

**RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER**

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).  
 The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Legal, Performance and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Legal, Performance and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

**1. Description of decision**

To approve funding from the Mayor's Climate Change Fund for an application from Harrold Centre to fund the installation of 7.2kW Solar PV, in the sum of £9,987 for the reasons set out in this report.

**2. Date of decision**

16 October 2023

**3. Reasons for decision**

To allow a qualifying project that meets the funding criteria to be funded which will contribute to reducing the overall carbon emissions in the Borough.

**4. Alternatives considered and rejected**

Not to fund this application - If the Council does not strive to help the communities of the Borough to reduce their energy consumption it may have a negative impact on the Council's reputation and its ability to reach future government set targets.

**5. How decision is to be funded**

The Mayor's Climate Change Fund budget is £0.600m. Funding is currently available to cover the application detailed in the report, which is £9,987.

**6. Conflicts of interest**

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Not Applicable

Signed



Date:

16 October 2023

Name of Decision Taker:

Tom Wootton

**This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Legal, Performance and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.**

Date decision published: 16October2023.

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: ...26October2023.

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

**Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Mayor**

**Date: 16 October 2023**

**Report by: Chief Officer (Environment)**

**Subject: MAYOR’S CLIMATE CHANGE FUND PROJECT APPLICATION FROM HARROLD CENTRE**

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This report provides details on an application for funding to the Climate Change Fund from Harrold Centre and recommends approval of the funding towards the project.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 **That the Mayor considers the report and, if satisfied:**

- **To approve funding from the Mayor’s Climate Change Fund for an application from Harrold Centre to fund the installation of 7.2kW Solar PV, in the sum of £9,987 for the reasons set out in this report.**

**3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 To allow a qualifying project that meets the funding criteria to be funded which will contribute to reducing the overall carbon emissions in the Borough.

**4. THE CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 The Council has successfully funded 12 projects to the sum of £137,317.45 in 2023. The approval for funding this project will bring the total grant spend to £147,304.45 out of the £600,000 allocated.

## 5. DETAILS

- 5.1 The Mayor's Climate Change Fund is a Council grant funded scheme that aims to support projects that improve community buildings, contribute to the reduction of the carbon emissions within the Borough, and thus contribute towards national reduction targets.

The fund is open to voluntary and community groups, not-for-profit organisations, registered charities, public sector including schools and parish councils, and social enterprises. It covers projects such as: insulation measures, upgrading of heating systems, installation of low energy lighting and other of renewable technologies.

The maximum level of grant, which can be applied for from the fund, is £20,000. All monies must be spent within 12 months of an offer being made and within the financial year, that approval was given. Importantly, as a demonstration of commitment, applicants will need to provide match funding of at least 50% of the total project cost from other sources.

It is a requirement of the criteria that groups have a legal status, terms of reference and a bank account. Projects must be located within the Borough boundary. Private businesses and individual households & groups of houses are not eligible.

- 5.2 Details of Funding Application: Harrold Centre, High Street, Harrold, Bedford, MK43 7BH

The 120-year-old village hall at Harrold is used by the residents of Harrold, Carlton, Chellington and Odell for a range of activities including classes, meetings, events and parties. Prior to this project, the hall has upgraded their lighting to LED, installed new double glazed front doors and draft proofed fire doors.

This project will consist of installing 7.2kW solar array and 6kW battery storage to enable the hall to use as much of the generated renewable energy as possible to offset their energy costs.

It is expected that this will save the hall at least 3,812kWh of electricity a year, which at their current unit rate is equal to saving £2,325/year. This results in a payback of around 6.5 years and a saving of 1 tonne of carbon/year. The utilisation of the battery storage will likely improve the self-sufficiency of the site beyond what has been quoted from the installer\*.

\*The energy team has calculated that the installer expects 62% self-sufficiency from this installation compared to other similar quotes which suggest an 80% self-sufficiency, therefore the energy savings noted here are to be taken as a minimum guarantee.

It is confirmed that the applicant meets the criteria for an award set out in paragraph 5.1 above in that the project:

- (a) aims to improve a community building.
- (b) installs renewable technologies.
- (c) contributes to the reduction of the carbon emissions within the Borough.
- (d) achieves energy and emission savings for a large number of community groups and residents that use the centre and the wider Borough in general.

**6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

6.1 To not approve the application for the climate change fund has been considered but rejected by officers. This project demonstrates both carbon savings and significant energy and cost savings for this organisation which is the aim of this grant funding.

