

MAYOR AND CABINET		
Report Title	Community Energy Fund Grant Award Report	
Key decision	Yes	Item No.
Ward	All	
Contributors	Head of Law, Head of Finance. Exec Director Housing, Regeneration and Environment.	
Class	Part one	Date: 12th February 2020

## 1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the award of Community Energy Fund grants to five voluntary and community organisations across the borough: Beecroft School, Rathfern School, Retrofit Action for Tomorrow, Sydenham Gardens and Dalmain School.

## 2. Recommendations

### 2.1 It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet agree:

To award grants listed in the table below for the financial year 2019/20.

Organisation	Recommended grant
Beecroft School	£15,000
Rathfern School	£15,000
Retrofit Action for Tomorrow	£14,500
Sydenham Gardens	£15,000
Dalmain School	£14,971.35

### 2.2 We would invite Mayor and Cabinet to note for context the six grants below £10,000 awarded to the organisations listed in the table below.

Organisation	Recommended grant
Deptford Park Play Club	£1,500 (final amount TBC)
2000 Community Action Centre	£1,500
Climate Action Lewisham	£1,895
Evelyn TRA - LH	£1,500
Kilmorie - SELCE	£3,000
John Bull - SELCE	£6,160

## 3. Policy Context

### 3.1 The proposals within this report are consistent with the Corporate Plan 2018-22 which commits to 'Better care for our local environment and the planet', to

maximise opportunities for energy efficiency and to provide support on energy bills for vulnerable residents.

- 3.2 In February 2019 Lewisham Council agreed a motion to declare a 'Climate Emergency' and asked Mayor and Cabinet to agree a new action to make Lewisham zero carbon by 2030.
- 3.3 Prioritising support for our communities and particularly the most vulnerable within the context of the climate emergency is a clear way to demonstrate that action on climate change is about social justice.
- 3.4 The Lewisham Community Energy Fund is part of the Council's response to this emergency and seeks to help local communities be more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate and create new local solutions on energy demand and supply.
- 3.5 Responding to climate change and tackling fuel poverty needs all available resources to pull together to address the scale of challenge we face. The Lewisham Community Energy Fund is intended to encourage this, to provide new capacity for local community and voluntary groups and to bring people together for a common purpose in relation to energy, carbon reduction and fuel poverty.

#### **4. Lewisham Community Energy Fund**

- 4.1 In September 2019 the Council launched a new Community Energy Fund offering up to £15,000 once-off grants to local community initiatives to support energy efficiency and carbon reduction projects such as solar panels on community buildings.
- 4.2 The Lewisham Community Energy Fund aims to support the community in overcoming challenges associated with implementing energy related projects in the borough. The objectives of the Lewisham Community Energy Fund are to:
  - Empower and enable the community to improve quality of life through access to clean and sustainable energy.
  - Reduce borough-wide carbon emissions of households, community facilities and businesses through reduced energy use and increased uptake of renewable sources of energy.
  - Find new ways to support vulnerable residents at risk of fuel poverty
- 4.3 When considering applications, the Lewisham Community Energy Fund prioritises:
  - Collective action to reduce, manage and generate energy.
  - Community-led development and delivery of energy projects which provide direct benefit to the local community.
  - Increasing community awareness and action on energy efficiency.
  - Projects which focus on households affected by fuel poverty, for example: older people, low income families, disabled people or those with long term health conditions.

- Activity that fits within and complements existing work in the borough.
- New approaches that will provide additionally in terms of outcomes for the borough.

4.4 The Lewisham Community Energy Fund is open to all constituted groups and businesses who would like to carry out an energy related project. The organisation does not have to be an energy or environmental group to apply, however applications are limited to the following groups:

- Community and Voluntary Groups
- Co-operatives
- Faith and Equalities Groups
- Social Enterprises
- Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) - SMEs including third-sector organisations and sole traders which:
  - Employ less than 250 full-time employees
  - Have an turnover of <£25m per annum
  - Are no more than 25% owned by a parent company that does not meet above criteria

4.5 The Lewisham Community Energy Fund was designed to have two rounds with a third to go ahead if any funds remained. The first round closed to applications in October 2019 and the second in December 2019.

4.6 Across the two rounds the Fund received applications from 14 organisations from a range of organisations and community groups.

4.7 The 11 successful proposals were agreed by a Lewisham Community Energy Fund panel comprising of members of the Climate Resilience Team and Communities Team. The proposals were individually assessed using the same assessment tool. This allowed for each proposal to be scored against the various criteria generating a final score for comparison.

4.8 Five of the proposals are recommended grants for over £10,000 and are listed in the table below:

Project name	Proposal	Recommended grant
Beecroft School	Light-emitting diode (LED) lighting and educational workshops.	£15,000
Rathfern School	LED lighting and educational workshops.	£15,000
Retrofit Action for Tomorrow	Deep retrofit feasibility study and action plan for a school coupled with workshops and with pupils and parents.	£14,500
Sydenham Gardens	Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and heat pump.	£15,000
Dalmain School	PV solar panels and educational workshops.	£14,971.35

#### Beecroft School

A primary school located in Brockley SE4. The school aspire to become carbon neutral. Their bid would part fund new LED lighting throughout. This could save 6000 kgCO<sub>2</sub> annually. The school are also working with South East London Community Energy (SELCE) who will deliver activities for KS2 children to improve their understanding of energy consumption. SELCE will also run workshops for parents on how they can reduce the energy demand in their own homes delivering benefits beyond the school and into the wider community.

