

Actions Not Ambitions - A Renewable Energy Future

The Council, on 15th March 2023 passed the following Motion and the Executive Director – Place and Economic Growth has broken down her answer to this Motion in the following terms:

- **Ensure that the council continues its ambitious plans for the council to be operating as a carbon neutral council by 2025.**

The Council has an estates decarbonisation programme which will support this resolution. The programme has already successfully secured almost £2.5m in grant funding for a number of schemes at Alex Park Eco-Centre, Oldham Leisure Centre and the Spindles, and will deliver further projects going forward. The Council is also carrying out a review of energy purchasing arrangements which will include zero carbon electricity for Council Buildings and Street Lighting as well as carbon offsetting measures for our residual gas consumption.

- **Continue to work towards a carbon neutral Oldham by 2030, and a carbon neutral Greater Manchester by 2038.**

Oldham Council has been successful in securing £75K of grant funding from the Innovate UK Net Zero Living Pathfinder Places programme, to carry out feasibility work around establishing an Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership, to secure the £5.6bn investment needed to deliver the low carbon infrastructure in Oldham's Local Area Energy Plan. The Council is currently in discussion with the GM Combined Authority and Manchester City Council, both of whom were also successful in Phase 1 of the Innovate UK programme, with a view to a consortium application to Phase 2 of the programme to secure up to £5m to implement the projects in our feasibility studies. If successful, this funding will help Oldham, Manchester and GMCA to put in place delivery mechanisms which will drive progress towards the 2030 and 2038 carbon neutrality targets.

- **Explore further options for renewable energy schemes across the Borough. Specifically, by identifying companies who could be involved in running a Mine Water Heat Network and working with them to develop a successful plan for Oldham Borough.**

The Detailed Project Development / Outline Business Case feasibility work for the proposed minewater heat network is currently underway, funded by the Department for Net Zero and Energy Security, and this includes some market engagement with heat network developers. Additionally, two rounds of market engagement for the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership work that the Council has already undertaken have identified a number of large companies which could deliver heat networks plus other low carbon infrastructure, and a further number of these companies have expressed an interest in working in Oldham following the UKREiF event earlier this year.

- **Commit to re-evaluating all council owned assets for the viability of having solar panels installed to maximise the renewable energy generated by the Council.**

The Council is currently undertaking a review of up to 20 Council-owned sites looking at feasibility for the installation of solar panels and other low carbon technologies. We are being supported in this review by the GM Combined Authority via the Go Neutral and Decarbonising of the Public Estate programmes. The review will identify a potential portfolio of low carbon projects for investment where the business case allows.

- **Explore the creation of a Local Energy Market to sell excess energy generated by council renewable assets to residents at a reasonable price, independent of the main energy providers, and to support the development of privately owned renewable energy generation in Oldham which can also help residents and businesses to reduce their energy bills through schemes like the Oldham Energy Futures project - piloted in Sholver and Westwood – and the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership.**

As well as being a partner in the Greater Manchester Local Energy Market project, the establishment of a LEM for Oldham is a key aim of the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy, and part of the OGND Delivery Partnership initiative referenced above. The OGND Delivery Partnership will create a pipeline of renewable energy projects, including on privately owned land and also community owned and led projects, which could feed electricity into an Oldham Local Energy Market to supply Oldham businesses and residents. This initiative has the potential to deliver fair energy costs over the medium term, but discussions are already underway with a number of potential private and community renewable energy projects with a view to securing energy supplies for the Oldham LEM.

- **Request that Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF) divest from fossil fuel companies by 2030 at the latest**
- **Request GMPF provide an annual report - until such a time that they are fully divested - to record active interventions they are making to change those companies' policies to become carbon neutral.**

The Council has raised the issue with GMPF but at the time of writing has not received a response.

This Council further resolves to:

- **Work alongside the partner agencies to identify more sites in the Borough which could potentially help Oldham reduce its reliance on fossil fuels.**

Working with the private, third and community sectors to identify and support the development of further renewable energy projects across the borough is a key aim of the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership initiative referenced above, and discussions are already underway with a number of potential project leads.

- **Work alongside future governments to support the creation of a national public energy company, where the income generated will be reinvested into**

the UK, rather than into the pockets of shareholders or other nations who own energy companies operating in the UK.

- **No update.**
- **Reaffirm our commitment to a true windfall tax on the runaway profits of oil and gas giants. This tax revenue is needed to support families who are struggling.**

No update