

NORTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of **SLEAFORD RENEWABLE ENERGY PLANT COMMUNITY POWER FUND PANEL** held at Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant on Wednesday, 8 January 2020 at (10.30 am - 1.50 pm)

PRESENT:

Councillor Mervyn Head	Kirkby La Thorpe and South Kyme
Councillor Mrs Amanda Sanderson	Billingham, Martin and North Kyme
Caty Collier	Voluntary Centre Services NK
The Revd Philip Johnson	Vicar of Sleaford, Rural Dean of Lafford
John Cole	Natural Power
Paul Taylor	Taylor Keogh

1 Welcome and Introductions

Paul Taylor (Taylor Keogh) and Alan Gray, Economic Development Manager NKDC, welcomed the Panel to the Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant.

The Panel members introduced themselves and apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Tarry.

2 Election of Chairman

The Panel elected Councillor Head as Chairman.

3 Election of Vice-Chairman

The Panel Elected Councillor Mrs Sanderson as Vice Chairman.

4 Background to Sleaford REP Community Power Fund

Paul Taylor (Taylor Keogh) and Alan Gray, Economic Development Manager NKDC, provided an overview of the background and context of the Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant Community Power Fund to the Panel.

The Panel noted how the Plant came to exist, including how the location was determined, the importance of the use of renewable energy, the economic benefits to the local area, and additional contribution to wellbeing.

It was stated that a strong relationship existed between the Plant, the Council and local community groups, and that the Council's recent recognition of Climate Emergency was another positive step in further strengthening these relationships.

The Panel asked numerous questions and the following responses were given:

- A summary of how the fund had been formed was provided.
- The intention was for the fund to be spread wider than the previous fund over 28 parishes and was to be administered by NKDC.
- That a district heating system had been established, providing free heating to public facilities across Sleaford, such as the District Council Offices, the Leisure Centre and schools.
- That further community grants were anticipated for the future.

The Panel noted the background and context of the Fund and commended the Plant's commitment to supporting the local community. The Chairman noted that a lot of people would have the opportunity to benefit from the fund.

5 **Terms of Reference**

North Kesteven District Council's Economic Development Manager presented the Terms of Reference to the Panel.

The following aspects were explained: Objectives, Terms of Reference Powers, and Standing Orders.

It was noted that:

- The Panel shall ensure the £125,000 fund is administrated to local community and leisure projects – allocating £25,000 each year for a 5 year period.
- The Panel shall ensure probity and ethics are adhered to at all times.
- The Panel shall oversee the administration, promotion and implementation of the Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant Community Power Fund.
- The Panel shall be responsible for agreeing a communication strategy, overseeing its implementation, and acting as advocates for the Plant.

The Panel discussed the Terms of Reference in detail and asked numerous questions. The following responses were provided:

- That the Terms of Reference were to be made clearer.
- It was advised that the ratification of the Terms of Reference would discussed at the next meeting .
- North Kesteven District Council's Democratic Services Team were to ensure that published minutes were also forwarded to Paul Taylor (Taylor Keogh) and the Glennmont General Manager.
- It was clarified that meetings would occur four times per year.

Resolved:

The Panel noted the Terms of Reference and suggested the following minor amendments: under Terms of Reference Powers Part 2 and Part 5:

- Part 2
The costs of marketing and promotion of the fund should not be met from the £125,000 allocated to the Community Power Fund. Any such costs incurred will be met directly by North Kesteven District Council and/or Glennmont.
- Part 5
Copies of minutes will be published on the NKDC website and the Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant website.

6 **Grant Criteria, Application Form and Guidance**

The Partnerships Officer (NKDC) presented the Grant Criteria, Application Form and Guidance to the Panel.

The following matters were explained:

- How applicants were to apply to access the grant and the availability of the funding
 - A shorter application form was to be created for grants up to £1000.
 - The maximum grant that could be offered per case was £5000.
- Objectives of the grant
 - Funded projects must concern environment, sport, wellbeing and education.
 - Funded projects must benefit the community – whether that be within geographic area, age, gender, ethnicity or interest.
- Eligibility for the grant
 - It was stated that applicants must have a governing document and bank account,
 - groups must not be for profit, and
 - groups must operate in Parishes within a 5 mile radius of the Plant.
- The kind of projects that were to be funded
 - The grant was to fund projects that concerned green spaces, arts groups, capital projects, children's groups, community groups, disability support, local markets, art, schools, sport, and/or volunteering initiatives.
- What was not to be funded
 - This included individuals, larger appeals, profiting, political or faith specific groups, routine maintenance, statutory responsibilities, retrospective funding, and/or utility bills.
- Grant information
 - Applications were to be considered at quarterly meetings of the Panel.
 - Payments were to be made upon receipt of invoices.
- Grant deadlines and notification periods
 - It was agreed that a fixed day each month prior to an upcoming meeting was to mark the application deadline.
 - Applicants were to be informed of the status of their application within 5 working days of Panel meeting.
- Required supporting information
 - It was expected that organisations would provide evidence of the following, in order to qualify for the grant:
 - Constitution, or governing document,
 - the latest set of audited accounts,
 - 3 quotes to prove best value, and
 - any documents specific to the project or organisation (e.g. safeguarding procedures, public liability, personal accident, building insurance, etc.).
- The design of the Application Form was also presented to the Panel.

