

## **CABINET – 10TH FEBRUARY 2022**

### **Report of the Strategic Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure**

**Lead Member: Councillor Jonathan Morgan**

#### **Part A**

#### **ITEM 13     FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION**

##### Purpose of Report

The report seeks approval and delegation to commission a feasibility study for the construction of a solar farm on Council owned land.

##### Recommendation

1. That Cabinet approves spend of up to of £150,000 to undertake feasibility studies for the construction of solar (PV) installations on Council owned land.
2. That authority for the same be delegated to the Strategic Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure to commission the studies.
3. That the activity be added to the Council's Annual Procurement Plan.

##### Reason

1. To understand the Council's options and ability to build solar PV installations or other renewable energy options in the Borough.
2. To allow for the timely completion of studies such that that any following phases of a project can be planned and submitted for scrutiny and approval.
3. To allow contracts of the Council to be let in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

In June 2019, Charnwood Borough Council committed to achieving carbon neutrality for the Council's own operations by 2030. This builds on the success of our 2015-2020 Carbon Management Plan, which saw us reduce our carbon footprint by 37% between 2012 and 2018. Since then, our footprint has fallen by a further 3%.

The Council's Carbon Neutral Plan, approved at Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021, sets out a series of actions (also approved) to move the Council further towards its carbon neutral target. Actions 15-18 come under energy feasibility studies for which this report seeks approval to progress.

The level of spend required to undertake these studies is above the Key Decision threshold in the Council's constitution and therefore requires Cabinet approval to spend.

The budget will be taken from the Carbon Neutral Action Fund, approved and allocated in the Council’s Capital plan.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The decision will come into effect immediately (subject to Call-in).

Following this decision, future reports will come before Cabinet to determine the direction forward and will be open to Scrutiny.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

*Financial Implications*

The Carbon Neutral Action Fund forms part of the approved Capital Plan, however if the Capital scheme does not go ahead this will be funded from the Reinvestment Reserve.

*Risk Management*

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Surveys return results that are financially unfavourable	Unlikely 2	Serious 3	Moderate (6)	Officers will investigate if external funding or partnership opportunities exist.
The budget identified is insufficient to thoroughly understand the potential.	Unlikely 2	Significant 2	Low 4	There is a significant contingency built into the figure for approval. The money need not be spent if not warranted but must be available if needed. The nominated individuals will manage this process as it happens, and robust procurement routes will be used.

*Equality and Diversity*

No implications

*Crime and Disorder*

No implications

*Sustainability*

This decision forms part of the adopted Carbon Neutral Plan

Key Decision:

Yes

Background Papers:

None

Officer to contact

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## **Part B**

### Background

1. The Council's Carbon Neutral Plan was approved by Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
2. The two major contributors to the Council's carbon footprint are Buildings (15%) and Transport (84%). Reductions in emissions with both areas will take time as the council investigates the options for future accommodation and adoption of green technologies for our fleet as they emerge.
3. Carbon offsetting, in the form of renewable energy installations, provides the best opportunity to significantly reduce the Council's carbon footprint in the shorter term and is one of the main 3 challenges outlined in the Carbon Neutral Plan.

### Location choices for studies

6. In this undertaking, financial prudence must be exercised. In considering any potential location, use of land and buildings owned by the Council is preferred as it would not incur the costs of land purchase to be factored into consideration.
7. Two primary sites will be studied for the possibility of solar farms: land near the new cemetery at Nanpantan (8.7 hectares) and land at Allsopp's Lane (16.2 hectares)
8. Council owned buildings will be examined for the potential of rooftop installations.
9. Council owned car parks will also form part of the same feasibility work to understand any potential with these locations.
10. In these studies, careful consideration will be paid not only to the level of energy generation possible, but also to the financial implications of any installation, ensuring that any proposal is financially balanced and sustainable.