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A new initiative had been launched in Cambridgeshire to help schools reduce their energy consumption and manage their energy bills.

Pioneered by Cambridgeshire County Council, the scheme could help headteachers manage their ongoing maintenance of school boilers and generate income from renewable energy. The initiative comes as part of the Mobilising Local Energy Investment (MLEI) Project for Cambridgeshire, which aims to increase the rate of investment in low carbon energy schemes using new ways to finance projects.

The County Council has agreed to offer loan financing for schools to pay for the upfront costs of the energy measures.

Cambridgeshire County Council will work with an energy services company to help schools secure significant improvements in their energy performance.

Participating schools will be able to reduce the amount of money they spend on electricity, gas and other fuels. There is also the potential for schools to create income from Government tariffs and incentives to generate renewable energy.

The savings schools make on their energy bills, added to the income from the government for renewable energy generation, will repay the initial investment. This is expected to take 7-10 years. When the initial investment is repaid all the energy savings will continue to benefit the schools budget plus the income from renewable energy generation should continue for a further 10 years helping schools manage their spend on energy bills in the longer term.

Schools or colleges need to register their interest in the programme with ron.dsouza@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and tel: 01223 699448 a member of the Mobilising Local Energy Investment (MLEI) Team. Ron will support schools to work effectively with the energy services company to assess the school buildings and land to identify what energy saving measures would deliver the greatest savings.

Cllr David Harty, Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Learning said: *"This excellent scheme gives schools a real opportunity to reduce their bills by having their energy usage assessed by experts. This can only be good in the current climate of financial challenge our schools face. It will also give teachers the opportunity to incorporate the learning into the curriculum."*

Cllr Mathew Shuter, Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Skills, Energy and Waste said *"The MLEI project provides the opportunity for schools to access the technical, financial and legal skills and knowledge to help schools make informed decisions on how best to reduce their energy consumption and become more energy self-sufficient over the longer term."*