The Panel discussed the report in great detail and asked numerous questions and the following responses were given:

- It was not appropriate for the Panel to personally recommend recipients of the fund.
- The inclusion of examples of projects that met the criteria of the fund was employed in order to help guide applicants, rather than influence ideas for projects.
- Funding was restricted to local applications who both operated and based were within the Plant's local vicinity.
- The Panel noted that funding was granted in arrears.

- It was verified that VAT registered organisations would have to include VAT in the calculation of their cost breakdown.
- Defining groups within the same categories was found to be a too narrow definition – it was instead suggested that this should be phrased as similar categories.

The Panel noted the Grant Criteria, Application Form and Guidance and made the following further suggestions:

- A clear project description was needed to guide applications and specify the criteria. It was also found necessary to outline what the fund was trying to achieve more succinctly.
- It was agreed that community engagement and cohesion was to be made an objective of the fund to better serve the Council's 'Our Communities' priority. Further wording was suggested to emphasise this objective.
- Further clarity was necessary regarding invoicing, to state that invoices concerned the group's name, not the individual's.
- Clarification that applications would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis was required.
- A standard GDPR statement was required.
- Officers were to look into ways of overcoming issues associated with funding in arrears, and possibly include an evidence/explanation box for how the project would be delivered.

Conclusions:

1. The Panel agreed that all suggestions be incorporated and the the following actions be taken concerning the Grant Criteria, Application Form and Guidance:

- Wording concerning if the application form was not wholly suitable to legitimate applications was to be reviewed – to instruct applicants to make contact if there is anything they are unsure of.
- Further alterations that were to be made to the Form included:
 - Part 3.2 was to be incorporated into part 4.
 - Part 2.4 should state 'recommended' instead of 'expected'.
 - Outcomes had to be measured.
 - To include a report to measure progress after 6 months.
 - To include clarity that checks were to only be completed after a grant had been allocated and if it was applicable to the organisation in receipt and the funding.
 - Part 6 to clearly hold separate documentation.

2. That the Partnerships Officer update the application form and guidance accordingly and circulate the updated documents to the Panel via email.

7 Funding Rounds and Meeting Dates

The Panel discussed future meeting dates under minute item 11.

8 Reporting Process

North Kesteven District Council's Partnerships Officer presented the Reporting Process to the Panel.

The following matters were explained:

- A verbal reporting system was to be introduced to preliminarily determine the strength of an application before it was considered by the Panel.
- A verbal report concerning potential application was to be presented to the Panel at each meeting going forward

The Panel asked numerous questions and the following responses were given:

- Applications for discussion were to be distributed by the Partnerships Officer before each upcoming meeting, for the Panel to familiarise themselves.
- Democratic Services were to attach all final application forms to each upcoming meeting's Agenda going forward.

The Panel noted the Reporting Process with the following comments:

- Decision Notices were agreed to be forwarded to Glenmont and confirmed by PT following each meeting going forward.
- Applications were to be prepared for panel to review in advance of each meeting, as explained.

Conclusions:

1. That the Panel have earlier sight of the applications prior to the agenda dispatch.
2. That Decision Notices be scanned and forwarded to Glenmont and confirmed following each meeting going forward.
3. That all final application forms be attached to each upcoming meeting's Agenda going forward.

9 **Publicity**

North Kesteven District Council's Partnerships Officer presented Publicity matters to the Panel.

The following matters were explained:

- A press release was scheduled for the week following the meeting to promote the fund via local papers.
- North Kesteven District Council scheduled to make a social media post that day to promote the fund on twitter and facebook.
- Parish news letters were to be alerted of the fund so that they could make their own arrangements to publicise and recommend applicants.

The Panel noted Publicity matters with the following comments:

- Publicity was to be made a standing item on the agenda, so that publicity of the fund could be continuously reviewed and improved.
- Statements from the Panel were to be included in publicity material.

- District Council Members agreed to raise awareness of the fund with their respective ward residents.
- Members agreed to raise awareness of the fund with parishioners and the broader community.

Conclusions:

1. That Publicity update be made a standing agenda item for future meeting.
2. That the Partnerships Officer collates a list of previous successful outcomes to be sent to the Communications Manager.

10 **Any Other Business**

There was no further business to discuss.

11 **Future Meeting Dates**

The Panel discussed the proposed meeting dates for the Panel in 2020/21 and agreed that times and meeting room arrangements the following dates be explored and confirmed via email:

- Wednesday 13th May 2020.
- Wednesday 9th September 202 (PM).
- Wednesday 13th January 2021 as an alternative to 6th January 2021.
- Wednesday 12th May 2021.

The next meeting of the Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant Community Power Fund Panel was scheduled for Wednesday 13th May 2020.