

## RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

### \*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted N/A

**SERVICE DIRECTORATE:** Place

#### **1. DECISION TAKEN**

- 1.1 To appoint Wilmott Dixon to prepare Heat Decarbonisation plans and support for an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund.

#### **2. DECISION TAKER**

- 2.1 Sarah Kingsley, Service Director - Place

#### **3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:**

04 October 2024

#### **4. REASON FOR DECISION**

- 4.1 To ensure the council had specialist support in order to successfully submit a bid for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and to deliver a Heat Decarbonisation Strategy covering the Council's remaining fossil fuel heated estate to meet requirements of grant funding awarded under the Government's Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF).

#### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 To carry out a competition via the Council's E-sourcing system for the services required, however this would not have been possible, due to the timescales required to meet the LCSF grant conditions. Wilmott Dixon also provide additional value by engaging with their construction arm to ensure the proposed schemes were deliverable and costed accurately.

#### **6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)**

- 6.1 The Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Green Spaces was consulted.

#### **7. FORWARD PLAN**

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

#### **8. BACKGROUND / RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The Council was successful in its bid for funding to decarbonise our three leisure centres through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) in Autumn 2023 and was awarded a grant of £7.74m. This project is being delivered over 2024-25 and 2025-26. Our focus is now on decarbonisation of our wider estate, particularly

the District Council Office, North Herts Museum and Hitchin Town Hall (our priority buildings) to meet our 2030 target of being Carbon Neutral for our own operations.

- 8.2 To support this objective, the Council submitted a bid for a grant from the Low Carbon Skills Fund in April 2024 to produce heat decarbonisation plans and an overarching strategy covering our remaining fossil fuel heated estate. We were awarded this grant in July 2024. Through this grant, detailed feasibility assessments for the opportunities of low carbon heating (such as air source heat pumps) will be conducted for our priority buildings: District Council Office, Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum, and the North Herts Leisure Centre learner pool. High level energy audits will also be carried out for: Royston Town Hall Annex, Grange Sports Pavilion, and Letchworth and Hitchin Lidos.
- 8.3 Having requested quotes from a number of consultancies to deliver this work, Wilmott Dixon were appointed through the SCAPE Framework to deliver the grant awarded through the LCSF, as well as to support an application to PSDS for our priority buildings: District Council Office, North Herts Museum, Hitchin Town Hall and the learner pool at North Herts Leisure Centre.
- 8.4 The priority buildings have been identified for submitting bids for PSDS funding due to our long-term commitment to these sites and their contribution to the Council's Scope 1 emissions (due to use of gas as a heating source). PSDS offers public sector organisations the opportunity to apply for funding which will help decarbonise their buildings. Therefore, applying to the fund allows the council an opportunity to decarbonise part of its estate, with a much-reduced capital outlay. Detailed applications have to be prepared for the scheme, including heat decarbonisation plans and further technical, risk and governance assessments.
- 8.4 Wilmott Dixon's appointment through the major works element of the SCAPE Framework for the initial plans would also allow us to directly award the construction contract for delivering the project to them should we be successful.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Under 14.6.4 (a) (ii) of the Council Constitution, Service Directors have a general authorisation for "entering into contracts to carry out works and/or for the supply of goods and services within approved budgets".
- 9.2 The Council is a member of the SCAPE Framework which allows call off by relevant partner organisations. Therefore, under the Contract Procurement Rules (11), the Council is not required to undertake a full tendering procedure and can call off from an approved external Framework Agreement (CPR 11.1, 11.3) and shall follow the call-off procedure.
- 9.3 The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (No. 2095) require officers undertaking non-executive decisions to record (amongst other things) an award of a contract that materially affects the Council's position in a written delegated decision. At North Hertfordshire District Council, this is any award of a contract or financial decision, that is or is likely to be above £50,000.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. The LCSF grant awarded to deliver this work is £39,065.00 Additionally, £35,919.80 of an existing council budget allocated for producing heat decarbonisation plans will be utilised to deliver the work and submit a funding application to PSDS. This is considered a key opportunity towards reducing our fossil fuel usage and making progress towards meeting the Council's climate commitments.

- 10.2. There is currently no additional capital funding allocated to deliver decarbonisation works at our priority buildings. The council plans to submit an application to PSDS which commits 2025-26 to act as a planning year with works (and associated costs) delivered in 2026-27. If the Council is successful in its bid to PSDS round 4, a capital budget proposal will be submitted.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There is a risk that the PSDS bid will be unsuccessful, or the planned works are not deliverable. However, with the LCSF funding, the financial implications of that are quite low. The work towards submitting the PSDS bid is valuable in understanding the options available and the financial implications of those options for planning future capital proposals.
- 11.2 There is also a risk that, if we are successful in our bid to PSDS round 4, that additional costs will emerge as the project develops, requiring additional capital funds to deliver. To mitigate this risk, Wilmott Dixon have engaged their construction focused colleagues earlier to get greater input in the plan designs. This is intended to ensure we gain a fuller understanding of construction costs prior to submitting a capital budget proposal.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.2 The “go local” policy has not been applied because the support required is specialist in nature though the consultants appointed are locally based. Utilisation of a government grant (LCSF) to support this application has also limited opportunities to embed social value.

## **14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 There are no Environmental implications associated with the appointment of Wilmott Dixon, though the heat decarbonisation plans that they produce will help the council understand how it can decarbonise our wider estate, thereby reducing impact on the environment. Appointing Wilmott Dixon will also result in an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. If we are successful, the scheme will allow us to deliver works highlighted in the heat decarbonisation plans on the Council’s priority buildings. These works would achieve energy and carbon savings. As such, a full Environmental Impact Assessment will be undertaken if the council is successful with its funding application, and at the point at which formal decision is made to move forward with the decarbonisation projects.

## **15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 Wilmott Dixon were appointed in recognition that the council does not employ specialist staff who could produce heat decarbonisation plans and also had limited capacity to pull together the application. If successful in receiving the PSDS funding, the resource implications will be considered as part of the project management process.

**16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1 None

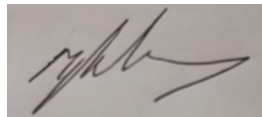
**17. APPENDICES**

17.1 None

**NOTIFICATION DATE**

04 October 2024

**Signature of Executive Member Consulted ...**



**Date 04/10/2024**

**Signature of Decision Taker**

 .....

**Please Note:** that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.

**Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**