**7. KEY IMPLICATIONS**

<b>7.1 Legal Issues</b>	The Climate Change Act commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. The 100% target was based on advice from the Climate Change Committee's 2019 report, 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming'.
<b>7.2 Policy Issues</b>	<p>The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2026, vision of the period of this Plan is:</p> <p>We want Bedford Borough to thrive as a place, that people are proud of, want to live in and move to. To do this we need a growing and strong local economy and an active response to climate change. From this foundation our residents will be able to thrive and realise their potential, supporting and celebrating our diverse and inclusive communities.</p> <p>Cross-Cutting Theme - Climate Change Emergency – to deliver what we need to do across all our services to address climate change.</p> <p>Sustainable Development and Environment Efficiency Strategy:</p> <p>Priority 1: Demonstrating Community Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local communities to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions</li> <li>• Support schools/academies in the Borough to reduce their energy and water use</li> </ul> <p>Priority 2: Building Community Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local communities to help them become resilient to the impacts of climate change</li> <li>• Support the installation of low carbon buildings and communities within new and existing developments</li> </ul>

<b>7.3 Resource Issues</b>	The Mayor's Climate Change Fund budget for 2023/24 is £600,000 and full funding is currently available to cover the application detailed in the report, which is £9,987. The Climate Change Fund is revenue funded and therefore it is necessary to have all the works completed and invoices received by 31st March 2024. The Climate Change Fund was established to help communities in the Borough to reduce the use of fossil fuels, which will result in a reduction in carbon emissions and will promote and improve energy efficiency in the Borough.
<b>7.4 Risks</b>	If the Council does not strive to help the communities of the Borough to reduce their energy consumption and encourage them to generate energy from renewable sources, it may have a negative impact on the Council's reputation and its ability to reach government set targets.
<b>7.5 Environmental Implications</b>	Encouraging communities to help reduce their carbon footprint will help mitigate the impacts of climate change.
<b>7.6 Equalities Impact</b>	<p>In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>In operating the Climate Change Fund the Council recognises the need to ensure that all residents and organisations of the borough are able to access information on the fund. The fund has been promoted through press articles, presentations and the council's website: <a href="http://www.bedford.gov.uk">www.bedford.gov.uk</a> Those interested in the application process can email their interest to <a href="mailto:climatechangefund@bedford.gov.uk">climatechangefund@bedford.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>7.7 Impact on Families</b>	<p>Located in the very heart of the village, Harrold Centre is more than a building and more than the activities taking place within it. It is where and how people and families can become involved in the community and village life. Not only does it improve individual quality of life by contributing to social, physical, economic, educational and environmental wellbeing, it also positively impacts on the social cohesion of the village through the sharing of common interest and experience, resulting in friendship, togetherness, a sense of belonging and community spirit.</p> <p>Harrold Centre is a registered charity (268251) providing a venue from which local people can access a wide range of social, health and educational related activities. The charitable objectives of Harrold Centre are:</p> <p>The provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the parishes of Harrold, Carlton with Chellington and Odell without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.</p>
<b>7.8 Community Safety and Resilience</b>	Prominent threats to utilities, especially from extreme weather events, are common and increasing. The project will help with utility resilience by installing 7.2kW solar array and 6kW battery storage to enable the hall to use as much of the generated renewable energy as possible to offset their energy costs.

<b>7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing</b>	The Hall improves individual quality of life and has a positive impact on those using it on their Health & Wellbeing by contributing to social, physical, economic, educational and environmental wellbeing, it also positively impacts on the social cohesion of the village through the sharing of common interest and experience, resulting in friendship, togetherness, a sense of belonging and community spirit.
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**8. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME**

8.1 The following Council units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

- Deputy Mayor & Portfolio Holder for Environment, Highways and Transport
- Director of Environment – Craig Austin
- Carbon, Energy Team – Claire Wilkinson
- Chief Officer for Finance – Rhiaian Bevan
- Chief Officer Legal, Performance and Democratic – Margaret Martinus
- Manager for Asset and Estate Management – Margaret Birtles

All relevant comments have been incorporated into the report as necessary.

**9. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS**

9.1 The local ward Councillor for the Harold Ward has been consulted and all relevant comments have been incorporated into the report.

**10. CONTACTS AND REFERENCES**

10.1 Please see references in the table below:

Report Contact Officer	Paul Pace – Chief Officer (Environment) <a href="mailto:paul.pace@bedford.gov.uk">paul.pace@bedford.gov.uk</a> ext. 47275 Claire Wilkinson – Energy and Water Technical Officer <a href="mailto:claire.wilkinson@bedford.gov.uk">claire.wilkinson@bedford.gov.uk</a>
File Reference	I: Environment/Committees/Reports/Decisions
Previous Relevant Minutes	None
Background Papers	None
Appendices	None