

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – URGENT RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Susan Carey

Cabinet Member for Environment

DECISION NO:

21/00034

For Publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Public Decarbonisation Fund -Section 31 Award.

As Cabinet Member for Environment, I agree to:

- Accept a Grant from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund from Salix Finance on behalf of the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), subject to s151 Officer consideration.
- Confirm that the grant funding will be for up to £21m for several proposed energy projects (subject to separate decision-making where appropriate), and up to a further £1.2m for school site energy projects; and
- Delegate authority to Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as necessary to implement decisions to spend the grant.

Reason(s) for decision:

Responding to the climate change emergency, KCC has set a target of net-zero carbon emissions from its own estate by 2030. Working with LASER, KCC has estimated to achieve this target will require an investment of £27m in energy projects. The bid to the Public Decarbonisation Fund represents a substantial funding contribution to the investment level required.

A Section 31 grant is proposed.

Financial Implications:

£21m for several proposed energy projects, and up to a further £1.2m for school site energy projects.

Individual projects will need to be developed and proposed to be added to the capital programme. Normally new or additional projects that are 100% grant funded are included for approval in the routine budget monitoring reports. Due to the tight timescale for Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund individual decisions to proceed with projects and inclusion in the capital programme may be needed in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations.

Reason for Urgency:

The Grant Offer Letter requires KCC to sign and return binding documents accepting the grant by 1 March 2021.

Member and other consultation:

No Cabinet Committee consultation possible due to urgency process.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, in addition to agreeing that the decision could not be reasonably deferred, provided the following comments:

Mr Booth stated:

I would like to support the continuing work of the Cabinet Member and her supporting staff during these challenging times.

The Group Spokespeople of the Scrutiny Committee provided the following comments:

Mr Bird stated:

I welcome the opportunity for KCC to receive this valuable funding which will help make the KCC estate carbon neutral. However, I am concerned about the extremely tight timeframes proposed by Government. These should not prevent proper consultation with members and other key stakeholders on the projects, before they are commenced. Accordingly, I request that a full report setting out the proposed work programme be considered at the next meeting of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 18th March. This should set out the proposals for consultation with other stakeholders where appropriate.

The Chair and Group Spokespeople of the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee provided no comments.

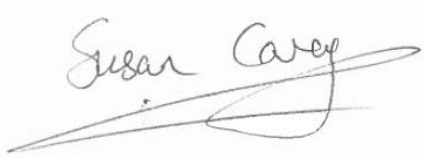
Any alternatives considered and rejected:

This is a substantial funding opportunity. Whilst other funding sources and opportunities may become available, these are unlikely to match the levels of funding secured.

The focus of this decision is on the acceptance of the funding to support proposed projects in the future. Options analysis and further consideration of alternatives will be at the project level.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Carey". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

1/3/2021

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signed

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date

Susan Carey