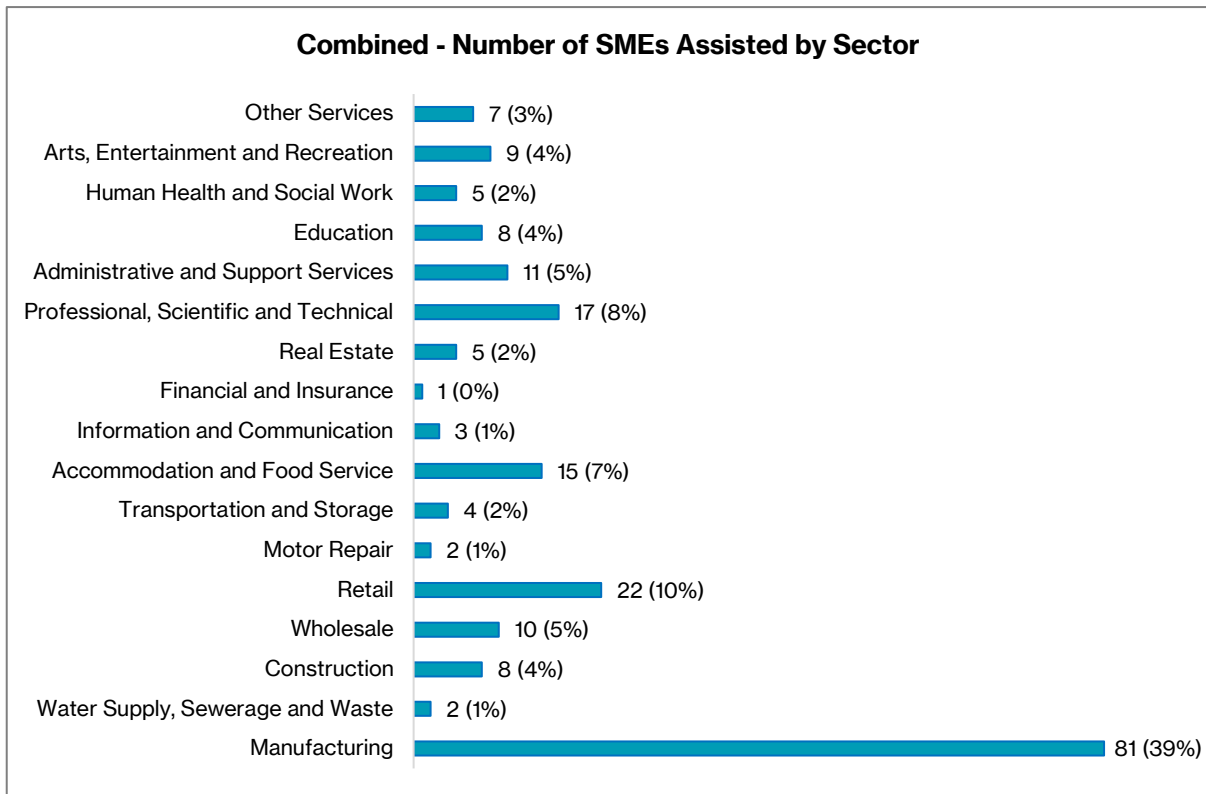


An analysis of the location of suppliers was also undertaken to understand how much of the funding has been in theory retained locally within Leicester or Leicestershire. In total 67.5% of expenditure has been with suppliers with an LE postcode and therefore a high percentage of the grant expenditure has supported the local economy.

3.2.6 Sectors

The charts below show the sectors from each of the two phases and the two phases combined for all the SMEs receiving grants. This was collected from the SIC codes of registered businesses and the EOI forms for businesses not registered at Companies House.

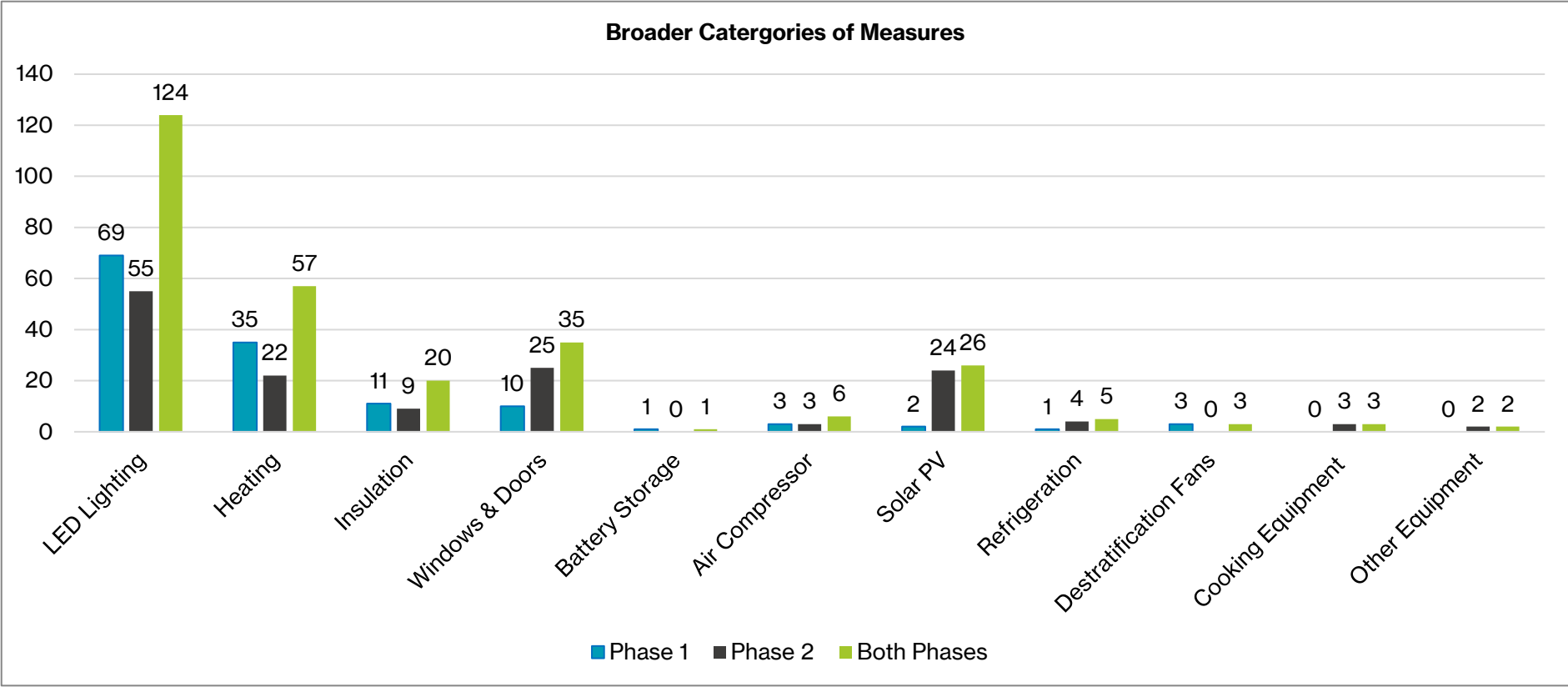




The charts show that manufacturing was by far the most heavily supported sector by the project, receiving 49% of grants during Phase One and 31% during Phase Two. When the two phases were combined, the manufacturing sector accounted for 39% of all grants received.

3.2.7 Measures Supported

The chart below shows the types of energy efficiency measures supported through each phase of the project.

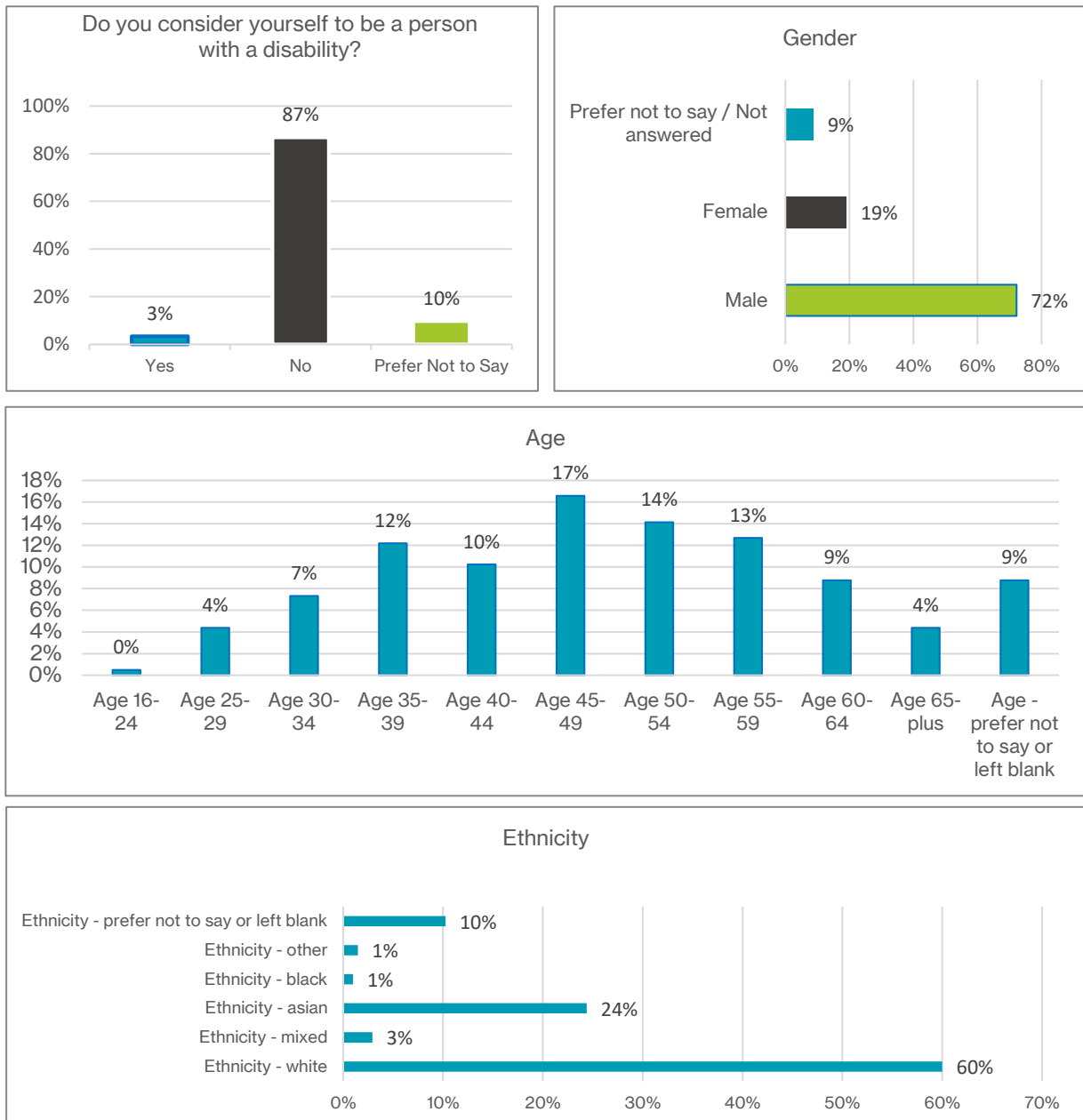


This chart illustrates that LED lighting has consistently been the most popular measure for which businesses used their grants. When the total number of grants for each measure is considered, LED Lighting is then followed by Heating, Windows and Doors, and Solar PV.

3.2.8 Equal Opportunities Analysis

As well as gathering data on the location of businesses and suppliers, the project team has also collected equal opportunities data as part of the application process. Businesses were asked to answer in relation to the person signing the form, and not for the business as a whole. The data represents businesses who received a grant rather than all applications.

The key headline data is shown below.



- **72%** of respondents were male and **19%** were female. Nationally, finder.com² reports that **72.92%** of business owners are male and **27.08%** are female, therefore the project looks to be broadly reflective of the national position.
- The most common age range of respondents for Green BELLE was **45-49** years. According to finder.com, the most common age of business owners is 51 years, and the average age is 49 years.
- Only **3%** of Green BELLE respondents consider themselves as having a disability whereas according to the Federation of Small Businesses³, **25%** of small business owners across the UK are managing a disability or health condition on a daily basis. It should be noted that Green BELLE's questionnaire asked about disability only rather than disability and health condition.
- **60%** of Green BELLE respondents consider their ethnicity to be White and **24%** consider their ethnicity to be Asian. According to the ONS Small Business Survey, 2021⁴, **88%** of SME employers were majority led by people from the White ethnic group; **4%** were majority led by people from an ethnic minority and **7%** had leadership teams where ethnicity was unknown. Population wise, the 2021 census data reveals that Leicester's population is made up of **43.4%** of people who identify as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh.

² Source: <https://www.finder.com/uk/business-owners-uk>

³ Source: <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/business-without-barriers.html>

⁴Source: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/business/leadership-of-small-and-medium-enterprises/latest>

4.0 Project Delivery and Management

This section sets out the project delivery and management approach for the Green BELLE project. It has been informed by a review of documentation and consultation with the project team and Grant Panel members.

4.1 Project Delivery

SMEs initially submit an expression of interest through the Green BELLE website (<https://www.greenbelle.org.uk/>). These are checked for eligibility by the Project Officers.

The online expression of interest form has been devised in a way to ask the key questions to filter SMEs that are eligible (such as post code checker, stating SME sector) and ask for information on state aid to ensure that the project does not assist SMEs who are over the state aid limits.

To be eligible for a Green BELLE grant, businesses must meet several criteria, as follows:

- Both the business and the premises in which they wish to install energy efficiency measures must be within Leicester or Leicestershire.
- Businesses must meet all of the criteria to meet the EU definition of a Small or Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME).
- Businesses must be within a sector eligible for support from EU funding programmes.
- Businesses must not have received over €200,000 in De Minimis State Aid funding over the last three rolling years.
- Businesses must not meet the definition of an Undertaking in Difficulty.

If the SME is considered eligible, they will receive a visit from one of the Project Officers. Prior to the pandemic, this was undertaken as a face-to-face visit to the business premises. Since the pandemic, this has been undertaken virtually via a 'Microsoft Teams' (or occasionally Zoom) meeting.

The Project Officer reviews the proposal and, where appropriate, makes suggestions for alternative or additional measures, particularly focusing on measures which achieve the highest greenhouse gas savings, as this is a target required by ERDF.

Businesses are then invited to submit a full application and must secure three quotations for each energy efficiency measure they are applying for. Applicants must also provide 12 months (or a minimum of six months) of energy bills for the period prior to the application, where necessary to calculate the greenhouse gas savings.

Applicants are also required to provide an upfront estimate of the greenhouse gas savings with their application. This was introduced in Phase Two, at the request of DLUHC. This estimate is usually calculated with the assistance of the Green BELLE Project Officer who also checks any calculations provided by the applicant. Asking for this information, as well as various other relevant details, on the full application form was a learning point from the Phase One Summative Assessment implemented in Phase Two.

Applications are initially checked by the Project Officers and are then presented to the Grant Panel. If funding is approved, the Grant Panel will decide which quotation the SME must accept to receive the grant.

