

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023/24
Decision No.
2524

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 18 March 2024

Portfolio	Policy & Resources
Subject:	Renewable Energy Scheme: Hook Recreation Ground Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Development Feasibility
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Corporate Priority:	Promote Economic Development; Respond to Climate Change and Protect the Environment; Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

Purpose:

To brief the Executive on the potential for a solar photovoltaic (PV) scheme at Hook Recreation Ground and to seek funding for the next feasibility stage of the project.

Hook Recreation Ground is a former landfill site currently used as an informal recreation ground, mainly by dog walkers and model plan flyers. This report advises the Executive on the potential to develop a 3.5MW solar PV scheme on the site. There are two main benefits of a solar PV scheme:

- **Financial:** From the financial modelling undertaken thus far a solar PV scheme has significant revenue generating potential and could be used to reduce the Council's electricity bills.
- **Environmental:** The Council would produce renewable electricity. As a minimum it would generate enough electricity to power the Civic Offices, Depot and Housing communal areas which would in turn reduce the Council's carbon footprint. Renewable electricity would also be returned to the wider electricity network, contributing toward 'greening of the grid'.

Understanding if and when a solar PV scheme could connect into the grid network is essential to progressing to the next feasibility stage of the project and associated business case. The project cannot progress to further stages without securing a viable grid connection, and overall scheme viability would be questionable if this could not be obtained for some time. Accordingly, there is a time imperative to making the grid application.

To make an application for a grid connection and secure the offer, should it be received, this report seeks a budget of £130,000. Between £25,000 - £30,000 would be used to make an application and commission associated studies. This is non-refundable. The remaining £50,000 - £100,000 would be required as a deposit to

accept a grid connection if an acceptable offer is received. The money would be refundable if the Council did not proceed with the solar PV scheme. It would not be committed without a further Executive approval.

It is acknowledged this type of development on Hook Recreation Ground would result in the loss of open space, albeit of poor quality. This will be addressed during later stages of the project once the initial feasibility work around a grid connection has been undertaken. The project is dependent on a viable grid connection and therefore, it is not worthwhile undertaking further work until this has been assessed.

Furthermore, development of this type involves risks. This is being carefully considered against the benefits, a process that will continue into the next stages of the project.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive approves a budget of £130,000 for a grid connection application and for a deposit to secure the connection should an acceptable offer be received.

Reason:

To be able to progress with the next feasibility stage of the project and associated business case.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 18 March 2024