

REPORT TO: Climate and Environment Advisory Committee 12 January 2021

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Lead Cabinet Member for Climate Change

LEAD OFFICER: Head of Shared Waste and Environment

Retrofit Opportunity

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to present an opportunity arising from the Eastern New Energy Research Collaboration Project (ENE) to further the Council's aspirations for a zero carbon district by supporting the development of retrofit services for the benefit of South Cambridgeshire residents.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the committee recommends to the lead Cabinet Member for Climate Change the purchase by the Council of a one-year licence for Ecofurb programme builder and plan builder software for South Cambridgeshire.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Council agreed an aspiration for South Cambridgeshire to become zero carbon by 2050 in its Zero Carbon Strategy, adopted in May 2020. Homes in the district currently account for around 20% of the district's carbon footprint. Work to retrofit insulation and low carbon heating measures will be required to all existing homes in order to meet the zero-carbon target.
4. The proposed purchase of the one-year licence for the Ecofurb software would enable South Cambridgeshire residents to obtain free advice on retrofitting their home, and to purchase, for a fee, detailed retrofit plans, tailored to their wishes, budgets and priorities, drawn up by a qualified retrofit co-ordinator.

Details

5. The Eastern New Energy Project (ENE) is a major collaborative research project aiming to help build a stronger low carbon economy in the East of England by understanding and overcoming barriers to rapid decarbonisation.
6. One of the ENE project outputs is 40 home retrofits delivering carbon reduction, to be delivered by the co-operative Retrofit Works.

7. Retrofit Works wish to develop a retrofit service in Cambridgeshire along the lines of the Ecofurb Low Carbon Home Service they have established in London with the support of BEIS and the London boroughs of Brent, Camden, Ealing, Islington, Haringey, Waltham Forest, Merton, Greenwich, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, Lewisham and Lambeth.
8. The Retrofit Works model is a cooperative structure that involves trusted community based 'advocate' organisations promoting the Retrofit Works Retrofit Coordinator service, along with suppliers who themselves are members of the cooperative. It is referenced in the UK Green Building Council Retrofit Playbook for local authorities, and in the Ashden 31 Climate Actions for Councils.
9. A licence for the Council for the Ecofurb Plan Builder and Programme Builder software would enable South Cambridgeshire residents to obtain free advice on retrofitting their home, and to purchase, for a fee, detailed retrofit plans, tailored to their wishes, budgets and priorities, drawn up by a qualified retrofit co-ordinator from the Retrofit Works co-operative.
10. A one-year licence for the software would require an investment by the Council of £4,500.
11. South Cambs residents will also get access to moving further on their retrofit project by getting help with making the concrete retrofit design necessary for various contractors to successfully work together on a whole house retrofit, as well as have access to a quality vetted supply chain of local contractors who can do the actual installations.
12. For South Cambs contractors, RetrofitWorks will build a network of local installers beyond the 20 from the ENE project and if they wish to they can become members of the Retrofit Works cooperative. This will give them access to homeowners who are ready to invest in their homes because they already have a Whole House Plan and a specified retrofit design to work from. These are sometimes called "warm leads", as much of the admin and non-installation work contractors normally have to do to find new customers is eliminated.
13. The ENE Project is receiving up to £5,127,158 of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations.

Options

14. The committee could recommend to the lead Cabinet Member for Climate Change the purchase by the Council of a one-year licence for Ecofurb programme builder and plan builder software for South Cambridgeshire, or not.

Implications

15. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial

16. The sum of £4,500 would be additional to existing budgets.

Climate Change

17. The proposal would support the Council's aspirations for the district to reach net zero carbon by 2050.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Growing local businesses and economies

18. The proposal supports the aim of growing local businesses and economies by supporting the development of the retrofit economy.

Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in

19. The proposal supports the aim of housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in by supporting the uptake of energy efficiency measures which have the potential to reduce heating costs.

Being green to our core

20. The proposal is in line with the Zero Carbon Strategy and would support the Council's aspirations for the district to reach net zero carbon by 2050.

Background Papers

None relevant

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