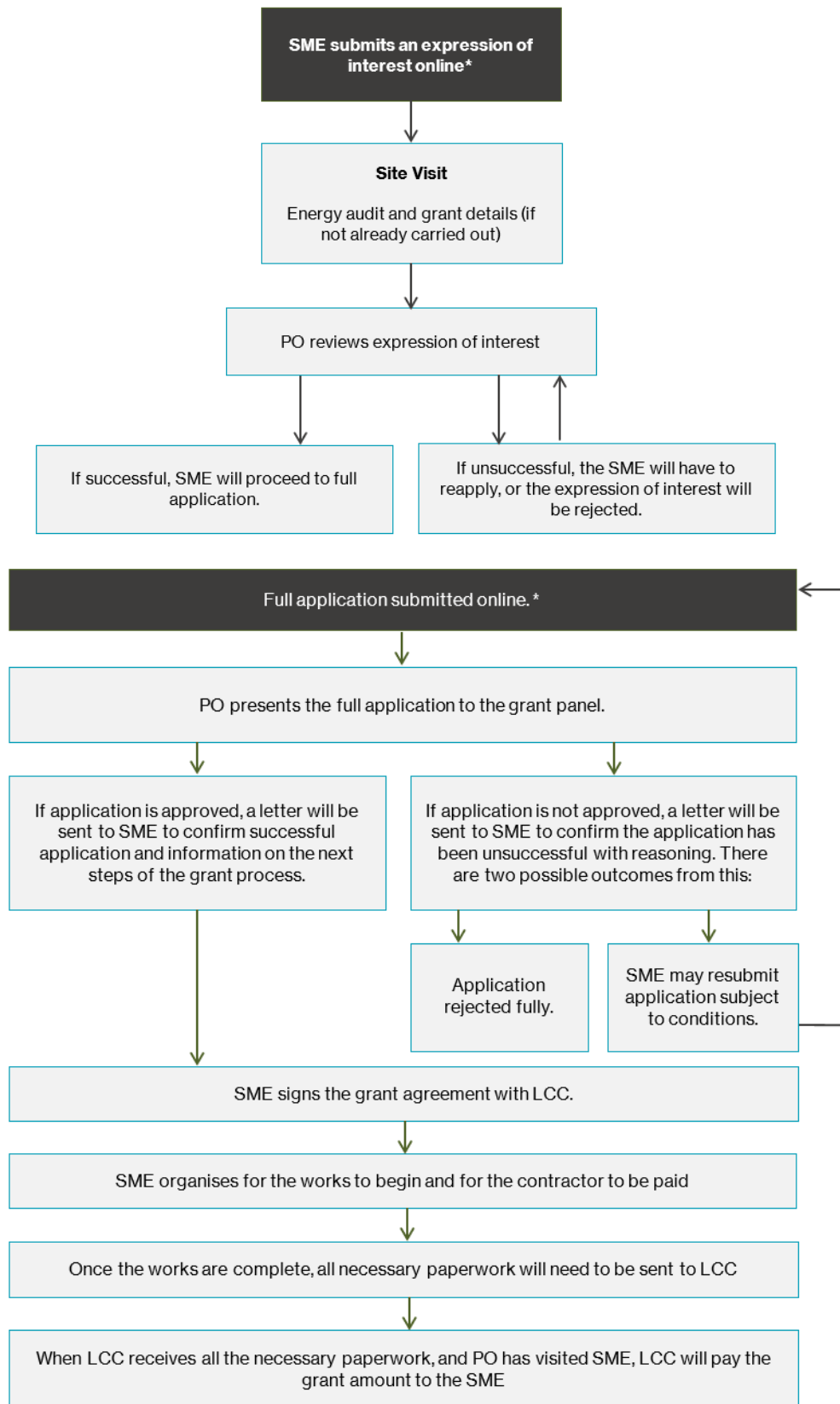
Prior to Covid, the Grant Panel met approximately every six weeks. During the pandemic, these were held virtually. Because of the drop in applications, this was done via email between the Grant Panel members as and when an application was ready for consideration. The Grant Panel has continued to operate in this way for the remainder of the project, as it was felt that this was a better system for approval. For example, applicants didn't have to wait weeks for the next meeting date for their application to be considered (and possibly reconsidered at the following meeting); project officers were not under pressure to finalise a high number of applications by a set meeting date and did not feel under pressure to answer all of the Grant Panels' questions during the meetings (which had been a problem at times in Phase One); emails provided a better record of discussion points (although any particularly complex issues could also be discussed with a phone call); and this also removed the problem of having to coordinate regular meetings between the Grant Panel members and Project Officers.

Post award, SMEs receive a grant agreement which must be signed and returned with any required supporting document before they are issued with a permission to start. At this point in process, the applicant was also issued with a notification of the amount of funding they would receive, as required under ERDF for state aid purposes.

ERDF funding requires SMEs to pay for capital measures upfront and then be reimbursed for the approved grant amount. This is to ensure that the grant is being used for the approved energy efficient measure. Green BELLE grant recipients must therefore pay for the installation of measures and provide evidence of this to Leicester City Council including the invoice from the supplier, copies of bank statements to evidence that the supplier has been paid and photos of the installed measures. Where considered necessary, for complex installations, follow-up site visit could also be conducted by the Project Officer, either remotely using Microsoft Teams or in person at the SME's property. The SME can then invoice the Council for the grant amount and this is paid on the Council's usual 30-day payment terms assuming all the required evidence is provided.

A feedback form is sent to the SME after the grant has been paid.

The flowchart below shows the customer journey for the project.



* Offline versions of the EOI and Full Application Forms were also available on request.

4.2 Marketing

4.2.1 Marketing

A range of marketing routes have been utilised for the project with the project team supported by the Marketing Department at Leicester City Council. A copy of the Green BELLE marketing leaflet and a screenshot from the project's website homepage can be found in the appendices. In analysing the referral routes for businesses that were ultimately claimed as an output, the following were the most successful in Phase One:

- Web search
- Word of mouth
- Energy Projects team/ Carbon Reduction Funding Consultant
- LEP/ LLEP Business Gateway/ Collaborate/ Textiles Hub Business Investment Manager
- Leicester Mercury
- Radio Advert.

Whilst in Phase Two, the following were the most referenced referral routes:

- Web search/ online
- Email
- Business Gateway/ Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Radio Advert.

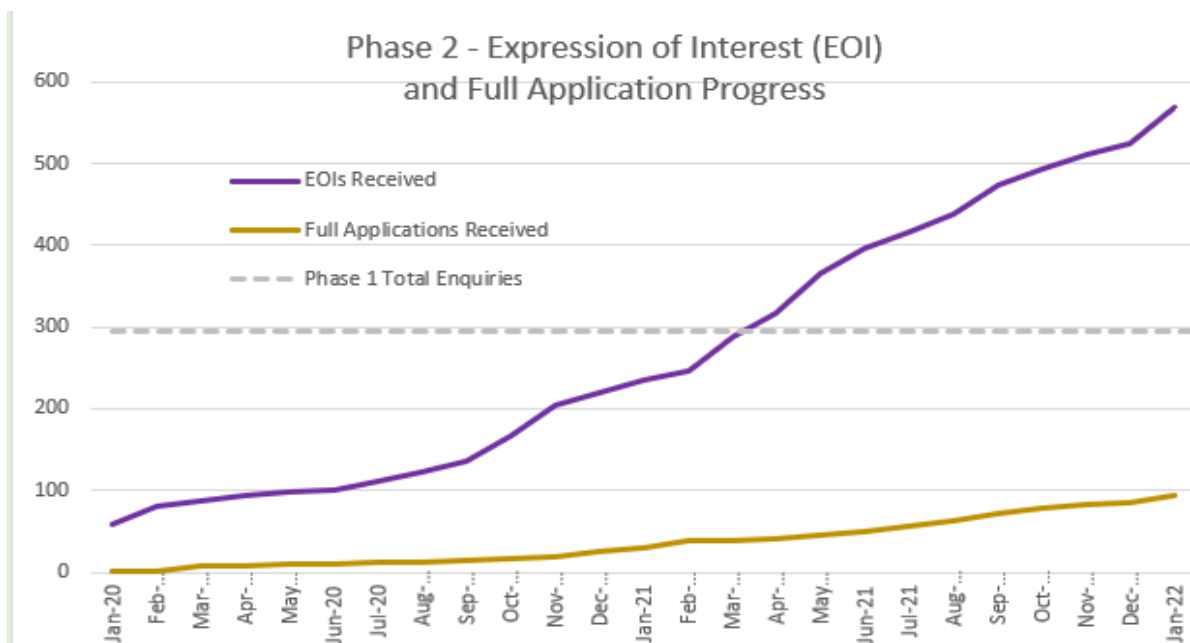
The project has focused marketing activity in Phase Two on the most successful referral routes from Phase One. A range of marketing approaches have been taken to try and reflect the diversity of the city and the county including advertising on Asian radio stations. Equal opportunities data is analysed at section 3 above. Feedback from the team on the marketing of the project is provided at section 4.4 below.

As explained below, the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the number of applications being made to Green BELLE. In response, the team promoted Green BELLE extensively - advertising on the radio, on display posters in the city of Leicester, advertising in magazines and on websites, leaflet drops on industrial estates, and attending and speaking at webinars remotely via Teams to promote Green BELLE to businesses. The team made use of business networks to ask others to promote Green BELLE on their behalf, as well as utilising Leicester City Council's own opportunities for press releases and publicity. An online pay-per-click advertising campaign was also initiated which was been successful in attracting a high number Expressions of Interest.

4.3 Impact of Covid-19

After a good start to the second phase of Green BELLE, at the beginning of 2020, Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for Green BELLE funding reduced significantly in March, due to the national lockdown.

This can be seen from the graph, below. (Note that the graph shows the cumulative number of EOIs received by the end of the month indicated on the x-axis, so there was a large increase in the number of EOIs received in February 2020, but only a very small increase in March 2020, for example).



Source: PCR, February 2022

Between mid-March and the end of May 2020 the team were unable to carry out site visits due to the national lockdown. However, at the beginning of June 2020 they started offering SMEs remote site visits using Microsoft Teams, which meant that the team were able to start processing new applications again. This approach, combined with a successful marketing campaign boosted enquiry numbers again significantly. However, most SMEs in Leicester and Leicestershire remained affected by lockdown restrictions.

Despite the relaxation of lockdown rules nationally towards the end of June 2020, Leicester was kept in a local lockdown due to the high number of cases reported in the city and some surrounding areas. This was extended in July and was eased slightly in August, although Leicester and some parts of Leicestershire were kept in a Tier-2 lockdown that remained in place until the second national lockdown in November 2020. After this, Leicester and Leicestershire were placed in Tier-3, which was then upgraded to Tier 4, and remained in a third national lockdown that lasted until the end of March 2021. Overall, Leicester remained under lockdown restrictions longer than almost every other part of the country.

With a vigorous marketing campaign, Green BELLE actually received nearly double the number of EOIs than in Phase One of the Project. However, as can be seen in the graph above, this did not translate from EOIs into as many applications for grant funding as hoped.

The team reported that the ongoing effects of Covid-19 made SMEs reluctant to commit the capital match funding required in this period of economic uncertainty. They also felt it was possible that SMEs affected by the regulatory changes due to leaving the EU were less willing to commit match funding over this period and may have had less time available to focus on applying for Green BELLE funding.

Once SMEs have decided to apply for a grant, many reported to the project team that they were finding it particularly difficult to obtain the three quotes per measure required, as contractors were extremely busy dealing with a backlog of work after lockdown.

SMEs had difficulty in obtaining any further information required from contractors once their quotes have been received. These factors, combined with the need to strengthen processes for capturing and measuring GHG reductions, as requested by DLUHC at the beginning of Phase Two, increased the administrative burden on the SME at the application stage. The team felt that this also led to a reduction in conversions from EOIs to full applications and grants approved.

The original aim for Phase Two was to allocate all available funding by April 2021. This would allow up to six months following approval of all funds for SMEs to install measures and a further 12-months to collect follow-up energy bill data (where required), with two months to process the necessary paperwork and defray payments for the final grant claim. However, the impact of the pandemic meant this was not achieved and the team continued to process and approve grant applications until August 2022 following a Project Change Request to extend the end date from December 2022 to June 2023.

4.4 Consultation Feedback

To inform and add further detail to the Project Delivery and Management analysis, consultation was undertaken with the project team and Grant Panel members. The following people were consulted with as part of the evaluation:

- Anna Dodd, Sustainability Manager, Leicester City Council
- Lucy Birch, Energy Projects Manager, Leicester City Council
- Robert Leeson, Project Officer, Leicester City Council
- Anna Dias, Project Officer, Leicester City Council
- James O'Brien, Team Manager Environment Policy & Strategy, Leicestershire County Council.

The findings of this consultation have been grouped together under themes and have not been attributed to particular individuals.

4.4.1 Delivery

Leicester City Council is the accountable body and Leicestershire County Council is represented on the Grant Panel. Consultees felt that there is a good relationship between the partners.

Whilst the Grant Panel has operated remotely since the start of the pandemic, generally it was felt that this has operated effectively and efficiently. The Grant Panel has evolved as the project has progressed, making small changes to the processes to maximise benefits and with a strong focus on consistency in decision making.

The Project Officers generally knew the types of measures the panel would likely support based on the carbon savings that could be achieved and therefore encouraged businesses to apply for these measures. This helped make the process as smooth as possible.

The team reported that most SMEs had already decided what measures they wanted when they put in the Expression of Interest although some were more open to suggestions.

The team felt that generally doing the site visits remotely worked effectively. Whilst some SMEs struggled with it a little in the beginning, the consultees felt remote visits aligned better with the aspirations of the project as it reduced the amount of travelling undertaken by the Project Officers. It was reported that the team did try and encourage a fabric first approach, but that SMEs were generally not particularly open to this approach and some team members reported back that a fabric first approach might not have necessarily had the required impact on CO2 savings.

There have been a number of staff changes during the period of the project and whilst consultees felt this didn't impact on day-to-day delivery, particularly as there has been more consistency in the Project Officers, it did mean that there were periods when the Project Officers had limited supervisory / management support due to challenges in recruiting to the Energy Project Manager post. But it was recognised that different members of staff did step in to support the team during these periods.

4.4.2 Covid Impact

As highlighted above, the team discussed the significant impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had had on the project and the reduction in applications received. The team reported that during the pandemic, businesses were just concerned with survival and even though the grant would pay for 50% of the costs, businesses were not making this type of investment.

Remote site visits were introduced, and consultees felt that this was an effective way to allow SMEs to continue to progress their application following the submission of their initial Expression of Interest. However, some consultees felt that not doing site visits since Covid has impacted on the quality of applications.

In order to increase the number of applications received, the team introduced a more stringent process to follow up SMEs who submitted an Expression of Interest but not a full application.

In addition to email reminders, the team followed up site visits with phone calls to businesses to encourage them to submit full applications.

The team felt that the pandemic particularly impacted on the achievement of greenhouse gas reductions which is the ERDF required output for the project. Many SMEs were in lockdown for sustained periods over the pre-installation bill monitoring period or reduced their productivity because of the impact of Covid-19. This led to much lower energy consumption levels in the 12-months prior to installation of the energy efficiency measures. The result of this has been much lower energy savings than would normally be seen. In some cases, an SME's energy usage might even increase following installation of the energy efficiency measures, due to increase in productivity following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

4.4.3 Successes

Helping and advising businesses to make energy and financial savings was highlighted by all as the biggest achievements of the project with the team reporting that they had received lots of positive feedback from businesses.

The team felt that they had been able to keep things as simple as possible for businesses within the constraints of the funding and helped some companies to be more innovative in their approach to energy efficiency.

It was recognised that the project is delivering something that is not available elsewhere and helping businesses to address a well-known market failure in terms of SME investment in energy efficiency measures.

The project has faced a lot of challenges and maintaining delivery and achieving the outputs it has, is also seen as a big success of the project.

For members of the team, being involved in the project has been personally rewarding because of the positive impact it is having on SMEs and reducing their environmental impact.

4.4.4 Challenges / Limitations

One of the biggest challenges has been the many externalities that have impacted on the project.

From the impact of the pandemic discussed above through to the energy and cost of living crisis which increased demand towards the very end of the project, Green BELLE has had to respond to these many external factors throughout Phase Two.

One of the limitations of the project identified through the consultation was the level of advice able to be provided to SMEs. The Project Officers were recognised as being very knowledgeable but not technically trained. However, team members reported that many of the businesses were not necessarily looking for advice, they knew what they wanted to apply for. It was suggested it would have been good to have a commercial energy assessor as part of the team to advise SMEs.

Calculating the carbon savings has been identified as a challenge which has taken up a lot of the Project Officers' time in terms of chasing SMEs for energy bills and calculating the savings. Consultees suggested that having training on how to calculate the savings or bringing in external support for this would have been helpful.

In addition, the increasing decarbonisation of the grid over the period of the project meant that carbon savings for some measures have been reduced and the payback in terms of carbon savings is getting longer and longer. Whilst decarbonisation of the grid is clearly positive, it potentially had an impact on the greenhouse gas savings targets for the project and it was suggested that there may have been more appropriate measures for the project, but annual GHG savings was the output required for the ERDF funding. Some of the measures SMEs wanted would have resulted in financial savings and didn't necessarily deliver the level of CO2 savings required and this could be challenging to balance.

Some consultees felt that the project should have taken more of a fabric first approach and to have pushed SMEs to think more holistically about their premises rather than on an individual measure basis. However, some consultees felt that this might be off putting to some SMEs as part of the appeal of the Green BELLE grants is the relatively easy access to funding it provides.

The need for SMEs to provide energy bills for the 12 months prior to their application, for most measures meant that some businesses such as startups or businesses that had recently moved into new premises couldn't be supported. The team reported that it was difficult when they had to turn businesses down for these reasons.

Finally, it was reported that the lack of a consistent ERDF Contract Manager within MHCLG and then DLUHC for much of the Phase Two delivery period did cause difficulties for the team as queries would take a long time to be resolved.

4.4.5 Marketing

There was a lot of engagement with the Marketing Team at Leicester City Council with regards the best way to market the project. The project has focused marketing activity in Phase Two on the most successful referral routes from Phase One. The team reported that a range of marketing approaches have been taken to try and reflect the diversity of the city and the county including advertising on Asian radio stations, but some felt that the project had probably not been successful in achieving the reach necessary to be reflective of the diversity of the target area.

There was a project launch at Phoenix in Leicester city centre and different team members spoke at events to raise awareness. The team reported that some districts promoted the project heavily to their businesses and others didn't, and this is probably reflected in the geographical distribution of grants.

The team felt that the project has been difficult to promote at times as it hasn't always been at the top of SMEs' agendas. However, this changed somewhat once the energy crisis hit in 2022.

Consultees reflected that it is really difficult to know if the marketing activity undertaken would have been more effective if there had been no pandemic.

4.4.6 The Future

All consultees felt that there is a need for the project to continue in some form as there is continued need and demand with a waiting list of SMEs. The team also felt that a strong brand had been developed with Green BELLE and this shouldn't be lost.

Some suggested that a slightly different approach would be beneficial in the future with more upfront time with businesses and the opportunity to be more flexible and encourage SMEs to be more innovative in their approach to energy efficiency, including where appropriate a fabric first approach.

Consultees felt that for any future projects, there could be a better way of measuring impact than calculating the greenhouse gas reductions as this is very time intensive and the time could be better spent supporting businesses.

