

DECISION BOOK

Issue: 654 Date: 23 MARCH 2022

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DECISION BOOK - ISSUE 654 - 23 MARCH 2022

1. WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION & OMICRON GRANT FUNDING

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1. WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION & OMICRON GRANT FUNDING	COUNCILLOR ENNIS	BOROUGHWIDE	1

This report sets out the decision to allocate the Council's Workforce Recruitment and Retention Funding and Omicron Grant, as outlined in Section 3 of this report, in line with the associated Grant conditions.

It is the decision of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care to allocate the Council's Workforce Recruitment & Retention Funding' and 'Omicron' Grant as outlined in Section 3 of the report in line with the associated Grant condition.

2. RIVERMEAD NEW LEISURE CENTRE & PALMER PARK NEW POOL - ADDITIONAL CARBON REDUCTION WORKS

<u>DECISION</u>	<u>LEAD COUNCILLOR(S)</u>	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
2. RIVERMEAD NEW LEISURE CENTRE & PALMER PARK NEW POOL - ADDITIONAL CARBON REDUCTION WORKS	COUNCILLORS PAGE AND HOSKIN	ABBAY & PARK	7

This report sets out the decision to include additional carbon reduction measures to the works to construct the new Rivermead Leisure Centre and new swimming pool at Palmer Park using £976,248 from approved funds allocated for low carbon capital investment works (energy efficiency and renewable energy installations) in the MTFs. The work is to install additional air source heat pumps (ASHPs) and solar panels to further improve the carbon savings for the sites.

It is the decision of the Executive Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and the Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport, that £976,248 of approved low carbon capital funds are deployed to enable additional air source heat pumps and solar panels as part of the works to build the new Rivermead leisure centre and new swimming pool at Palmer Park Sports Stadium.

The existing contract including the annual revenue re-payment schedule with Greenwich Leisure will be updated to include these works to meet the agreed opening dates for the new facilities at these sites.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR ENNIS - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE	
DATE:	23 MARCH 2022	
TITLE:	WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION & OMICRON GRANT FUNDING	
SERVICE:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH	WARDS: BOROUGHWIDE
AUTHOR:	MELISSA WISE	TEL: 07580 871066
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the decision to allocate the Council's Workforce Recruitment and Retention Funding and Omicron Grant, as outlined in Section 3 of this report, in line with the associated Grant conditions.
- 1.2 On 14 September 2021 the Department of Health and Social Care made a commitment in the COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021 to support local authorities and social care providers to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period and to continue working with the care sector to ensure there is sufficient workforce capacity across services.
- 1.3 The funding received from The Department of Health and Social Care will enable the adult social care sector to meet the challenges it faces this winter which have been exacerbated by the Pandemic. This report focusses on two Grants - the Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund' (received in two rounds) and the 'Omicron' grant.
- 1.4 In relation to the Workforce Recruitment & Retention Grant, Reading Borough Council have received two rounds of funding: £385,601 (round one - received on 21 October 2021) and £711,878 (round two - received in January 2022). The Council received £142,376 of Omicron Grant in January 2022. All grant funding must be spent by 31 March 2022.

2. DECISION

- 2.1 It is the decision of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care to allocate the Council's Workforce Recruitment & Retention Funding' and 'Omicron' Grant

as outlined in Section 3 of the report in line with the associated Grant conditions.

3. THE DECISION

3.1 Current Position:

Collaborative work is underway with Social Care Providers to determine the best use of the Grant funding to meet local needs and maximise market capacity. The funding is also being considered in light of the system pressures that are being experienced, with particular focus on the pressure on hospitals and primary care.

Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund

The main purpose of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund, is to support local authorities to urgently address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area through recruitment and retention activity this winter, in order to:

- support timely and safe discharge from hospital to where ongoing care and support is needed
- support providers to maintain the provision of safe care and bolstering capacity within providers to deliver more hours of care
- support providers to prevent admission to hospital
- enable timely new care provision in the community
- support and boost retention of staff within social care

The Grant conditions linked to the Fund dictate the way the Grant must be spent to meet the objectives outlined above. This will need to be verified in returns linking to the expenditure that will need to be submitted by the Council.

The Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund monies from Round 1 have been allocated and issued to Providers. The details of the allocations are noted in 3.2.3. Monies from Round 2 have been allocated based on proposals received from the Adult Social Care Market and the commitment from the Council to support the Adult Social Care Workforce. The details of this proposed allocation are outlined in 3.2.4.

