

Question: CQ20.01&02

Cabinet – 18 January 2022

Re: Agenda item 20 - City Leap Energy Partnership – procurement update

Questions submitted by: Councillor Martin Fodor

The council has been pursuing the City Leap joint venture since early 2018. The hope is that this will help the city and council decarbonise with up to around £1bn of extra investment so it's right that we should be ambitious and bold. The procurement process was restarted two years ago after initial expressions of interest as the process had to be repeated once Bristol Energy was removed from the mix.

This latest report brings the cost of legal and financial services to over £1m each. Setting up the joint venture will be an additional cost.

While the goal is around a £billion of investment in decarbonisation projects we might not have been able to undertake alone these are substantial sums and includes use of other service budgets which is worrying and needs to be clarified.

We still don't know how far it might make a serious difference to the city reaching our 2030 target or the possible compromises that might be reached to work with the interests of the chosen City Leap partner and how these will be managed and weighed against other considerations. For instance the HRA business plan (p319) on principles of Housing Repairs and Maintenance procurement, says it aims to 'maximise opportunity for social value contributions' but also to 'maximise opportunities to utilise the City Leap partner once procured'. I would be concerned about what would happen if the City Leap partner doesn't provide the most social value or is more expensive than alternative providers.

This report authorises the Director for G+R to appoint the preferred bidder and enter into the City Leap contracts with them. We still don't know who that bidder (out of the two remaining) will be and what their offer is. In this regard I'm reassured by the promise for involvement of scrutiny and perhaps audit to examine these tenders before the council signs up to one of the bidders as its partner. We are promised that City Leap will be coming to OSMB before cabinet signs off on its procurement partner which is a key chance to have a fresh look at the proposed package.

Question 1:

What confidence does the Mayor have that after almost four years in procurement, this initiative will be able to deliver the decarbonisation and social value originally promised at the scale envisaged in the next few years to make a difference to Bristol's 2030 Carbon Neutrality target?

Question 2:

How soon does he envisage there will be additional and measurable benefits from this project in terms of carbon savings?