

## **Net Zero Innovation Programme: Project Plan (2022/23)**

This form is an overview of the project which you are undertaking and will be appended to the grant agreement. The grant will be given directly to the council. Please work on the form with your partner and submit it using the online form by November 25th 2022 before 5pm. If you have any queries, please contact [climate@local.gov.uk](mailto:climate@local.gov.uk) or [freya.roberts@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:freya.roberts@ucl.ac.uk)

### **Name of partnership**

Condensation in Housing: Systems, Engagement and Net Zero.

### **Names of the Council and University in your partnership**

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC), University of Bedfordshire (UoB).

### **Please outline what your project is setting out to achieve (max 100 words)**

This project will tackle condensation in social housing by engaging with tenants to improve understanding of perspectives, behaviours, motivations and needs. The project will enhance knowledge sharing across social housing tenants and local authority professionals to develop collective approaches to reduced condensation in housing.

The team will specify a 'toolkit' to support local authority staff in eradicating condensation for different property types and constraints. Knowledge sharing and education will cross multiple stakeholders including tenants, surveyors, local authority technical staff, managers and chief executives.

Ultimately, knowledge exchange around factors contributing to condensation (insulation, heating and ventilation), will support zero carbon targets.

### **Please outline how you plan to undertake the project (max 300 words)**

The aim is to improve understanding of direct stakeholders' views and perceptions around condensation and allow this to guide the project outputs. The cultural and social-economic factors impacting on condensation issues across key stakeholders needs to be better understood to develop collaborative, co-created approaches to condensation action.

The research will focus on stakeholder participation in small localised research events based at local community centres.

The emphasis will be on enabling tenants to discuss attitudes and lifestyle factors that may affect successful avoidance and eradication of excess condensation in their homes. Understanding perceptions, concerns and issues is a main element of the research.

A key aim is to develop guidance and advice based on research evidence and address individual circumstances. This will be achieved by enabling tenants to better inform local authorities.

Training and knowledge exchange will be a multi-directional process involving tenants, local authorities and the academic team. Although it is known how and why condensation forms, the key element is how to support people in challenging economic circumstances to improve ventilation, and/or change deep-rooted perceptions and behaviours.

The research will culminate in a larger-scale research dissemination and knowledge-sharing event. The project team will involve other regional local authorities, housing bodies, tenants, housing officers and maintenance personnel to enhance the development of balanced workable solutions. The academic team will provide support in developing the evidence to inform the outputs and guidance provided for key/vulnerable stakeholders in particular.

There will be three key elements to the project:

1. Local community engagement (social housing tenants) to exchange knowledge and enhance understanding of the key issues.
2. Knowledge sharing and training for local authority professionals.
3. Condensation toolkit (specification) to support local authorities in assessment of action to address condensation issues (insulation, heating and ventilation), minimise health risks and support Net Zero targets.

### **Please outline the outcomes and outputs of your project**

- 2-3 targeted, accessible and inclusive research events at local community centres to facilitate discussions with tenants and leaseholders and develop the required understanding of the status, restrictions and expectations of tenants. This will also be an opportunity for local authority surveyors to provide some initial guidance for tenants on condensation issues.
- Formulate a realistic evidence and solution-based approach to addressing condensation, based on the data gathered from the research events.
- Apply scientific rigour to the project and formulate the basis (specification) for an accessible and useable toolkit to help guide different stakeholders in addressing condensation issues.
- A dissemination/knowledge-sharing event involving multiple stakeholder types. This will include discussions, information sharing and collaboration with other regional local authorities, housing bodies, tenants/leaseholders, academics, contractors and associated departments within council housing services.

### **How will you budget your project? (Please break down how you will spend up to £12,000)**

- £4500
  - 2-3 targeted research/knowledge-sharing events with tenants/local authority professionals, and a dissemination event involving wider group of project stakeholders (including food and refreshments).
- £4800
  - 7 days of academic consultancy for the preparation/facilitation of the research/knowledge-sharing events, and development of the toolkit specification.
- £500
  - Transportation costs for research events (taxis, buses etc.).
- £200
  - Printing and stationary for research events.
- £2000

- Miscellaneous (potentially including British Sign Language interpreter, language access/translator and streaming service for online access and participation).