Whilst recognising the importance of ensuring value for money is secured, consultees reported that getting three quotations for exactly the same measures could be very difficult for SMEs sometimes and this did put some off applying for the grant.

This was particularly a problem during and after Covid lockdowns as contractors were extremely busy dealing with the backlog of work that had built up after lockdown. It was suggested that a little flexibility on this, where justified, would help facilitate delivery.

It was also suggested that being able to offer over 50% funding on occasions might make the funding accessible to more businesses.

5.0 Project Outcomes and Impact – Business Feedback

To demonstrate the impact of the project, this section details the results of consultation with businesses awarded a Green BELLE grant. To establish the counterfactual position, consultation was undertaken with a control group of businesses who submitted an expression of interest to the project but did not end up receiving a grant.

In addition, the project team have undertaken a number of case studies with businesses supported through the project. These capture a more in depth understanding of the impacts that the Green BELLE grants have had on the SMEs supported. The findings of each of these is shown over the following pages.

5.1 Businesses who received a Green BELLE Grant

A survey was designed by the project team with input from Focus and an electronic survey link was circulated to businesses to take part in the survey. The project has awarded grant to 205 SMEs to date and 78 businesses completed the survey – a high engagement rate of **38%**.

In addition, this section draws on the results of the feedback form which is sent to all SME beneficiaries after their Green BELLE grant has been paid. 39 feedback forms have been gathered through Phases One and Two.

The findings from both surveys are set out below. Further information on the types of businesses supported, the nature of measures installed, and the projected greenhouse gas savings can be seen through a range of case studies on the Green BELLE website:

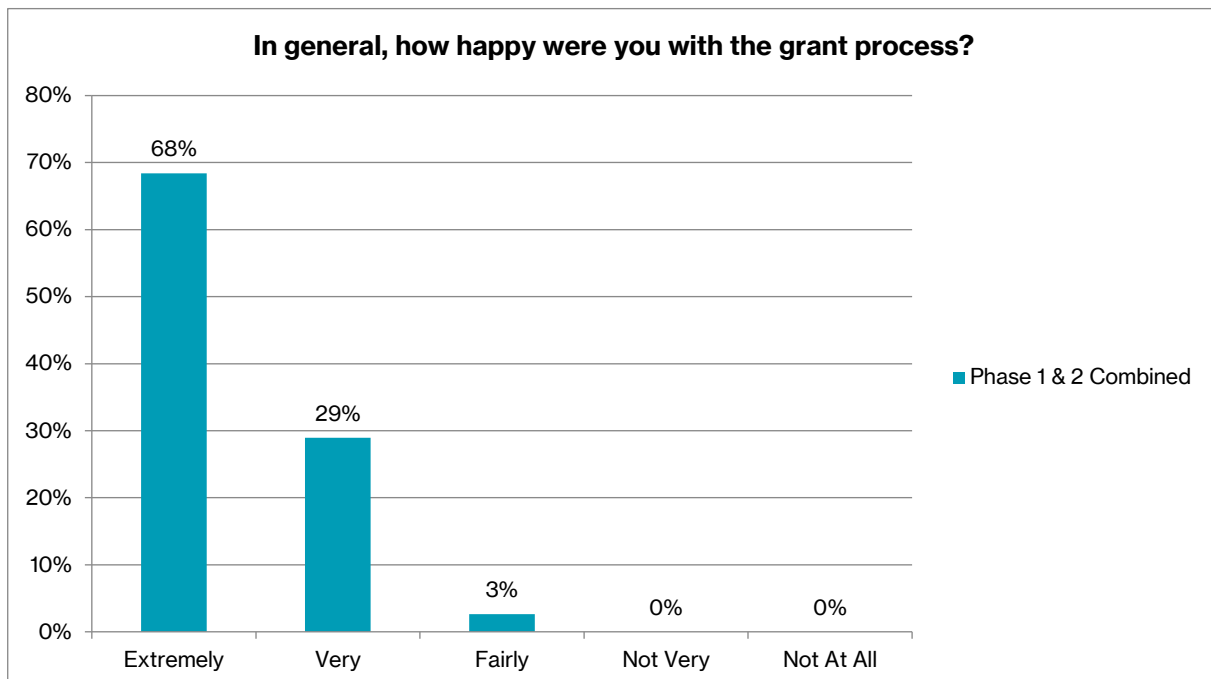
<https://www.greenbelle.org.uk/case-studies/>

Key Findings

- **97%** of respondents said they were either extremely or very happy with the grant process.
- **96%** of businesses said their assigned Project Officer was either extremely or very helpful.
- **99%** of respondents to the feedback survey said they were either extremely or very happy with the measures installed and 99% of respondents said they are still using the energy efficiency measures for which the Green BELLE project provided grant funding.
- **53%** of businesses said they would not have installed the measures without the funding.
- **36%** of businesses said that without a grant it would take 5 years to be able to install any measures.
- **60%** of businesses that said they wouldn't have installed the measures without funding said this was due to the upfront cost.
- **90%** of respondents said that applying for funding was to save money on energy bills. With more than **70%** saying it was to reduce carbon emissions.
- **73%** of businesses said that the implementation of measures had resulted in a reduction of operating costs.
- **86%** of businesses said that the project had or would have a positive impact on the business.
- **99%** of business said they would recommend Green BELLE to other businesses and **88%** said they would consider applying again if Green BELLE reopened.

5.1.1 Feedback Form

A feedback form is sent to all SME after their Green BELLE grant has been paid. Businesses were asked 'in general, how happy were you with the grant process?'. The combined responses for businesses supported through Phases One and Two of the project are shown in the chart below. 97% of respondents said they were either extremely or very happy with the grant process.



Specific comments received included:

- The Project Officer was extremely helpful throughout the entire process, together we managed to overcome all the obstacles to get the installation completed.
- All very straightforward.
- Excellent support from Green BELLE team and Leicester City Council.
- Difficult getting three quotes from suppliers all to be valid within 30 days of each other.
- Project Officer has extremely visible, cooperative and helpful.
- The grant process was helpful and straightforward.
- It's good to get the support but the process is exceptionally onerous.
- Very easy.

Businesses were then asked about particular elements of the grant process. The key points are summarised below:

- **82.5%** of respondents found the site visit either extremely or very helpful. It should be noted that this question was only asked of businesses supported through Phase Two of the project when the majority of site visit were virtual.
- **87%** of businesses across both phases thought that the Green BELLE Expression of Interest was either extremely or very easy to complete. Only 1 business fed back that they found the EOI 'not very' easy to complete.
- **100%** of respondents said the Full Application was either extremely, very or fairly easy to complete, with nearly **50%** stating it was 'very' easy to complete.
- **96%** of businesses fed back that their Project Officer was either extremely or very helpful.
- Nearly **99%** of businesses stated that they were either extremely or very satisfied with the measure installed as a result of their Green BELLE grant.
- **79%** reported that the Green BELLE website was extremely or very helpful. 5% reported that it was 'not at all' helpful. Analysis of the comments suggests this is because these businesses did not access the website.
- All but one business stated that they would recommend Green BELLE to other businesses.

Businesses who completed the feedback form were then asked if they wanted to provide any further comments. A selection is shown below:

"The grant scheme has enabled us to make our building more heat efficient. We decided to apply as our old historical listed building struggles to retain heat. The process was fairly easy, agent support from LCC makes it seamless. The whole process was around 6 months from start to finish. Well worth it, during the current climate with energy bills at their forever high I am hoping this will save on costs as we have had secondary glazing installed on all our first-floor single glazed windows. 50% contribution from the Green BELLE grant was really helpful making it cost effective and affordable made it possible for us to have the works completed now rather than later."

"Having become generally unimpressed with previous government grants where I concluded that the potential merit did not justify the process, my opinion has been changed. The application requires quite considerable detail but no more than is appropriate to validate a meaningful financial contribution. The process was clear and well executed, with professional and courteous support from the grant officer"

“Fantastic work and made our decision of changing the lighting to LEDs so much easier. I think this is an excellent project, it’s enabled me to massively reduce my electricity usage with measures that I could never have afforded otherwise.”

“The Green BELLE scheme has been really beneficial to us - not only will the new LED lighting save on our electricity bills, but we have also reduced our emissions and helped the environment. I just want to say that.... the Project Officer in charge was amazing throughout the whole process and extremely helpful!”

“Without the support of my assigned grant officer I don't think I would have got through the process and probably wouldn't have installed the measures.”

“From start to finish, the process has been very smooth and efficient. The project officers were extremely helpful, professional and got back to any queries I had very quickly. Thank you.

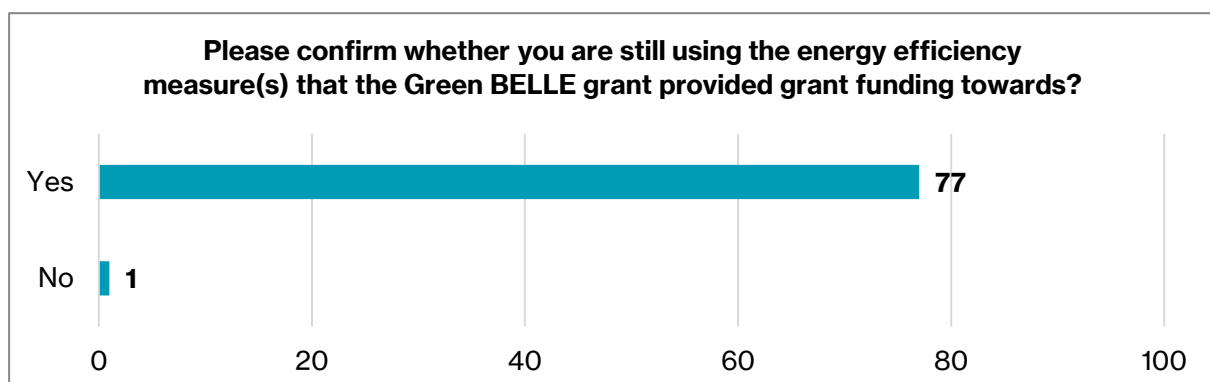
“Thanks to Green BELLE it enabled us to consider energy efficiency measures within our building which we perhaps would not have been able to install otherwise due to cost reasons. This will allow us to ensure that our energy usage is low, the building is efficient to run and we are in turn lowering our impact on the environment. Delighted!”

“I would say most business owners could make savings with their use of energy, but the costs of ‘change’ and the timescales involved often outweigh the process. I can certainly recommend that any business owner should make the call to Green BELLE and see for themselves how much they can both improve and save on their energy use. I did, and underwent a very smooth LED lighting project.”

“Green BELLE has been vital in the transformation of my small hotel from a one size fits all central heating system to bespoke guest controllable in room units which can also be operated and monitored online. I anticipate significant energy savings and positive business impact which could not have been achieved without the Green BELLE funding.”

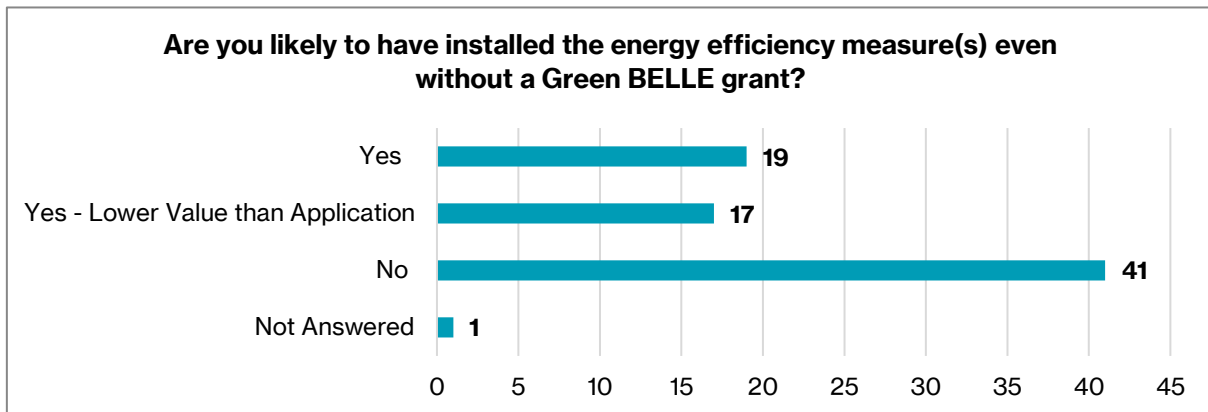
5.1.2 Energy Efficiency Measures Installed

Businesses who completed the evaluation questionnaire were asked to confirm whether they are still using the energy efficiency measure(s) that the Green BELLE grant provided grant funding towards. The results can be seen in the chart below.



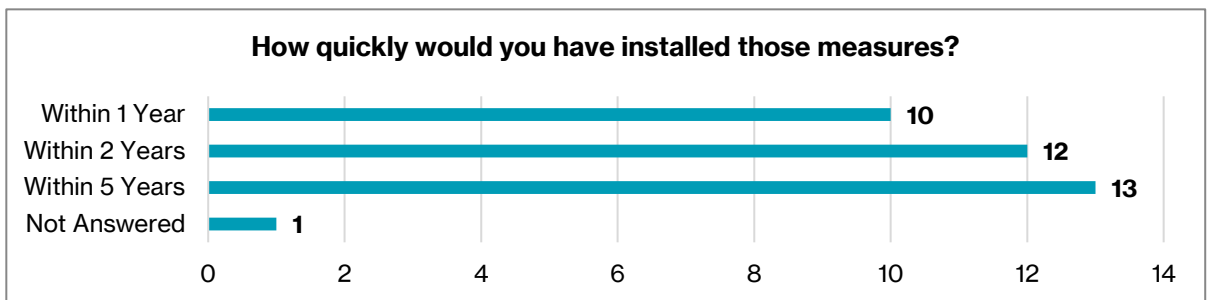
99% (77 businesses) of respondents said they are still using the energy efficiency measures for which the Green BELLE project provided grant funding. The one business that no longer uses the energy efficiency measures stated that this is because they had relocated from the building in which the measures were installed.

Businesses were asked ‘Are you likely to have installed the energy efficiency measure(s) even without a Green BELLE grant?’ Their responses are illustrated in the chart below.



The majority of businesses (**53% - 41 businesses**) said they would not have installed the energy efficiency measures if not for the grant. Another 17 businesses (**22%**) said they would have installed some of the energy efficiency measures, but at a lower cost.

Businesses who answered yes to question 3, of which there were 36, were asked ‘How quickly would you have done this? - How soon installed measure’.



36% of businesses said that without the grant from this project, they would have installed measures within five years. Furthermore, 12 businesses (**33%**) stated that it would have been within the next two years. This demonstrates that the project has significantly aided businesses in accelerating the installation of energy efficiency measures.

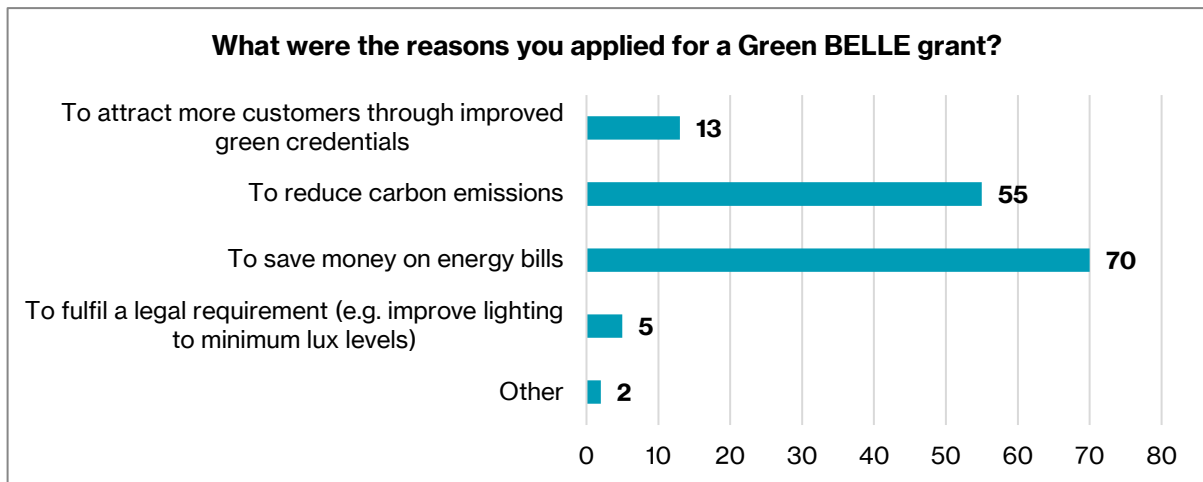
Businesses were then asked to elaborate and explain why they would not have installed the measures if that had not received a grant. Comments included:

- I wouldn't have known what to install without Green BELLE advice.
- The savings on energy bills would not pay back the cost quickly enough.
- Upfront cost is too high without a grant.

The largest response, with just over **60%**, was that the upfront cost is too high without a grant.

