

To: Central, South & West Area Committee

Date: 9 March 2010 **Item No:** 13

Report of: Head of Community Housing & Community Development

Title of Report: Grant Application from West Oxford Community Renewables

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Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To advise Central, South & West Area Committee of an application for funding from West Oxford Community Renewables.

Key decision: No

Report Approved by:

Finance: Janine Graham

Legal: Helen Lynch

Policy Framework: Stronger and More Inclusive Communities

Recommendation(s):

Central, South & West Area Committee is recommended not to support this application.

Introduction

1. An application for grant funding has been received from West Oxford Community Renewables (WOCR). This community group was established for the specific purpose to generate income for Low Carbon West Oxford (LCWO). 100 local people have bought shares in WOCR since July 2009.
2. All the money generated from their investment will be spent on equipment to construct and commission renewable energy schemes in West Oxford including solar panels, a micro-hydro at Osney Weir and small wind turbines on Cumnor Hill.
3. WOCR are requesting £9,991 to pay for the design work for the new powerhouse and specialist engineering advice to help them obtain an

abstraction licence from the Environment Agency for a micro-hydro planned for Osney Weir.

4. A micro – hydro is a piece of equipment that uses the energy produced by water and turns it into electricity.
5. Eventually the electricity generated through this project will be sold to building and land owners (with any excess sold to the grid) and the earnings will be donated to Low Carbon West Oxford to reinvest in community projects to help make further cuts in CO2 emissions.
6. The grant application is appended to this report for more information.

Project Costs

7. The funding requested from Central, South & West Area Committee today will be used to pay for the following item's:-

Items of Expenditure	Cost (£)
Design work	3,500
Environmental reporting work	4,462
Specialist engineering advice	2,029
Total	£9,991

Assessment of Application

8. The officers grant panel assessed this application on 09.02.10.
9. The application scored well on need and meeting the aims of the Council.
10. However, the panel were confused over the costs for this work. The application asks applicants to tell us how much the total cost of their project or piece of work is. The total cost shown on WOCR application is £16,391. Shown as follows:-

£16,391 (£9,991 2009/10; £6,400 2010/11)

Requested from Central, South & West Area Committee today is £9,991. There is nothing in the application to explain where the balance of £6,400 will be found or if they are intending to apply again in 2010/11 to cover the total cost of this work.

11. Applicants are asked how many people will benefit from their project or activity. Within the application from WOCR it says 30,000 people using the Thames Path during the year will benefit from this project. The panel were unclear how this will happen.

Recommendations

Central, South & West Area Committee is recommended not to support this application.

Name and contact details of author:

Julia Tomkins Tel. 01865 252685 email: jtomkins@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers:

Application appended for further information

Version number: 2

Application for an Area Committee Grant

Please read the enclosed criteria before you complete this application form.

If you require any help or support to complete this application form, please contact Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action (OCVA) on (01865) 251946.

Completion of all information required on this form is mandatory.

1. Your details

Name of Organisation	West Oxford Community Renewables
Project name (if different from above)	Osney Weir Microhydro
Address of organisation	West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road
Contact name (person with overall responsibility for this application)	Barbara Hammond
Position held	Chair
Project address (if different from organisation address)	34 East Street Oxford OX2 0AU
Contact tel no. (day)	01865 245047 Mob: 07711 729280
Contact email address	Barbara.Hammond@zen.co.uk
Contact fax no.	
Where will the project take place?	West Oxford
What is the total cost of your project?	£16,391 (£9,991 2009/10; £6,400 2010/11)
How much grant is being requested from Oxford City Council?	£9,991

If this is the first time you are applying for a grant from Oxford City Council, please contact the Grants Officer on 01865 252685 before completing the referee section.

Referee

Please provide the details
contact regarding your app
The referee must be aware

Name:

Contact address:

Telephone (home):

Telephone (mobile):

Email:

In what capacity is the refe
known to organisation:

2. Organisation details

What type of organisation are you? (please tick)

(give registration number)

Registered Charity

Unregistered Group

Other (please state)

X	Industrial and Provident Society for the benefit of the community

How many people are involved in running your group?

