

## BRIEFING PAPER

### Update for Council on the February motion:-

*This Council notes the work that has been done to date on exploring opportunities in the borough for commercial and community renewable energy projects and resolves;*

- 1. To work with and encourage residents, experts, businesses, community groups and other interested parties to submit any ideas or proposals in relation to renewable energy that would benefit residents, businesses and the council to generate energy and/or to improve energy efficiency which would lead to carbon and energy cost reductions.*
- 2. To encourage and support councillors to work with District Partnerships to develop community energy projects.*

*To ask the Cabinet Member responsible for Low Carbon and renewable energy to bring a report to a future meeting of the council in 2014 detailing the progress made in this area.'*

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Abdul Jabbar

Report Author: Andrew Hunt, Environmental Policy Manager

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014

### **Briefing:**

On 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014, a cross-party workshop was held, in response to the above Council motion, to identify ways in which Oldham Council could tackle climate change, building on Oldham's Climate Change Strategy and Community Energy Strategies.

As the outcome of the workshop, it was decided that the Council would sign up to the Local Government Association's "Climate Local" agreement, with the following commitments:-

- Implement a range of 'quick win' energy efficiency measures in Council buildings to achieve significant short-term reductions in energy consumption.
- Support three community energy groups over the next twelve months.
- Complete the conversion of St Mary's estate from fossil fuels to a biomass fuelled district heat network, by the end of March 2015.
- Take 2,000 households out of fuel poverty between 2013-2015.
- Embed behaviour change campaigns in all of the above to ensure residents and council employees can play their part in reducing energy use.

The Leader of the Council, Jim McMahon, formally signed the Climate Local agreement on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014. A detailed action plan is currently being prepared and will be submitted to the LGA within six months of this date.

Specific updates on each of the five commitments are as follows:-

**1. Implement a range of 'quick win' energy efficiency measures in Council buildings to achieve significant short-term reductions in energy consumption.**

Power down successful but further resilience works required to generators before ccan complete all of the transformer switchovers – should be significant way through works by financial year end but completion will be in new financial year.

Essential work to the Civic Centre, which involves switching off power to the complex for a number of days, is now completed, which means that Invest to Save project work can progress on a number of 'quick win' projects:-

- evaporative cooling
- inverter motor drives
- generators

However, further resilience works are required to generators before it will be possible to complete all of the transformer switchovers – we should be a significant way through the works by the end of the financial year but completion will be in the new financial year.

**2. Support three community energy groups over the next twelve months.**

Saddleworth Community Hydro, in which Oldham Council is a shareholder and member, have now completed the installation of the hydroelectric turbine at Dove Stone Reservoir and will formally open the facility on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. A representative from the Council attended the opening ceremony.

Oldham Council's community energy programme, 'Generation Oldham', has its launch event on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014. Community groups from across the borough have been invited to come and see presentations from four successful community energy organisations: Saddleworth Community Hydro, St John's Sunshine, Biomass Energy Co-op and the Carbon Co-op. There will then follow a workshop to identify community energy opportunities across the borough.

The Council's Environmental Policy Team has been meeting with a number of 'early mover' community groups, with a view to including their buildings in a first batch of feasibility studies. Around ten buildings will be included in this first 'tranche'.

Officers from the Council's Environmental Policy Team have also met with representatives of the "Energize Oldham" group, based in Shaw, who are hoping to form a community energy cooperative in that area.

A feasibility study looking at the potential to establish an Oldham community energy cooperative, with a target of installing 5MW of solar PV on public and private buildings across Oldham, is now underway, with surveys on school roofs to begin shortly.

### **3. Complete the conversion of St Mary's estate from fossil fuels to a biomass fuelled district heat network, by the end of March 2015.**

Work to build the new boilerhouse and install and commission the new biomass boilers will be complete and the boilers will be commissioned and handed over to the Council around March 2015.

A contract to upgrade the heat network pipe insulation to reduce heat loss in the network, and the amount of biomass fuel needed to run, it has now been awarded.

First Choice Homes Oldham has completed energy efficiency retrofit works on many of the 600 properties targeted, using Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding from British Gas.