Omicron Fund

The Omicron Fund has been introduced to support the adult social care sector, including relevant local authority staff, in its COVID-19 response, and in particular increased challenges posed by the Omicron variant.

The Grant conditions linked to the Fund dictate the way the Grant must be spent to meet the objectives outlined above. This will need to be verified in returns linking to the expenditure that will need to be submitted by the Council.

- ensuring that staff who are isolating in line with government guidance receive their normal wages and do not lose income while doing so
- paying for temporary cover for staff who are unable to work because they are unwell due to COVID-19 and/or are isolating in line with government guidance, in order to maintain safe workforce capacity in care services
- paying for temporary staffing (overtime or agency) to maintain safe staffing levels
- limiting staff movement between settings in line with the latest guidance, to help reduce the spread of infection - this includes staff who work for one provider across several settings, staff that work on a part-time basis for multiple employers and agency staff
- limiting or cohorting staff to individual groups of people receiving care, including segregation of COVID-19 positive residents in care homes
- steps to limit the use of public transport by members of staff
- providing accommodation for staff who proactively choose to stay separate from their families in order to limit social interaction outside work
- support to providers in purchasing CO2 monitors or air cleaners for use in care homes to monitor and improve ventilation
- enhancing local authorities' current direct payment offer to support care provided by friends and family, including any additional support the carer may need to assist them to continue in their caring role
- providing additional support to care homes or other providers that are currently experiencing an outbreak to ensure that they are able to put in place sufficient IPC measures
- providing support to community groups and paying volunteer expenses

The Omicron Grant has been allocated as outlined in 3.2.5.

3.2 Options Proposed:

- 3.2.1 In order to determine the best use of the Grant funding and achieve the biggest impact the Council collaborated across the South East as Local Authorities and also spoke to our Local Providers about their capacity challenges to determine possible solutions. There has been a number of Grants passported to the sector and Providers had noted that it was a struggle to administer Grants given the varying conditions of spend and tight timetable for spend.
- 3.2.2 A number of options were discounted before reaching the final proposed position as outlined in 3.2.3, 3.2.4 and 3.2.5.
- Early inflationary increase (from Jan) for Care Home Providers - this was excluded as Care Homes have received more Grant funding than any other part of the sector.
 - Early inflationary increase (from Jan) for off Framework Home Care Providers - excluded as they don't have the same obligation to pay the Living Wage Foundation Rate as our Framework Providers do

- Additional blanket payment to Providers to support recruitment - excluded due to the Council's investment in this already with recent marketing campaign and investment in a Personal Assistant Portal as well as supporting and sponsoring overseas workers for 6 Providers
- Additional blanket payment to Providers to boost capacity - excluded as a large proportion of funding has already been passported to them.

3.2.3 The allocation for Round 1 of the Grant Funding is as follows:

Care Homes & Home Care - 1st instalment	Cost
Care Homes (1st Instalment)	£52,253.84
Community Providers e.g. Home Care (1st Instalment)	£78,380.76
Care Homes & Home Care - 2nd instalment	
Care Homes (2nd Instalment)	£35,712.56
Community Providers e.g. Home Care (2nd Instalment)	£52,253.84
Total	£218,601.00
RBC Usage - 1st instalment	Cost
Staff overtime costs for Hospital Team & Provider Services	£48,000.00
RBC Usage - 2nd instalment	
Maintaining & where possible increasing short term capacity in adult social care teams	£104,000.00
TETS Training for Manual Handling for Providers (Community skills)	£15,000.00
Total	£167,000.00

Grand Total £385,601.00

3.2.4 The proposed allocation for Round 2 of the Grant Funding is as follows:

Item	Cost
Advanced Inflationary 'Flat' uplift	£56,075.00
Retention payment to Homecare Framework Providers £250 per person	£175,000.00
Retention payment to Care Home workers £250 per person	£229,000.00
New staff Welcome Payment £100 per person - External Market	£3,000.00
Specialist equipment - Manual Handling (Community skills)	£12,000.00
Maintaining & where possible increasing short term capacity in adult social care teams	£154,000.00
Retention Payments to Non-Framework Homecare Providers £250 per person	£43,697.00
Boosting Personal Assistant workforce (marketing and PA portal) 50% of the cost	£39,106.00
Total	£711,878.00

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3.2.5 The proposed allocation for the Omicron Grant as follows:

Item	Cost
Non-Framework Providers - Retention and Welcome payments	£26,197.00
Boosting Personal Assistant workforce (marketing and PA portal) 50% of the cost	£39,106.00
Sourcing alternative services for service users due to Omicron outbreak	£52,060.00
Maintaining & where possible increasing short term capacity in adult social care teams	£64,119.00
Total	£181,482.00

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

4.1 These time limited Grants are required to be spent in line with specific grant conditions:

- Workforce Recruitment & Retention - [Annex B: grant conditions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Omicron - [Adult Social Care Omicron Support Fund: guidance Published 10 January 2022](#)

The purpose of the grants and associated grant aims also align with the Council's corporate plan priority theme around Thriving Communities.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no known implications

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 External Providers have been made aware of the funding and there has been engagement with them in relation to the best use of the grants to maximise capacity and reduce pressure on their services. Providers have been asked to provide evidence of staffing numbers as well as employment history in order to allocate payment funding in a fair and transparent way.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Home Care Framework providers and non-framework Home Care providers have been included in the funding allocation as all these Providers have supported Reading residents with personal care during this period and therefore entitled to the funding in the Council's view.

This proposal does not make any changes to the services received by service users.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Grant funding will be spent by Reading Borough Council in line with the Grant conditions outlined by the Department of Health & Social Care. The Council will provide the Department of Health & Social Care with returns by 29 April 2022 (for both grants) certifying that reported expenditure from this grant has been spent in compliance with the grant conditions.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The department's expectation is that the grants will be fully spent on by 31 March 2022. 'Spent' being that expenditure has been incurred between 21 October 2021 and 31 March 2022 and that the activity leading to the expense must have happened by 31 March 2022, so that the local authority is accruing the expense and it appears in the local authority's 2021 to 2022 accounts.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for adult social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/programmes/workforce-recruitment-and-retention-fund-for-adult-social-care)
[Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for adult social care, round 2 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/programmes/workforce-recruitment-and-retention-fund-for-adult-social-care/round-2)
[Adult Social Care Omicron Support Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/programmes/adult-social-care-omicron-support-fund)

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COUNCILLOR HOSKIN - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SPORT		
DATE:	23 MARCH 2022		
TITLE:	RIVERMEAD NEW LEISURE CENTRE & PALMER PARK NEW POOL - ADDITIONAL CARBON REDUCTION WORKS		
SERVICE:	REGENERATION AND ASSETS CULTURE	WARDS: ABBEY & PARK	
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the decision to include additional carbon reduction measures to the works to construct the new Rivermead Leisure Centre and new swimming pool at Palmer Park using £976,248 from approved funds allocated for low carbon capital investment works (energy efficiency and renewable energy installations) in the MTFS. The work is to install additional air source heat pumps (ASHPs) and solar panels to further improve the carbon savings for the sites.
- 1.2 The Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood has delegated authority to agree significant variance to the programme of low carbon capital works on which approval to spend has been given (minute 13 (3) of the 30th June 2021 Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee refers).
- 1.3 The existing contract with Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) to Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) the new Rivermead leisure centre and new pool at Palmer Park will be amended to procure and install the additional ASHPs and solar panels to meet the agreed opening dates for both sites.

2. DECISION

- 2.1 It is the decision of the Executive Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and the Lead Councillor for Health,

Wellbeing and Sport, that £976,248 of approved low carbon capital funds are deployed to enable additional air source heat pumps and solar panels as part of the works to build the new Rivermead leisure centre and new swimming pool at Palmer Park Sports Stadium.

- 2.2 The existing contract including the annual revenue re-payment schedule with Greenwich Leisure will be updated to include these works to meet the agreed opening dates for the new facilities at these sites.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 An extensive procurement process to procure a leisure partner to design, build, operate and maintain (DBOM) boroughwide leisure facilities culminated on 20 January 2020, with Policy Committee (minute 62 refers) awarding a 25-year DBOM contract to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL). The new contract commenced on 1 July 2021.
- 3.2 On 2 November 2020, Policy Committee endorsed the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 with the aim to achieve a net zero carbon Reading by 2030 (minute 57 (1) refers); and a corporate Carbon Plan for the same period (minute 57 (2) refers). This set an ambitious target of an 85% reduction in the Council's carbon emissions by 2025, compared to the 2008/09 baseline en route to becoming a net zero carbon Council by 2030. Key to achieving both targets is additional investment in Council assets to reduce energy use, improve energy efficiency and increase renewable energy generation.
- 3.3 The budget and MTFS approved in February 2021 included provision for over £7m in low carbon capital investment and on 30th June 2021, the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee granted approval to spend on a flexible programme of schemes to meet the Council's climate change policy objectives (minute 13 refers). This included delegated authority for the Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services (DEGNs) to vary the original programme of works within the overall capital budget envelope. This is due to an evolving programme involving new technologies and approaches in which a degree of flexibility is needed as projects may drop out of the programme and new projects are brought in to meet the requisite carbon savings.