Management Committee

Volunteer

Paid Staff

Other

	6
	5
	0
	100 shareholders

Please enclose a copy of your Constitution / Aims and Objectives if you are applying for the first time.

3. About the project or activities you are planning

Please describe what it is that you want to do with the grant.

Help towards the costs of design and planning work so that we can get planning permission, an abstraction licence from the Environment Agency and agree the terms of a lease for Environment Agency land. This will put the project on a firm footing so that we can plan for installation during the summer of 2011.

How do you know that there is a local need for the project or activity?
(please give recent evidence)

Osney Sustainable Island Group conducted a survey of island residents in 2001 to understand attitudes to climate change and renewable energy. 30% of households responded of which 90% thought that climate change was important and 80% supported renewable energy, particularly microhydro at Osney Weir.

OSIG merged with Low Carbon West Oxford in 2008 which then formed West Oxford Community Renewables to put out a share offer to the community for development of the renewables. 100 people have bought shares since July 2009.

The microhydro project is a key part of the WOCR 'pipeline' of community renewable energy projects and the one which will be most visible.

What neighbourhood of the city will your project be delivered in?

West Oxford

What are the expected benefits and outcomes you hope to achieve with the grant for local people?

An income which can be donated to Low Carbon West Oxford to support its work to:

Reduce household energy use and bills

Plant trees

Reduce waste

Promote sustainable transport projects etc

A very visible renewable energy project with educational benefits including raising awareness of climate change, demonstrating renewable energy technologies, monitoring of fish populations

A new public space by Osney Weir just off the tow-path

Supporting Oxford City Council in its efforts to be at the forefront of activity to combat climate change

Who will benefit from your project or activities?

The community of West Oxford

The large numbers of people who use the Thames Path

How many people will benefit?

4000 residents of West Oxford

An estimated 30,000 people who use the Thames Path during a year, both Oxford citizens and tourists

4. Meeting the aims of the Council

Please choose **ONE** of the themes from the list below, if you fill in more than one box you will **NOT** increase your chances of getting a grant.

Tell us how the grant will help you achieve, all or part, of the objectives within the theme you have selected.

Theme: Stronger and More Inclusive Communities.

Some of this theme is commissioned.
However Oxford City Council invites applications that are aimed at:-

- Training and skills projects aimed at areas of deprivation, which are **not** provided by other agencies and/or which show a major investment from other agencies
- Projects, which support people living on low incomes and which are **not** provided by other agencies and/or which show major investment from other agencies.

Theme:- Improve the environment, economy and quality of life.

Some of this theme is commissioned.
However Oxford City Council invites applications that are aimed at:-

- Local cultural, recreational and sporting projects particularly for disadvantaged communities or group where they are not the primary responsibility of another statutory agency.
- Projects that protect and enhance Oxford's built and natural environment/

The income from the project will support the activities of Low Carbon West Oxford under this theme.

The project will provide a new local cultural project that will also protect and enhance Oxford's built environment.

The intention is to develop a 'landmark' powerhouse and public open space associated with the microhydro project.

The project will benefit:

- **the environment by producing renewable energy**
- **the economy of West Oxford by producing income to help householders reduce their energy bills**
- **quality of life by providing a new public open space designed to a high quality**

5 . Monitoring and evaluation

How do you plan to monitor the success of the project or activity?

The success of the project will be proved by its gaining planning permission from the City Council, an Abstraction Licence from the Environment Agency and a lease agreement with the Environment Agency by July 2010.

6. Financial details of your organisation

Please tell us if you have received any funding or subsidy from Oxford City Council within:- (please tick box)

a) the last 3 years

Yes	Yes	No	
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If yes, please give details

A small grant for help with the initial feasibility work for the project

b) expecting to receive during 2009/10

Yes		No	No
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If yes, please give details

Please provide the following details from your most recent annual accounts:
Please input data below, DO NOT refer to any attached documents

Account year ending (Day / Month / Year)

1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 nb. These are for Low Carbon West Oxford; West Oxford Community Renewables was not registered until June 2009

Total (gross) income

£30,046

Total expenditure

£18,026.69

Balance at year end

£12,019,58 NB This has now all been spent

Savings (reserves, cash, investments)

-

If your savings are more than your annual income, what are they for?