5.1.3 Reasons for Applying

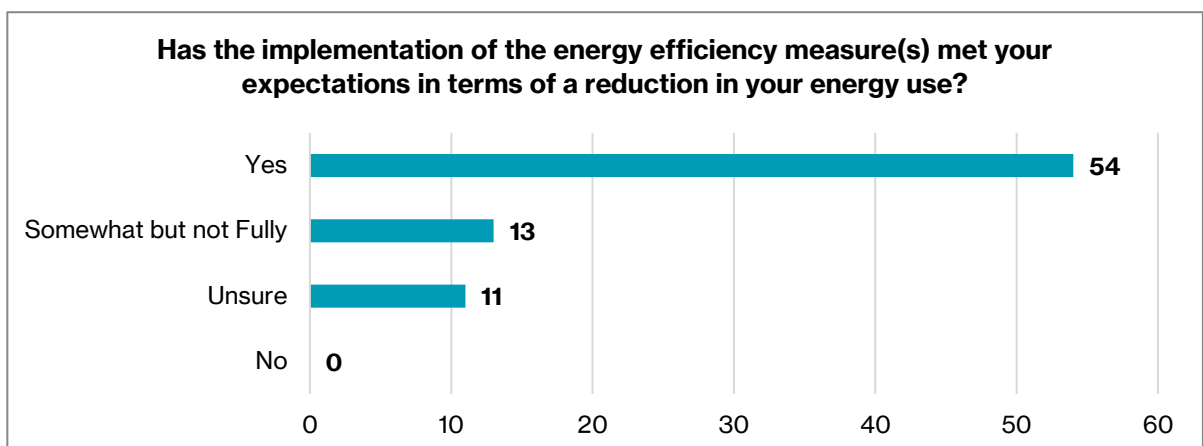
Businesses were asked about the reasons they applied for a Green BELLE grant. Businesses were provided with a range of options and could select more than one option. The chart below shows the number of responses for each option.



Feedback from the questionnaire shows that the primary reason businesses applied for a Green BELLE grant was to save money on energy bills, with nearly **90% (70 businesses)** opting for this option. Furthermore, slightly more than **70% (55 businesses)** said they had applied for a grant to reduce carbon emissions for their company. The two businesses that replied 'other' said this was to improve working conditions.

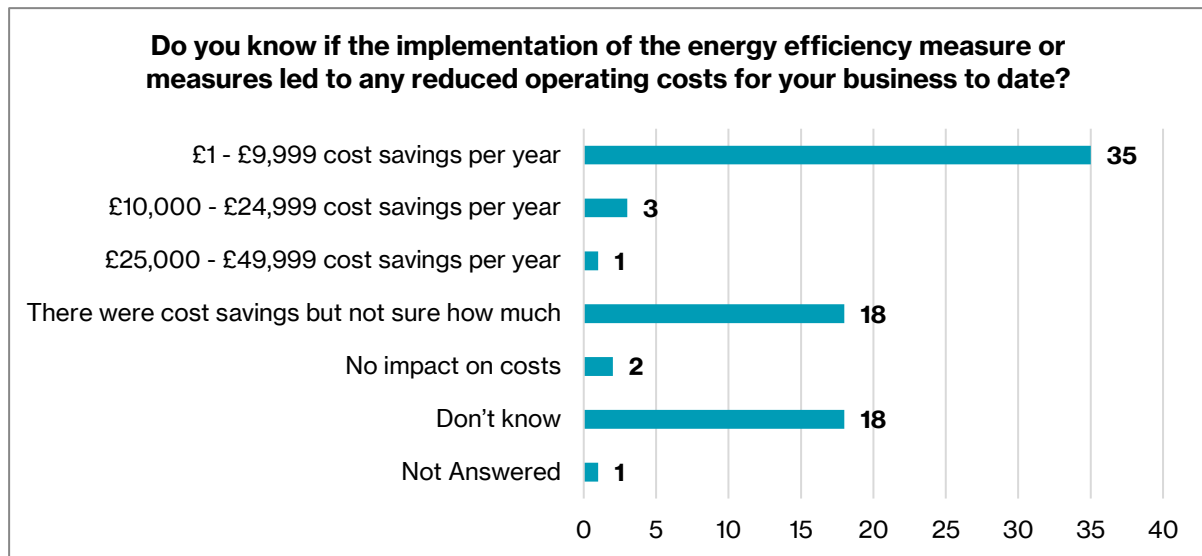
5.1.4 Impact

Businesses were asked whether the implementation of the energy efficiency measure(s) met their expectations in terms of a reduction in your energy use. The chart below shows the responses.



In terms of energy use reduction, **54** of the businesses (**69%**) said that the implementation of energy efficiency measures met their expectations. A further **13** businesses (**17%**) stated that their expectations had been met in part but not entirely.

The survey then investigated the wider impacts of the installations funded through the project. For example, businesses were asked whether the implementation of the energy efficiency measure or measures has led to any reduced operating costs.



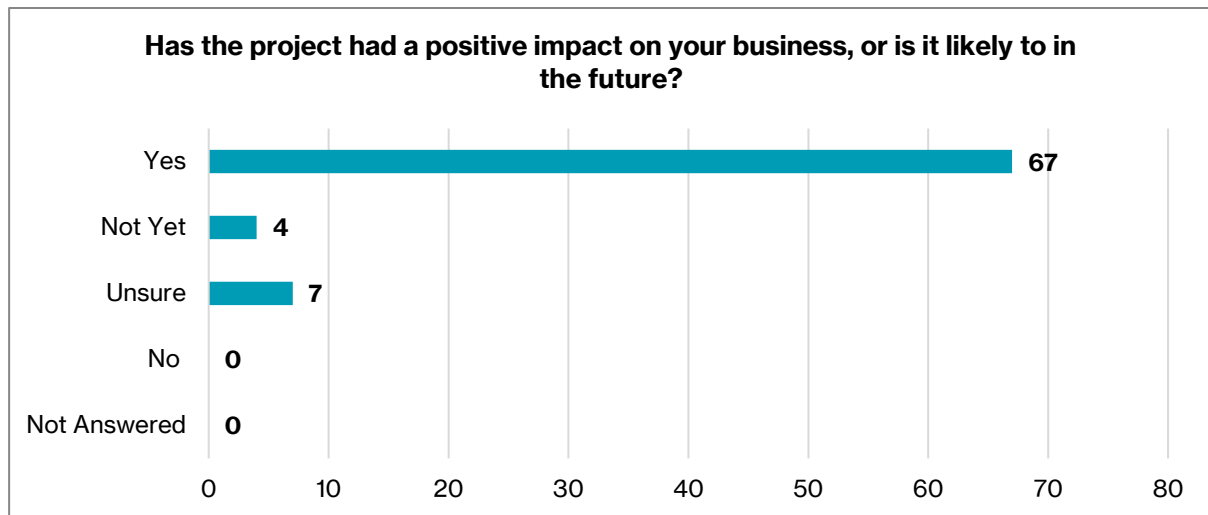
57 (73%) of the businesses that responded to the above question said that the implementation resulted in a reduction in operating costs ranging from £1 to £49,999. The majority (35 businesses - **45%**) reported cost savings ranging from £1 to £9,999 per year.

When asked, slightly more than **15%** of businesses said that implementing the energy efficiency measure/s resulted in new business opportunities.

Furthermore, **10%** of businesses reported that implementing energy efficiency measures had a positive impact on turnover.

17% of the businesses that participated in the survey reported an increase in the number of employees the implementation of the energy efficiency measure or measures. All 13 businesses that responded yes said they had increased their workforce by 1 - 5 Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTE).

When businesses were asked if the implementation would result in an increase in FTE Employees over the next two years, this figure rose to **22%**. Again, the majority of businesses (15 businesses - **19%**) anticipate increasing their workforce by 1-5 FTE employees during that time period.



When asked if the project had or would have a positive impact on the business, the overwhelming response was yes. According to the chart below, **86%** of businesses, or 67 businesses, said it had or will have a positive impact.

To elaborate, businesses that responded yes included some of the following comments about the positive impacts the project has had or will have.

- Improved our environmental credentials and assisted in achieving PAS 2060 compliance, which will enable us to attract a wider portfolio of clients.
- Losing less heat through the roof.
- Reduced electricity cost.
- Our project should reduce costs long term and secures our staff going forward.
- We create less carbon.
- Reduced energy costs means we can invest more in the business.
- The grant helped the charity meet its obligations to minimising its carbon footprint.
- Brighter, more comfortable light to work in. Staff have since been more conscious of behavioural changes to reduce energy consumptions such as turning unnecessary lights off. It has saved costs to The Trust which ensures future sustainability and enables important work on the park.
- To increase energy efficiency and work towards carbon neutrality, will not only impact costs but also the planet. We would recommend Green BELLE and would like to further our partnership with another lighting project.
- Lower running costs and green credentials, right thing to do for future proof business.

5.1.5 The Future

'Would you consider applying again, either for the same or a different measure, if Green BELLE were to reopen (on the same terms)?' Was posed to the businesses that participated in the survey.

The results are shown in the table below.

| If Green BELLE were to reopen, (on the same terms), would you consider applying again, either for the same measure or for a different measure? | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Option | Total | % |
| Yes | 69 | 88% |
| No | 1 | 1% |
| Don't know | 8 | 10% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 78 | 100% |

As shown in the table above, there is widespread support for this type of project, with **88%** of businesses saying they would apply again.

Furthermore, businesses were asked, 'Would you consider applying for this if Green BELLE offered an interest-free repayable loan covering the entire up-front cost of energy efficiency measures, rather than a 50% grant?'

| If Green BELLE were to offer an interest-free repayable loan, covering the entire up-front cost of energy efficiency measures, instead of a 50 percent grant, would you consider applying for this? | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Option | Total | % |
| Yes, I would prefer an interest free loan covering the whole cost of installation to a 50 percent match-funded grant | 10 | 13% |
| Yes, but I would prefer another 50 percent match-funded grant | 44 | 56% |
| No, I would not be interested in applying for an interest-free loan to install energy efficiency measures | 23 | 29% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 78 | 100% |

According to the table above, although they would be interested in an interest-free repayable loan, the majority (**44** businesses - **56%**) would prefer another **50** percent match-funded grant to this option. Another **23** businesses said they would not be interested in applying for an interest-free loan. However, ten businesses said they would prefer an interest-free loan covering the entire cost of installation over a 50 percent match funded grant.

5.1.6 Further Comments

Businesses taking part in the survey were asked for any further comments they had regarding the project. A selection of these can be seen below.

- My point of contact with Green BELLE gave excellent support and made the whole process very easy to complete, well done Green BELLE excellent grant scheme.
- Simple and efficient service to use.
- Good service and helped us through the process. staff were very helpful.
- It has been a good experience, but it is too early to comment on what exact savings we will achieve. Overall, we are happy we have gone ahead with the Green BELLE grant.
- Overall Green BELLE has been extremely helpful and was instrumental in choosing and moving to new business premises. Calculating savings on a new building with a new heating system was very difficult, because there was no comparison with previous bills. Also, the time taken to approve the grant meant that the ASHP originally selected was no longer available from the approved installer, and whilst we did eventually source and fit the same manufacturer/range ASHP, this route was extremely difficult. However, the initial energy bills we have received to date are significantly lower than was feared so I can say with confidence that the Green BELLE installation was successful.
- Excellent grant, much needed during energy crisis to reduce electricity costs.
- Great project to help business like mine when starting out. Helps saves energy and reduces carbon footprint. Also, great help and support from the Project Officer.
- The whole process was very efficient and the people we dealt with at Leicester City Council were very knowledgeable. I was pleasantly surprised by how easy the forms were to complete. I was expecting a lot more paperwork than we actually had to complete. Full marks all round!
- The grant was awarded with speed and impressive clarity.
- Our experience with the Project Officer has been brilliant, they helped us to overcome all the hurdles we faced with supply chain issue's; working together we managed to complete the project within the specified time frame. Can't thank the Project Officer enough for their input and guidance, they are a true asset to your organisation and a pleasure to work with.
- This has been a very positive experience for our company, and we are pleased to have had the support of the local council, which has not only saved us money, but has reduced carbon emissions.
- The service from start to finish was impeccable, clear concise and exceeded our expectations.
- The experience overall was really good. The Project Officer was very helpful and efficient. It would be nice to have more access to funding as we would like to install solar panels on our buildings.
- Majority of people would not do these energy efficiency measures without support. It really helped us with ours and the grant made us do it. Thanks.

The comments above are just a sample of the overwhelmingly positive responses to the Green BELLE project. Furthermore, many comments mentioned how professional and efficient the project team was.

5.2 Businesses who did not received a Green BELLE Grant – The Control Group

To establish the counterfactual position, consultation was undertaken with a control group of businesses who submitted an expression of interest to the project but did not end up receiving a grant. A survey was designed by the project team with input from Focus and an electronic survey link was circulated to businesses to take part in the survey. 80 responses were received.

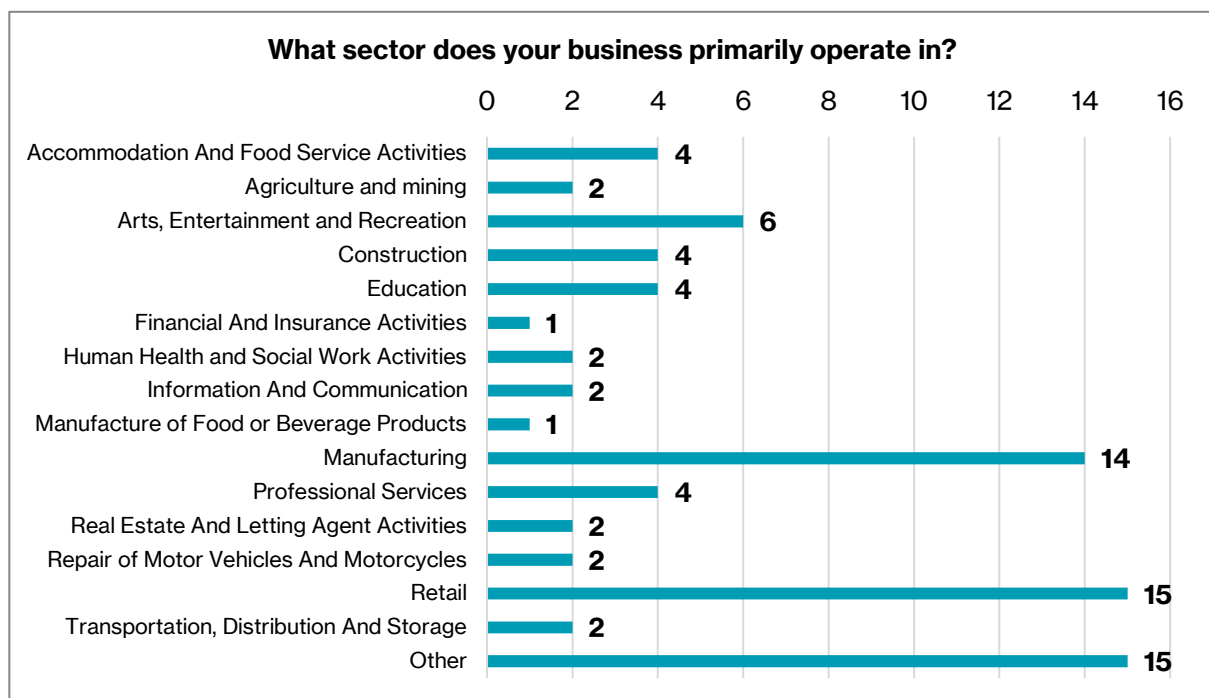
The findings are shown in the following section.

Key Findings

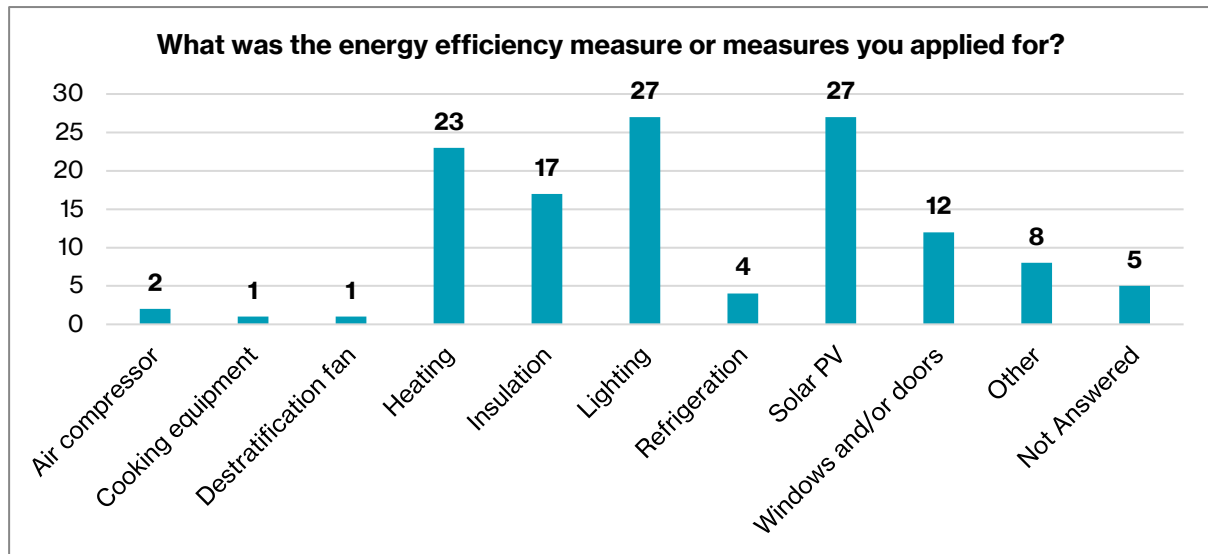
- 'Lighting' and 'Solar PV' with **34%** and 'Heating' with **29%** were the most popular energy efficiency measures requested.
- **24%** of businesses said that they ran out of time to submit an application.
- **19%** of businesses said it was too difficult to obtain the required 3 quotes.
- **76%** of businesses said they wouldn't install measures without a grant.
- **45%** of businesses said that this was due to costs being too high.
- **94%** of businesses said they applied for a grant to reduce energy costs & **83%** said they wanted to reduce carbon emissions.
- **72%** of businesses said they would consider applying again if Green BELLE reopened the scheme.

