

# CEAC Briefing Paper



Report of Interim Head of Development and Regeneration

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To: Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Dates: 28 October 2020

## Oxfordshire Greentech Membership Briefing

### Recommendation(s)

- (a) That the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) notes the benefits of Founder Membership of Oxfordshire Greentech (OG).
- (b) That the CEAC notes the proposed Year One support package negotiated with OG.

### Purpose of Briefing Paper

1. To inform CEAC members of the benefits of purchasing a joint Council Membership of Oxfordshire Greentech (OG) at Founder Member level.
2. To inform CEAC members of the proposed year one support package negotiated with OG.

3. To seek approval of the Year One support package and allow completion of OG membership at Founder Member level for both Councils.

## **Corporate Objectives**

4. Work is currently being undertaken to develop the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and update priorities, which provides an opportunity to embed climate emergency related goals. It is proposed that the draft of the future corporate plan 2020-2024 for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse has a theme on the Climate Emergency.

## **Background**

5. In November 2019, the Economic Development team was asked to respond to the proposed CEAC Work Programme with recommendations of how the Councils might support and grow the Low Carbon Economy in South and Vale.
6. In response, Economic Development recommended that the Councils join the Oxfordshire Greentech Network.
- a) The response outlined how OG membership would enable the Councils to access cost-effective expertise within the low carbon sector

The full proposal can be found in the “Economic Development Response to year one Climate Emergency Work Programme” included within the appendix

7. OG is a business network supporting growth of the low-carbon sector.
  - a) The network was initially run by a collaborative partnership between the Low Carbon Hub, Cherwell District Council, Bioregional, Oxford City Council, the University of Oxford, and Oxford Brookes University and supported by the £3.2m OxFutures fund
  - b) OG aims to facilitate the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon future in Oxfordshire and the world by bringing together businesses and organisations to encourage innovation, collaboration and knowledge transfer
8. This recommendation for OG membership was included within the CEAC work programme approved by Vale Cabinet in January 2020 and South Cabinet in February 2020.
9. In August 2020, the Insight and Policy Manager requested delegated authority from the Head of Development and Regeneration to approve commissioning OG’s services as a Specialist Contract under the Contract Procedure Rules. The approved delegated authority includes the Councils’ legal team request that details of a Year One support package were finalised before membership was completed.
10. The following sections detail the proposed Year One support package alongside general and founder level membership benefits.

## Benefits for all members

11. Joining Greentech at Founder Member level includes benefits that are available for all tiers of membership. These benefits are:

- a) Free or discounted access to events (dependent on type of event), including OG's Annual Conference, networking events and investment forums
- b) Membership and attendance of special interest groups (i.e. Circular Economy focus group)
- c) Organisation name listed on OG website
- d) Opportunity for promotion via OG's newsletter and social media channels
- e) Opportunity to receive and offer discounts from / to Greentech members and network
- f) Access to Greentech resources, including case study materials and information on funding and commercial opportunities within the low carbon sector

## Benefits for Founder Members

12. Joining as a Founder Member allows for additional benefits alongside those available to all membership tiers. Additional benefits are:

- a) Organisation logo and profile featured on OG website
- b) Help to shape the network as a member of Quarterly Steering Group (optional)
- c) Access to exclusive Founder Member networking meetings, including investor and meet the buyer events
- d) Priority invitations to facilitated international innovation events. E.g. Department for International Trade – Greentech Festival
- e) Option to initiate and lead Special Interest Groups
- f) Introductions to key players in sectors of interest
- g) Dedicated and frequent promotion of any of your relevant news, job vacancies, new business ventures etc via our newsletter, social media channels and our media contacts

## Bespoke Support for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

13. To help meet the objectives detailed in the CEAC work programme, Economic Development officers have negotiated an additional Year One support plan that directly relates to the outlined objectives.

14. Suggested actions within the Year One support plan are listed in points 15 to 19. Individual actions are bullet pointed beneath the most relevant CEAC Work Programme objective that it will help us to meet.

15. To meet the objective ***“Help us to invite local businesses to move more strongly toward a low carbon economy and support local businesses to do so wherever possible, including continued promotion of appropriate funding”*** the following actions are proposed:

