


Portfolio Holder Decision

Fast Followers Competition bid to Innovate UK

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate & Culture
Date of decision	28 February 2023
	Signed 

1. Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder Environment, Climate & Culture approves the submission of a bid for grant funding under the UK research institute Fast Followers competition in the sum of £300,000

2. Reasons for decisions

2.1 The report asks the Portfolio Holder to approve a submission of a funding bid under the UK research institute Fast Followers competition. The County Council's Constitution requires that Portfolio Holders approve any bid for funding in excess of £250,000 or that will commit the Council to funding in excess of £50,000 that cannot be met from a service's allocated budget. The bid is for a total of £300,000 with no funding provided by a local contribution.

3. Background information

3.1 The UK Government Fast Followers competition aims to support local authorities in up to 20 places and fund a dedicated Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Officer role. The funding will help to further develop net zero delivery plans, improve delivery pathways and enable adoption at scale of innovative products and services. A maximum bid of £300,000 per place can be applied for over 2 years which in addition to delivery officers will also provide access to net zero skills and capability support. Funding will be channelled through the UK research institute, who are a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

3.2 The deadline for submissions is the 28 February 2023. If this bid is successful, will be required to accept by the 14 April 2023 and initiate work on 1 July 2023. The duration of work is for 24 months. Given the impending application deadline of the 28 February 2023, urgent approval is sought to confirm the submission for grant funding.

- 3.3 The proposed bid is to utilise social value to drive behaviour and practice change within suppliers to Warwickshire County Council. As a Council we want to understand how to work in partnership with our suppliers to help them make significant contributions to net zero and our communities' wider response to the climate emergency. Involvement in this funding programme is allowing us to access expertise in the area of net zero which we will share with our suppliers. With this joint understanding of what is possible we will then be able to work together to deliver meaningful plans to respond to the climate change emergency.
- 3.4 Will we make sure we constantly measure and evaluate the impact of this project -- this will help us adapt what we do and how we do it to have maximum effect. We will then work to share our learning with as many other organisations as possible so they can also benefit from this investment and work.
- 3.5 Additional benefits from this work will include an increased understanding of social value generally and specifically how WCC will be delivering this in procurement activity, increased skills and capacity within Warwickshire on Net Zero and wider environmental concepts and better relationships between business and VCS sector.
- 3.6 WCC currently has a third party revenue spend of over £350m per annum and £900m worth of contracts going out to tender over the life span of this project; the £300k grant will have an impact on a significant value of third party spend and therefore has the potential to make a considerable difference to net zero ambitions.
- 3.7 If successful we will recruit or second two Full time Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Officers to be based within the contract management and quality assurance service. Additional funds will be allocated to the delivery of a learning and training package and a website.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 The project will cost £300,000 with 100% of the funding from Government Sources. Staff resource would be recruited if successful in the bidding process, on a two year fixed contract basis from the 1st July 2023 with full cost recovery from the grant.

5. Environmental implications

- 5.1 Delivering this project will allow the Council to overcome key non-technical barriers, namely capacity and capability hindering the visibility and control of carbon emissions in our supply chain.
- 5.2 Providing support to our supply chain will heighten their willingness to engage, improve their capacity around both making and measuring reductions in carbon emissions, and wider contributions to tackling impact on the environment

5.3 At the close of this project, we will have improved the quality of primary data we gather across our supply chain and be able to more accurately quantify emissions from these sources.

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Assistant Director	Steve Smith Assistant Director, Commissioning Support Unit
Strategic Director	Portfolio Holder Strategic Director for Resources
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Heather Timms Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate & Culture

Urgent matter?	Yes
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

Consent to Urgency Form

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Heather Timms

Corporate Board – Rob Powell

Legal – Nic Vine

Finance – Virginia Rennie

Democratic Services – Isabelle Moorhouse

Councillors – Clarke

Local Member(s): n/a