

New posts for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality

Date: 10th June 2021

Report of: Chief Officer, Sustainable Energy and Air Quality

Report to: Director of Resources

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The focus on the climate emergency is increasing rapidly given the requirement to act urgently to reduce emissions before we reach a point of no return in terms of climate change.
- As a result the workload of the team is increasing at a rapid rate, meaning that people are being spread too thinly and that the council cannot take advantage of all opportunities or progress critical projects such as renewables quickly enough.
- A key part of the work is also related to policy as it is critical that we are able to effectively influence government at this stage to ensure that changes to legislation will enable us to deliver net zero by 2030.
- It is also critical that not only do we deliver the large number of projects such as housing retrofit, fuelling infrastructure etc but that we also engage the city in our plans and the actions that individuals and organisations can and must take.
- The climate emergency is at the heart of this proposal – the increased resource will specifically focus on improving the council's delivery of its net zero ambition.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Resources is asked to approve the creation of three new posts for the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality team.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1.1 The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 with a commitment to reach net zero by 2030. This is an ambitious target that requires progress to be made at a rapid pace.
- 1.2 The team have been very successful in securing external grant funding to enable delivery. For example, in 2020 the council bid for funding to retrofit its own estate and was successful

in securing £25 million. Similarly, the council also secured £15 million to support the retrofit of the city's housing stock. Both funding streams required multiple bids to be submitted in very tight timescales.

1.3 In order to reach net zero, there are numerous work streams that need to be progressed in parallel:

- Housing retrofit
- Commercial and public sector buildings retrofit
- Renewables development
- District heating
- Alternative fuelling infrastructure
- Zero emission fleet
- White Rose Forest
- Analysis of scope 3 emissions, with an associated action plan developed to reduce emissions

1.4 As well as all the project work there is a significant amount of work that has to happen to enable change to happen at pace:

- Policy work internally with members through CEAC and the associated working groups
- Work with government and numerous stakeholders to ensure that the council remains at the leading edge
- Supporting groups such as Leeds Climate Commission and Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission in their work programme
- Lobbying to ensure changes that are required linked to legislation, funding streams etc are delivered
- Working to develop alternative financial mechanisms for the city
- Identifying how we support green jobs and skills in the city
- Raising the profile of the city to help attract green investment
- Council wide carbon literacy training
- Supporting other directorates in their work focused on net zero i.e. planning, transport, public health, adults
- Supporting other organisations in their net zero activity such as Climate Action Leeds
- A comprehensive communications and engagement campaign to ensure that all parts of the city are supportive of the work undertaken and aware of the actions that they need to support

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

2.1 Currently the team has many competing priorities – all with very tight deadlines. This means that there is no resource available to progress schemes such as solar farms, developing innovative finance products and progress on much of the enabling work is limited.

2.2 To provide the team with more capacity, 3 additional posts are required:

- Communications Officer – S02
- Policy Officer – P02
- Senior Project Officer – P04

2.3 The next 9 years are critical in terms of delivering the net zero ambition and without more capacity the team will not be able to plan how to optimise this period but instead just be focused on the immediate projects. The proposal will enable the necessary progress to be made in the areas outlined above and will be critical in supporting the achievement of our carbon reduction targets.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

3.1 Trade unions have been consulted on the proposal and our approach to recruitment. The talent pool will be checked first for any suitable colleagues.

3.2 Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate Change has been consulted, as has the chair of CEAC.

What are the resource implications?

4.1 This proposal is focused on creating three new posts for the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality team at a cost of £138,850 per annum. The proposed staffing is set out below:

PO4	Senior Project Officer	1	£ 53,107	£ 53,107
PO2	Policy Officer	1	£ 45,148	£ 45,148
SO2	Comms Officer	1	£ 40,595	£ 40,595
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TOTAL				138,850
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4.2 The team will be funded from grant secured in 2021/22 and it is anticipated that there will be future grant funding streams that the team will continue to pursue to enable the long term future of these additional posts.

What are the legal implications?

5 None

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

6 The team is currently under incredible pressure, with many team members highlighting the stress that they are feeling. Without additional capacity, there is the risk that staff's wellbeing is impacted/ sickness levels increase.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- 7 The proposal clearly supports the pillars through stimulating investment, and reducing emissions and carbon relating to the Council's and the City's activities.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 8 Supplementing the existing in-house team through securing grant funding represents an excellent option since it enables the additional resource to be integrated into the team but with no budgetary impact for the Council.

b) How will success be measured?

- 9 Performance against carbon reduction targets.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 10 Recruitment scheduled for September 2021.

Appendices

- 11 EIA screening report.