

OFFICER DECISION FORM

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY: Director of Finance

KEY DECISION : Yes

DIRECTORATE: Regeneration & Place

WARDS AFFECTED: BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE

SUBJECT: BIRKENHEAD DISTRICT HEAT NETWORK – PROCUREMENT OF A PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNER

1.0 DECISION:

- 1.1 The Director of Finance has authorised the commencement of a procurement exercise, to select a private sector partner who will ultimately be responsible for the design, build, finance, operation and maintenance of a district heat network within Birkenhead town centre. This will be conducted through a concessionaire (evergreen) approach, via a competitive dialogue process.

2.0 REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 2.1 The Chancellor's 2019 Spring Statement and Future Homes Consultation sets the commitment that fossil fuel heating will no longer be permitted in new homes from 2025. The UK Government estimates that around 18% of UK heat will need to come from heat networks by 2050 if the UK is to meet its carbon targets cost effectively. Heat Networks supply heat from a central source to consumers via a network of underground pipes carrying hot water. On 15 July 2019, Wirral Council declared an Environment and Climate Emergency at a meeting of full Council, and through this committed to action to address the ecological and climate crisis.
- 2.2 Wirral's Cool 2 Climate Change Strategy 2019 includes an objective to generate and/or source all our local energy needs from zero carbon and renewable sources by around 2041 and commitment to progress heat networks. Provision has been made within the Local Plan to support the heat network through safeguarding of energy centre and mandating suitable buildings for connection to a heat network. The development and delivery of a Birkenhead Heat Network is listed as 1 of 8 catalyst projects in the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework.

3.0 STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

- 3.1 The recommendations are made further to legal advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been completed. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

4.0 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

4.1 The officers involved in facilitating the procurement process to identify a preferred private sector partner have no interests to declare. The Director of Finance as the nominated officer for this decision has no interest to declare either.



Signed:

Officer: Matt Bennett

Title: Director of Finance

Date: 6 January 2025

A list of background papers on this issue is held with:

Contact Officer: Neil Mitchell

Date: 3 December 2024

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