5.2.1 Snapshot of businesses taking part

Businesses were asked to identify the primary sector in which they operate. The largest sectors that responded to the survey were 'Retail' and 'Other' at **19%**, and 'Manufacturing' at **18%**. The chart below shows the sectors of businesses that responded to the survey, with the sectors with zero responses filtered out. Please note that these survey respondents are SMEs that didn't receive a grant. [See section 3.2.6](#) to compare to sectors for all SMEs that did receive a Green BELLE grant.



Businesses were asked what energy efficiency measure/s they were intending to apply for from a selection provided and were asked to tick all that applied to their business.



According to the chart above, the most popular energy efficiency measures requested by people that completed this survey were 'Lighting' and 'Solar PV', with **27** businesses (**34%**) opting for this. These were closely followed by 'Heating' measures, for which **23** businesses (**29%**) were interested in applying for funding assistance. This helps demonstrate where there is continued demand for specific measures. Please note that these survey respondents are SMEs that didn't receive a grant. [See section 3.2.7](#) to compare to measures for all SMEs that did receive a Green BELLE grant.

5.2.2 Application for a Grant

Businesses were asked which year they applied for a grant for the energy efficiency measures. The year in which most survey respondents applied was 2022, with **43%** of businesses applying in that year. 2021 came in second with **24%**. In 2017, and 2018, the number of applications received was **1** and **4%**, respectively. This may indicate that the impact of unexpected measures (Covid-19 pandemic and energy price increases) and legislation has had a greater impact on businesses requiring energy efficiency measures within their business to either save money or to try and recoup any lost earnings from previous years. However it may also just be reflective of the reduction in likely engagement as the length of time that the business applied for the grant increases.

Businesses were asked 'what stage of the application process they reached'. As shown in the table below, **74%** of the businesses that responded to this survey reached the expression of interest stage but didn't have a site visit. **11%** went on to have a site visit but didn't submit a full application, and another **11%** went on to submit a full application which was unsuccessful. Two of the businesses surveyed had their application approved by the Green BELLE Grant Panel and one of these returned a signed Grant Agreement but didn't complete the installation.

| What stage of the application process did you reach? | |
|--|-----------|
| Option | Total |
| Submitted an expression of interest form | 59 |
| Site visit carried out by a Green BELLE Project Officer | 9 |
| Submitted a full application form (this was only sent out after a site visit) but was unsuccessful | 9 |
| My application was agreed by the Green BELLE Grant Panel | 1 |
| I returned a signed Grant Agreement but didn't complete the installation | 1 |
| Not Answered | 1 |
| Total | 80 |

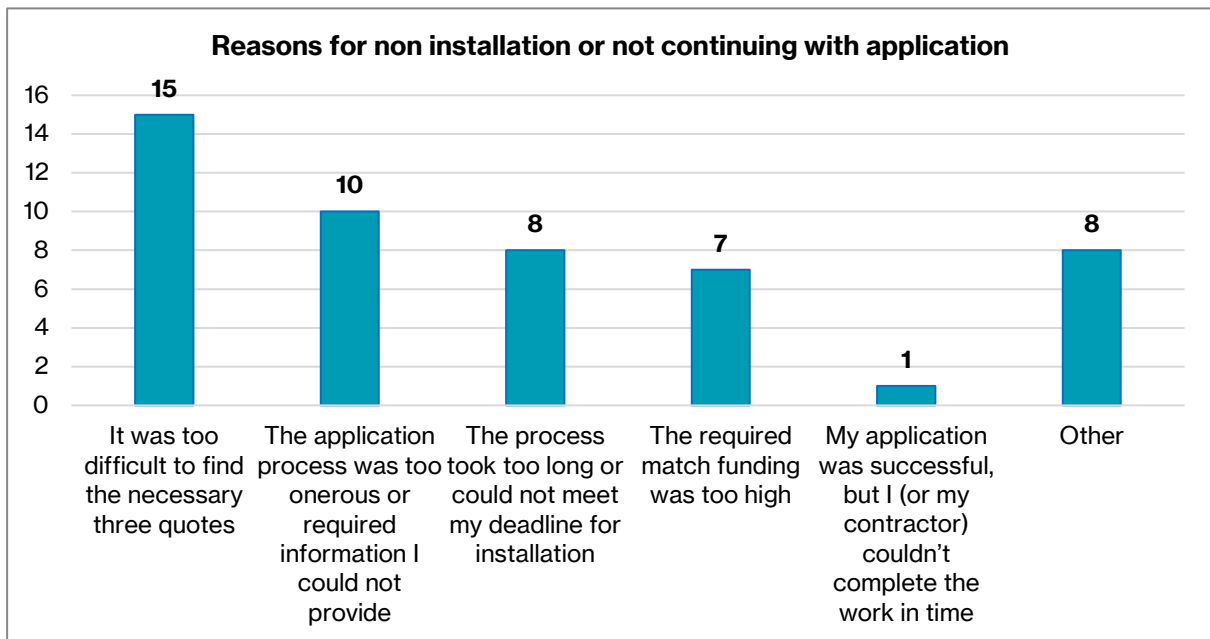
It should be noted that all eligible SMEs that submitted an EOI were offered a site visit, although most SMEs in Phase Two were offered a remote site visit only, due to Covid. In Phase Two, 59% of all SMEs that submitted an EOI received a site visit (mostly remotely over Microsoft Teams), compared to Phase One where nearly all eligible SMEs that submitted an EOI received an in-person site visit.

Businesses were then asked about the reason they didn't continue with the grant application. The responses are shown below.

| What was the reason you didn't continue with the grant application? (Please tick all that apply) | | |
|--|-------|------------|
| Option | Total | Percent |
| I was told that my company was not eligible for a grant | 16 | 20% |
| My proposed measure was not eligible or rejected for another reason (e.g., lack of information) | 7 | 9% |
| I ran out of time to submit my application before Green BELLE closed | 19 | 24% |
| My application was placed on the reserve list but was not approved | 3 | 4% |
| My application was accepted but the installation was never carried out or completed | 5 | 6% |
| I decided not to continue with my application | 15 | 19% |
| Other | 12 | 15% |
| Not Answered | 7 | 9% |

The most common reason given by businesses for discontinuing their grant application is that they ran out of time to submit the application. Furthermore, **20%** of the businesses that responded reported that they were informed that they were not eligible for a grant.

If the response to the previous question was "My application was accepted but the installation was never carried out or completed" or "I decided not to continue with my application", businesses were asked to provide further detail on this. These reasons reported are shown below.



The chart illustrates that, according to 15 businesses (**19%**), 'it was too difficult for most businesses to locate the required three quotes.' The next response given by **10** businesses (**13%**) was 'The application process was too onerous or required information I could not provide.'

5.2.3 Impact of not receiving a grant

Businesses were then asked, '*Did you go ahead and install the measure anyway, without the grant?*' **76%** of businesses said they did not. **15%** said they did install the measures without a grant, and **7.5%** said they installed some measures but to a lower value than they would have if they'd have received a Green BELLE grant. This demonstrates that green efficiency measures are likely to be prohibitively expensive for businesses to implement without assistance.

Businesses were then asked - 'If you answered No to Question 6, do you still intend to install the measure without the grant?' The outcomes are shown in the table below.

| If you answered No to Question 6, do you still intend to install the measure without the grant? | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Option | Total | Percent |
| a) Yes, most likely within the next year | 8 | 13% |
| b) Yes, most likely within the next two years | 11 | 18% |
| c) Yes, most likely within the next five years | 7 | 12% |
| d) Yes, but most likely not within the next five years | 22 | 37% |
| e) I no longer intend to install the measure | 12 | 20% |
| Total | 60 | 100% |

While some businesses intended to install the measure even without the grant, nearly **40%** said it would most likely not be done within the next five years.

If they chose 'D' or 'E' for the above question, they were then asked to explain why. Their responses can be found below.

- Cost is too high without a grant – (45%)
- The savings on energy bills would not pay back the cost quickly enough – (8%)
- Other – (6%)
- I am confused about what to install – (4%)

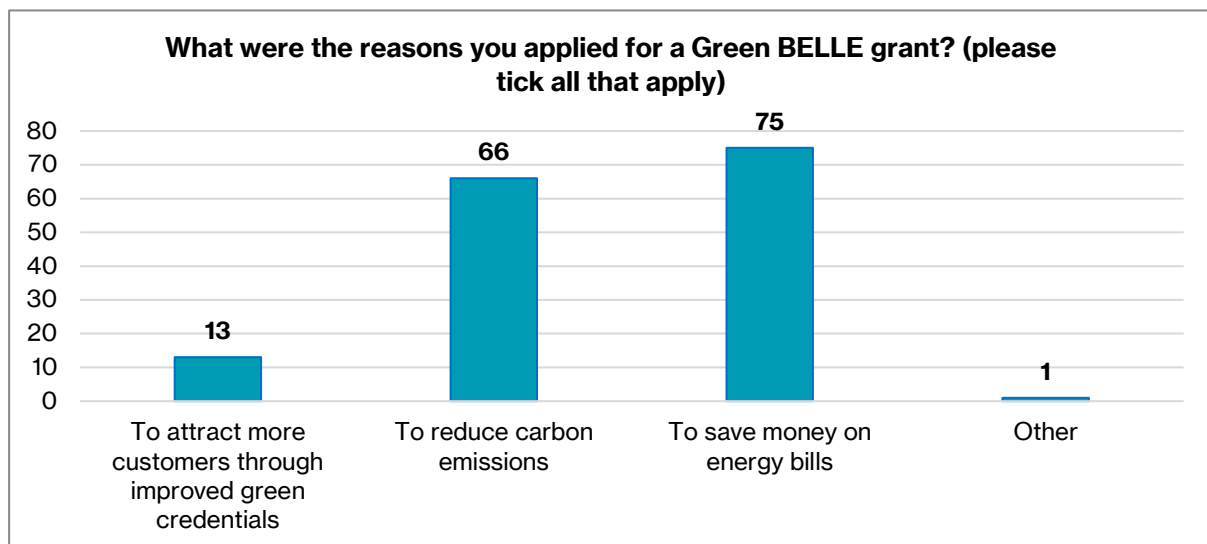
49% of businesses chose not to answer.

Some comments from people who answered ‘other’ included the following.

- Difficult to ascertain energy savings.
- We need financial support to help become greener in such difficult times.

5.2.4 Reasons for Applying

The survey sought to ascertain why businesses applied for grants from the Green BELLE project in the first place. The most popular answers are shown in the chart below.



75 out of the businesses that responded (or 94%) stated that it was to reduce energy costs. Just 16% of respondents said they wanted to increase customer attraction through better green credentials, while 83% said they wanted to reduce carbon emissions. If businesses did install the measure/s without the assistance of a grant the survey sought to find out if it resulted in any additional impacts. 21% of businesses said that they had reduced energy usage, with 15% saying they had reduced operating costs. The one business who said that it had an ‘Other’ benefit said the following.

‘I can offer a fully green alternative to the mainstream services on offer elsewhere’.

5.2.5 Application Process

The survey sought feedback on the grant process, including, where applicable, the expression of interest, full application, site visit, the Green BELLE website, and any engagement with a Project Officer.

These questions - to businesses that did not receive a Green BELLE grant – were the same as the questions on the Feedback Forms given to those businesses that did receive a grant, as shown in [Section 5.1.1](#), above.

Firstly, businesses were asked '*In general, how happy were you with the grant process?*'

| In general, how happy were you with the grant process? | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Extremely | 3 | 4% |
| Very | 6 | 8% |
| Fairly | 16 | 20% |
| Not very | 34 | 43% |
| Not at all | 15 | 19% |
| Not Answered | 6 | 8% |
| Total | 80 | 100% |

32% of businesses reported being "extremely" to "fairly" happy with the process. However, **62%** of businesses surveyed said they were either "not very" or "not at all" happy with the process. Specific feedback included:

- Finding three quotes for a very specific install was difficult.
- We struggled to find contractors who could supply quotes in a timely manner as there was huge demand for them. We then suffered from economic uncertainty and reluctantly decided to put off the measures due to smaller than expected sales due to the pandemic.
- Could not get 3 quotes for the same specialist equipment.
- Just too hard to get the quotes.
- We liaised with the grant officer throughout the project, so it was very disappointing to be told at the 11th hour that the funding had run out.
- Convoluted process, any future process could be more streamlined.
- Had to chase the application to then be told that we wouldn't get it.
- The grant process is not clear. When made initial enquiry I was told that a grant would be available. When started the application process, I was then told that grant not a single because of our legal status being a community amateur sports club.
- It closed suddenly with no information when it will open again.
- Too many hoops to jump through, the process need modifying.
- Initial conversation told me to apply, completed my initial interest, was given a date for survey with some things to do for that & then it was pulled last minute.
- I completed the application as requested and then spent the next three months answering questions that should have been asked in the application process. An absolute waste of time for all those involved.
- You require too much to be spent by the person requiring the grant. I wanted to be as energy efficient as possible, but couldn't afford the measures to do it, and so my costs are still higher than they could be. I rent a unit, so I am not prepared to spend lots on it myself, for my landlords' profit in the long run.
- Believe that businesses who create the most carbon emissions should be assisted and encouraged more to be energy efficient and carbon neutral.

32% of businesses that received a site visit during the application process said it was 'extremely', 'very', or 'fairly' useful.

Concerning the expression of interest (EOI) form and how easy it was to complete, **79%** of businesses said it was 'extremely', 'very', or 'fairly' easy to complete.

Despite the fact that the majority of businesses that participated in the survey stated that they did not reach the stage of having to complete a full application. **26%** of the businesses that did, said it was 'extremely', 'very', or 'fairly' easy to complete.

Businesses that had a Project Officer assigned to them were generally pleased with them and found them to be helpful, with **37%** agreeing that they were either 'extremely', 'very', or 'fairly' helpful. However, the majority of people who answered this question said the question wasn't applicable to them.

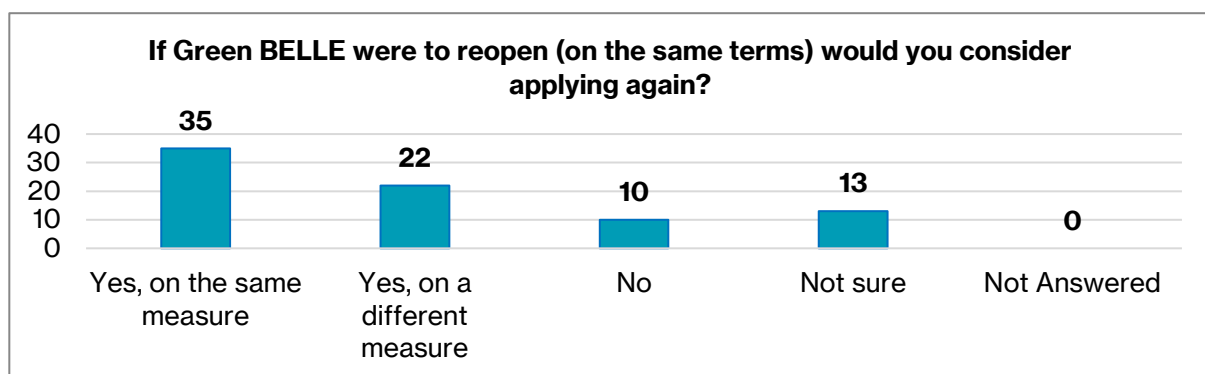
More than half (**56%**) of the businesses surveyed said they found the Green BELLE website 'extremely', 'very', or 'fairly' useful.

A little less than a third (**29%**) of the businesses surveyed said they would recommend Green BELLE to other businesses.

Please that these results are from businesses that did not receive a Green BELLE grant. For the feedback results from the same questions asked to SMEs that did receive a grant, [see section 5.1.1](#), above.

5.2.6 The Future

Businesses were asked if Green BELLE was to reopen whether they would consider applying again.



57 businesses (**72%**) would consider applying again if Green BELLE reopened. 35 businesses (**44%**) would apply for the same energy efficiency measure again, while 22 businesses (**28%**) would apply for a different measure.

This is consistent with the response rate for a similar question asked of those businesses who did receive a grant, where **88%** said they would consider applying to Green BELLE again, were it to reopen.

The survey also enquired whether businesses would consider applying for an interest-free loan covering the entire up-front cost of energy measures instead of a grant. The responses are shown in the table below.

| If Green BELLE were to offer an interest-free loan, covering the entire up-front cost of energy measures, instead of a grant, would you consider applying for this? | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Yes, I would prefer an interest free loan (covering the whole cost of installation) to a 50 percent match-funded grant | 23 | 29% |
| Yes, but I would prefer a 50 percent match-funded grant | 28 | 35% |
| No, I would not be interested in applying for an interest-free loan to install energy efficiency measures | 29 | 36% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 80 | 100% |

64% of businesses said they would consider applying for this. However, **35%** said they would prefer a 50 percent match-funded grant, and **36%** said they would not apply for an interest-free loan.

