

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 responsible for 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 responsible for 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 to fund the installation of Solar PV and battery storage at Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha and Community Centre, in the sum of £16,930 for the reasons set out in this report.

2. Date of decision

23 April 2024

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 £16,930.

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: 23 April 2024

Name of Decision Taker: Tom Wootton

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

Date decision published:24April2024.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:3May2024.....

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

Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Mayor

Date of Report: 23 April 2024

Report by: Chief Officer (Environment)

Subject: MAYOR’S CLIMATE CHANGE FUND PROJECT APPLICATION FROM Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha and Community Centre

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides details on an application for funding to the Climate Change Fund from Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha and Community 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 Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha and Community Centre to fund the installation of Solar PV and Battery Storage, in the sum of £16,930 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 committed funding for projects to the sum of £227,900.89. The approval for funding this project will bring the total grant spend to £244,830.89 out of the £600,000 budget allocated for this purpose.

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:

The Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha and Community Centre Bedford is a multicultural organisation, serving everyone regardless of race, colour, creed, gender or ability. The existing building is over 100 years old, and the site has been extended.

The organisation is committed and enthusiastic about adopting environmentally friendly practices to reduce their own carbon emissions and energy use. The installation of solar and battery will also provide the opportunity to generate an additional, albeit modest, source of income. By selling any surplus electricity generated back to the grid, they will not only contribute to a sustainable future but also bolster their financial sustainability, allowing them to continue providing valuable services to the community.

The system will comprise of 76 solar panels across 2 roofs generating up to 30.1kW as well as 27.96kW battery storage. It is estimated that the site will be 59% self-sufficient from the grid, saving over 14,000kWh and saving £5,615.95 per year.

5.3 The energy savings breakdown below

Type of Energy	Units to be used	Total units pre-project	Total Units saved	Carbon Emissions Factor (Kg)	Total Kg of Carbon Saved	Tonnes of Carbon Saved
Electricity	kWh	25041	14,043	0.2556	3589.5	3.6

Energy savings and Payback						
Type of Energy	Unit Rate	Kwh saved	Total £ saved	Project cost	£ savings	Project payback
Electricity	0.3999	14,043	5615.95	£33,860	£5,615.95	6.0293

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) contributes to the reduction of the carbon emissions within the Borough.
- (c) 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

7.1 Legal Issues	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'.
7.2 Policy Issues	<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"> • Support local communities to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. • Support schools/academies in the Borough to reduce their energy and water use. <p>Priority 2: Building Community Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local communities to help them become resilient to the impacts of climate change. • Support the installation of low carbon buildings and communities within new and existing developments.
7.3 Resource Issues	The Mayor's Climate Change Fund budget is £600,000 and full funding is currently available to cover the application detailed in the report, which is £16,930. 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.
7.4 Risks	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.
7.5 Environmental Implications	Encouraging communities to help reduce their carbon footprint will help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

7.6 Equalities Impact	<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: www.bedford.gov.uk Those interested in the application process can email their interest to climatechangefund@bedford.gov.uk</p>
7.7 Impact on Families	<p>The Community Centre users are wide and varied both culturally and in terms of age, (ranging from young children to the elderly) and also families. The Community Centre is a multicultural organisation, serving everyone regardless of race, colour, creed, gender or ability.</p> <p>Installation of the solar and battery storage will commence asap, subject to funding approval by the council and installation timescale from the supplier. This initiative aligns with the centres commitment to sustainability and will contribute significantly to reducing the environmental footprint of the building.</p>
7.8 Community Safety and Resilience	<p>In regard to resilience and the worlds current challenges relating to climate change their commitment as a community organisation they are very enthusiastic to adopt environmentally friendly practices to reduce their own energy usage and carbon emissions to become more resilient. Their objectives are to embrace greener solutions and to enhance the cost-effectiveness of their energy consumption. This, in turn, will allow the community centre to maintain the building at lower costs directly benefiting the community they serve.</p>
7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing	<p>The Community Centre 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 area through the sharing of common interest and experience, resulting in friendship, togetherness, a sense of belonging and community spirit.</p>

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 – Rhian Bevan
 Chief Officer responsible for Legal – Lee Phanco
 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(s) for the Greyfriars Ward have 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) paul.pace@bedford.gov.uk ext. 47275 Claire Wilkinson – Energy and Water Technical Officer claire.wilkinson@bedford.gov.uk
File Reference	I: Environment/Committees/Reports/Decisions
Previous Relevant Minutes	None
Background Papers	None
Appendices	None