

Environment and Sustainability Committee



Date of meeting 4 March 2025

Title	<i>Green Initiative Fund Bid</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	Community Resilience Environment
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: To support a further year of funding form the Green Initiatives Fund for the Climate Change Officer post
Reason for Recommendation	The Green Initiatives Fund supports projects/roles aiming to reduce the impact of climate change in the Borough.

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The climate change officer role is a permanently established post but is funded by the Green Initiatives Fund and we need to ensure there are sufficient funds left in the account to fund up to 28/29 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The climate change officer role is important to ensure delivery of projects agreed across the Council and by the Climate Change Working Group/Environment and Sustainability Committee thus ensuring the corporate plan and climate change strategy are delivered.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the final year of funding for 28/29 as this will secure the role even with changes expected with Local Government Reorganisation and enable us to continue to drive down carbon emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With agreement of the Committee the climate change officer role will be able to continue to move projects forward to achieve net zero by 2030.

1.1 The Council allocated £747,000 to create the Green Initiative Fund (GIF) to address the Climate Emergency the Council declared in October 2020. The purpose of the fund is to help Spelthorne move forward on addressing in climate change.

1.2 This report is a request to continue to fund the climate change officer post

2. Key issues

2.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in Oct 2020.

2.2 The Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030 aims for the Council to be Net Zero for its Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 2030.

2.3 The Green Initiatives Fund is an important factor in the Council's Net Zero 2030 target as it is the only internal budget available for carbon reduction and is listed in the Climate Change Strategy as one of the main funding streams. It has allowed the Council to undertake projects to reduce carbon emissions but also ensured we have an officer to help delivery of the strategy and action plan (revised in 2024 with the development of an action tracker).

2.4 The Green Initiatives Fund has been refocused on projects within the Spelthorne assets portfolio to help ensure there are funds which can be used to develop, robust business case for projects which demonstrate a reduction in carbon emissions within the Council's estate.

2.5 The applications are assessed by the Climate Change Working Group, if approved by the Climate Change Working Group applications go forward to the Environment and Sustainability Committee for formal approval and release of funds. The role of the climate change officer is instrumental in moving these projects forward to ensure we are meeting the Council's targets.

2.6 To date £319,525.60 has been committed from the original £747,000, the spent amount is lower as some projects are either waiting to get underway or are underway and not yet complete, hence the money has not yet been spent. A further estimated expenditure of £70,500 is expected by end of 24/25.

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 **Option 1 preferred** To approve the extension of monies from the GIF Fund to finance the climate change officer role up to 28/29.

3.2 **Option 2** Not to do so would not enable us to drive forward the climate change strategy and Corporate plan targets the Council has agreed.

4. Financial management comments

- 4.1 To date the costs of the climate change officer salary from the GIF fund (allocated and spent) are shown below.

Year	Cost	Comment
22/23	£45,373	actual costs
23/24-	£42,946	actual costs
24/25	£43,900	Estimated final figures at year end due to post vacant for one month
25/26	£50,900	Estimated and factored into budget with increased NI rates
26/27	£50,900	Estimated
27/28	£50,900	Estimated and factored into budget
28/29	£50,900	Request for funding
Total	£335,819	

- 4.2 Factoring in the climate change officer costs for 28/29 leaves a balance of £305,381 in the GIF fund.

5. Risk management comments

- 5.1 Fraudulent bids - however, a bidding application process was approved by Environment and Sustainability Committee in January 2022 ensure scrutiny of proposals.
- 5.2 Not to have a climate change officer would inhibit our ability to deliver in line with our agreed strategy and action plans for net zero by 2030.

6. Procurement comments

- 6.1 No procurement requirements.

7. Legal comments

- 7.1 The climate change officer role is already in place within the establishment as a permanent post.

8. Other considerations

- 8.1 None.

9. Equality and Diversity

- 9.1 In recruiting a climate change officer equality and diversity is included in that process.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 10.1 The fund is sole budget available internally for Sustainability and Climate Change projects. In order to receive funding a project has to demonstrate how it will reduce carbon emissions in Spelthorne and a climate change officer is required to do that. Projects undertaken by climate change officers have

included solar panels on Council buildings, supplementary planning guidance, biodiversity net gain, community gardening (including schools), a climate change strategy (including review and action tracker) and now a refocus on reducing carbon emissions in Council buildings and adaptation to climate change.

11. Timetable for implementation

- 11.1 To ensure salary is covered from now until 28/29 though it is recognised a new local authority entity may be in place at that point but given timelines for that process are currently unknown it is considered appropriate to ensure security in the role for the foreseeable future.

12. Contact

- 12.1 Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation

Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.

Background papers:, There are none.

Appendices: Appendix 1 Green Initiatives Fund Bid