

**REPORT TO:** Climate & Environment Advisory Committee 13 September 2021

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER:** Lead Cabinet Member for Climate Change

**LEAD OFFICER:** Interim Head of Shared Waste Services and Environment

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## Solar Together Cambridgeshire Update

1. This report provides the committee with details of progress in delivering Solar Together Cambridgeshire - the solar pv group-buying scheme led by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with Cambridgeshire councils.
2. It is provided to the committee for review and comment.

### Details

3. The Council are participating in delivery of a group buying scheme for solar pv panels and battery storage systems, which launched last autumn and is led by Cambridgeshire County Council, in partnership with Dutch group-buying company, iChoosr. Details of the operation of the scheme and the background to its establishment in Cambridgeshire were provided in the report to CEAC on 20 June 2020.
4. The scheme contributes towards the delivery of the Council's Zero Carbon Strategy by increasing local generation of electricity through solar pv and reducing reliance on grid electricity. It also provides significant benefit to residents by providing an easy, good-value route to high quality solar pv installations.
5. The Council's role in the scheme has been to promote it including via a direct mailing to targeted households and social media by Members working with the Communications team.
6. Households interested in purchasing solar pv and/or battery installations through the scheme were invited to register online. They were then provided with an offer with an indicative price for their installation, to be confirmed at survey.
7. The scheme attracted a high level of interest in South Cambridgeshire, which translated into 605 acceptances of the provisional offers. As expected, a proportion of households withdrew following the survey for a variety of reasons including unexpected issues or costs. As of 31 August, 105 households in South Cambridgeshire had withdrawn, leaving 500 households expected to continue to completion.

8. Delivery of the scheme has been affected by challenges to supply chains and workforces caused by Covid-19 and Brexit which have caused the expected completion date to be put back to the end of October. (Completion was originally intended by 31 May). Other than this delivery is proceeding well with high levels of reported customer satisfaction and very few complaints. Further details can be found on the August report from iChoosr at Appendix 1.
9. The table at Appendix 2 gives details of progress in Cambridgeshire as reported by the installer company and provided by iChoosr at 31 August 2021. Due to reporting delays the figures in the table may lag behind the situation on the ground.
10. The scheme was entered into by the Council on the expectation that it would be cost-neutral, with a minimum of 133 installations expected and a small commission on each installation covering the cost of promotion. With installations now expected to total around 500, income from the scheme will exceed costs.

#### **Plans for a second scheme**

11. Cambridgeshire County Council have indicated that they are intending to proceed with a second scheme to be launched later this year. We have accepted their offer to participate as before.

## **Background Papers**

Report to CEAC 20 June 2020

<https://scambsmoderngov.co.uk/documents/s117025/200630%20CEAC%20Solar%20Together%20Cambridgeshire.pdf>

## **Appendices**

- 1 Solar Together Cambridgeshire Progress Report August 2021
- 2 Solar Together Cambridgeshire Progress Report with district breakdown

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