#### Rathfern School

A primary school located in Catford SE6. The school aspire to become carbon neutral. Their bid would part fund new LED lighting throughout. This would save 9000 kgCO<sub>2</sub>. The school are also working with South East London Community Energy (SELCE) who will deliver activities for KS2 children to improve their understanding of energy consumption. SELCE will also run workshops for parents on how they can reduce the energy demand in their own homes delivering benefits beyond the school and into the wider community.

#### Retrofit Action For Tomorrow RAFT

RAFT is a community interest company based in Honor Oak SE23. Their proposal is to deliver educational workshops on climate change and thermal performance in parallel with a deep retrofit, low carbon feasibility study and action plan for a Lewisham Primary School. The proposal aims to engage, educate and empower children and the wider community to reduce energy and carbon use at school and homes.

#### Sydenham Gardens

A resource centre based in Sydenham SE23, it provides activity and spaces that promote community wellbeing and fosters recovery from mental ill-health principally through horticulture and arts & crafts. Their bid will part fund the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump to provide low carbon heat and a photovoltaic (PV) solar panel to cover approximately 1/3 of their annual electricity usage. This would save 6700 kgCO<sub>2</sub>.

#### Dalmain School

A primary school based in Forest Hill SE23. Their bid would fund the installation of a 10.7kWp PV solar array. This would save 3000 kgCO<sub>2</sub>. The school are also working with South East London Community Energy (SELCE) who will stage a Solar Dragster Challenge to teach them how solar energy is converted into electricity. SELCE will also run workshops for parents on how they can reduce the energy demand in their own homes delivering benefits beyond the school and into the wider community.

- 4.9 Six other organisations have also been recommended grants for under £10,000 these are listed in the table below:

Project name	Proposal	Recommended grant
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Deptford Park Play Club	Feasibility study to assess suitability of building to install PV solar panels.	£1,500 final award TBC
2000 Community Action Centre	Feasibility study to assess suitability of building to install PV solar panels.	£1,500
Climate Action Lewisham	Outreach work to improve understanding of the climate crisis across the borough	£1,895
Evelyn Community Centre	Feasibility study to assess suitability of building to install PV solar panels.	£1,500
Kilmore School	LED lighting and educational workshops.	£3,000
John Bull School	LED lighting and educational workshops.	£6,160

## 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 These five grants totalling £74,471.35 will be paid from an existing 2019/20 budget of £107,000 from the Lewisham Community Energy Fund.
- 5.2 Grants below £10,000 total £15,555 and will be paid from the above budget.

## 6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Under S1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do unless it is expressly prohibited.
- 6.2 The giving of grants to voluntary organisations is a discretionary power which must be exercised reasonably, taking into account all relevant considerations and ignoring irrelevant considerations.
- 6.3 In relation to any consultation exercise sufficient reasons must be given for any proposal, adequate time must be given for consideration and response and the outcome of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account by the decision maker.
- 6.4 The level of grants at over £10,000 requires the approval of Mayor and Cabinet. The decision will be a key decision under Article 16(c.) (xiii) of the Constitution.
- 6.5 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

6.6 The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.

6.7 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-actcodes-ofpractice- and-technical-guidance/>

6.8 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
- Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
- Engagement and the equality duty
- Equality objectives and the equality duty
- Equality information and the equality duty

The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sectorequalityduty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>.

## **7. Crime and Disorder Act Implications**

7.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

## **8. Equalities Implications**

- 8.1 No direct equalities implications however the Lewisham Community Energy Fund is intended to drive work that will reduce carbon emissions and address climate change.
- 8.2 Climate impacts and extreme weather events can affect anyone, but some people have the potential to be more affected than others (<https://www.climatejust.org.uk/socially-vulnerable-groups-sensitive-climate-impacts>)
- 8.3 Amongst others the risks from climate change identified in the Government's UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 include:
- Risks to health and wellbeing from high temperatures;
  - Risks of shortages in the public water supply;
  - Risks to food production and trade;
  - New and emerging pests and diseases.
- 8.4 The projects proposed within this report will all have an impact on the communities they serve; either through educational outreach work or by reducing running costs for community run buildings. These projects will foster closer social networks and build local community resilience to climate change.

## **9. Environmental Implications**

- 9.1 The recommendation of this report supports awarding grants to projects that will lower energy consumption in community buildings based in the borough. This will reduce carbon emissions in the borough, contributing to the Council's carbon neutral by 2030 target.

## **10. Conclusion**

- 10.1 The Council recognises the important part the voluntary and community sector plays in the lives of our residents, and the Lewisham Community Energy Fund seeks to stimulate and build local community resilience to climate change.

If there are any queries on this report please contact Emma Bushell, Sustainability Manager on 020 8314 3306.