5.3 Business Feedback – Summary

- Nearly 90% of business who received a grant indicated that the installation of energy efficiency measures through Green BELLE has met or partially met their expectation in terms of reduction in energy use.
- Over 70% said that the installation of energy efficiency measures has resulted in a reduction in operating costs which given the current energy crisis is extremely positive.
- Nearly 90% of businesses said the project had a positive impact on their business and the rest said it was a bit too early to understand the impact.
- Businesses supported through the project provided very positive feedback with regards their interactions with the Project Officers.
- It is clear the Green BELLE project has allowed SMEs to invest in energy efficiency measures that the majority wouldn't have done without a grant, or it has accelerated their investment.
- This is further supported by feedback from the counterfactual groups, of which over three quarters said they would not install the energy efficiency measures applied for without a grant.
- The main reasons that the counterfactual group did not receive a grant were because they were ineligible, or they ran out of time to before the project closed to applications. The requirement to get three quotations was a significant barrier to making an application. Many of these businesses also felt the application process was too onerous.
- This suggests that there is still significant demand for projects like Green BELLE, particularly for the following measures: solar, heating and lighting.
- Over 70% of the counterfactual group would consider applying again and nearly 90% of the businesses that received a grant would consider applying again for different measures.

6.0 Economic Impact

6.1 Economic Impact Assessment Principles

This section outlines the approach that has been taken to estimate the economic impact that the Green BELLE project has had on the regional economy. It provides a review of the key features of the economic impact methodology and terminology used and details the calculations undertaken.

We have particularly focussed on the quantifiable estimated economic impacts that the business support programme has had, or is anticipated to have, on:

- Greenhouse gas savings
- Additional employment created.
- Reduction in operating costs.

Before we detail the findings, we have first highlighted below some of the key principles/features used in the economic impact calculations. We have also included a glossary of the terminology used.

a. Key Features of the Economic Impact Assessment

- The approach taken is rooted in HM Treasury ‘Green Book’ methodology, using a mix of relevant technical guidance, and judgements, primary data or standard assumptions for key economic factors.
- When using data sources to inform calculations we have applied the following approach:
 - Use of primary sources where possible.
 - Where possible use of data from the project team.
 - Where primary data is not available, we have used standard assumptions.

b. Economic Impact Terminology Used in the Calculations - Glossary

The research undertaken has been designed to estimate the total effect of the business interventions made by Green BELLE. This means considering a wide range of consequential or induced effects as well as the immediate effects. Throughout the calculations a variety of factors have been applied to calculate these effects – these are explained below.

- **Additionality:** The impact arising from the intervention that is additional - i.e., it would not have occurred in the absence of the intervention.
- **Multiplier effects:** The further economic activity (jobs, expenditure or income) that is associated with additional local income, local supplier purchases and longer-term effects of the intervention.
 - **Indirect:** The effects of purchases made as a result of the intervention and further purchases associated with linked firms along the supply chain.
 - **Induced:** The effects associated with local expenditure as a result of those who derive incomes from the direct and supply linkage impacts of the project over a set period of time.
- **Deadweight:** The outputs that would have occurred without the intervention.
- **Displacement:** The proportion of intervention outputs accounted for by reduced outputs elsewhere in the target area.

- **Leakage:** The proportion of outputs that benefit those outside of the intervention's target area or group.

6.1.1 Limitations of Economic Impact Assessments

It is important to recognise that there are limitations to any economic impact assessment. Below we have listed both limitations that are applicable to all economic impact assessments and also limitations that are specific to the project.

a. General Economic Impact Constraints

- The approach is constrained to a specific impact area.
- The findings are reliant on the robustness of the 'base case'.
- There is an inability to count non-quantifiable economic benefits that have value to individuals or organisations (e.g., quality of life improvements, profile raising, personal saving on travel time).

b. Green BELLE Project - Specific Economic Impact Constraints

- Only limited numbers of businesses completed their financial information as part of the survey. Whilst this is understandable due to the sensitive nature of the data, it has resulted in the calculations being built on a sample size.
- Some of the calculations, such as job creation, rely on businesses estimating the future predicted impact of their involvement with Green BELLE. There will always be some inaccuracy with estimated figures.
- The economic impact analysis was undertaken in March 2023 when the project still had three months to run.

Not discounting all of the above it must be noted that the approach taken is cost effective, comparable and is built on economic convention.

6.2 Greenhouse Gas Savings

To value the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the Green BELLE project, the principles set out in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's 'Green Book supplementary guidance: valuation of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for appraisal' has been used.

As of the final claim submission, the project has claimed annual decreases of 1497.58 tonnes of CO₂eq (tCO₂e).

Greenhouse gas emissions values ("carbon values") are used across government for valuing impacts on GHG emissions resulting from policy interventions.

They represent a monetary value that society places on one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (£/tCO₂e). They differ from carbon prices, which represent the observed price of carbon in a relevant market (such as the UK Emissions Trading Scheme).

The published Carbon values in £2020 prices per tonne of CO₂ can be applied to the savings achieved through Green BELLE to place a monetary value of this output. The government publishes low series, central series and high series values and the central series value has been utilised here. The 2020 value has been applied as the midpoint between when Phase One commenced and Phase Two of the project will end.

| | Savings Achieved |
|--------------------|------------------|
| tCO ₂ e | 1497.58 |
| Value per tonne | £241 |
| Total annual value | £360,917 |

The project is therefore anticipated to deliver over £360,000 of value to society annually as a result of the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

6.3 Employment

We then investigated the impact that the Green BELLE project has had on existing and predicted future levels of employment.

6.3.1 Additional Employment Created

This section calculates the direct employment that has, or is predicted to be created in the future, as a result of the Green BELLE project.

These calculations have been based on data gathered through the consultation process. It then goes on to calculate the wider employment impact of the scheme across Leicester and Leicestershire.

The methodology is shown below:

a. Employment Data Collected from Businesses

As part of the consultation process, businesses were asked whether, as a result of their involvement with Green BELLE they had taken on any new employees. 17% reported that their involvement with the project had led to any increase in the number of employees in the business of between 1 and 5 FTE employees.

As part of the consultation process, businesses were asked whether, as a result of the grant from Green BELLE they were planning to take on any new employees in the next two years. The results are shown in the tables below.

| Increase in Employees as a Result of Green BELLE Grant | | |
|--|----------------------|-------|
| Number of Additional Staff Predicted to be Employed in 2 Years | Number of Businesses | % |
| None / Not answered / Don't Know | 61 | 78.2% |
| 1 - 5 | 15 | 19.2% |
| 6 - 10 | 1 | 1.3% |
| 11 - 20 | 1 | 1.3% |

From the data in the above table, we can take midpoints of the ranges to assume how many jobs businesses are expecting to create in the next 2 years. We have used midpoint values in these calculations.

- The average predicted increase in the next two years = $(15 \times 3 \text{ jobs}) + (1 \times 8 \text{ jobs}) + (1 \times 16 \text{ jobs}) / 17 = \mathbf{4 \text{ jobs}}$

We can pro-rata these figures to estimate the anticipated number of jobs that have been/will be created within all businesses supported through the Green BELLE project. This has been done using the following calculations:

Estimate of New Jobs Created by all Businesses Taking Part in the Project to Date

Total businesses supported by the project (193)

X

Percentage of the businesses completing the question in the survey who told us that they have created new jobs as a result of the grant from Green BELLE (17%)

X

Estimated new jobs created in each business as a result of the project (3 jobs)

= 98 jobs

Estimate of New Jobs Created by all Businesses Supported by the Project in the Next Two Years

Total businesses supported by the end of the project (205)

X

Percentage of the businesses completing the question in the survey who told us that they will create new jobs as a result of the grant from Green BELLE (22%)

X

Estimated new jobs created in each business that will create jobs as a result of the project (4 jobs)

=180 jobs

Note: calculations assume that businesses who completed the survey are a representative sample for the whole programme. Figures are based on 193 businesses being supported by the project at the time of analysis (March 2023) and 205 supported by the end of the project.

However, as noted above, our economic impact research has been designed to calculate the total effect of the financial interventions made by Green BELLE. This means considering a wide range of consequential or induced effects as well as the immediate effects. The findings also need to specifically relate to Leicester and Leicestershire.

These calculations have been undertaken in the next section.

b. Calculating Total Employment Impact for Leicester and Leicestershire

To understand the total impact of these jobs on the target we have applied the following factors:

- I. **Leakage:** The proportion of outputs that benefit those outside of the intervention's target area or group – in this case the target area is Leicester and Leicestershire.
- II. **Multiplier effects:** Further economic activity (jobs, expenditure or income) associated with additional local income, local supplier purchases and longer-term effects.
- III. **Deadweight:** Outputs that would have occurred without the intervention.
- IV. **Displacement:** The proportion of intervention outputs accounted for by reduced outputs elsewhere in the target area.

Each of these is considered in more detail over the following pages:

I. Leakage

The leakage factor represents the number of jobs created within the businesses supported that are likely to be outside of the target area. To estimate this, we have used industry benchmark data from Homes and Communities Agency Additionality Guide (2014).

A 'Medium' 'ready reckoner' would apply a 25% leakage factor, defined by 'a reasonably high proportion of the benefits will be retained within the target area/ target group'.

We can therefore assume that 75% of all new jobs created will be within Leicester and Leicestershire.

II. Multiplier Effect

This section quantifies the employment Multiplier Effect – this is the further economic activity, in this instance jobs, associated with additional local income, local supplier purchases and longer-term effects. The Scottish Office have developed an input-output model using economic data since 1999 which includes the calculation of economic multipliers. They present two different employment multipliers that can be used:

Type I employment multipliers – the ratio of direct plus indirect employment changes to the direct employment change.

Type II employment multipliers – the ratio of direct plus indirect **plus induced** employment changes to the direct employment change.

As we want to capture the induced effect as well as the direct and indirect effects, we have opted to use Type II multipliers in this instance.

The Scottish Government publishes these multiplier rates for a range of different sectors of the economy – i.e., the multiplier rate is different for each sector of the economy and there are therefore different multipliers for different industries.

As the Green BELLE project works across a variety of sectors there is no one multiplier rate that directly matches with the industry sectors that Green BELLE has supported. Analysing data on the businesses supported, we can see that manufacturing was by far the biggest sector supported. Manufacturing has a type II multiplier of 1.3 and therefore this has been used for the calculations.

III. Deadweight

We know from the counterfactual survey that 76% of businesses said they wouldn't install measures without a grant, and we can therefore assume the 24% of businesses would have installed the measures anyway and this is therefore the deadweight.

IV. Displacement

To estimate displacement, we have used industry benchmark data from Homes and Communities Agency Additionality Guide (2014).

A 'High' 'ready reckoner' would apply a 75% displacement factor meaning that a high proportion of jobs created could be accounted for by reduced jobs elsewhere in the target area.

Given the broad nature of sectors supported and the nature of the grant provided, it is considered that there could be a relatively high level of displacement of jobs i.e., the new jobs are filled by people who were already employed in Leicester and Leicestershire. We have therefore assumed that 25% of the jobs created are new, non-displaced jobs.

Total Employment Impact for Leicester and Leicestershire to Date

Total Employment Impact for the target area to date can therefore be counted by calculating:

Jobs Created **(98)**

X

Multiplier **(1.3)**

X

Leakage **(75%)**

X

Deadweight **(76%)**

X

Displacement **(25%)**

=

Estimated Total Employment Impact for Leicester and Leicestershire to date = 18 Jobs

Total Employment Impact for the Leicester and Leicestershire in the Next Two Years

Total Employment Impact in the next two years can therefore be counted by calculating:

Jobs Predicted to be Created **(180)**

X

Multiplier **(1.3)**

X

Leakage **(75%)**

X

Deadweight **(76%)**

X

Displacement **(25%)**

=

**Estimated Total Employment Impact for Leicester and Leicestershire in the Next 2 Years =
33 Jobs**

c. Additional Gross Value Added (GVA) Created

This section measures the potential impact that the additional jobs created could have on the Gross Value Added (GVA) in Leicester and Leicestershire.

We have used the 'Subregional Productivity: Labour Productivity Indices' from ONS to estimate the average GVA per employee across Leicester and Leicestershire. This data gives a GVA per job in the Leicester and Leicestershire LEP area of £51,566 (2020).

| Economic Impact of Jobs Created per Annum on the Leicester and Leicestershire economy | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------------|
| Productivity Measure | GVA Impact of Employment to Date | |
| The average GVA per employee per annum is £51,566 | Jobs X | 18 |
| | Average GVA per employee per annum | £51,566 |
| | = Increase in GVA | £928,188 |
| Productivity Measure | GVA Impact of Employment to Date | |
| The average GVA per employee per annum is £51,566 | Jobs X | 33 |
| | Average GVA per employee per annum | £51,566 |
| | = Increase in GVA | £1,701,678 |

The potential total impact for Leicester and Leicestershire of jobs created in the next two years as a result of the Green BELLE project after leakage, multipliers, displacement and deadweight have been attributed to 33 jobs. Assuming these jobs are permanent jobs, these workers would create an additional circa £1.7m increase in GVA per annum for the area.

6.4 Reductions in operating costs

This section quantifies the potential impact that the Green BELLE project has had on operating costs amongst the businesses that it has supported.

Businesses taking part in the consultation survey were asked whether as a result of the grant they received from Green BELLE, their business had benefitted from any cost savings and to what level. The results are shown in the table below.

| Reduction in operating costs as a result of receiving a Green BELLE grant | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Cost savings to date | Midpoint of Savings Range | # of Businesses | % of Businesses |
| No impact / Not answered/ Don't know | N/A | 39 | 50% |
| £1 - £9,999 | £5,000 | 35 | 45% |
| £10,000-£24,999 | £17,500 | 3 | 4% |
| £25,000 - £49,999 | £37,500 | 1 | 1% |

The average cost savings can therefore be calculated by multiplying the savings by the % of businesses reporting these saving. We have used midpoint values in these calculations:

- The average cost savings = $(35 \times £5,000) + (3 \times £17,500) + (1 \times £37,500) / 39 = \mathbf{£6,795}$

Reduction in Operating Costs to date

We can use this information to estimate the predicted cost savings achieved for all businesses who received a Green BELLE grant to date by using the following calculation:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\text{Total number of businesses supported (193)} \\
 &\quad \times \\
 &\text{\% of businesses who experienced costs as a result of the Green BELLE grant (50\%)} \\
 &\quad \times \\
 &\text{Average cost saving (£6,795)} \\
 &=
 \end{aligned}$$

Estimated reduction in operating costs across the project = £655,718

Reduction in Operating by the end of the project.

We can use this information to estimate the predicted costs savings achieved for all businesses who received a Green BELLE grant by the end of the project by using the following calculation:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\text{Total number of businesses supported (205)} \\
 &\quad \times \\
 &\text{\% of businesses who experienced costs as a result of the Green BELLE grant (50\%)} \\
 &\quad \times \\
 &\text{Average cost saving (£6,795)} \\
 &=
 \end{aligned}$$

Estimated reduction in operating costs across the project = £696,488

Figures are based on 193 businesses being supported by the project at the time of analysis (March 2023) and 205 supported by the end of the project.

- The potential reduction in operating costs experienced by the businesses receiving a Green BELLE grant is estimated at just under **£700,000** by the end of the project.

6.5 Summary - Economic Impact Assessment

A high-level economic impact assessment has been undertaken for the project to understand the potential economic impact that the project has and will have on the businesses supported. The calculations are based on the quantitative data collated through the beneficiary survey.

- **Greenhouse gas reductions:** It is estimated that the project is delivering over £360,000 of value to society annually as a result of the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Employment:** The potential estimated additional total direct and indirect employment impact for Leicester and Leicestershire as a result of the Green BELLE project to date is 18 Jobs and this is projected to increase to 33 in the next two years.
- **GVA Impact of additional employment:** The anticipated jobs have been created as a result of the project have the potential to generate an additional circa £928,000 of GVA per annum for the local economy, rising to £1.7m in the next two years.
- **Reduction in operating costs:** It is anticipated that businesses supported through the project to date have made savings in operating costs of £655,718 as a result of their involvement with the project. This is estimated to rise to nearly £700,000 by the end of the project.

Note: All above calculations are based on sample data from businesses completing a questionnaire about their involvement and benefits from receiving a grant through the Green BELLE project. Calculations assume that the businesses completing the questionnaire are a representative sample of all businesses supported through the project. Figures are based on 205 businesses supported by the end of the programme.

7.0 Value for Money

To explore the extent to which the Green BELLE project has represented value for money we have applied a simple but standard analysis of the estimated cost per output. This enables comparison to be undertaken with the cost per output achieved within the Priority Axis 1 of the ERDF Programme. Drawing upon the analysis in the consultation and impact assessment sections, this section provides a clear analysis of the value for money that the project has provided and is benchmarked against similar interventions.

It should be noted that this is only an approximate method of understanding efficiency, as projects and programmes deliver a range of activities. The results should be viewed alongside the overall quality and impact of the project.

