

Report of:	Head of Housing and Partnerships
Contact Officer:	Christian Hawkins
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Portfolio Leader:	Housing
Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Cabinet 12/11/20

Cabinet**12 November 2020****Budget Provision to Subsidise Funding to Optimise the Usage of Existing Solar PV Energy Installations****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To consider budget provision to subsidise funding for a battery storage project to optimise the usage of existing solar photovoltaic energy generation systems on Council owned dwellings.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That approval for funding for the project is granted.
- 2.2 That the Head of Housing and Partnerships is authorised to agree on the conditions of the project with Beat the Cold and Chase Community Solar.
- 2.3 The list of properties to be included in the project will be restricted to Council owned properties agreed by the Head of Housing and Partnerships and will be determined on the basis of their suitability for inclusion in the project.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The project will assist with the development of energy efficient technology to help reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- 3.2 Information on how energy generated from Solar PV Panels can be more efficiently utilised and providing education to the Cannock Chase Council tenants on how to more efficiently use their solar PV installation.
- 3.3 On average occupiers utilise less than half the amount of electricity generated from photovoltaic (PV) panels. Batteries will enable occupiers to store the energy for times when the PV panels are not generating, that is, during hours of darkness.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This scheme supports the Council's Corporate Priority of 'Community Wellbeing', specifically the Strategic Objectives of 'Supporting Vulnerable People' and 'Promoting Attractive and Healthy Environments'.
- 4.2 The scheme supports the motion detailed from Council on 17th July 2019, where Council agreed to "the expansion of community energy to keep the benefits of our local energy generation in our local economy", to meet "carbon neutrality by 2030" and to "Continue to work with partners anchored in the area to deliver carbon reductions and grow the local economy".

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 In 2015 Chase Community Solar Limited, in collaboration with the Council, delivered the installation of Solar Photovoltaic Panels on 314 bungalows within Cannock Chase Council's housing stock, supported by the Cabinet report 'Provision of Photovoltaic (Solar) Panels to Further Council Owned Properties' submitted on 20th March 2014.
- 5.2 Chase Community Solar Limited is an Industrial and Provident Society which is a locally funded community based organisation which benefits from the feed-in Tariffs relating to the energy generated. Since the Solar PV panels were initially installed, Chase Community Solar has undertaken consultation with the tenants regarding the use and effectiveness of the installations. This consultation highlighted that two thirds of our tenant's are interested in further energy saving technologies.
- 5.3 The company ethos is to invest back into the local community, which led to Green Energy Networks Ltd approaching them regarding a 'Sandbox' trial in 2018. A Regulatory Sandbox is an approved method of permitting the controlled trial of an innovative business model, which in this case relates to the use of technology managing shared battery storage from electricity generated locally by Solar PV panels.
- 5.4 The Council approved the 'sandbox' trial during a meeting of Cabinet on 8th November 2018. Funding for the 'Sandbox' trial did not materialise and as such the project did not commence.
- 5.5 Chase Community Solar have now been approached by Beat the Cold to put forward a bid for funding to install battery storage to store energy generated by existing PV panels and not consumed at the time of generation. The project is to be known as the 'Cannock Senior Solar Self-Consumption' project.
- 5.6 In October 2020 Chase Community Solar approached the Council regarding the project to bid for £190k – £250k to deliver the installation of 75nr batteries to Council owned bungalows with existing PV equipment, in 2021.

- 5.7 To enhance the bid and show support to having the project carried out for Cannock Chase tenants, Cannock Chase Council have been asked to contribute £50k to the funding.
- 5.8 The bid for funding through the 'Energy Redress scheme' will be undertaken by the charity 'Beat the Cold' with whom we have a number of connections with corporately.
- 5.9 Chase Community Solar will carry out monitoring in order to report back the success of the project.
- 5.10 The potential benefit is an Increase in 'free electricity' for participating tenants with Solar PV panels.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The project requires a contribution of £50k to support the £200k - £250k project for Cannock Chase residents and enhance the bid. Should the bid be unsuccessful there will be no commitment required by the Council.

There will be a cost of administering / providing support to the scheme on behalf of the Council. It is felt this can be managed within existing staffing levels.

6.2 Legal

Contracts must be let according to the Procurement Regulations. Legal agreements will need to be drafted to cover the obligations imposed on all parties involved in the project, including provisions for funding and agreed specifications for the equipment and its installation.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

The project will require liaison with the tenants in the properties and the sharing of personal data. Chase Community Solar has knowledge of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 and will be required to enter into a further Data Processing Agreement with the Council prior to being passed any personal data.

6.7 Risk Management

The benefits to the tenants could be variable and require the tenants input however in the longer term it will assist in the knowledge we have in decarbonising our homes and meeting our agenda for carbon neutrality by 2030.

The Construction Design Management Regulations 2015 will apply to this scheme and hence, it will need to be administered in the same manner as any other construction / building contract.

In the event of an unsuccessful bid the project will not proceed and no financial obligation will be placed on the Council

6.8 Equality & Diversity

None

6.9 Best Value

None

7 Appendices to the Report

None.

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

Cabinet Report, 8 November 2018 – Participation an in OFGEM Approved ‘Sandbox’ Trial to Optimise the Usage of Existing Solar PV Energy Installations