

Name of meeting: Cabinet
Date: 22nd September 2015

Title of report: Kirklees Council support of the Friends of the Earth
 'Run on Sun' Solar Schools Strategy

Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Is it in the Council's Forward Plan ?	No
Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny ?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Director</u> & name	Jacqui Gedman - 02/09/2015
Is it signed off by the Director of Resources?	David Smith - 02/09/2015
Is it signed off by the Acting Assistant Director - Legal & Governance?	Julie Muscroft - 11/09/15
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Sheard (Leader) Strategic Themes Cllr McBride - Transportation, Skills, Jobs and Regional Affairs Cllr Pandor - Schools and Learning

Electoral [wards](#) affected: All
Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

1. Purpose of report

To ask Cabinet to consider:

- 1.1. Supporting the Friends of the Earth 'Run on Sun' campaign for schools, which is promoting clean energy and campaigning for a mechanism to facilitate schools investing in solar energy.

- 1.2. Agreeing that the council writes to all schools in Kirklees, encouraging them to consider the benefits of installing solar technologies in advance of the outcome of the Government review of the renewable energy Feed-in Tariff regime (expected late 2015).

2. Key points

- 2.1. The Friends of the Earth (FoE) 'Run on Sun' campaign calls for the Government to ensure that any school that wishes to, gets the support it needs to install Solar renewable energy technologies.
- 2.2. Specifically, the campaign calls for five steps from the Government to facilitate the installation of solar technologies on schools. These are:
 - To allow schools to borrow to invest in solar.
 - To provide guaranteed grid connections for solar school projects.
 - To set up an impartial one-stop shop for solar schools information.
 - To ensure all new schools have renewables and high levels of energy efficiency as standard
 - Beyond schools, make sure the Feed-in Tariff (FIT) works for all rooftop solar systems, and aim for six million solar roofs across the UK by 2020.
- 2.3. Schools are comparatively likely to be suitable for solar technologies (both photovoltaics (PV) and solar thermal) due to possessing relatively large, accessible roof spaces and utilising most energy during daylight hours. Solar PV is a means for schools to both reduce their electricity bill and their carbon emissions. The FoE estimate that a typical secondary school could save £8,000 per year from their energy bill with the income from the FIT repaying installation costs in typically 7-9 years.
- 2.4. Solar is a popular renewable technology in terms of public perception. The latest DECC Public Attitudes Tracker suggests that 81% of the public 'strongly support' or 'support' solar developments.¹
- 2.5. Currently, there are limited routes for schools to invest in solar (or other renewable installations). Most commonly this is for schools to use their own funds or apply to their local authority to borrow on their behalf. There is no specific mechanism for schools to be able to borrow independently to invest in renewables.
- 2.6. Other funding options for solar in schools that have been explored elsewhere in the country include 'crowdsourcing' funds from the local community or by engaging with a solar developer who may install a system at a reduced rate

¹ DECC *Public Attitudes Tracking Survey*, Wave 14, 14th August 2015
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-attitudes-tracking-survey-wave-14>)

(or 'free') up-front but then cover their costs from the ongoing FIT payments to the school.

- 2.7. The recent national Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) Solar PV Strategy ² (Part 2 - April 2014) stated that the Government would "lead an initiative specifically targeted at England and Wales' 24,000 schools." However, to date, this has not been announced.
- 2.8. On 22nd July 2015, the Government announced changes to a number of 'low carbon' subsidies, including a full review of the FIT in order to drive "further significant savings". The consultation on this review is due to close on 23 October 2015, and proposes significant reductions to the FIT across the board, with the intention being for revised rates to be implemented on 1st January 2016 ³.
- 2.9. For schools considering Solar PV, prompt development is therefore likely to be beneficial in terms of maximising income from the FIT and delivering savings to energy expenditure.

3. Implications for the Council

- 3.1. This report proposes council support for the FoE initiative. No direct capital funding support to schools for solar installations is proposed.
- 3.2. Further council support to schools will be limited to a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document relating to solar technologies, and , subject to sufficient demand, one seminar event for interested schools.
- 3.3. The installation of solar technologies is an investment decision for Kirklees schools themselves, which would have financial implications for each school concerned.

4. Consultees and their opinions

- 4.1. Cllr Sheard, Leader of the Council, is supportive of the initiative and requested that this paper be prepared.
- 4.2. Cllr McBride, Cabinet Member for Transportation, Skills, Jobs and Regional Affairs, is supportive of the proposals.
- 4.3. Cllr Pandor, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning is supportive of the proposals and welcomes the opportunity to work with FoE and do our little bit in reducing CO2 emissions and reducing energy usage. He is optimistic that schools will welcome this initiative, not just on commercial grounds, but also

² DECC *UK Solar PV Strategy, Part 2*, 4th April 2014 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-solar-pv-strategy-part-1-roadmap-to-a-brighter-future>)

³ DECC *Consultation on a review of the Feed-in Tariff scheme*, 27th August 2015 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-a-review-of-the-feed-in-tariff-scheme>)

on environmental grounds and recognises the wider learning this initiative will create for our young learners.

5. Next steps

5.1. Subject to approval of these proposals, Officers from Investment & Regeneration and Physical Resources and Procurement will proceed to:

- Contact the Friends of the Earth to register the Council's support of the 'Run on Sun' initiative.
- Write to all Kirklees schools encouraging them to prioritise making a commercial decision on the benefits of installing solar technologies and highlighting potential changes to the FIT subsidy.
- Arrange a one-off guidance seminar for interested schools, subject to interest.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

Members are requested to:

- Approve this request to support the FoE initiative as this highlights the need for further assistance for schools to maximise the installation of solar technologies. These can reduce costs for schools and reduce carbon emissions.
- Approve the request to write to Kirklees schools to encourage them to consider solar technologies. The reason for this is that prompt action is considered important in advance of proposed reductions to the FIT.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation

- Cllr Sheard, Leader of the Council, is supportive of the initiative and requested that this paper be prepared and for it to proceed to Cabinet.
- Cllr McBride, Cabinet Member for Transportation, Skills, Jobs and Regional Affairs, is supportive of the proposals and for the report to proceed to Cabinet.
- Cllr Pandor, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning is supportive of the proposals and welcomes the opportunity to work with FoE and do our little bit in reducing CO2 emissions and reducing energy usage. He is optimistic that schools will welcome this initiative, not just on commercial grounds, but also on environmental grounds and recognises the wider learning this initiative will create for our young learners and for this report to proceed to Cabinet.

8. Contact officer and relevant papers

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Relevant Papers:

Friends of the Earth 'Run on Sun' general briefing note:

<https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/run-sun-mps-briefing-april-2015-75773.pdf>

Friends of the Earth 'Run on Sun' Local Authority-specific briefing note:

<https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/run-sun-briefing-you-can-give-your-local-authority-76895.pdf>

9. Assistant director responsible

Paul Kemp

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