4. THE DECISION

4.1 Current Position:

The contract to construct the new Rivermead Leisure Centre and new swimming pool at Palmer Park provides for BREEAM excellent rated facilities with higher energy efficiency standards relative to the current leisure centres. There is, however, still a gap between this standard and that required to align with the Council's aspiration for net zero operations by 2030.

4.2 Options Proposed

Ongoing discussions with GLL since the signature of the contract have identified opportunities to further improve the carbon performance of the leisure centres by inclusion of increased ASHP and solar capacity. However, GLL does not have access to sufficient capital to enable this, whereas the RBC low carbon capital programme is currently underspent. It is therefore proposed to use the approved funds for two additional ASHPs inclusive of electrical upgrade at a cost of £400,000 and 300kWp of

extra solar capacity at the Rivermead leisure centre at a cost of £375,000, in addition to the replacement of the existing solar panels (49kWp), at an estimated cost of £61,250. The proposal also includes the installation of an additional ASHP at the new swimming pool at Palmer Park Sports Stadium at a cost of £139,998.

The additional two ASHPs at Rivermead will reduce the use of gas by approximately 700,000 kWh/year, which equates to a circa 75% reduction of the carbon emission rate of the new centre's heating system with a large amount of the additional electrical load offset by the solar panels and further reductions in the future as the grid electricity decarbonises. The additional ASHP at Palmer Park will reduce the new pool's use of gas by approximately 400,000kWh/year which equates to a circa 50% reduction of the carbon emission rate of the new pool's heating system. Solar panels are already part of the scheme being installed at Palmer Park as part of the original new build design to help offset the additional electrical load.

4.3 Other Options Considered

The existing new build design for both sites included a mix of gas fired condensing boilers to heat the buildings and ASHPs to serve the domestic hot water system with solar panels included to offset their electrical load requirements. However, there is the opportunity to amend the design to include additional ASHPs and increase the amount of solar to replace the reliance on gas for heating. To retrofit these units in the future will be costly and mean closure of the new facilities to replace the heat network from gas to electric.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Reading's future leisure provision with lower carbon emissions will contribute towards the achievement of the following Council Priorities:

- Healthy Environment - specifically: "Committed to playing our part in tackling climate change and working towards our goal of a carbon neutral town by 2030". The decision to install additional ASHPs and solar panels will help deliver the Council's ambitions for a net zero Reading by 2030 and help protect Reading's communities from the worst impacts of a changing climate.
- Thriving Communities - specifically transforming leisure services to deliver enhanced leisure facilities and activities that increase participation levels in physical activity. The new leisure facilities will modernise facilities and create affordable, accessible services to improve the physical and mental health of residents.
- Inclusive economy - ensuring economic growth goes hand-in-hand with achieving our climate goals, by harnessing new technology and investing in green infrastructure.

5.2 The Council is working with its new leisure partner in the delivery of key national and local strategic policies. It will also demonstrate that investment and action is making a positive difference to people's lives and show the impact the delivery of the leisure service is having on local individuals and communities and public health outcomes.

5.3 Whilst the town's culture and leisure opportunities are accessed by the vast majority of residents there are significant cohorts who face barriers to access. This can lead to increased levels of obesity and poorer health and wellbeing for both adults and children in respect of physical activity; and poorer quality of life, mental health, social isolation and wellbeing. Addressing these barriers and widening participation is a key outcome requirement.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 On 26th February 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency (minute 48 refers). On 2nd November 2020, Policy Committee endorsed the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 with the aim to achieve a net zero carbon Reading by 2030 (minute 57 (1) refers); and a corporate Carbon Plan for the same period (minute 57 (2) refers). This set an ambitious target of an 85% reduction in the Council's carbon emissions by 2025, compared to the 2008/09 baseline.

6.2 The Council's 'corporate carbon footprint' calculation, on which the 85% target is based, takes account of emissions from buildings and other operations within the Council's direct control (known as scope 1) and associated purchased energy (known as scope 2). Emissions from third party/outsourced services commissioned by the Council but not within its direct control are accounted for as part of the Council's 'wider influence footprint' calculation (known as scope 3) but do not form part of the 'corporate carbon footprint' calculation.