7.1 Cost per Outputs

7.1.1 ERDF Cost per Outputs

The ERDF allocation of funding for Priority Axis 4 is £685.3m as identified in the National Evaluation of English ERDF Programme 2014-20: Phase Two Report.

The table below details the published targets under Priority Axis 4 that relate to the Green BELLE project. The targets are taken from ERDF England Operational Programme 2014 to 2020 (2020): 2.A.6.5 Table 5: Common and Programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by COR for the ERDF). We have calculated the cost per ERDF output by dividing Union Support (£) by the ERDF Target.

| ERDF PA4b Cost per Output | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| Output | PA4 Output Target | Cost per Output |
| Number of enterprises receiving support | 24,004 | £28,549 |
| Estimated annual decrease of GHG (Tonnes of CO ₂ eq) | 343,178 | £1,997 |

A similar exercise can be undertaken by looking at the National Evaluation of English ERDF Programme 2014-20: Phase Two Report: Interim Impact Evaluation published in January 2021. This stated that at the time of analysis, £ 151.1m had been paid against projects in Priority Axis 4 and reported that the following outputs had been achieved:

| ERDF PA4b Cost per Output | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Output | PA4b Outputs Claimed to Date | Cost per ERDF Output in 2021 |
| Number of enterprises receiving support | 4,408 | £34,278 |
| Estimated annual decrease of GHG (Tonnes of CO ₂ eq) | 70,112 | £2,155 |

7.1.2 Green BELLE Cost per Outputs

The total ERDF expenditure on the project at the initial analysis was £1,424,000 whilst the total ERDF expenditure by the end of the project was £1,538,416. This can be used to work out the costs per output of the outputs contracted and achieved by the project.

The table below shows the cost per output for outputs achieved at the time of the initial analysis (March 2023) and the cost per output at the end of the project. It has been calculated using the following calculation:

ERDF Expenditure / Outputs = Cost per Output

| Green BELLE Cost per Output | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Output | Outputs Achieved by March 2023 | Cost per Output to date | Outputs achieved by June 2023 | Cost per output |
| Number of enterprises receiving support | 193 | £7,378 | 205 | £7,504 |
| Estimated annual decrease of GHG (Tonnes of CO ₂ eq) | 1143.7 | £1,245 | 1497.58 | £1,027 |

7.2 Benchmarking – Value for Money

The table below shows the cost per output of the Green BELLE project benchmarked against the ERDF PA4 outputs within the Operational Programme and as reported in the programme evaluation in January 2021. It shows the cost per output at the end of the project.

| Green BELLE v ERDF PA4 Cost per Output | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Output | Green BELLE Cost per Output by June 2023 | Cost per Output – ERDF Programme (Operational Programme) | Cost per Output ERDF Programme (Programme Evaluation 2021) |
| Number of enterprises receiving support | £7,504 | £28,549 | £34,278 |
| Estimated annual decrease of GHG (Tonnes of CO ₂ eq) | £1,027 | £1,997 | £2,155 |

The data highlights that the project is performing below the average expected “cost per output” at a programme level and representing good value for money when considering the level of outputs for the ERDF input.

7.3 Benchmarking – Previous Projects

Value for money can also be assessed by benchmarking the cost per output achieved by Green BELLE against other, similar ERDF projects. To do this, we have drawn on data from published Summative Assessments and a range of secondary sources therefore are reliant on the accuracy of these reports for comparison.

| Project | ERDF Amount | C1 Outputs | | C34 Outputs | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| | | Achieved | Cost per Output | Achieved | Cost per Output |
| Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) ⁵ | £533,887 | 262 | £2,037.74 | 885.48 tCO ₂ e | £602.94 |
| Low Carbon Workspaces ⁶ | £2,879,562 (business grants only) | 824 | £3,495 | 3,776 tCO ₂ e | £762.59 |
| Smart Energy Greater Lincolnshire (SEGL) ⁷ | £5,400,000 | 256 | £21,093.75 | 3,549 tCO ₂ e | £1,521.56 |
| Green BELLE | £1,538,416 | 205 | £7,504 | 1497.58 tCO ₂ e | £1,027 |

Because of the nature of these projects and the source of the data, we cannot say that these are the final costs per output. However, they do provide some kind of benchmark to demonstrate that Green BELLE is providing broadly comparable value for money when considering it on a 'cost per output' basis.

7.4 Summary – Value for Money

Once all outputs have been achieved, the project will likely have performed relatively well in terms of cost per outputs when compared to the benchmarking for the ERDF programme and other projects with similar aims and ambitions.

As indicated elsewhere in this report, the project has seen a higher-than-average grant request from SMEs in the later phases of the project which means fewer SMEs could be supported. This has meant that the cost per C1 output is higher than originally anticipated. Discussions with the project team suggest this higher grant request is believed to be due to rising costs as well as SMEs applying for more ambitious or expensive measures.

In terms of greenhouse gas reductions, the actual achieved is likely to be higher than reported as difficulties in calculating the GHG reductions meant that the project was unable to claim towards the C34 targets for five SMEs awarded grants in Phase One of Green BELLE. Therefore, the actual reductions will be higher and therefore the cost per output lower. Overall, it is considered that the project has offered good value for money, and this is reflected in the feedback from beneficiaries.

⁵<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s117948/BEEP%20-%20ACE-R%20SE2%20FINAL%20HG.pdf>

⁶ Data taken from project website: <https://www.lowcarbonworkspaces.co.uk/>

⁷<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2021/09/SEGL-Summative-Assessment-Headline-Findings.pdf>

8.0 Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

8.1 Summary and Conclusions

- The Leicester and Leicestershire Low Carbon Sector Growth Plan which was first published in 2015 reported that many enterprises are aware of energy/resource efficiency but lack financial and personnel resources to implement solutions. The Green BELLE project which commenced in 2016 aimed to help address this by providing capital grants to SMEs in Leicester and Leicestershire for the installation of low carbon and energy efficiency measures.
- The project total value is £3,076,833 which includes ERDF funding of £1,538,416. Phase One of the project operated between October 2016 and December 2019. Phase Two commenced in January 2020 and completed at the end of June 2023.
- Green BELLE has supported Small or Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Leicester and Leicestershire to increase their energy efficiency, reduce their energy costs and lower their carbon emissions. Grants of £1,000 to £10,000 were made available to support the installation of low carbon and energy efficient technologies in local SMEs.
- All grants had to be match funded with the SME, so up to 50% of the costs could be covered by a Green BELLE grant with the remainder met by the SME. Measures supported through the project must reduce carbon emissions and increase energy efficiency. The types of measures supported include energy efficient heating systems and controls, low energy lighting replacements (LEDs) and controls, renewable energy systems, replacement energy efficient equipment and machinery, insulation, and energy efficient windows and doors.
- The policy around energy efficiency has evolved significantly since commencement of the project with a shift toward a net zero carbon policy. In 2021, the Government published its 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener' and Leicester and Leicestershire's local authorities have both declared a climate emergency and have set out plans to move towards net carbon zero.
- During the period of Green BELLE Phase Two, the world has also faced an energy crisis which has increased the demand for Green BELLE grants. The project's strategic fit with the national and local policy agenda has strengthened and become even more relevant over the period of delivery.
- The project has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. After a good start to the second phase of Green BELLE, at the beginning of 2020, Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for Green BELLE funding reduced significantly in March, due to the national lockdown. The team started offering SMEs remote site visits using Microsoft Teams but the ongoing effects of Covid-19 made SMEs reluctant to commit the capital match funding required in this period of economic uncertainty. Overall, Leicester remained under lockdown restrictions longer than almost every other part of the country.
- The project has allocated all of the available grant funding to SMEs. As of the final claim, the project has claimed 100% of its capital and revenue budget.
- In total 47% of the funds have been awarded to businesses in Leicester City with 53% to businesses in Leicestershire. The districts that have received the highest proportion of funds are Blaby, Charnwood and North West Leicestershire.
- In total 67.5% of expenditure has been with suppliers with an LE postcode and therefore a high percentage of the grant expenditure has supported the wider local economy.
- In terms of outputs, the project had achieved 97% of its 'Enterprises Receiving Support' (C1) outputs and 95% of its 'Estimated Annual Decrease of Greenhouse Gases' (C34) outputs.

- The shortfall in the C1 outputs is as a result of seeing a higher than average grant request from SMEs in the later phases of the project which means fewer SMEs could be supported. Discussions with the project team suggest this higher grant request is believed to be due to rising costs as well as SMEs applying for more ambitious or expensive measures.
- The project team have indicated that as of July 2023, the total decrease in greenhouse gases, is 1497.58 tCO₂e which is 95% of the target. The achievement of the GHG savings target has been particularly challenging. Reasons for this have included where meter readings have not been taken regularly enough, the SME has not kept copies of their energy bills and has not been able to obtain copies.
- The pandemic particularly impacted on the achievement of greenhouse gas reductions. Many SMEs were in lockdown for sustained periods over the pre-installation bill monitoring period or reduced their productivity because of the impact of Covid-19. This led to much lower energy consumption levels in the 12-months prior to installation of the energy efficiency measures. The result of this has been much lower energy savings than would normally be seen. In some cases, an SME's energy usage might even increase following installation of the energy efficiency measures, due to increase in productivity following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.
- One of the biggest challenges has been the many externalities that have impacted on the project. From the pandemic through to the energy and cost of living crisis, the project has had to respond to these many external factors, particularly through Phase Two.
- Some of the limitations of the project identified through consultation included: the level of technical advice that could be provided to SMEs or that SMEs were willing to take, calculating greenhouse gas savings which took a lot of the Project Officers' time and the need for SMEs to provide energy bills for the 12 months prior to their application meant that some businesses such as start-ups or businesses that had recently moved into new premises couldn't be supported.
- Some consultees felt that the project should have taken more of a fabric first approach and to have pushed SMEs to think more holistically about their premises rather than on an individual measure basis. However, it was considered that the restrictions and requirements of the funding would have made this quite challenging to deliver.
- Through the consultation with businesses who received a grant it was identified that nearly 90% of business who received a grant felt that the installation of energy efficiency measures through Green BELLE has met or partially met their expectation in terms of reduction in energy use. Over 70% said that the installation of energy efficiency measures has resulted in a reduction in operating costs which given the current energy crisis is extremely positive.
- Nearly 90% of businesses said the project had a positive impact on their business. It is clear from the feedback received that the Green BELLE project has allowed SMEs to invest in energy efficiency measures that the majority wouldn't have done without a grant, or it has accelerated their investment. This is further supported by feedback from the counterfactual group, of which over three quarters said they had not installed the energy efficiency measures applied for without a grant.
- The main reasons that the counterfactual group did not receive a grant were because they were ineligible, or they ran out of time to before the project closed to applications. The requirement to get three quotations was a significant barrier to making an application. Many businesses also felt the application process was too onerous.

This suggests that there is still significant demand for projects like Green BELLE, particularly for the following measures: solar, heating and lighting. Over 70% of the counterfactual group would consider applying again and nearly 90% of the businesses that received a grant would consider applying again for different measures.

- An economic impact assessment of the project has estimated that the project will be delivering over £360,000 of value to society annually as a result of the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- The potential estimated additional total direct and indirect employment impact for Leicester and Leicestershire as a result of the Green BELLE project to date is 18 Jobs and this is projected to increase to 33 in the next 2 years. These jobs have the potential to generate an additional circa £928,000 of GVA per annum for the local economy, rising to £1.7m in the next two years.
- It is anticipated that businesses supported through the project to date have made savings in operating costs of £655,718 as a result of their involvement with the project. This is estimated to rise to nearly £700,000 by the end of the project.
- The project has performed relatively well in terms of cost per outputs when compared to the benchmarking for the ERDF programme and other projects with similar aims and ambitions. The project has faced a number of challenges in relation to the achievement of outputs but overall, it is considered that the project has offered good value for money, and this is reflected in the feedback from beneficiaries.

8.2 Lessons Learnt

- Major periods of economic uncertainty hugely impact on a business's decision to invest. The pandemic saw a major and sustained reduction in applications to Green BELLE whilst the cost-of-living crisis led to a rise in applications. Projects of this nature need to be able to be flexible to enable businesses to respond to externalities of this nature.
- It is clear from the feedback from businesses that the majority of SMEs are unlikely to invest in energy efficiency measures without financial incentives or will take much longer to make these types of investments. The economic case for investment is therefore still strong and demand remains high, particularly for solar, heating and lighting measures.
- Whilst reductions in greenhouse gases should be a demonstrable aim for the project, there may be better ways of measuring impact that are less restrictive and time intensive and recognise that because of decarbonisation of the grid, carbon savings may not always be as high as they would have been in the past.
- The nature of the funding has been quite restrictive and has not necessarily encouraged innovation from SMEs in terms of their approach to energy efficiency.
- A more flexible approach in the future could be beneficial with more upfront time with businesses and the opportunity to be more flexible and encourage SMEs to be more innovative in their approach, including where appropriate a fabric first approach.
- Whilst the team tried to make the process of applying and receiving a grant as straight forward as possible for SMEs, many businesses reported that they found the application process to be too onerous and this put them off applying. The requirement for three quotations was specifically identified as a challenge for SMEs. Some flexibility on this where justified may be appropriate.

- For site visits, both a virtual and on-site option should be offered in the future. It is considered that on site visits might result in a better outcome for SMEs and more likely to lead to a full application. However, virtual visits, where appropriate could still be offered as they are much more efficiency and reduce the travel requirements of the Project Officers.
- To maximise SME engagement and accessibility of funds, a more flexible approach potentially including grants for more than 50% where the need for such can be evidenced and potentially a mix of grants and interest free loans should be considered to allow funding to be recycled and support more businesses.



Appendix 1

Green BELLE Expression of Interest Form



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund

Green Grants To Grow Your Business

APPLY NOW

Apply now

Phase 2 of Green BELLE is now open.

For general enquiries please use the contact form on our [contact us](#) page, instead of the form below.

If you already have an idea of what measure or measures you'd like to install, please fill out the Expression of Interest form below.

If you would like more information on Green BELLE that you can't find on this website, you are unsure of what to do next, or you would like to discuss options for which Green BELLE measures you could apply for a Green BELLE grant to install, please use the contact form or contact details on the [contact us](#) page, instead.

(To request a hard-copy version of this form, please use the details on our [contact us](#) page.)

Expression of Interest Form

Please note, **this form might not submit using Internet Explorer**. We are currently working to fix this problem. In the meantime please use a different browser (For example, Edge, Chrome or Firefox), or [contact us](#) for a hard-copy version.

SME Business Details

Contact name

Position within business

Name of business

Address

Postcode

Telephone/mobile number

Email

Company registration number

Select your Local Authority:

Blaby District Council



Eligibility

Green BELLE is for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Leicester and Leicestershire.

Please select the business sector that best describes your business' activity:

Accommodation & Hospitality

Green BELLE support is available to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). To be defined as an SME, your business must meet all three criteria below:

- Has fewer than 250 employees
- Has an annual turnover that does not exceed €50 million or has an annual balance sheet that does not exceed €43 million
- Is not more than 25% owned by an organisation that in itself is not an SME

Please tick to confirm that your business is an SME

- Yes – My business is an SME
- No – My business is not an SME

How did you hear about the project?

If your business has had an energy or environmental survey within the past year, please give details of who carried out the survey and the main findings, if known.

Proposed Measure(s)

Please include details of the proposed measure or measures.

Please include:

- The proposed measure(s)
- The justification for the proposed measure(s)
- The benefits this will bring to the business

How will the above measure(s) impact on your business' energy use?

De Minimis State Aid

The assistance you are being offered is being given under the European Commission's State Aid regulations. This allows a company to receive up to €200,000 of De Minimis state aid over a rolling three year period. To confirm that you are able to receive this assistance you must therefore declare the full amount of De Minimis state aid you have already received over the last three fiscal years.

For more information, please see [What is state aid?](#) (opens in a new window / tab) on the GOV.UK website.

Please confirm, by ticking the box, that your business has not received state aid exceeding the value of €200,000 within the last three rolling years:

De Minimis State Aid is always calculated in Euros (€).

Please list any state aid that has been received in the past three rolling years, or tick the box below to confirm that you have not received any:

I have received no state aid (€0) within the last three rolling years:

| Organisation providing the assistance/aid | Value of assistance (€) | Date of assistance | Nature of assistance |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Please check you have filled in all required fields correctly. If you need help filling in this form, please [contact](#) the Green BELLE team.

[Home](#) [About Green BELLE](#) [Is your business eligible?](#) [Case studies](#) [FAQs](#) [Contact us](#) [Apply now](#)



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund

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Appendix 2

Green BELLE Application Form

Green BELLE Full Application

This Full Application is a continuation of the Expression of Interest form.

In order to complete this form, the following information is required:

- Three written quotations for the proposed measure
- Specification used to generate the quotations
- 12 months of energy bills for the period prior to this application

If you have any questions about this Full Application, please contact the Green BELLE team: energygrant@leicester.gov.uk or 0116 454 2700.

1.0 – Business Information

Contact Name:

Position within Business:

Name of Business:

Address Line 1:

Address Line 2:

Address Line 3:

Postcode:

Telephone/Mobile:

Email:

Website (optional):

Company Registration Number:

Date of form completion:

Please state the total number of full-time equivalent employees:

Is the business part of a group of companies?

