



## Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment	Councillor Alan Vincent, Resources Portfolio Holder	3 December 2020

### Appointment of Consultant to Provide Funding Bid Assistance with the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek Portfolio Holder approval for an exemption to the council's financial procedure rules for the procurement of APSE Energy to provide energy audit advice and assistance with writing the funding bid to benefit from the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund (PSLCSF).

#### 2. Outcomes

- 2.1 To submit a funding bid for the PSLCSF to carry out detailed energy audits and cost savings analysis for projects to improve the energy efficiency of key council assets.
- 2.2 To progress towards the council's commitment to reduce council carbon emissions and achieve a cleaner, greener Wyre.

#### 3. Recommendation/s

- 3.1 That approval is given to appoint APSE Energy to assist in the preparation of a funding bid for the PSLCSF, to submit to Salix in order to secure funding for detailed energy audits at the Civic Centre, Fleetwood Market, Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre.
- 3.2 That approval is given by the Resources Portfolio Holder to allow for the appointment of consultants APSE Energy under the exemptions to Contract Procedures contained within the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules. The exemption is sought on the grounds that the services are of a specialised nature carried out by only one or a limited number of firms with no reasonably satisfactory alternatives available, and that these services are required urgently.

**3.3** That approval is given by the Resources Portfolio Holder for the Corporate Director Environment to enter into an agreement with APSE Energy to provide consultancy services to assist in the preparation of the funding bid and carry out subsequent audits if the bid is successful.

#### **4. Background**

**4.1** The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) launched the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) on 30 September 2020, which is delivered by Salix. This offers £1bn of grant funding to deliver energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects, to achieve significant carbon savings in the public sector, support jobs and encourage a green Covid-19 recovery.

**4.2** This provides an opportunity for local authorities to access funds to complete improvement works on council-owned buildings. The main focus of the project is on heat decarbonisation. However other improvements such as insulation, lighting and new windows can be fully or part funded from the scheme. Detailed calculations are required to determine the capital cost, energy savings and carbon savings for applications to be approved.

**4.3** The scheme is split into two parts: a Capital Grant Scheme for projects that are fully calculated and costed; and the PSLCSF for authorities to source specialist advice to identify and develop projects prior to preparing a robust application to the Capital Grant Scheme.

**4.4** The PSLCSF would be the most suitable grant for the council, as this will fund external support to conduct energy audits of key council assets. This will include research, site visits, data collection and analysis, and the production of a report detailing recommendations for actions to improve energy efficiency and ensure decarbonisation at each site. As the highest energy users, the following four buildings would be targeted during this initial round of funding, to gain a detailed understanding of what is required to reduce their energy consumption:

1. Civic Centre,
2. Fleetwood Market,
3. Marine Hall,
4. Thornton Little Theatre.

**4.5** If the PSLCSF is successful and detailed energy audits identify suitable projects, it is possible to follow this up with a further application to the Capital Grant Scheme to obtain funding for the capital required to deliver the identified energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects.

**4.6** Progressing the initial funding bid requires the assistance of a competent consultant with experience of successfully working with local authorities to achieve grant funding under the PSDS, as well as expert knowledge in conducting energy audits and compiling comprehensive decarbonisation plans for council estates.

**4.7** During the full council meeting on 11 July 2019, members unanimously agreed to declare a Climate Emergency and committed to making the council activities net-zero carbon neutral by 2050. This included a commitment to achieve 100% clean energy across the council’s full range of functions by the same deadline. A successful application to the PSLCSF would enable the council to make progress towards this commitment.

## **5. Key issues and proposals**

**5.1** In order to qualify for the funding bid, it is necessary to complete the application by 4 December. To achieve this, it is necessary to obtain the support of a competent and experienced consultant. APSE Energy meet these requirements as a leading local authority energy collaboration run by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), which the council have subscribed to as a member authority. It is therefore proposed to directly appoint APSE Energy to provide these services.

**5.2** Exemption from the council’s standing orders is therefore sought as the services are of a specialised nature carried out by only one or a limited number of firms with no reasonably satisfactory alternatives available. There are a limited number of this type of Energy Consultant and they are likely to be heavily oversubscribed by other councils also trying to claim off this fund before the deadline.

**5.3** Exemption is also sought as the services are required urgently, owing to the upcoming deadline of 4 December 2020 for claiming off the fund. This could not have been anticipated due to the very tight timeframes that the whole initiative has been run on.

**5.4** The services required to submit the funding bid and to produce subsequent energy audits of the four buildings outlined above will be supported through external funding from the PSLCSF. This is estimated at approximately £41,000.

## **6. Delegated functions**

**6.1** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the council’s constitution):

“To consider departures from Rules relating to financial and contractual matters if appropriate.”

<b>Financial and legal implications</b>	
Finance	APSE Energy will not charge for assisting the funding bid application if the bid is unsuccessful.

	If the bid is successful, the costs of the services will be met by the funding from the PSLCSF. No costs will be incurred by the council. An estimate of costs for the external consultants is approximately £41,000. Officer time on the project can be accommodated from within existing budgets.
Legal	The appointment of APSE Energy requires exemption from the procurement procedures at Part 4.06.07 Appendix F of the Constitution. The special circumstances required are set out at clause 3.2 and 5.3 above. Prior to appointment, an agreement between the council and APSE Energy will be entered into.

### Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	✓
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	✓
climate change	✓
ICT	x
data protection	x

### Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

### List of appendices

None