

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 6 September 2023

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Decarbonisation of EDDC Swimming Pools, Consultant Appointment

Report summary:

This report outlines a request for a key decision to be made regarding the allocation of up to £333,000.00 from the Climate Change budget towards the production of Heat Decarbonisation plans for three swimming pools.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation

1. That Cabinet approves the allocation of £333,000.00 from the Climate Change budget for the production of RIBA Plan of Works Stage 3 decarbonisation plans for Exmouth and Honiton Leisure Centres, including swimming pools, and Sidmouth Swimming Pool.

Reason for recommendation:

To support the Council's journey towards its net-zero target by 2040

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change High Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; The production of Heat Decarbonisation Plans will give the Council a clear understanding of the work required to decarbonise swimming pools, which are significant emitters of Carbon Dioxide. The funds for this work exists in the Climate Change budget is so is low risk. However it should be noted that it had been hoped to use this work to prepare for the two external funding

opportunities opening in the 'autumn 2023' which is now unlikely due to the extent of work required. But going forwards undertaking this work will allow us to apply for future external funding opportunities and will still provide invaluable information for deciding how to take this decarbonisation work forwards.

Links to background information [Heat Decarbonisation Plan Guidance Phase 4 LCSF](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

Report in full

In April 2023, East Devon District Council applied for funding from the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) to produce Heat Decarbonisation Plans (HDP) for three LED swimming pools in the East Devon area (Honiton, Exmouth and Sidmouth). The purpose of a heat decarbonisation plan is to describe how an organisation intends to reduce direct greenhouse gas emissions by replacing fossil fuel heating systems with low carbon alternatives (for example heat pumps, electric heating, or other low-carbon fuel sources) within its estate. Unfortunately on this occasion our bid was unsuccessful.

Swimming pools are a particular focus in terms of local authority carbon saving, due to the high level of energy usage. Putting it into context; taking the latest DEC (Display Energy Certificate) for Exmouth Leisure Centre (LC) (August 2022), based on the energy use only, the building produced 485 tonnes of CO₂. Extrapolating figures from another LC that has been through the process, savings can be estimated at 221.24 direct (energy use) and 23.92 indirect savings, giving 245.16 tonnes saved annually in total.

The total estimated cost of decarbonisation works across the three identified pools, excluding professional fees, is as follows (estimated figures extrapolated from similar sites):

- Exmouth Leisure Centre, £4.14m
- Honiton Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre, £3.96m, and
- Sidmouth Swimming Pool, £1.54m

Therefore an estimated total construction cost of £9.64m.

Over the past few years there have been opportunities to bid for funds towards the capital costs of this work (up to 50%). However in order to be in a position to apply to these funds we will need HDPs and we will need consultants to produce them and also to prepare the bids. We will also need to be prepared the fund the actual works or the balance after any external funding is secured.

Due to the complexity and the type of professional work required, it is beyond our resources and expertise to deliver this work in house, hence the need to appoint consultants. Some of the professional services required to undertake the works include:

- Environmental services
- Architectural services
- Building surveying services
- Quantity surveying
- Project management
- Principal designer services, (CDM – construction health and safety)
- Mechanical, electrical and public health services (MEP)
- Structural engineering

We have asked two consultants to provide fee proposals to undertake decarbonisation projects at EDDC swimming pool sites; Exmouth Leisure Centre, Honiton Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre and Sidmouth Swimming Pool. The fee was itemised by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Plan of Work Stages.

Whilst the fee proposals obtained cover all the RIBA Stages, in practice at this stage we will be committing to the fees identified up to RIBA Stage 3.

