



HELSTON TOWN COUNCIL

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THE GUILDHALL • HELSTON • CORNWALL • TR13 8ST



Invitation to Tender for Professional Services

An Invitation to Tender for services to provide technical assessment and a business plan for a single site solar PV land array with battery storage in a local parish, as part of a wider community energy project planned for the Helston and Lizard area.

14 December 2021

Please send tender returns to: -

Town Clerk

Helston Town Council

The Guildhall

Helston

Cornwall TR13 8ST

Please send completed tender documents (paper copy and memory stick) in a sealed envelope marked 'Rural Community Energy Fund tender' to be received by

5.00 p.m. on Wednesday 19 January 2022

Please contact Martin Searle, Projects Officer, Helston Town Council if you require any further information. E: regeneration@helston-tc.gov.uk T: 01326 761560

1 Background

In 2019 Helston Town Council (the Council) declared a Climate Emergency and facilitated the formation of the Helston Climate Action Group (HCAG) to work on solutions to the climate emissions from our local area.

A key element of the aims in the Helston Climate Action Plan (see below) is to reduce the carbon footprint of local communities by increasing renewable energy generation and to use the surplus funds from local ownership of energy generation for the benefit of the community.

Using Cornwall New Energy funding via the Helston Downsland Trust, an audit was carried out to benchmark Helston's current carbon energy footprint and to explore what local renewable energy options exist. Whilst this report showed what can be done within the Town boundaries, it also clearly indicated that the best option for reaching carbon neutrality would be to work closely with neighbouring parishes to develop local resources and resilience over a wider area. Helston is the only town and the local centre for communities on the Lizard, as recognised by Cornwall Council in the Helston and South Kerrier Community Network Area.

Following on from the benchmarking study the Helston Climate Action Plan¹ was developed which includes the following objectives:

- Aiming to reach Carbon Neutral by 2030
- Restoring local nature
- Promoting local resilience
- Supporting local food production
- Developing local renewable projects such as wind, PV and coppice wood
- Promoting local community energy projects

Given the major grid constraints in this area of Cornwall it has been concluded that the most effective way to develop the Action Plan and move towards carbon neutrality requires working within these local grid constraints. The Council is therefore keen to pursue local ownership of renewable energy installations to enable higher benefits to flow to our communities.

¹ <http://www.helston-tc.gov.uk/VirDir/CoreContents/News/Display.aspx?id=23718>

The Council intends to apply for grant funding under Stage 1 of the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) which requires an applicant to obtain at least three quotations for professional services to investigate the feasibility of a community energy project and it is in this respect that you are being invited to bid for the work as set out in Section 3.

The RCEF Project Team, which includes representatives of the Council and HCAG, has provided a checklist of areas which require detailed and professional investigation during the study and production of a final feasibility report, full details are provided in the Appendix. The areas relevant to this ITT are listed below.

2 *Area of Study: Helston and its rural hinterland*

THE COUNCIL has worked with assistance from the South West Energy Hub (SWEH) on a Scoping Study which explored options for local PV arrays large enough to be helpful in meeting the aims of the Action Plan. A number of potential sites were identified and subsequently, SWEH have obtained grid offers for two of the front-running sites from the local DNO, Western Power Distribution. Following engagement with these landowners, interest has been established and both have signed exclusivity agreements.

It is the intention to progress both of these sites through separate Phase 1 RCEF bids. The rationale for this is that SWEH has advised that the feasibility work should include a robust investigation of the curtailment issues with a view to establishing realistic projections and the Council would also like to include consideration of battery storage to mitigate against curtailment and to maximise viability.

Although separate tenders are being sought for each application and site, it is envisaged that the tender prices would be adjusted in the event that the same professional team is successful in winning both contracts. The proposed site has the capacity to export **9 MW**.

Full details of the proposed site will be provided to the winning bidder.

3 *Outline of tender tasks*

The following sections must all be considered as part of the feasibility study's required output; therefore, the Council would like to know how you propose to deliver against each of the following sections in turn. The Council understands that you may wish to enlist the assistance of specialists to provide expert knowledge in or around specific areas of the requirements as part of a consortium. If this is the case, then the costs incurred for each element of specific advice or delivery must be listed

in the cost breakdown. In any case we require separate cost statements for the four sections noted below.

If you choose not to bid for delivery of any of the sections listed, then you must state this categorically in your bid.

We are requesting bids in the following topics: -

- Landowner option and lease agreements advice
- Planning assessment
- Business plan development
- Grid connection and its constraints, including battery storage scaling

The contractor will be required to prepare a comprehensive final report according to the requirements of the RCEF Phase 1 feasibility report. This will also require liaison with the community outreach person for the Council.

3.1 Site landowner agreement

The landowner has already signed an Exclusivity Licence. The landowner option and lease agreements will be negotiated by the Council in this phase of the project development in liaison with the winning bidder's team. The contractor will be expected to provide advice relevant to the site and its environs as well as industry standard issues around PV site development and operation.

