

CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet member for Climate Change and Environment held on Monday, 18 July 2022 at 1pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Kimberly Barrett (in the Chair)
Charlotte Gerada
Russell Simpson

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Robert New.

2. Declarations of Members' Interests

No interests were declared.

3. Greening the city - funding application criteria

Bethan Mose, Development Manager introduced the report and in response to questions explained that:

This is a relatively new portfolio with a new budget that was allocated just after the elections which is why the criteria are being developed now. Previously, any greening funding was granted at the discretion of the relevant Cabinet Members.

No decision has been made yet as to the breakdown of funding between council-led projects and external projects.

Assessing how much a proposed project may increase tree canopy is an example of the type of feature that might feature under part A and would be the type of thing that would probably be for officers to assess. Were a funding round to be launched in Autumn, it might be stipulated that the council wants to support projects that deliver X amount of canopy increase or that fall in the lowest super output areas.

The officers have experience of obtaining funding and are not trying to make it too difficult for community groups; they are trying to ensure they get it right and follow correct process that withstands financial and legal scrutiny.

Councillor Kimberley Barrett noted that in her former role as Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Green Recovery, there were two pots of money which came under the regeneration and the environment portfolios. When the Climate Change & Environment Cabinet Member role was created in mid-May, it was realised that the criteria for funding would need to be looked at. The application that was recently submitted had highlighted the need for a process for granting funding applications.

The broader funding framework will be brought back to a later meeting to ensure that as much of the city as possible can be greened in alignment with the objectives set out in the Greening Portsmouth Strategy (2020)..

There are many wonderful community groups and projects and we want the criteria in place so that everyone has a fair chance to access funding.

DECISIONS

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & the Environment:

1. **Noted the proposed approach;**
 2. **Approved the criteria for internal and external grant applications; and**
 3. **Agreed to bring back further detail on the process for funding rounds at the September Decision Meeting.**
4. **Forward Plan Omission Notice - Low Carbon Projects Fund**

DECISIONS

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & the Environment noted the omission for the Forward Plan for 20 May to 20 August 2022 and noted the publication of the notice.

5. **Low Carbon Projects Fund**

Andrew Waggott, Head of Energy Services introduced the report and Wayne Layton, Finance Manager added that although this is a Climate Change & Environment portfolio initiative, as it requires £30 million unsupported borrowing and is a change to the Capital Programme, it must go to Full Council for consideration.

In response to questions, they clarified the following points:

His team is working very closely with Kristina Downey, Principal Climate Change Officer at the council to identify projects. The work she has been doing especially with anchor institutions has been very important for us to get our foot in the door to work with them to better articulate the reduction in carbon that can be brought about by these projects.

With previous work with utilities budget or the PV investment fund sometimes carbon reduction has been something of an afterthought.

The carbon savings from projects across departments will be centrally logged.

Traditionally the capital programme is agreed in February each year. As this report requests unsupported borrowing, a report can be brought to Full Council at any time. This will be a facility that will enable projects to be assessed and financed more flexibly.

Although this encompasses council buildings first and foremost, it will also allow the council to act more agile way with commercial entities in the city.

Some initiatives that are being looked at now would not have been fully formed when the budget was being set. If this proposal had been agreed at council for £30 million, if the costs had increased a request for more money would have had to go to Full Council.

There are other measures that could be taken to save more carbon per pound spent than solar canopies and batteries. Batteries are not in themselves carbon reducing technology, although they support implementation of technologies that are. It is expected that upwards of 2,400 tonnes of carbon would be saved over three years.

Councillor Kimberly Barrett commented that this would enable the council to move on quickly with projects especially in light of the Climate Emergency. Some projects may be able to include bigger solar panels than planned and therefore provide a bigger reduction in carbon, energy and save more money.

DECISIONS

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & the Environment approved the following recommendations for onward approval at Full Council:

- 1. Approves the aims of this borrowing facility in the context of the climate emergency and the council's net zero carbon ambition.**
- 2. That subject to a satisfactory financial appraisal that delegated authority is given to the Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the City Solicitor and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Environment to use unsupported borrowing to:**
 - Approve the financing of projects associated with renewable energy**
 - Approve the financing of projects associated with energy efficiency**
 - Approve the financing of projects associated with other climate change mitigation where there is a clear financial rationale for their implementation**
- 3. Approves a borrowing facility of up to £30 million to be invested in such projects, subject to financial feasibility and the Council's limit of indebtedness.**
- 4. Notes that these energy and climate projects may be implemented upon the Council's portfolio of buildings and land; or may be implemented upon the buildings and assets of other organisations in the city.**
- 5. Notes the Energy Services team will continue to identify and seek external funding opportunities to contribute to these initiatives to reduce the reliance on unsupported borrowing.**

The meeting concluded at 1:15pm

Councillor Kimberly Barrett
Chair