Yes No

If the premises is not owned by your business, do you have the landlord's or freeholder's permission to carry out the works?

Yes No Need to check

Is the business the sole occupier of the premises or are there multiple occupiers (i.e. different businesses based in the same building)?

Sole occupier Multiple occupiers

Please tick the legal status of the business:

Sole Trader

LTD

PLC

LLP

CLG

CIC

Other (please state):

Has the business received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee?

(N.B. this doesn't include COVID-19 recovery grant funding)

Yes No Need to check

Has the business received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan?

Yes No Need to check

2.0 – Building and Energy Details

2.1 – What are your main business activities?

2.2 – Please provide information on the building type and the age of the building

2.3 – What are your standard hours of operation, and what is the estimated usage of the existing measure (for example how many hours per day and how many days per week)?

2.4 – Briefly describe the energy concerns of the building (for example; cold, draughty, old lighting, high ceilings, high gas / electricity bills).

3.0 – Proposed Measure

3.1 – What is the measure or measures that you are applying to Green BELLE for? Please write the full details of the energy efficiency / low carbon measure(s) you would like to apply for under the Green BELLE grant, and, if applicable, what the measure will be replacing:

3.2 – What is the energy use of the new measure(s), for example, exact wattage of lighting or kW rating of a heating system.

3.3 – What is the estimated hours of operation of the new measure?

3.4 – What is the existing equipment that is being replaced (including quantities and estimated hours of operation, for example; type and kW of existing boiler). If lighting is being replaced, please use the table below.

For existing lighting, please provide a list of the specification of each type of light fitting that is to be replaced. Please also confirm the total quantity and wattage in the last row.

| Type of light (e.g. Twin 59-Watt | Quantity (e.g. 20 fittings) | Total wattage of fitting (with ballast if known - Please ask your | Estimated hours of use |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------|

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| T8 fluorescent tube fitting) | | contractor about ballasts wattages of existing lighting if unknown) e.g. 148 Watts - inc. ballast | per day / week (e.g. 8 hours 5 days a week, 4 hours Saturday) |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | Total Quantity: | Total Wattage: | |

3.5 – What are the predicted energy savings associated with installing the measure? (This is often included on the quotation.) Please also give details of the methodology used to calculate this.

3.6 – How will the existing equipment be disposed of? This may be stated on the quotation, for example, disposed according to the WEEE Directive.

4.0 – Quotations

A minimum of three written comparable quotations are required to apply for the Green BELLE grant.

List below the quotations that have been obtained for the project:

| Provider | Cost | Date of quotation and expiry date | Any comments |
|----------|------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Please state below if you have a preferred provider and include justification.

The same specification should be used to obtain the three comparable quotations. Please either attach this with the application or state the details below. N.B. quotes can vary slightly but must be similar enough to be comparable.

For lighting, please ask each contractor to provide quantities and fitting wattages of each proposed lighting type. If this isn't shown on the quotes, please specify wattages below.

5.0 – Project Plan

Please complete the section below to indicate the proposed start and end date of the installation, as indicated by the provider.

Proposed installation start date:

Proposed installation end date:

If there is currently not a start and end date proposed, please confirm the estimated duration of the installation.

Installation duration:

Any other comments or potential issues with the installation duration (for example, any deadlines):

6.0 – Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction

The aim of Green BELLE is to increase the energy efficiency and decrease the CO₂ emissions of your business premises. In order to assess the energy and CO₂ savings, please include energy bills for 12 complete months prior to installation.

A Green BELLE Project Officer will request your business's energy bills for 12 months from the date that the installation is complete. Please provide your energy bills as and when you receive them for the 12-month period.

The energy bills attached should relate to the proposed measure. For example, if installing solar panels please submit electricity bills. For gas boilers or blower heaters, please submit gas bills and, if possible, the electricity bills, particularly where any supplementary electric heating had been used. For insulation, please submit gas bills or electricity bills depending on your heating system. If gas heating is being replaced by electric heating, or vice versa, both gas and electricity bills will be required. Your Green BELLE Project Officer can also advise you on which bills will be needed.

Previous 12 months energy bills attached

I confirm that I (or a representative from the company) will also send 12 months of energy bills for the period directly after installation is complete, once available, to Green BELLE (energygrant@leicester.gov.uk)

Name:

Position:

7.0 – Equal Opportunities

Green BELLE is required to collect equal opportunities data and report it to our funding providers (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)), and will not be reported with the individual's name. The data will be recorded with the SME name as per our forms, and the privacy information is stated at the end of this form. Please answer the following in relation to the person signing the form, and not for the business as a whole.

Providing this information is optional and each question has a 'Prefer not to say' option.

7.1 - Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

7.2 - Disability: Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability, as described by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

7.3 - Age:

- 16 – 24
- 25 – 29
- 30 – 34
- 35 – 39
- 40 – 44
- 45 – 49
- 50 – 54
- 55 – 59
- 60 – 64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

7.4 – Ethnicity

- White
- Mixed
- Asian
- Black
- Other
- Prefer not to say

8.0 – Confirmation Signature

Please note, works cannot begin until the Green BELLE application has been approved and the Grant Agreement is signed. This includes agreeing the quotation with the contractor. A Green BELLE Project Officer will confirm when works can begin.

I confirm that I have read this information and that no works have begun or will begin before approval.

I certify that the information contained in this Full Application form is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Name:

Position:

Date:

9.0 – Green BELLE Social Media

Are you happy for your project and business name to be included on our social media? This may include the measure installed, the amount of grant awarded, the GHG emissions predicted / achieved and the area your premises is located. We will endeavour to tag your business in any posts if appropriate. Do you give permission to be included on social media?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe – please ask us again when a post is drafted

10.0 – Full Application Submission

Please ensure that you have attached the following information with this application form:

- Three written quotations for the proposed measure
- 12 months of energy bills prior to application

Please submit this Full Application by email or post to:

energygrant@leicester.gov.uk or,

Green BELLE Project

Leicester City Council
1st Floor, Phoenix House
King Street
Leicester
LE1 6RN

11.0 - Fair Processing Notice and Confirmation

The application will be submitted to the Green BELLE Grant Panel, which will assess the application. The results of the Grant Panel's decision will be sent to your business.

Confirmation of your grant application will be emailed to you, and a letter will be sent if an email address is not provided.

Any personal and business data that you provide will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It will be used by us and our partners to deliver and improve services and fulfil our statutory duties.

We will, as appropriate, retain records relating to the business or individual that is applying for or enquiring about grant funding and may share these details with our partners for the purposes of monitoring, reporting and auditing or the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This may include the names, contact details and other information relating to individual employees or representatives.

Read more about how we use personal data at
<https://www.greenbelle.org.uk/privacy-policy/>.

These partners include the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Leicestershire County Council and any third-party organisations procured by Leicester City Council to assist in the delivery of the Green BELLE project, for example to carry out a summative assessment of the project.

For more information about how we processes personal data, please refer to the privacy notice on Leicester City Council's website at <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/our-website/privacy/> as well as the ERDF privacy notice on MHCLG's website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-regional-development-fund-privacy-notice/european-regional-development-fund-privacy-notice>.

I consent to having Green BELLE collect my details via this form

(N.B. this is required for us to process your application, please tick)



Appendix 3

Green BELLE Grant Panel Approval Form

Appendix B: Green BELLE Grant Panel Approval Form

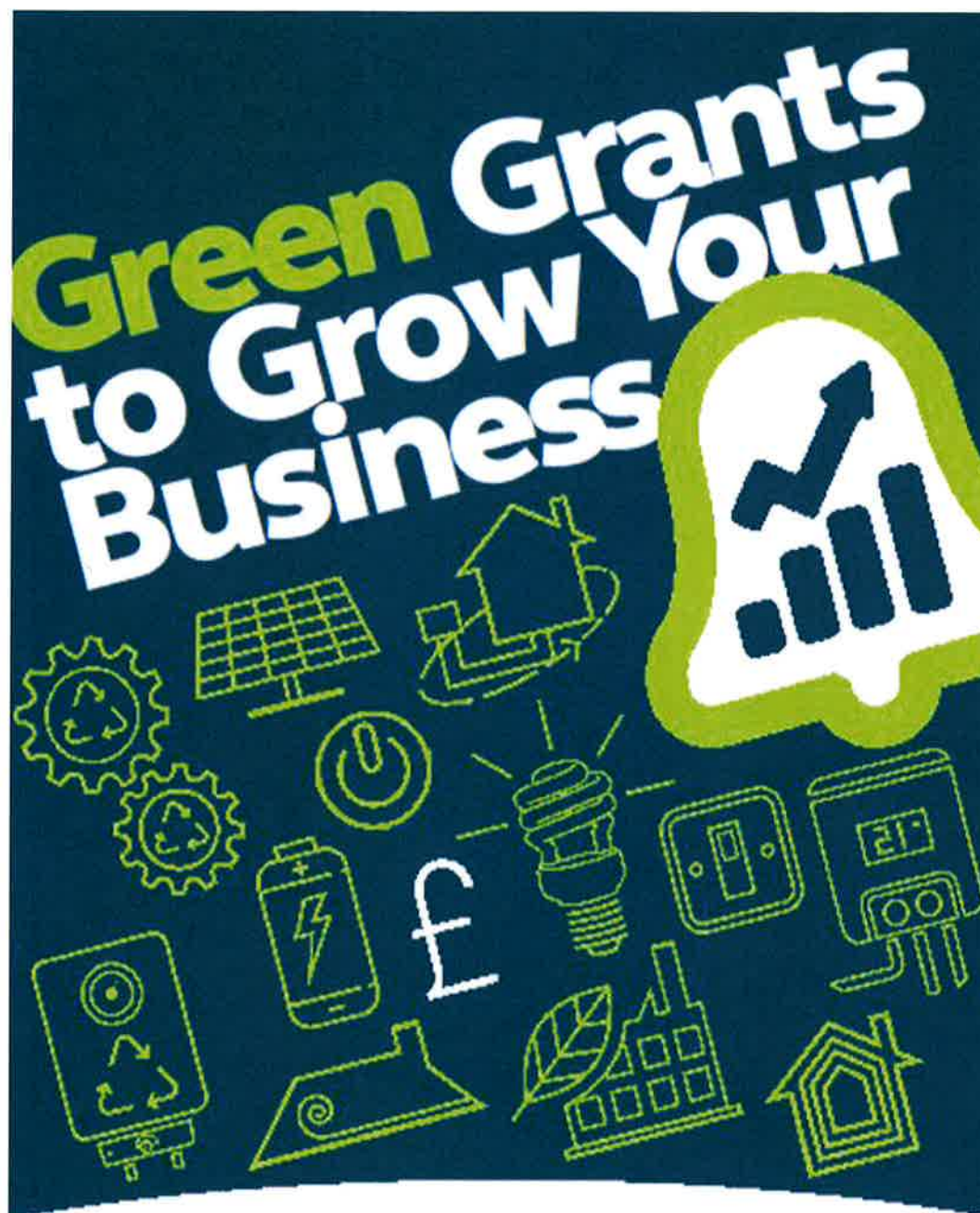
| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Business | |
| Project Officer | |
| Date | |
| The grant panel confirms the eligibility of the business; | |
| The business is an SME | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| De minimis state aid limit has not been exceeded | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The SME is eligible | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The grant panel confirms that the following evidence has been seen and checked; | |
| Grant application summary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quotations & specification (at least three comparable quotations) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Points discussed: | |
| | |

| | | |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Any actions required: | | |
| Any other comments: | | |
| SME Green BELLE application approved? | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Further information needed <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected | | |
| Chosen provider | | |
| Agreed grant amount | | |
| The grant panel signs to confirm that they are satisfied with the information and decision stated on this form. (please sign in the box below) | | |
| Name of Panel Member 1 | Name of Panel Member 2 | Name of Panel Member 3 |
| | | |

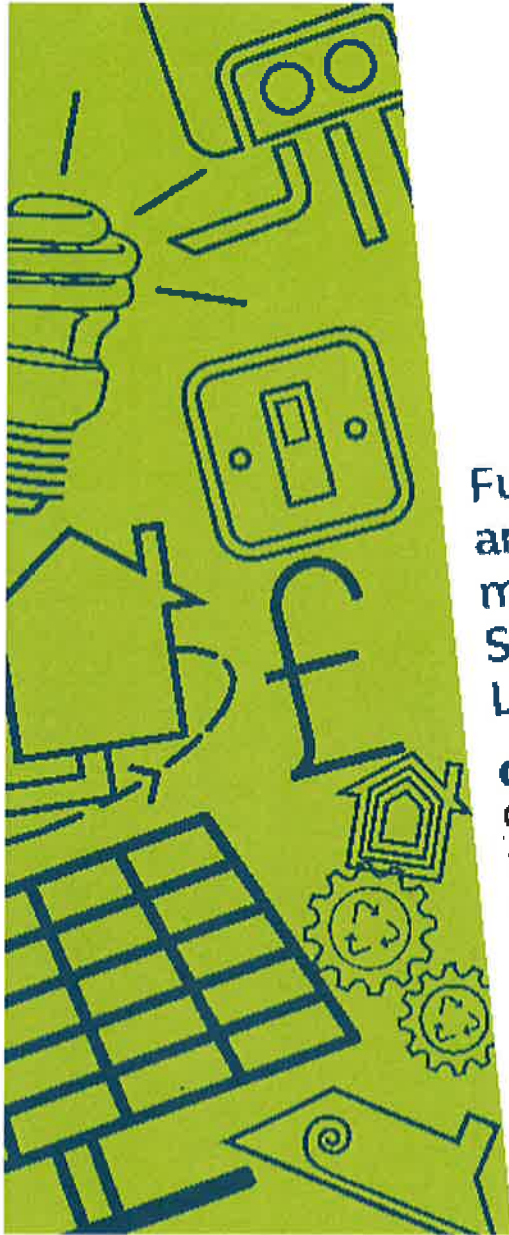


Appendix 4

Green BELLE Leaflet



Green BELLE is offering grants of
£1,000 to £10,000 for low carbon and
energy efficient measures



Funding for low carbon and energy efficient measures available for SMEs in Leicester and Leicestershire.

Grant Amount
Grants from **£1,000** to **£10,000** available. SMEs must supply 50% match funding.

Measures
Energy efficient technologies including; heating, lighting, insulation and renewable energy.

W greenbelle.org.uk ✉ energygrant@leicester.gov.uk
☎ 0116 454 2700 🐦 [@leicesterenergy](https://twitter.com/leicesterenergy)





Appendix 5

Green BELLE Website Homepage



Do you want to increase the environmental credentials of your business?

Due to an unprecedented demand, Green BELLE is now closed to new applications

Green BELLE provided grants of up to €10,000 to support SMEs in Leicester and Leicestershire to install low carbon measures and increase their energy efficiency. Green BELLE is part-funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).



What is Green BELLE?



Is your business eligible?



How does Green BELLE work?



Apply now!

Case Studies



Lestercast Limited

Lestercast Limited is a precision investment casting manufacturer and offer bespoke components in a range of metals and specialist alloys for industrial and commercial applications.

[Lestercast Limited read more...](#)



Bakers Waste Services

Bakers Waste Services is a waste management provider, offering an extensive range of waste management solutions to over 5000 companies based in Leicestershire and the wider East Midlands.

[Bakers Waste Services read more...](#)



Fashion UK

Fashion UK applied for a Green BELLE grant to replace their old single glazed windows, to reduce the cost of heating their offices.

[Fashion UK read more...](#)

Latest News

Tweets from @LeicesterEnergy

Follow

- Green BELLE** @LeicesterEnergy · Apr 29, 2021
SMEs – are you struggling to cut the cost of your energy bills? Green BELLE provides grants of up to €10,000 to improve your energy efficiency greenbelle.org.uk
- Green BELLE** @LeicesterEnergy · Mar 23, 2021
SMEs – are you struggling to cut the cost of your energy bills? Green BELLE provides grants of up to €7,000 to improve your energy efficiency greenbelle.org.uk
- Green BELLE** @LeicesterEnergy · Mar 23, 2021
We are advertising for a Marketing and Communications Officer at Leicester City Council, a unique opportunity to support delivery of the Council's Salix funded

SMEs Supported

So far, Green BELLE has provided

205 Grants
to SMEs totalling
£1,170,293

Request More Information

Contact Form

N.B. Green BELLE is now closed to new applications. For more information, visit: www.greenbelle.org.uk/apply

For general enquiries please use the contact form below.

Please also use this form to let us know if you'd like to be placed on our contact list to hear from us if any new Green BELLE funding becomes available.

For more information on other support schemes that are currently available for businesses, try contacting the [Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership \(LLEP\)](#), [Growth Hub Business Gateway](#), or use their online [Business Support Finder](#) tool.

Please note, **this form might not submit using Internet Explorer**. We are currently working to fix this problem. In the meantime please use a different browser (For example, Edge, Chrome or Firefox), or contact us by phone.

Your Name

Name

Your Email Address

Email

Your Message

Message

This form collects your name, email, and message so that our team can communicate with you and provide assistance. Please check our [Privacy Policy \(opens in a new window / tab\)](#) to see how we protect and manage your submitted data.

I consent to having Green BELLE collect my details via this form

What is the capital of England?

SEND