The outcomes of RIBA stages 0-3 include:

- The best means of achieving the Client Requirements confirmed
- Project Brief approved by the client and confirmed that it can be accommodated on the site
- Architectural/Design Concept approved by the client and aligned to the Project Brief
- Architectural and engineering information Spatially Coordinated

Core tasks include:

- Prepare Client Requirements
- Develop Business Case for feasible options including review of Project Risks and Project Budget
- Ratify option that best delivers Client Requirements
- Review Feedback from previous projects
- Undertake Site Appraisals
- Prepare Project Brief including Project Outcomes and Sustainability Outcomes, Quality Aspirations and Spatial Requirements
- Undertake Feasibility Studies
- Agree Project Budget
- Source Site Information including Site Surveys
- Prepare Project Programme
- Prepare Project Execution
- Prepare Architectural/Design Concept incorporating Strategic Engineering requirements and aligned to Cost Plan, Project Strategies and Outline Specification
- Undertake Design Reviews with client and Project Stakeholders
- Undertake Design Studies, Engineering Analysis and Cost Exercises to test Architectural/Design Concept resulting in Spatially Coordinated design aligned to updated Cost Plan, Project Strategies and Outline Specification
- Initiate Change Control Procedures
- Prepare stage Design Programme

At the end of RIBA Stage 3, construction costs estimates are re-evaluated and more certain, a decision is then made whether to proceed to the remaining stages and the consultants' fees are then reviewed and agreed. Stage 3 goes further than required to bid for funds. However if we are to progress the projects in due course we will need to carry out this work and it makes sense to carry it out at the same time as the budget allows it.

Both lead consultant approaches are in frameworks accessible to public authorities and those include an option to direct appoint a consultant, which is what we intend to do in this case.

Possible External Funding opportunities

There are two current funds that may be available to us once we have completed the decarbonisation plans. These could potentially fund up to 50% of the capital costs of decarbonisation. It is unlikely that the HDPs will be completed in time to apply this year but puts us in a good position for future bids. The current funds are:

- **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)**

The consultant's work to prepare for the PSDS bid would roughly equate to RIBA Stage 2 with some elements of Stage 3.

- **Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPFS)**

The requirements for the SPFS have been recently published and appear to be similar to the PSDS, except that this is a completely new funding opportunity and there is no experience over view of the actual application process. A further consideration is that Sidmouth Swimming Pool will not qualify for the PSDS funding as the gas boilers at this site are less than 3 years old.

Best value, for the purpose of appointing a consultant:

As it is highly unlikely that we will secure external funding this year, the consideration here should be the worst case scenario, i.e. aborting the projects at the end of RIBA Stage 3 or before, we should therefore consider the fee proposals to RIBA Stage 3 only. Considering EDDC has committed to being Net Zero by 2040 and that will not change, it is logical to appoint a consultant to lead on the decarbonisation projects to RIBA Stage 3 as this will give us usable information to take forwards, irrespective of funding bids. Based on the fee proposals obtained, the best value proposal is in the region of £333,000.00, not including specialist work and surveys, and lead consultant admin fee. If this is not possible due to budgetary constraints, it is recommended reducing the scope, i.e. the number of sites. Should this be a consideration, fee proposals for each site, not including specialist work and surveys, and lead consultant admin fee, are as following:

- Exmouth Leisure Centre, £139,000.00
- Honiton Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre, £134,000.00,
- Sidmouth Swimming Pool, £60,000.00

Having carried out the work to RIBA stage 3 will allow the Council to consider how to prioritise the capital works required.

Conclusion

Heat Decarbonisation Plans provide a 'road map' towards reduced carbon emissions and are a prerequisite for applying for the capital funds to carry out the required works. By extending the scope to RIBA stage 3 we will ensure that irrespective of success in funding bids we will have robust data on which to base any future decisions regarding works to decarbonise our leisure centres.

Financial implications:

The monies to be allocated are from underspends in this budget from previous years which have been held in reserve to be allocated. The report highlights the level of work required to enable the Council to decarbonise its swimming pools and this funding allows us to reach the stage of placing bids for external funding and/or to make a bid to the Council's own capital funding programme. As can be seen the likely overall cost are substantial but the full details need to be determined and presented for members to consider.

Legal implications:

The legal issues are covered within the report, Legal Services will assist with any documentation and further advice coming out of the project.