

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	Net Zero Neighbourhood Development Plan - grant approval		
Decision designation	GREEN		
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change		
Wards affected	Graiseley;		
Accountable Director	John Roseblade, Director of City Housing and Environment		
Originating service	Housing		
Accountable employee	Oliver Thomas	Climate Change Project Manager	
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Report to be/has been considered by	City Housing and Environment Leadership Team	21 June 2022	

Summary

The Report is seeking approval to build in supplementary revenue budgets totalling £50,000, fully funded from grant, to support the production of the Net Zero Neighbourhood development plan.

Recommendation for decision:

That the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, and City Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Chief Operating Officer.

1. Approve the establishment of supplementary revenue budgets totalling £50,000, fully funded from grant, to procure consultancy support to produce a Net Zero Neighbourhood delivery plan for Graiseley

1.0 Background

- 1.1 To meet our 2041 Net Zero targets Wolverhampton as a city should aim to retrofit 25,000 homes between now and 2026, whilst transitioning to renewable energy, and cleaner modes of transport, in line with the WMCA#2041 first five-year plan.
- 1.2 The Energy Capital team at West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is working closely with the City of Wolverhampton Council and the six other constituent local authorities to identify and develop Net Zero Neighbourhood (NZN) delivery plans
- 1.3 The plans will demonstrate a scalable financial and delivery model for a place-based approach to neighbourhood decarbonisation.
- 1.4 The City of Wolverhampton Council submitted an expression of interest to WMCA in February to request development funding for the project.
- 1.5 WMCA made £50,000 available to the City of Wolverhampton Council for the development of our NZN plan. The funding will be used to pay for consultancy support for the plan.
- 1.6 This report is seeking approval to build in supplementary revenue budgets totalling £50,000, fully funded from grant to support the production of the Council's Net Zero Neighbourhood development plan for Graiseley.

2.0 Discussion of progress and Options Moving forward

- 2.1 Wolverhampton have procured Arup to produce the delivery plan which will include an area profile, capital investment plan, project delivery plan, and community engagement plan.
- 2.2 The delivery plan will be submitted back to WMCA on the 6 July for consideration within a competitive funding bid to access a further £1.7 million of capital funding to support delivery of the plan.
- 2.3 The NZN delivery plan will clearly set out how the £1.7 million of funding can be used in conjunction with other available funding.
- 2.4 Five local authorities within the West Midlands will submit their own plans. This will be a competitive process and only one LA is likely to be successful who will receive the grant funding in full.

3.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 3.1 Option 1 accept the funding and use to produce a net zero development plan.
- 3.2 Option 2 give the money back and lose the £50,000 grant funding and the delivery plan.

4.0 Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The funding has limited conditions, other than the production of the delivery plan and submission back to WMCA by the 6 July. there are no obligations to deliver the plan if unsuccessful in the further bid, and the plan can be deferred or used to attract alternative funding in the future.
- 4.2 The plan may also provide a template for the development of further placed-based decarbonisation plans across the city to support our Climate Change objectives

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 The Council has been successful in being awarded a grant of £50,000 from the WMCA to support the costs of developing our NZN delivery plan.
- 5.2 The grant funding should be spent before the 29 July 2022; all invoices should be submitted by this date. Any unspent funding shall be returned to the WMCA.
- 5.3 Once the delivery plan is developed, it will help for a further bid to the WMCA for consideration within a competitive funding bid to access a further £1.7 million of capital funding. If Wolverhampton is unsuccessful in this bidding round, the delivery plan will be used to attract alternative finance to support delivery.
- 5.4 Approval is therefore sought to establish the supplementary revenue budget totalling £50,000, fully funded from grant.

[SB/09062022/S]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 The grant should only be used for the purpose of developing a Net Zero Neighbourhood plan.
- 6.2 WMCA have the discretion to withhold or suspend payment under certain circumstances if the grant is used for anything other than the above.
- 6.3 The Council must adhere to the details of the grant agreement (Appendix 1) including aligning with the monitoring and reporting requirements and meeting the insurance requirements.
- 6.4 WMCA accept no liability for the way the Council runs the project, and the Council may be liable to indemnify WMCA if any loss is incurred because of the Council's actions on the project, though the perceived risk of this is extremely low.
- 6.5 There are few perceived risks outside of inappropriate use of funds that would have legal implications for the council.

[RR/31052022/Q]

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 Production of the NZN delivery plan has no direct equalities implications.
- 7.2 Delivery of the plan will however target a more deprived and fuel poor neighbourhood as part of the demonstrator phase.
- 7.3 Fuel poor homes typically have the lower energy performance ratings, and so by tackling these areas first we will produce the greatest social impact through reducing energy bills and thus reduce fuel poverty.

8.0 All other Implications

- 8.1 The plan will support decarbonisation of homes, energy and transport within the city and thus aligns with the Council's ambitions to be net zero across the city by 2041. The development plan will outline the expected carbon savings from delivery of interventions across the neighbourhood.
- 8.2 This project has the potential to connect several key strategic drivers including digital, sustainable transport, public health and wellbeing, and regeneration through a place-based approach to decarbonisation, supporting key outcomes of the Council's City plan and the Levelling up agenda to produce a range of social, environmental, and economic benefits

9.0 Schedule of background papers

- 9.1 N/A

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Grant Agreement