

North East Local Enterprise Partnership

Job Description

Job Title: Rural Energy Officer

Service: North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP)

Responsible To: Energy Programme Lead, North East Local Enterprise Partnership

Host Employer: North East Combined Authority

Salary: £35,934- £39,782

Fixed term 2-year contract, post subject to funding.

Background

The North East LEP leads on the development and delivery of the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), aiming to foster economic growth and the creation of more and better jobs. Energy is set out in the SEP as an area of strategic importance for our regional economy.

We are seeking a high calibre Rural Energy Officer to help develop rural energy projects in the region. The postholder will also work as part of the North East and Yorkshire team responsible for supporting projects in accessing the Government's Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF).

The North East is home to a large and varied rural area, ranging from market and seaside towns to the largest remote rural area in England, hosting a diverse rural economy. The North East's Energy for Growth strategy identifies various energy opportunities and challenges, with unique implications for these rural geographies. They include provision of affordable, secure and sustainable energy in an off-grid setting, transitioning to low emission transport in remote locations, deployment of decentralised low carbon and renewable sources of energy, provision of geothermal heat from disused mine workings, energy storage and flexibility, and developing community energy projects.

This new role will cover the North East LEP's geography and drive this exciting rural energy agenda. The role also has a broader responsibility as part of the RCEF team, to promote and support access to RCEF across the North East and Tees Valley, occasionally providing support to the wider Yorkshire and Humber area.

Purpose of the role

As Rural Energy Officer, you will provide important support to identify, develop and deliver on rural energy project opportunities. You will work to identify new opportunities for rural energy projects, and support existing schemes, proactively building your network with local communities, individuals, and the LEP's cross-sector partners including Local Authorities, voluntary organisations, businesses and Universities.

You will support projects through delivery, including providing project advocacy, technical assessment and business case guidance, co-ordinating across stakeholders, and identifying routes to funding and other support.

You will particularly seek opportunities for the development of innovative rural energy projects and solutions in the North East. You will connect schemes into wider regional energy innovation capabilities and assets through the LEP's partners, supporting the development of

new business growth opportunities through these projects, such as new products, services or intellectual property.

You will act as the key point of contact for RCEF in the North East and Tees Valley, working as part of the North East and Yorkshire team responsible for driving support for projects through this fund, ensuring it is promoted effectively, raising awareness among stakeholders using various communications channels and through building your network. This post will work closely with the regional RCEF Programme Manager, including operating RCEF reporting systems.

You will provide guidance on RCEF eligibility, and specifically identify rural community energy projects with potential to bid into RCEF. You will support appropriate projects through the development and application process, monitoring and evaluating their progress. You will have a primary focus in the North East and Tees Valley, and from time to time provide support for the wider Yorkshire, and Humber geography as part of the regional RCEF team.

You will also identify additional sources of project development, delivery, or financial support, for example by finding synergies with other programmes and projects. This may include through devolution, city and growth deals such as the North of Tyne Combined Authority, the Borderlands Deal, or Industrial Strategy or European funding.

The post may be suitable for a secondment.

Submission of applications – Monday 22nd July

Shortlisting – Wednesday 24th July

Assessment – Friday 26th July

Main Responsibilities

- Identify opportunities for new rural energy projects, and existing schemes, by developing and maintaining a strong network across local community groups and individuals, and the North East LEP's public, private and academic partners.
- Support development of rural energy projects by providing project assessment, feasibility, technical, and business case development support. Co-ordinate across stakeholders to accelerate delivery of projects.
- Work closely with Local Enterprise Partnership programmes to identify and support specific opportunities for development of innovation, infrastructure and business growth priorities through rural energy projects, with outcomes which can support the region's wider aims, such as development of new products, services or intellectual property for regional businesses.
- Ensure a strong interaction with other appropriate partners in the region, for example by connecting rural energy projects to the region's wider energy innovation, demonstration and delivery capabilities through the LEP's partners.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration with appropriate rural partners from other areas which can benefit the North East, for example by connecting with existing programmes such as Borderlands Deal or with national rural programmes which could benefit partners in the North East

- Act as key RCEF point of contact with a primary focus in the North East and Tees Valley, from time to time providing support for the wider NEYH geography as part of the wider RCEF team.
- Deliver an engagement plan to promote and advocate RCEF as a funding opportunity for rural community energy projects. Use a variety of communication channels and proactively build your network among rural community groups and stakeholders to do so.
- Provide guidance on criteria for RCEF and identify rural community energy projects which are eligible. Assist community groups in applying, including developing project business cases and preparing the necessary documents.
- Monitor the uptake of RCEF, and the progress of projects which have applied or been successful with accessing funding. Evaluate their success, and report on their status, progress and performance, working closely with the regional RCEF programme manager.
- Identify additional sources of development, delivery, and financial support for rural energy projects, through other regional programmes. This may include through devolution, city or growth deals such as the North of Tyne Combined Authority, the Borderlands project, or through Industrial Strategy or European funding.
- Investigate and stay up to date on new energy technologies and solutions, with a focus on those with specific applications in a rural setting. Work with communities to develop new solutions and projects.

Person specification:

The ideal candidate will demonstrate an up to date knowledge of energy technologies, particularly those with specific applications in a rural setting. You will understand national energy policy drivers and direction, and the local policy and planning frameworks which can affect decision making and project delivery. You will have experience of energy project development and seeing projects from inception through to delivery. This will include the identifying and securing appropriate funding. You will be able to understand pertinent energy challenges and opportunities in rural areas and will have a track record of advocating for energy projects. You will be confident in approaching and engaging with a range of organisations, community groups and individuals, and have strong relationship management skills.

Experience and knowledge:

- Strong and up to date knowledge of the energy and decarbonisation agendas
- Excellent knowledge of energy technologies and solutions, developed from current or recent career experience
- Strong understanding of rural energy challenges and opportunities, and how these relate to future energy directions and drivers
- Strong understanding of national energy policy, and the effect of local policy and planning in the delivery of energy projects
- Clear understanding of project development and delivery from recent career experience
- Experience in the design or delivery of innovative energy projects
- An understanding of the role of a public sector body in supporting research and development, innovation and business growth

- High level of educational attainment, a good first degree in relevant subject, or equivalent experience in the industry
- Demonstrable experience in developing new relationships with a variety of stakeholders, and network building
- Demonstrable experience in advocating for projects, funding, and delivering effective communications activity
- Experience of creating and writing business cases for investment, or raising funding

Personal skills & abilities:

- Highly motivated team orientation, able to work closely with the partners
- Able to balance time across a number of projects and stakeholders
- Able to think innovatively, finding new solutions and links between partners
- Excellent organisational skills, and the ability to plan projects and coordinate working with others
- Able to effectively articulate technical project concepts and detail to a variety of audiences
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to network, build working relationships and influence with a range of partners
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Good team working skills, the ability to work effectively within the North East LEP team
- Ability to operate effectively with a high-volume and flexible workload, and to prioritise effectively

Personal Attributes:

- Entrepreneurial outlook, seeking out new relationships and opportunities
- Ambitious approach to project delivery, identifying and maximising opportunities and managing risks
- Delivery focused, with a high level of drive and motivation
- Open style that engages and inspires others
- Committed to working collaboratively – within the organisation and externally
- Commitment to equality of opportunity in all aspects of the role with partners
- Outcome and achievement focused