

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE
18 MARCH 2008

CLIMATE CHANGE PARKING LEVY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline a method for allocating proceeds from the Climate Change Parking Levy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2008-2018) for Exeter sets out a proposal to ring-fence 2% of city council car park revenues to fund additional climate change mitigation measures. Executive ratified this approach in its agreement of the Car Park Tariff Committee Paper of 20 November 2007. Approximately £110,000 (2% of expected revenue) has been allocated for this purpose. £10,000 has been top-sliced to extend the Green Bag campaign which the City Council has been running in partnership with the Express and Echo. For the remaining £100,000, City Council officers were asked to devise a structure and process for allocating the money, one that is transparent, inclusive and evidence-based. This paper responds to that request.

3.0 STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

- 3.1 The Leader has advised that responsibility for allocation of this levy should not sit solely with the City Council. To that end, officers are proposing the creation of an Exeter Parking Levy Evaluation Team (PLET) whose membership will include:
- the ECC Portfolio Holder for Environment and Leisure (chair),
 - an Express and Echo Reader's Panel member,
 - a member of Low Carbon Exeter,
 - a member of the Exeter business community (potentially a representative from the energy industry in Exeter)
- 3.2 This group will invite project ideas/proposals for allocation of this funding from the public. Invitations will be made through a range of media, in particular, to include the Express and Echo. Project proposals should aim to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and should target either homes in Exeter, business premises in the City or develop ideas for sustainable transport (see Climate Change Strategy for Exeter). There will be no restriction on who can submit proposals but all proposals must relate entirely to, and be capable of implementation within, the Exeter City Council area.

- 3.3 Projects will then be assessed by the PLET, using the following criteria:
- Cost and value for money (in terms of cost per reduction in CO₂)
 - Additionality (i.e. the ease, or otherwise, with which an idea could be funded via other sources)
 - Legality, deliverability and practicality
 - Originality and potential to gain the public's imagination/participation
 - Extent to which project ideas are informed by the evidence on carbon dioxide emissions in Exeter and respond to priorities set out in the Climate Change Strategy for Exeter.
- 3.4 The purpose of assessment is to allow the group to short-list those proposals that they feel best meet the criteria set out above. Short-listed ideas will then be put forward for public vote, leaving the public to decide which ideas should be implemented (see further below). It is not intended to impose an up-front financial limit on proposals – decisions on the affordability and value for money of proposals, it is suggested, should sit with the PLET, taking into account the quality of rival bids.
- 3.5 A City Council officer will provide a secretariat function for the PLET. Technical advice on the deliverability and cost effectiveness of proposals will be available from the Centre for Energy and Environment (Exeter University) and, as required, from others. Members of the PLET will be expected to declare an interest and will not be allowed to decide on the appropriateness of ideas that they or the organisations they represent have put forward for evaluation.
- 3.6 Short-listed proposals will be profiled in the June edition of the Citizen. The Citizen and Council website will be used to conduct a reader poll to identify the most popular ideas among residents. Use of the Citizen for the reader poll was identified as the most appropriate medium at a recent Member briefing event. The most popular ideas will then be implemented – subject to sufficient funding - and their progress reported on via local media.
- 3.7 Involving the Express and Echo and Citizen readership will usefully raise the profile of climate change within Exeter. In addition to the direct benefits that will flow from additional investment in climate change measures, the fund will also contribute to a wider effort to increase community engagement and local pride in such issues. The role of local media is vital in this respect.
- 3.8 In one sense, the governance model and process described above might be viewed as disproportionate to the level of funding involved. Nevertheless, the broader purpose of the fund – to raise the profile of climate change and to seek public engagement – should also be clear, and it is this wider purpose that has structured thinking in relation to this proposal.

4.0 MEMBER CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The proposals outlined above have benefited from, and take account of, consultation with Members attending a briefing session on Climate Change issues on 6th February 2007.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

- (i) That Executive endorses the approach set out above and permits officers to proceed with implementation, engaging partners as appropriate.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None.