



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE LEADER

TOPIC – CONTINUATION OF CARBON SMART GREEN BUSINESS CERTIFICATION

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Kate Cloud, Head of Economy and Arts, 01962 848 563
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Democratic Services Officer: Nancy Graham, Senior Democratic Services Officer, 01962 848 235, ngraham@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

- Carbon Smart (www.winchester.gov.uk/business/low-carbon-economy/) was commissioned in 2012 to deliver a green business certification scheme across the Winchester District. As a result, 147 businesses have had their carbon footprint, environmental policy and planned environmental improvements assessed, with blue, silver or gold certificates being issued. More information is available at www.winchester.gov.uk/news/2013/jul/carbon-smart-winchester-celebrates-100-certified-businesses/
- Officers recommend that a further year of Carbon Smart certification is commissioned, testing out alterations in the scheme. This year would also allow for the Council's support of environmentally friendly practices amongst businesses to be revisited as part of a review of its overall business support offer. This further year would be at a cost of £11,050 to Winchester City Council, already accounted for in the existing economic development budget. This fee will be for the costs of Carbon Smart marketing the scheme to both

existing and new clients, and also for the cost of the certification process itself.

- This work fits with both the High Quality Environment, especially 'Working towards a lower carbon District' and the Prosperous Economy strands of the Winchester District Community Strategy, especially 'Support the local economy'.

DECISION

1. That a direction be made under Contracts Procedure Rule 2.4 a) authorising a contract to be negotiated with Carbon Smart.
2. That the Head of Economy and Arts be authorised to commission Carbon Smart to deliver one further year of green business certification to allow for review and testing a new delivery module.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Carbon Smart has delivered a very successful certification scheme across the Winchester District. 147 businesses have been certified, inspiring others to consider their green credentials as a selling point to their customers and clients. Certified tourism businesses are able to add the Carbon Smart Winchester logo to their entry in the Winchester Visitor Guide, and the Carbon Smart programme has been used as the basis for the Winchester City Council sponsored green businesses award in the Winchester Business Excellence Awards.

The Carbon Smart Winchester programme has been free to businesses for two years. During the coming year, it is proposed that Carbon Smart would test out the appetite for this certification programme when a small charge is levied to businesses. This charge would be proportional to the size of the business, starting at £60 and rising to £150 for the largest organisations, and would demonstrate the commitment of a business to the process. Only by testing this model out will it be possible to establish whether there is a possibility of this sort of scheme being self-funded by the business community in future.

There are three clear alternatives to this course of action:

1. Withdraw the certification programme altogether. This would result in a zero cost to Winchester City Council, but would be contrary to its wish to support businesses to become more environmentally friendly. There would be no funded mechanism in place for businesses to assess their carbon footprint, and no certification for good practice.
2. Charge businesses the full cost of certification. This would result in a charge starting at £390 for small businesses, and this is felt to be too much for most businesses to realistically pay for this service.

3. Re-commission this work, allowing alternative providers to bid for the certification programme. This would not only terminate the Council's existing relationship with Carbon Smart, and the good work which has been achieved to date building up relationships and contacts, but would also appear confusing to the business community given that they have now been used to the Carbon Smart certification programme for two years, and recommissioning with a different provider would change the scheme before it has had time to 'bed in'. This would also come at an inopportune time, as the Council's wider business support offer, including support in environmentally friendly practices, is not complete. This review will inform the future shape of this work, in order to provide what the business community need to maintain and improve their green credentials.

Whilst extending the existing contract with Carbon Smart means that the market will not be formally tested for provision of the service, Carbon Smart were originally selected following a competitive process, and officers are satisfied that the quotation provided is good value for money. The contract sum is relatively low in procurement terms, and rigorous negotiation has taken place with Carbon Smart to ensure they would provide a high standard of service for businesses in the District. The need to continue with the existing scheme in order to thoroughly test out changes, such as a small charge for businesses taking part, is another factor in choosing to proceed with Carbon Smart.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The charge to businesses would be retained by Carbon Smart. The cost to the Council to continue the scheme would be a total of £11,050, split across two financial years (2014/2015 and 2015/2016), and this figure takes account of the proposed charges by Carbon Smart to businesses. Provision has been made for the payment by the Council within the existing economic development budget.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

In addition to monitoring ongoing feedback from businesses involved in Carbon Smart already, informal consultation has taken place with key local stakeholders including the Sustainable Business Network, Winchester Business Improvement District and Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, alongside existing participants from both micro and large business backgrounds and Winchester Action on Climate Change

As part of the review of Winchester City Council's business support offer, a much wider audience will be consulted with for work beyond the extension proposed in this Notice.

**FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED
FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION
NOTICE**

N/a

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR
OFFICER CONSULTED**

None.

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 02.02.15

Councillor Rob Humby – Leader