

Agenda Item 6

For decision - Environmental Landscape Sensitivity Analysis

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Summary

Frome Town Council declared a climate emergency in 2018 and has committed to becoming a zero carbon town. It is proposed that the council commissions a landscape sensitivity analysis to outline which areas are suitable for renewable energy projects. This can then feed into the Local Plan to help ensure that wind and solar projects are sensitively located with minimal impact on the landscape. The analysis will also look at which areas are suitable for tree planting which will feed into the council's Wild About Trees programme and the Environmental Resilience Framework.

Exploring renewable energy options is part of the council's current work plan and has an allocated budget of £5,000. It is proposed that this work takes the form of a landscape sensitivity analysis. The analysis will be done by a professional landscape ecologist and will outline which areas are potentially suitable for wind and solar. This does not mean that each area will subsequently have renewable energy generation on site but will instead be used to ensure that any future renewable energy projects are sensitively located. The analysis will also look at which areas are suitable for tree planting which will feed into the Council's Wild About Trees programme.

It is envisaged that the landscape analysis will then feed into the Local Plan to enable local renewable energy projects and tree planting to be included and considered for planning. In this regard, care will be taken to ensure that the brief that is prepared for this work and methodology meet Mendip District Council's expectations as local planning authority.

Recommendation

Approve expenditure of the £5,000 already allocated for this work in the Resilience budget, to support the landscape sensitivity analysis for wind, solar and tree planting around the town and the surrounding areas.