

Agenda item 6

For decision - Proposal to offer 'Cycle to Work' scheme for Councillors

Author: Cllr Nick Dove

Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the introduction of a scheme that will enable councillors to rent an e-bike that allows them to get around town and connect with their constituents. This could then be bought for a nominal sum after two to three years.

Background

Frome Town Council is committed to tackling the climate emergency. Part of its plan is to actively encourage people to walk and cycle around the town. Due to the town's topography e-bikes have proved to be a very effective way for people to travel around the outer reaches of Frome.

An essential part of a councillor's responsibility is to actively engage with constituents in their own wards and across town. Using an e-bike would increase the mobility of councillors and their ability to move around the town in an efficient and carbon neutral manner.

Councillors are not eligible for any of the Government schemes such as Ride to Work as they are not employees. This proposal is that FTC facilitates for Cllrs something similar to the 'Cycle to Work' scheme available to PAYE staff.

How the scheme would work

FTC would purchase an e-bike chosen by the Cllr up to a proposed maximum value of £3,000 to assist Cllrs in their travel in the community and rent it back to the Cllr over a two or three year period. The rental paid by the Cllr over the period would enable them to buy the e-bike from the Council for a nominal sum after the two or three years. Interest that would have been earned by Council funds in a savings account will be taken into account and paid for by the Cllr. An example of the calculation is:

£3,000 plus 2% interest per annum plus VAT on the rental, over 36 months = monthly payment of £103 (subject to variable interest rates)

The financial processes of this proposal were devised by Business Manager, Sarah Williams and she has checked them with FTC's internal auditor, Paul Reynolds.

With a top end cost of £3,000 per bike and with repayments over a 2 or 3 year period, I believe this is in effect a cost neutral scheme that will encourage the use of environmentally efficient transport and allow Cllrs to be more visible and effective in their roles.

I would also suggest that part of the scheme would be that the e-bikes should be bought from a local independent business.

Recommendation

To authorise the Business Manager to facilitate a 'Cycle to Work' scheme for Cllrs use up to a maximum amount of £3,000 per e-bike. The budget to be used is General Reserves, noting that the impact after 3 years on the General Reserve is financially neutral.