Emissions from Rivermead are accounted for as part of scope 3 as it is already operated by GLL. From the 2021/22 reporting year, emissions from Palmer Park will also move to scope 3 as operation has transferred to GLL. The impact of these investments will not therefore reduce RBC's 'corporate carbon footprint' or contribute to the 85% target, but they will reduce RBC's 'wider influence footprint' and contribute to the 'net zero Reading by 2030' target. By making this investment the Council is demonstrating that it continues to take responsibility for emissions from the leisure estate despite the transfer of operations to GLL.

6.3 A climate impact assessment has been completed which concluded that this decision will have a 'high positive' impact based on the significantly reduced emissions enabled.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way". The decision in this report relate to approved budgets and decisions already consulted upon as part of the original decision-making process in forming the leisure DBOM contract and Council low carbon capital funding.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for the decision made in this report as they do not have any implications for groups with protected characteristics.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The existing DBOM contract with GLL allows for variations to be made within the approved budgets. The DEGNs Director has delegated authority to allocate approved low carbon capital funds to schemes to help deliver the Council's corporate Carbon Plan.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Capital funding for these works are part of the approved low carbon capital investment in 2022/23 with works retention payable in 2023/24.

Capital Programme	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Proposed Capital Expenditure	n/a	£951,248	£25,000
Funded by Low Carbon Capital Funds Capital Receipts/Borrowing		£951,248	£25,000

10.2 Revenue Implications.

The 25year DBOM contract includes benchmarking utility usage rates 2 years after the new Rivermead leisure centre and Palmer Park swimming pool are open against utility rates used at contract signing. GLL are responsible for the cost of utility consumption / usage; the Council is currently responsible for the change in base utility rates from contract signing to when the new facilities are operational.

An updated DBOM contract payment schedule including the installation of solar panels to offset the increase in electricity from the Heat Pumps, and based on current energy costs, indicates an estimated annual decrease in costs of on average £23,617 p/a over the life of the contract. This would lead to an increase in the predicted amount that GLL will pay the Council in the later years of the contract.

Given the cost and volatility in the energy market there may be future pressures which if they arise will need to be factored into the budget setting process along with other changes reflected in the modelling of the contract. If mitigating actions are unsuccessful in eliminating a future revenue pressure arising from these investments, there will be a need to call on the earmarked reserves for climate change actions to fund the revenue pressure.

In addition the capital cost of the £976,248 expenditure has an impact on the revenue budgets as the Capital costs will be financed by borrowing. The estimated impacts of this assuming a 25 year life of the assets would be around £39,000 per annum MRP charge. Once the borrowing costs are taken into account with the reduction of the operating costs of £23,617 it leaves a potential annual pressure of £15,383.

There are a number of ways that any future energy revenue pressure and the increased revenue borrowing costs could be mitigated against which are covered below. We currently have an open book accounting process with GLL that may improve value for money from the contract using this mechanism.

The risk profile is expected to change as national policies are expected to make gas more expensive relative to electricity, therefore any cost differential in moving from gas to electric based heating is likely to be short-term and reversed over time. Also, whilst currently gas is cheaper, its use is not wholly consistent with the Council's climate policy commitments on carbon reduction which these measures lead to.

There may be scope in the future to install additional solar panels at Palmer Park, to reduce the reliance on purchased energy, which could result in future revenue pressures being less or eliminated.

Another action being investigated is the request by GLL to come back into the Council's more competitive energy contracts, which if conclude successfully, will mean the Council manage the procurement of energy tariffs. There may also be benefits from any recoverable VAT on energy costs, on which VAT advice is being sought.

One should also note that it will not be possible to make any return on the investment through solar feed-in tariffs or other means on that proportion of the approved low carbon capital investment allocated for this purpose.

In summary this scheme and the installation of the planned solar panels as it stands will not cause a significant pressure on the revenue budget, even incorporating Borrowing costs and there are further mitigating options available if the volatility in the energy market cause future revenue pressures, and to further offset borrowing costs.

10.3 Value for Money (VFM)

The cost of these works has been assessed at an elemental cost breakdown level for the ASHPs and verified as a competitive price by the contract cost consultant who provides independent cost advice on the DBOM contract to construct the new leisure facilities. The ASHP costs have been reviewed and benchmarked against another scheme, and they were comparable. The cost of the additional solar panels is a budget cost and will be verified and agreed once a firm quotation is provided.

The decision will provide a significant reduction in carbon emissions for both sites in line with the Council's policy commitments and will be more cost effective to install now whilst the new centres are being built than instead of trying to retrofit at a later date which besides install costs will incur loss of income due to centre closures to install the new heating systems.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.