- a) A speaking slot will be allocated to the Councils at OG's Annual Oxfordshire Conference. This can be used to help build each Councils profile and environmental agendas. The conference is currently scheduled for March 2021.
  - b) OG will organise and host a co-branded One Planet Living action plan training event. The event will be available exclusively for South and Vale-based businesses and will allow attendees to plan their sustainability journey (This is usually costed at £270.00 per business). District specific case studies will be developed from attendees. Initial discussions suggest the event can be scheduled for Q1 of 2021.
  - c) A ten per cent discount from the standard member rate will be offered to all South and Vale-based businesses wishing to join OG for the duration of our membership, allowing the areas businesses to affordably access OG's services.
  - d) The Councils will receive expert advice and support in understanding and promoting low carbon funding streams. These will include Energy Solution Oxfordshire (ESOX) and updated equivalents of the OxFutures fund.
16. To meet the objective ***“Develop and compile a portfolio of project examples to inspire South and Vale based businesses to act”*** the following actions are proposed:
- a) Bespoke case studies will be compiled and available from OG for use by the Economic Development team. Case studies will be promoted via our South and Vale Business Support channels to help influence and inspire local businesses.
  - b) The Councils will receive priority opportunities to appear in OG's monthly newsletter, with a reach of over 2,000 subscribers. This could be used to promote the Councils' climate change ambitions, economic opportunities and job vacancies within the districts.
  - c) The Councils will be able to access expertise from OG's network. This allows us to make connections for the areas businesses and offer credible speakers at events.
17. To meet the objective ***“Encourage new, low-carbon enterprises business into the area, identifying incentives for them to locate locally”*** the following actions are proposed:
- a) OG's expertise and contacts can assist Economic Development in identification of and promotion of low carbon related clusters and supply chain opportunities within the districts.
  - b) The Council's will receive priority access to investment and funding events. This will provide direct links to both investors and investment hungry SMEs.
  - c) The Council can access sector expertise from the OG network. This will allow Economic Development to offer specialised support and advice to the areas businesses.
18. To meet the objective ***“Help to develop skills in the local workforce, including apprenticeship opportunities, in respect of low carbon infrastructure and installation”*** the following actions are proposed:
- a) OG will identify and offer qualified advice on workforce opportunities within low-carbon industry. Communication of opportunities can take place via

South and Vale Business Support channels including knowledge transfer events.

19. To meet the objective **“Hold a minimum of two knowledge transfer events centred on the low carbon economy”** the following actions are proposed:

- a) Due to Covid-19 restrictions, events are likely to take place online.
- b) The possibility of holding physical events will be reviewed within year one.
- c) OG will work with Economic Development to identify, organise and promote knowledge transfer events on relevant areas of interest.
- d) Events will be co-branded. OG will lead organisation and logistics of events.
- e) These events will likely be scheduled for Q2 and 3 of 2021, to allow for more progress in events restrictions caused by the Covid pandemic.
- f) The focus of events will require further research, initial options include:
  - i. Sustainable construction
  - ii. Retrofitting opportunities
  - iii. Access to finance and investment
  - iv. Green skills and workforce opportunities
  - v. The Circular Economy

## Resource Implications

20. Responsibility for handling the OG relationship will primarily fall to the Economic Development team. Existing resources will need to be diverted from other priority areas and to be balanced with priorities outlined in the forthcoming Economic Recovery Plans.

- a) Economic Recovery plans for each Council will be informed by the results of the Business Recovery Survey Autumn 2020.
- b) A link to this survey can be found in the appendices. A full report on the results is scheduled for publication in early November 2020.

21. It is expected that aspects of the proposed membership may be relevant or beneficial to other service areas.

- a) Should the Councils wish to join the OG Steering Group, this opportunity may be best suited to the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee or the Council’s Climate Change Lead.
- b) Special interest groups focused on subjects such as Smart Cities, or Low Carbon infrastructure may be relevant to Garden Communities Team, or colleagues from Planning.

22. Support from Legal and Planning and Policy teams is required to finalise membership.

23. Support from the Communications team will be required to prepare promotional content such as the Councils' profile for the OG website.

## **Financial Implications**

24. Three-year Founder Membership of OG is costed at £2,500.00 per Council per year.
25. The budget for these works is included in the Climate Emergency Work Programme that has been approved by each Councils' Cabinet.

## **Legal Implications**

26. There is no formal paperwork or contract signing to become a member of OG. The councils are required to provide contact details (organisation name, registered company address, the name of the employee who will be the organisation's point of contact for any future interactions about membership, email address).
27. The Councils receive an invoice at founder membership level. OG request a council logo and short introduction to the organisation for their website and publicity.
28. The agreement is with Oxfordshire Greentech Ltd which is a standalone limited company. Bioregional is one of the founding partners of the network and leads on the running and resourcing of Oxfordshire Greentech (alongside the two others founding partners, Cherwell District Council and Cambridge Cleantech).
29. The contract terms and conditions for engaging this service will be produced by the Councils' legal team.

## **Risks**

30. The risks of proceeding with the recommended course of action are minimal. The main risk would be that OG does not perform the contract satisfactorily.
31. This risk should be mitigated by effective contract and relationship management which will be achieved collaboratively between the councils' Economic Development Team and the Insight and Policy team.
32. There are no obligations placed on the councils by becoming members of OG. As a member, the council are able to take advantage of a range of benefits that suit the councils' needs
33. A risk assessment will be carried out when the detailed support package is agreed.

## **Conclusion**

34. OG membership offers the councils a cost-effective opportunity to access knowledge and expertise to help support and grow the Low Carbon economy.

## Background Papers

- APPENDIX 1: CEAC Work Programme – ED Response
- APPENDIX 2: Delegated Authority with specialist exception Greentech Bioregional v6 SM signed180820 (3)
- APPENDIX 3: SODCVale Draft SV Greentech Membership Agreement
- APPENDIX 4: [Business Recovery Survey – Autumn 2020](#) - (information and link can be found at: [www.svbs.co.uk/business-recovery-survey](http://www.svbs.co.uk/business-recovery-survey))