-

7. Financial details of the project

Amount of grant sought from City Council

£9,991

Income sources

Income / Funding source	Status (definite or estimated)	2009/10 £
Total		

Details of Costs

Expenditure Item / Items the grant would pay for (e.g. volunteer training)	2009/10 £
Design work for the new public open space and powerhouse	£3500
Environmental reporting work following Environment Agency guidelines	£4462
Specialist engineering advice on Abstraction Licence conditions	£2029
Total	£9991 ✓

8. Value for money

Would the grant (if agreed) lever in funds or support from other sources?

If so, how much and from where?

West Oxford Community Renewables has been awarded large amounts of prize and grant funding recently totalling £863,000 and so it might seem strange that we are applying for this relatively small amount of funding.

£60k of this total is from the Big Green Challenge and has to be used to pay back the benefactor who gave us an interest-free loan to pay for our pilot solar PV roof on The King's Centre.

The rest of the funding is from the Government's Low Carbon Communities Challenge and has been awarded to pay for specific projects that can be installed this financial year. Our shareholder capital will be used as working capital to enable the draw down of the grant.

This leaves us with very little available capital to fund the next stage of the microhydro project development until we get the first income from our renewable energy projects. The Environment Agency has given us until the end of June 2010 to get all permissions in place so that it can determine our Abstraction Licence.

The vfm argument for this grant is therefore about securing the future of a project that has been awarded a Council grant previously. Success in achieving all the permissions necessary to proceed with the project will eventually lever in around £400k of installation capital.

We are very close to success with a project that has taken nearly a decade of dedicated volunteer work by local people. It would be a very great pity if it were to fail now for the want of a small amount of project development funding.

9. Declaration

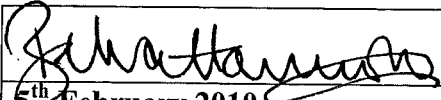
I declare on behalf of the organisation that the information in this form is correct.

Signed*

Date (day/month/year)

Name in block capitals

Position held

	
5 th	February 2010
Barbara Hammond	
Chair, West Oxford Community Renewables	

* If you are sending this form by e-mail you will need to print off this page, sign it and post it to the Grants Officer.

Checklist of enclosures

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Constitution or Aims and Objectives
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The last year's signed annual accounts
<input type="checkbox"/>	A recent bank statement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Equal Opportunities statement

10. Permissions

You supply this information on the basis that it may be shared with other grant giving and other relevant bodies.

Please tick box to show you understand and agree to this.

11. Contact details

If you have any queries about the application form or grants process, please contact:

**Grants Development Officer,
Community Housing & Community Development,
Oxford City Council,
3rd Floor, St Aldates Chambers,
109 – 113 St. Aldates,
Oxford. OX1 1DS**

Tel: 01865 252685 Fax: 01865 252662

or email to grants@oxford.gov.uk

TV Energy

The Enterprise Centre
New Greenham Park
Newbury
Berkshire
RG19 6HS
☎: +44 (0)1635 817420
Fax +44 (0)1635 552779
alison.wilshaw@tvenergy.org

2nd February 2010

Re: Osney Weir Microhydro Grant Application

TV Energy has considered the application made by West Oxford Community Renewables and considers that this project is worthy of support. Considerable effort has been invested in the development of this project by the Osney Island community. Recent success with the Low Carbon Communities Challenge has made funding available to realise the construction of the hydro plant, and this additional funding for the design and planning studies would ensure that the benefit of the Low Carbon funding is fully appreciated.

TV Energy is an independent, not-for-profit renewable energy agency covering the counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey and Northern Hampshire. We work with a wide range of client groups, from individual homeowners, community groups and local authorities, through to large public and private sector organisations.

TV Energy was one of the authors of the study *Low Head Hydro Power in the South-East of England – A Review of the Resource and Associated Technical, Environmental and Socio-Economic Issues*. The Osney Weir site was identified as a key potential hydro project by this study. If and when it is realised, the Osney Weir is ideally located to raise the profile of hydro schemes in our region and thus it should be supported to encourage other schemes of this type to be pursued.

Alison Wilshaw
Renewables Advisor
TV Energy



www.tvenergy.org