

SPECIAL URGENCY DECISION

Leader of Council:

Name: Councillor Alyson Barnes
Date agreed: 19th March 2025

Chair of Overview and
Scrutiny:

Name: Councillor Samara Barnes
Date agreed: 17th March 2025

Decision Taker:

Chief Executive
Date: 13th March 2025

Details of Decision and
Reasoning:

Decision to:

- Accept the grant from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund of £1,379,172.00 for the decarbonisation of Marl Pits Leisure Centre and allocate the required council contribution of £300,000 from the Carbon Reduction Fund.

The PSDS Phase 4 funding round opened for submissions on 25th November 2024 and the Council submitted a proposal to decarbonise Marl Pits Leisure Centre in Rawtenstall as a two-year project, starting circa May 2025 and finishing by March 2027. A two-month delay in the portal opening for submissions created uncertainty and impacted the organisation of the application. In light of the very late confirmation of the portal opening and the timescales remaining to seek formal approval to bid, officers had to submit the application prior to Council approval. However, details of the application were included in the Climate Change Strategy Update Report which was reported to and approved by Full Council on 5th March 2025. Salix Finance, administrators of the grant advised that applicants should expect to be notified of their applications outcomes by May 2025. Therefore, officers initially planned to send a report to the Full Council meeting in April to seek approval for the grant in the event of application success. However, on March 11th, 2025, Rossendale Borough Council was informed that the grant funding application had been successful.

Under normal circumstances, and in accordance with the Constitution, the decision to accept the grant would be made by Full Council due to its value. However, as there is no Full Council meeting before the required deadline, approval cannot be obtained on time. The next Full Council is scheduled for 2nd April 2025, and there is insufficient time to convene an additional meeting before then.

Due to tight timescales, officers must confirm acceptance of the funding by 24th March 2025. An urgent decision is now required to accept the funding offer by this deadline.

This is not a legally binding document but sets out the understanding of the grant.

In summary, the funding aim is:

1. To decarbonise council-owned buildings with end-of-life fossil fuel heating systems, by financing alternative energy systems and measures to reduce energy through a whole building approach.

The project fund must be spent by March, 2027, with a total project value of £1,679,172.00 including a mandatory council contribution of £300,000. This is split over two years:

- £107,250.00 in 2025/26
- £1,271,922.00 in 2026/27.

Decision to be taken by: Chief Executive

Documents to be considered by the decision taker: Grant Offer Letter
Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Implications:

Legal – As the value of the grant is over £250k, Full Council would ordinarily give approval for acceptance of the same. There is a requirement of the funders to accept the grant within the 10 days of offer therefore there is insufficient time for a meeting to either be convened or enough time to wait until the next meeting to seek the approval of Full Council. The timing of the award has come much sooner than officers anticipated. The Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer) will arrange for the completion of the grant funding agreement in line with the Council's Constitution.

HR – There are no HR implications arising from this decision.

Finance – Failure to accept this much needed grant within the timescales may put the funding in jeopardy, the Council in breach of the requirements stipulated and would be contrary to the member agreed Climate Change Action Plan. The £300k council match funding has been allocated from the Carbon Reduction Fund as outlined in the body of this decision.

Status: Open - for publication

Date: 19th March, 2025

NOTES

A Key Decision is defined as one that either:

- a) is, in value worth more than £100,000, or
 - b) has a **significant impact** because (for example) it either:
 - (i) affects individuals or organisations outside the Borough; or
 - (ii) will have a long term (more than 5 years) or permanent effect on the council or the borough.
1. Status - Is the issue an open and public matter or is it a private and excluded matter as described in Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972. If it is an open matter it is for publication. If it is a private matter it is not for publication and you state the reason why and the appropriate paragraph number of Schedule 12A.
 2. Implications – List any financial staffing and legal implications and remember to consult with legal, human resources and finance. Also consider implications such as LA21 Environment, Human Rights Act 1998. Equal opportunities, Community Safety, IT, Land and Property and Partnership Working.
 3. When the decision has been made and the form signed by the decision taker and the portfolio holder the form should be sent to the Committee Services Manager.