### **4. Take 2,000 households out of fuel poverty between 2013-2015.**

The second year of the "Warm Homes Oldham" scheme is now underway, with preparations being made for a promotional push for the autumn season. The target of 1,000 households in Year 1 was met, with 1,074 people lifted out of fuel poverty and a target of 1,200 people has been set for 2014/15, with 475 people lifted out of fuel poverty so far this financial year.

Additionally, the Greater Manchester "Little Bill" whole house retrofit offer is now available in Oldham, with special offers and extra funding available in Failsworth, Crompton and Saddleworth, and seven properties are already receiving special insulation measures and other energy efficiency works under the "Little Bill" scheme.

### **5. Embed behaviour change campaigns in all of the above to ensure residents and council employees can play their part in reducing energy use.**

The "B Green" behaviour change campaign for St Mary's estate will accompany the conversion of the heat network to run on biomass, with residents encouraged to make energy saving a priority.

The "Warm Homes Oldham" scheme includes a behaviour change programme, which aims to educate residents to use their heating controls correctly and understand their energy use better. Savings through behaviour change are estimated at around £340 per household.

The Council's eco-champions employees' network will receive training in how to conduct environmental audits. This will give them extra skills, ensure their service areas perform better all year round in environmental management, and help to make sure that the Council retains its ISO14001 certification in 2015.

Housing retrofit will form part of the "Generation Oldham" programme, with the Greater Manchester 'Carbon Co-op' presenting at the launch event on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, encouraging residents to install special insulation and other energy

efficiency measures to cut their energy use, before they think about installing solar panels or other renewable energy generation equipment.

### **Ground source heat from disused coal mines**

At the Council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014, a question was asked by Cllr Sykes about the potential in Oldham for disused coal mines to be used to provide ground source heating.

A short presentation was given by Keith Paylor from Unity Partnership at the cross-party working group on energy and climate change on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

A more detailed discussion will take place at a future meeting of the cross-party working group, to be arranged.

### **Solar power**

A number of feasibility studies are underway looking at the potential for solar power on schools, Council-owned buildings such as Tommyfield Market and on Council-owned greenfield sites. A tender for the installation of solar PV has been placed on "The Chest" and is now open to bids from suppliers. The Council is working with an APSE programme looking at opportunities for large-scale solar farms, concentrating on three possible sites within Oldham.

A potential collaboration with strategic partners such as First Choice Homes Oldham to form an energy cooperative for the borough is also being explored.

The results of these feasibility studies should be available by March 2015, with some available sooner.

### **'Generation Oldham'**

The Council's pioneering community energy programme, 'Generation Oldham' was launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. A packed event saw presentations from four successful community energy co-ops from Oldham and around Greater Manchester, followed by a workshop to identify possible opportunities for community energy around the borough.

At its outset, the programme set a target of six projects around Oldham, one in each of the districts.

At the time of writing, sixteen potential projects have already been identified through conversations with 'early mover' community groups, and it is expected that once the outputs from the launch event workshop have been analysed, this will more than double to a total of 40 or so projects, including solar PV, biomass and energy efficiency retrofit.

The Council will support community groups to access funding for feasibility studies, and will work with Unity Partnership to offer community groups a number of approved local companies to deliver feasibility.

It is expected that a new community energy cooperative for the borough will be incorporated early in 2015, and that installation works and community share issues will take place later next year.

Youth Councillors are also involved in the programme, and the Council will be offering a range of training opportunities for them, ranging from involvement in the delivery of every stage of the community energy projects including feasibility and installation works, to visits to working projects such as Saddleworth Hydro, St John's Sunshine in Old Trafford and Scout Moor Wind Farm. The Council's Development Academy could also offer training in project management, report writing and other skills, and it is hoped that in autumn 2015 a number of apprenticeship opportunities will be available to Youth Councillors.

The Council is also exploring potential schemes for young people Not in Employment, Education or Training, to become involved in the environmental business sector.

### **How to be actioned:**

- Report author attending
- Discussion item
- Presentation
- Workshop
- Circulate offline to Leadership for information