



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL - 25th SEPTEMBER 2019
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM (12)
Subject	FUNDING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr. Rachel Coxcoon Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, Climate change and Energy Email: Rachel.coxcoon@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Claire Locke Group Manager - Commissioning Tel: 01285 623427 Email: Claire.locke@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To secure funding for specialist consultants to produce reports to inform the Council's Climate Change Strategy and actions and for a Strategic Climate Change Manager post to deliver a Climate change Strategy and action plan for the Council.
Annexes	None
Recommendation/s	<i>That Council agree to:</i> <i>(a) a variation to the Publica contract and increase in budget of £70,000 per year for a new Strategic Climate Change Manager post to deliver against the Council's Climate Change declaration. Funding for the post to come from the Council Priorities Fund earmarked reserve initially and the longer-term funding requirement for the post to be incorporated within the Council's budget setting process , and,</i> <i>(b) a one-off budget in the range £85,000 to £105,000 to procure studies from specialist consultants to establish the Council and district emissions baseline, develop a credible emissions reduction trajectory and conduct a district-wide renewable energy study to inform future actions. The budget to be funded from the Council Priorities Fund earmarked reserve.</i>
Corporate priorities	To address the Council's commitment to tackle climate change and become net carbon zero in its own operations as identified in the emerging corporate plan.
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	None

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** In July 2019 the Council declared a state of climate emergency, and committed to carbon and energy targets.
- 1.2.** This will be a new priority within the emerging Corporate plan and constitutes new work for the Council which is currently only supported by a shared part time Energy and Resources Project Officer.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1.** The Council's Climate Emergency declaration makes a commitment to employ a management-level member of staff who will guide and lead work to become a zero-carbon district. If the Council wishes to deliver its ambitious targets to address climate change this new body of work will require officer resources as there is no spare capacity or appropriate expertise within Publica to deliver this work on the Council's behalf.
- 2.2.** It is likely a team of officers will be required to deliver actions and the resource implications will be considered as this work is taken forward so that the most appropriate roles are created, however it is clear at this early stage that a senior Manager role will be required to provide leadership and develop and deliver the action plan. Since the Council made its Climate Emergency Declaration in July, more than 100 other councils have made similar declarations. Competition for good staff to take on this complex role will be stiff, and the Council wants to ensure that it is able to recruit a highly qualified and capable member of staff. The role will need to be appointed at a level commensurate with having adequate seniority and gravitas to get involved in the work of all business areas. It is also a complex role with a range of competencies required in the appointed individual, spanning from an understanding of buildings energy management, transport and procurement and buildings retrofit, through to energy policy in the planning sphere, and the ability to work strategically to stimulate others across the district, from householders to business, to come on this journey with the Council.
- 2.3.** It is proposed that this role should be advertised by Publica on a salary of £50,000-£60,000. The role will be full-time and for Cotswold District Council only, and will be advertised as a permanent post. The annual commitment is therefore circa £70,000, accounting for salary and on-costs. We expect this role to become at least partially self-funding as time passes, due to the potential for income generation via renewable energy schemes, and the fact that the Climate Emergency is now high on the political agenda and therefore external funding streams are likely to emerge.

The road to zero-carbon – commissioning and evidence base and emissions reduction trajectory for our estate and the wider district

- 2.4.** The Council's Climate Emergency Declaration makes a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality for the Council's own operations, activities and estate as soon as possible. The Council now needs to prepare a Carbon Neutral Plan to identify what will be required to achieve this.

- 2.5.** The Council needs to commission a study that will include guidance and information on how to address all aspects of the Council's current carbon emissions so as to achieve its corporate target for carbon neutrality. It is anticipated that this study will identify a range of savings and income generation opportunities in relation to the council's energy use. Having identified the current baseline position and identified the gap between current activities and the Council's aspirations, the Council expects the appointed consultants to identify and provide outline business plans for projects which will help the Council achieve its aims.
- 2.6.** This work must be prioritised in order to play the leadership role the Council has committed to by setting its own house in order, and so that it can share what is learnt in the process with other corporate bodies across the district, to help them achieve the same. The appointed consultants will also be required to produce a study with a wider focus than our own estate, by developing a credible zero-carbon emissions trajectory and outlining the optimal mix of technology installations, behavioural, system and land-use changes that will be needed to achieve net-zero carbon for the district as a whole. This will allow the Council to play the leadership role outlined in the Climate Emergency declaration, by providing a robust evidence base on which to base action. The estimated cost of this work is £70,000.

Renewable energy assessment and planning policy guidance

- 2.7.** The Council needs to commission a specific study to understand the opportunities and constraints for renewable energy deployment across the district, to inform both its zero-carbon strategy and its new planning policy frameworks. This would include a full review of any currently planned installations across the district, and then a review of opportunities for the deployment of:
- Solar – rooftop and ground mounted
 - Wind power – small scale, medium and large.
 - Hydro power
 - Biomass combined heat and power
 - Heat pumps
 - Heat networks
- 2.8.** Consultants delivering this work will also need to provide policy support to the planning policy team, with regard to site allocations and robust policy frameworks relating to the range of opportunities. Consultants will also need to assess the landscape sensitivities of all of the above technologies, and produce a high level cost-benefit analysis that looks at optimum paths to maximise zero-carbon energy generation for the least cost to society. This work should be prioritised so that the new Climate Emergency Manager, working with community engagement staff at Publica, can begin a detailed consultation process with communities across the district to inform the local plan. The estimated cost to the Council of this is £35,000.

- 2.9.** The high level of geo-spatial analysis in this work means that there will be very significant economies of scale to be gained if it can be combined with similar work in other Publica council areas. Officers will discuss with other partner Councils their appetite to invest in this work on a similar timetable. The budget above is therefore based on Cotswold District Council commissioning this work alone only if other Publica council areas do not wish to commission jointly. It is expected that a joint study for the three council areas would cost around £45,000 – £50,000, with each Council area contributing $\frac{1}{3}$. A final decision will be brought to Cabinet in October, once discussions with other Council areas have been finalised.
- 2.10.** This is not work that Publica can resource currently, nor do Publica hold all the skills necessary to undertake this specialist work. It is therefore proposed that funding be allocated for specialist consultants to undertake these studies. An initial sum of £105,000 is sought to commission this work, which could be as low as £85,000 if other Publica councils wish to jointly commission the renewables assessment.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1.** The delivery of an action plan will be a long term project and therefore it is proposed to create a permanent role. The total cost including on-costs, is estimated at up to £70,000 per year..
- 3.2.** There is currently no funding within the Council's base budget for this role. The post will therefore be funded from the Council Priorities Fund earmarked reserve initially and then embedded in the budget during the budget setting process.
- 3.3.** It is proposed that budget in the range £85,000 to £105,000 is made available for consultancy work as set out in paragraphs 2.4 to 2.10. The budget to be funded from the Council Priorities Fund earmarked reserve.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1.** None.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.** This represents a growth in budget however failure to fund this role and these studies will mean the Council will be unable to deliver against its climate change reduction targets.
- 5.2.** Publica will ensure work in this field is delivered in a joined up way providing all partners with the benefits of shared knowledge, cost share and economies of scale in purchasing, wherever possible. However a full-time Cotswold District Council post will ensure there is capacity to drive forward an action plan and deliver tangible benefits as soon as possible.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT (IF REQUIRED)

Not relevant.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

7.1. As detailed above.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

8.1. The Council could wait until an action plan is developed before allocating staff resources and commissioning studies however that will slow the delivery of the action plan.

8.2. The Council could decide not to allocate any staff resources but this will mean it cannot deliver against its Climate Change targets.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1. None

(END)