**Please identify the key stakeholders involved in your project**

Robert Smith (DBC), Annie Smith (DBC), James Bishop (UOB), David Jazani (UOB), Tenants/Leaseholders (DBC), Senior Management (DBC).

**Please outline the timeline and key milestones of your project (between January-June 2023)**

- January 2023 – Planning and mobilisation
- February/March 2023 – Targeted research events
- April/May 2023– Academic research and data review. Review with stakeholders.
- May 2023 – Condensation guidance/toolkit specification development/production.
- June 2023 – Information exchange/stakeholder dissemination event
- July 2023 – Project report

**Please include your main project risks and how these will be mitigated**

Management

- Weekly/bi-weekly meetings with the project team to assess and amend schedules, tasks and targets.
- Production of a clear and detailed plan with a programme for delivery of each stage of the project, to include time contingency and prevent scope creep.
- A clear process of interaction and communication with key stakeholders (tenants) will be developed.
- Early experience of tenant consultations will be reviewed and the engagement process will be adapted, if required.
- Safeguarding awareness – the team will consult with and seek guidance on policies from DBC (and the University).
- GDPR guidance and policies from DBC (and the University) will be adhered to.
- The team will consider key political/policy focus within local authorities, and the current issues and priorities that may influence the project by working closely with the relevant DBC teams and departments (with initiatives that are closely aligned to the scope of this project).
- Financial management – the team will regularly review the budget/project plan, based on the delivery of the research/knowledge-sharing events in particular.

External

- Covid19 and associated impacts – the team will minimise risk by adhering to DBC and University policy/guidance around engagement of project participants. The team has the option of running virtual events, should face-to-face events prove to be problematic due to any unforeseen restrictions due to Covid-19.
- Management of key stakeholder expectations – the team will look to engage with key stakeholders early-on in the project, and in particular senior DBC management and social housing tenants, to communicate the scope of the project, anticipated coverage and engagement, and collaboration in the co-creation of outputs.

- Affordability (of engagement) – the project team will utilise the budget to cover transport costs to/from project events if required. Food and refreshments will be provided at the research events.

### Quality/Technical

- Access to tenant data and archetypes of properties – the team will work with the relevant DBC teams/departments to access this data in support of the project. However, the project is not limited to this data (with a key focus being on tenant engagement), should the team experience any issues with data access.
- Contractor competence – DBC is aware of issues in the implementation of remedial works to tackle condensation, implemented by external contractors. Although potentially beyond the scope of this project, the project team will consider engagement with contractors, with a view to continuing to work with them after the completion of the project.

### Organisational

- Lack of tenant participation – the project team will work with existing local authority forums/groups, DBC Housing Engagement Team and the DBC Communications Team (social media and marketing), to enhance awareness of the project (and the opportunity to learn more about action in reducing condensation issues). The team will also collaborate with and join existing DBC community events and initiatives with links to the project. The team will also work with and consult with the DBC EDI Officer.

### **How will you evaluate your project? (Include criteria if applicable)**

- Stakeholder numbers and engagement data.
- Qualitative data obtained from targeted research/knowledge-sharing events to inform the approaches and method for the toolkit specification (and guidance on condensation action).
- Workshop feedback (participant surveys) to evaluate the methodology/approach to the delivery of the events, and facilitation of discussions/knowledge-exchange.
- Regular review and monitoring meetings with the project team and key stakeholders
- Production of an evidence-based condensation-action toolkit specification.
- Collection of feedback data (surveys) 6-12 months after the completion of the project to evaluate:
  - The experiences of local authority staff in tackling condensation issues, following their involvement in the NZIP project (events) and potential changes in approaches/behaviours.
  - The experiences of social housing tenants in minimising condensation issues in their homes, following their involvement in the NZIP project (events) and potential changes in approaches/behaviours.

### **How will you ensure key elements of the project (e.g. tools, outputs, learnings) are scalable beyond your local area?**

The project team will engage with key stakeholders from other regional local authorities who have specific roles/interests linked to the project (outcomes), during the delivery of the project.

This will help initiate partnerships and collaborative relationships with other local authorities around condensation (and the associated links to Net Zero), and start to evaluate the potential adoption of the project findings and outputs on a wider-scale.