

## **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY]**

# **ENERGY STRATEGY UPDATE 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

## **Report of Chief Officer (Environment)**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide an update of progress as requested by the Committee.

**This report is public.**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**(1) That the report is noted.**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee have requested an update on the progress of the Council's energy strategy.

1.2 The Council's energy strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2015. The specific resolutions of Cabinet were: -

- (1) That Cabinet approves the Energy Strategy / Action plan, recognising it as a working document to inform other corporate strategies and the allocation and prioritisation of resources.
- (2) That Cabinet agrees in principle to the development of a 5MW solar farm on its Middleton (former Shell/ICI) site and that it be managed in as wildlife friendly way as possible.
- (3) That in order to progress the above, Cabinet approves the use of the Invest to Save Reserve to fund the project to the point where it can be submitted as a planning application.
- (4) That Officers report back on the outcome of the further detailed appraisal of the project in order to inform Cabinet's final decision.
- (5) That Cabinet's budget proposals for 2015/16 onwards be updated to provide for the above.

- 1.1 The approved Energy Strategy / Action plan are attached at Appendix 1.

## **2.0 Details**

2.1 Activity since February has been very much focussed on the solar farm project. Besides the commissioning of the work needed to bring the farm to the point where a planning application can be submitted the Council has been involved in a collaboration with a number of other Authorities led by APSE that will culminate in a procurement exercise that will in theory at least allow a solar farm to be built by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

2.2 Appraisal of the viability of the project beyond the planning stage will very much depend on the outcome of the new Government's consultation exercise on the funding of solar energy. Some of the proposals in the consultation if adopted by the Government mean that in the short/ medium term at least it may not be financially viable to proceed with the project.

2.3 Even getting the project to planning stage may well depend on an in depth environmental assessment of the site which we now understand is likely to be required due to concerns about the potential impact on migrating birds

2.3 Work has also taken place in the form of a number of energy audits being commissioned for our public buildings. The information from these audits is currently being assessed and further details will be provided in due course.

2.4 Tracking has been fitted to the Council's vehicle fleet. Data from the tracking will be used to aid in the design of service delivery with the aim being to improve efficiency and reduce the overall amount of fuel used.

2.5 A review of the use of private cars for Council business has taken place and has been implemented.

2.6 There are a number of business as usual actions which have also either taken place or been implemented.

2.7 Within the context of the range of challenges the Council is facing the above represents significant progress in this regard.

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> <b>(including Health &amp; Safety, Equality &amp; Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</b></p>
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<p>See appendices.</p>
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<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p>
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<p>None as a direct result of this report.</p>
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**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None as a direct result of this report. The implications of the various ongoing developments will be appraised and either reported through for consideration as part of decision-making, or incorporated into the 2016/17 budget update, as appropriate.

**OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS****Human Resources:**

N/A.

**Information Services:**

N/A.

**Property:**

As outlined in the report and appendices.

**Open Spaces:**

As outlined in the report and appendices.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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