



SOUTHWESTERN ENERGY HUB PROJECT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 21/20

9 MARCH 2020

The purpose of this Report is to seek Members' agreement to the submission of a grant application to the Southwestern Energy Hub for a Feasibility Study for a renewable energy Project based on seaweed.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) is a £10 million programme which supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects, which provide economic and social benefits to the community.
- b) It provides support to rural communities in two stages:
 - o Stage 1: grants of up to £40,000 for a feasibility study for a renewable energy project.
 - o Stage 2: grants of up to £100,000 for business development and planning of feasible schemes.
- c) Councillor Colm Watling met with the administrators of the RCEF in Bristol on 12 February and submitted an outline application to this scheme on behalf of the Town Council 15 February as a consequence of which the Town Council has been invited to apply for a Stage 1 grant of up to £40K.
- d) The outline of the application was to investigate the feasibility of using beach cast seaweed from our beach and haven (and possibly further afield) to feed an anaerobic digestion plant (there are 3 on the island) to generate gas to heat homes and/or run buses.

2) THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The feasibility study will look at:

- o the practicalities of collecting, washing and storing the seaweed;
- o the microbiology and AD parameters (temperatures, feeds and speeds);
- o the use of the seaweed as a standalone feedstock or as an adjunct to the existing crop feedstock;
- o the capacity of the existing plants and the economics of a dedicated plant; and
- o the storage, logistics and economics of locally produced biogas for bus and other heavy fleet use (eg refuse collection).

3) NEXT STEPS

- a) To complete the next stage application form that Councillor Colm Watling has volunteered to do supported by Town Council staff.
- b) In addition to the completed form the other documents required are:
 - o a De Minimis Declaration: the Town Clerk has provided the information for this; and
 - o three quotations from suitably qualified consultants against the DEFRA specification of work.

4) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to continue with the application process.
