

Ely Net Zero Carbon Action Plan 2023: Financial Proposals

This document is one of a set of three that constitute the Ely Diocesan NZC Action Plan. It sits alongside a Policy and Overview Statement. There is a detailed spreadsheet of action points that is the basis of the action plan.

Following the General Synod's commitment to net zero carbon by 2030 the national church has released a Routemap and funding for dioceses. We are using the first capacity-building grant of £15k to employ the Rev Canon Nigel Cooper as NZC Manager and Diocesan Environment Officer on a contractor basis. (He has decades of experience with the Faculty process and environmental issues, e.g. he is a visiting professor at the Global Sustainability Institute at ARU). A condition of the £15k grant is the development of a diocesan Action Plan.

Ely, as part of a consortium of the five East of England dioceses, has been awarded £131k in the second round of funding for the next two and a half years. Unlike our fellow dioceses, we are placing emphasis on engaging contractors to audit samples of our buildings to help us understand what needs to be done. We also plan to employ three different part-time people, rather than a single NZC officer, with a view to them building capacity in our regular staff team so that the work is sustainable beyond 2025 when the funding ceases. The posts are: NZC officer to be the technical expert, a DEO to provide direction and motivation (especially among parishes) and a NZC administrator who will also relieve time for heads of other departments to do NZC work. We shall also contribute our agreed share for the regional coordinator.

The costings estimates are based on those submitted in our grant application. The work towards the action plan has not yet identified any major changes to this, though we may have underestimated the costs of audits. Some costs will be covered by the grant and any significant changes will have to be approved nationally, other costs will need to be covered by diocesan funds. Work on NZC may throw up some other small needs for funding. Few ongoing commitments are established apart from the DEO post. However, acting on the building audits will be expensive and responsibility for upgrading clergy housing will fall mainly on the DBF. Schools are wholly reliant on government funding for property investment. In the case of SCA and SALIX funding, this necessitates a 10% contribution from school budgets. In the current economic climate schools cannot afford this level of financial contribution to enable them to draw down these funds. Parishes will be responsible for finding funds for their churches. We are expecting some national funding in the next triennium that may help.

The grant application assumed that the figures would be spread evenly across the 2.5 years. We do not yet know the timing of the release of grant funds to us. The appointments will not be achieved until at least Q4 so there are adjustments to produce a predicted spread across each of the three years. The prediction allows for an early underspend to be unallocated. As things develop, it may be allocated either to more hours for the employees, more audits of property or subsidise audits if they prove more costly than estimated.