3.2 Solar PV site planning and technology assessment

Given the grid constraints in this area of Cornwall, the technical assessment has to include working with grid consultancy and potentially battery assessment for determining the best option for the envisaged scale of installed PV on the selected site relative to technical & planning issues and financial viability.

Planning issues:

The contractor will be expected to carry out a detailed assessment of the planning issues for this site, which is **not** situated within **a designated area**.

The assessment should include the following topics:-

- ◆ Local planning policies extant and those in development
- ◆ Relevant national planning policies

- ◆ Landscape design assessment for layout, access, etc, taking into account landform, screening and local viewpoint impacts
- ◆ Assessment of likely need for ecological surveys
- ◆ Identification of nearby archaeological and cultural heritage sites

The assessment should include the following deliverables:-

- ◆ Potential outline site layout(s)
- ◆ 2-3 photomontages from locations to be agreed with the Council
- ◆ Preliminary LVIA assessment
- ◆ Phase 1 ecological survey report
- ◆ Consultations with the Local Planning Authority including a Screening Opinion Request

Technical issues:

- ◆ Site design in relation to landform, utilities, on-site grid connection location and potential battery storage requirements, including access requirements
- ◆ Technical assessment of equipment suitable for this location – panels, inverters, grid connection shelter/building, acoustic muffling
- ◆ Yield assessment

3.3 Business plan

We require the delivery of an initial cost analysis exercise for the project to include a detailed analysis on capital and operating expenditure, including professional fees; design fees; equipment procurement; construction costs; installation costs, auxiliary equipment purchase and installation; grid connection fees; engineering overheads, commissioning costs and operating costs.

In addition, a breakdown of expected income streams is required: generation income from the sale of electricity to licensed electricity suppliers, and potential costs and income from any proposed battery investment. These income streams should be subjected to future stress modelling to take into account of the effect of electricity price changes with an indicator of the sensitivity of the business case to fluctuating electricity prices and values.

The third element of the business plan required is proposals on suitable corporate governance structures to include appropriate models ensuring at least 51% community ownership and potential for high community benefits to accrue from the income streams, alongside suitable methods of raising the required capital and operating finance. This analysis should include an appraisal of differing debt options, asset ownership, and a community share issue, with a proposed financial strategy as one deliverable.

It should be assumed that project equipment is installed from 2024 onwards.

3.4 Grid connection

The following sections must all be considered as part of the grid study's connection process. Therefore, we would like to know how you propose to deliver against each of the following sections in turn.

HTC are in receipt of a formal WPD grid connection offer and associated curtailment report for the site, and require services to:

- ◆ Review the grid connection costs quote received from Western Power Distribution and develop proposed reduced costs options to ensure that the proposed connection cost is a cost-effective solution
- ◆ Review the grid curtailment report, provided by Western Power Distribution, regarding its likely accuracy and provide evidence as to how low the curtailment figure could be in practice at the site location. It is expected that several scenarios will be modelled
- ◆ Assess and scale other methods of maximising the site output via battery storage and other technical methods appropriate to this site location

4 Budget

Please provide a time and cost breakdown for each section of anticipated work as follows:

3.1 Landowner option and lease agreement liaison

3.2 Solar site planning and technical assessment

3.3 Business plan

3.4 Grid connection review and constraints reduction assessments

In setting fee proposals bidders are expected to take account of the fact that the Council is also seeking to support separate but complementary community outreach work costing approximately £5,000 within the £40,000 maximum RCEF grant.

Bidders are also requested to provide an overall cost for both sites as it is expected that some cost savings will be achievable if two projects are progressed together.

Bid requirements and tender evaluation

5.1 Bid Requirements

Please submit CVs of all personnel to be assigned to the project listing relevant experience in the specific areas. Proof of Professional Indemnity Insurance must be provided to the value of at least £1million.

Please submit your bids to the return address by **5.00 p.m. on Wednesday 19 January 2022**

As this is part of an RCEF application there is no guarantee that any contract will be awarded unless and until a positive grant decision has been received in writing.

5.2 Tender evaluation

Tenders will be assessed against the following evaluation matrix.

Topic	overall weighting	category	category weighting	element	element weighting
Price	20%		20%		20%
Quality	80%	technical	20%	capability	10%
				resources	10%
		service delivery	5%	flexibility & communications	5%
		quality	10%	customer care/quality of service	10%
		environment	25%	low carbon delivery	20%
				environmental targets	5%
		social value	20%	awareness of local issues	10%
				social enterprise capability	10%
Totals			100%		100%

THE COUNCIL, working in partnership with HCAG is committed to moving the local area to low carbon working as quickly as possible and we see this project as an important part of how we move in that direction. This project aligns with the principles and vision of the Helston Climate Action Plan.

Appendices

Appendix i RCEF requirements for report of feasibility study

1. Executive Summary
2. Community Engagement
3. Community Benefits
4. Technology
5. Financial Projections
6. Planning & Permitting
7. Site
8. Operation and Governance
9. Scheduling
10. Conclusions

for more details, please see the RCEF Guidance Notes.