

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

Executive
Forward Plan
Reference

E2711

**Bath and West Community Energy Co-Operation
Agreement Renewal**

Date of Meeting	12-Nov-14
The Issue	The existing Cooperation Agreement with BWCE has enabled award-winning work and expires in October 2014, this proposal is to renew it for five years
The decision	(1) To RENEW the BWCE Cooperation Agreement for five years, until November 2019.
Rationale for decision	<p>The Cooperation Agreement will enable the Council and BWCE to work together to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) B&NES deliver its Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy aim of providing the leadership to enable a 45% cut in district wide CO2 emissions; b) maximise the proportion of the District's 2020 renewable energy target in the draft Core Strategy that will be delivered using a strong community model; c) build community resilience, for example, by alleviating the impact of rising fossil-fuelled energy prices, and retaining economic benefit locally; and d) establish a significant 'community fund' for re-investing in local energy projects in the area.
Other options considered	<p>Working with commercial companies to deliver similar projects: Some other local authorities have various procurement arrangements with for-profit companies. However, in this case the profits from energy projects are not reinvested locally, representing less value for the area. The social benefits of local ownership of energy, community involvement in projects and the development of a local low carbon supply chain would also not be as fully realised.</p> <p>Working with organisations that are similar to BWCE: We have not found any other local organisations who can provide the same benefits as BWCE of being non-profit, reinvesting revenues into a community fund and being owned by local people via community share offers (as noted, BWCE's uniqueness is also recognised at a national level through their receipt of several community energy awards). Our work would make us aware if there were any other organisations in the district offering similar benefits. For example, our Community Sustainability Officer coordinates a Community Energy Forum and works with the Stronger Communities team to support energy groups throughout the district, some of which are considering becoming enterprises (e.g. Transition Keynsham). We also monitor planning applications to make us aware if any community projects get to the delivery stage. Hopefully, similar enterprises will emerge as the national landscape for community renewables becomes more favourable and were such groups to form, we</p>

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could consider invoking our Localism Act powers to work with them based on their ability to contribute to our policy objectives.
The Cooperation Agreement is not an exclusive agreement, and the Council can choose to pursue other options should it be in its interests to do so and would positively consider any other organisation's proposals that achieved the same aims.

The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision