

## **General Purpose & Highways Committee 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

### **Agenda item 7 – Solar Panels**

#### **Background:**

The Climate and Biodiversity emergency declaration made by Royston Town Council (RTC) states that it will 'make all reasonable efforts to reduce carbon emissions from the council, with the working party to investigate the feasibility of the Council being net zero by 2030'.

In September 2022, it was agreed that the council should register on the Solar Together scheme which was run by North Herts Council and allowed local residents to obtain quotes for solar panels and they would benefit from reduced prices due to "group-buy" bargaining power.

It became apparent that this method was not appropriate for a commercial installation and so Solar Together and 4 other companies were contacted independently to obtain quotes for installing solar panels at the Town Hall.

The companies have experienced high demand due to the fuel price rises and it has taken until recently to get 3 quotations for this project.

#### **Funding:**

In December 2022, the Community Engagement Officer at NHC assured us that S106 funds could be used for the capital costs of this project. However, on checking more recently, directly with the S106 officer, it transpired that the project was not an 'additional community facility' therefore did not meet the criteria. Substantial costs are involved. Town Council reserves would be required to carry out the work or an amount would need to be added to next year's budget to finance the installation.

#### **Planning permission:**

Once the quotations were received, a plan of the panel layout was sent to a planning officer for an informal opinion on what kind of planning application would be needed and whether or not the layout looked acceptable.

The officer has indicated that as the Town Hall is a building of historic interest situated in a conservation area, a full planning application would be needed including a heritage statement. It was further suggested that solar tiles which resemble slate tiles (information enclosed) should be investigated rather than the ones quoted for. These would have the least impact on the appearance of the building and be more likely to be accepted. The alternative would be to only have panels on the west side of the building which would be less obtrusive. Planning permission and a heritage statement would still be needed. RTC officers have only found one supplier of slate effect tiles. If a planning application is to be made, a planning consultant would need to be employed as the need for a heritage statement makes the process more complex.

Other information discovered so far:

#### **Smart Export Tariffs:**

Octopus Energy are now offering a Smart Export Guarantee of 15p per kwh, by far the best rate on the market for SME's, most offer less than 5p but NHC would have to agree to change supplier as at the moment we are in an agency agreement with them for electricity and gas in the Town Hall and Annex. NHC control the contract and invoice RTC for reimbursement. Clarification would be needed on the current contract terms and conditions.

#### **Fire safety:**

This is mainly a concern if a battery is fitted. The location is important as batteries pose a significant fire risk according to our insurer's advice (information attached). Two fire officers visited from Herts Fire Service and recommended installing a battery in the basement opposite the lift or outside the building. They said some fire proofing material would need to be installed, mainly round the window. This extra cost is not yet known.

One supplier thought that the basement would be a good place to put a battery and if we were going to have one, they would either install fire proofing around it or they could put it outside.

**Structural survey:**

One supplier includes this in the price, another recommended getting an independent survey and a structural engineer has given a quotation. They estimated £700 for the survey and about £670 for the cost of equipment for accessing the roof.

**Building Control & Construction, Design and Management:**

On enquiring with NHC about the agency agreement, I was directed to the Buildings and Facilities Manager. He advised that Building Control would need to approve the plans before going to planning and that it would be wise to appoint someone to oversee Construction, Design and Management (CDM) as the work would be carried out at height.

The panels would need maintenance and cleaning from time to time which would require safe access to the roof.

Our insurers would also need to be informed of the plans.

He also recommended an independent structural survey.

**Slate effect tiles:**

1. A full quotation for the slate effect solar panels has not yet been sought. A possible advantage of these is that they are lighter than normal tiles so a structural survey may not be needed.

2. Only one company manufacturing these has been identified so it wouldn't be possible to compare quotations.

3. Some rough maths:

Total roof area is 191.4 sqm.

1kw is generated per 6.5sqm so maximum 29.5kw for roof size. An overall roof kit price of £294/sqm without fitting or delivery which means £56,154. A normal system would generate 14.9kw and cost around £36k.

**Conclusion:**

The complexities of this project have increased as the research has gone on.

New challenges have appeared (e.g. CDM, building control, maintenance) that would not have been known about if NHC had not mentioned them. There may well be other considerations.

It has become clear that a substantial amount of funds would need to be allocated to the initial stages, even before a planning application could be made.

Officers don't have the relevant experience or qualifications to manage this project or make a recommendation with any confidence. For the project to proceed, a professional building project manager would need to be contracted.

Members are to:

- a) receive an update from the Deputy Town Clerk (information enclosed)
- b) discuss and agree next steps to be taken.

Keri Sharman

Deputy Town Clerk to Royston Town Council

5<sup>th</sup> July 2023

## Agenda Item 8 – Active and Safer Travel



**Hertfordshire  
Cycling**

**Delivering cycle  
training to  
you.**





**Beginner Biking**

Aimed at our youngest riders, this course helps children learn to ride. Stabilisers should be removed from children's bikes before the start of the course and parents/carers must understand that they are there to help their child to learn to ride.

This course requires a hard-standing area such as a playground or tennis court without nets.

Suitable for: Reception and year 1/2  
Group size: 8 rider/carer pairs  
Duration: One 1 hour session

Price: £60 /hour – this covers 8 pairs

**Fun Skills**

The Fun Skills course is a one-hour session for up to 16 children who can cycle unaided. Our instructors will provide the cones and equipment to deliver a skills-based games to improve the rider's cycling skills

This course requires a hard-standing area such as a playground or tennis court without nets.

Suitable for: Years 1/2/3  
Group size: Max 16 riders  
Duration: One 1 hour session

Price: £60/hour this covers up to 16 riders

**FREE LEARNING  
RESOURCES:**

[https://bikeability.org.uk/  
tools-for-schools](https://bikeability.org.uk/tools-for-schools)

**Bikeability Level 1 - Skills course**

This course aims to develop mastery in cycle handling in an off-road environment and prepare riders for cycling on the road. Riders must be able to cycle (i.e. pedal and glide) to participate.

Suitable for: Year 3/4      Ideal group size: 12-16      Minimum group size: 10  
Duration: Two 2 hours on 2 consecutive days

Price: £15/rider

**Bikeability Level 2 (inc. Level 1) - Basic Road Course**

The Level 2 course aims to develop riders' skills and confidence for cycling on single-lane roads and simple junctions with mostly moderate motor traffic flows (where riders encounter vehicles with progressively greater frequency in each module), and prepares riders for cycling on more complex, often busier or faster roads and junctions. Riders must have fully demonstrated Bikeability Level 1 National Standard assessment criteria before they start Level 2 training.

Suitable for: Years 5/6      Ideal group size: 12-16      Minimum group size: 10  
Duration: 5 sessions over 5 consecutive days (2hr session first day, 1hr 15mins remaining days)

Price: £25/rider (subsidised by central Government funding)

**Bikeability Level 3**

The Bikeability Level 3 course aims to develop riders' skills and confidence so they can ride in diverse road environments, including complex, often busy roads and junctions, sometimes with speed limits above 30 mph. Successful demonstration of National Standard assessment criteria in Bikeability Level 2 is a prerequisite for participation in Bikeability Level 3.

Suitable for: Year 6 plus      Ideal group size: 6      Minimum group size: 6  
Duration: Four sessions over 4 consecutive days

Price: £25/rider (subsidised by central Government funding)

For all courses we will require access to a hard standing area, sheltered cover and access to toilet facilities. Cones and equipment to deliver the course will be supplied by our instructor team, however we are unable to provide bikes for courses.

**For further information please contact us:**  
Phone: 01992 556808 Email: [cycle.training@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:cycle.training@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

**Other courses available**

The team also offer courses through the various cycle hubs during holiday breaks where children can attend if they have missed training in their school or wish to retake training. These cycle hubs are located in Hertford, Leavesden, Stevenage and Watford.

Our partnership with the Herts Disability Sports Foundation has allowed us to offer school holiday training courses for those with SEND / medical requirements that could restrict them taking part in courses with their peers. For more information and dates for these courses please visit:  
[www.hertsdisabilitysportsfoundation.com](http://www.hertsdisabilitysportsfoundation.com)

We also offer one to one training for those that wish to learn to ride, retake training or expand their skills. This is available for all ages and can be requested by following this link:  
[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/cycletraining](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/cycletraining)

Your cycle training  
will count towards  
your Modeshift  
Stars accreditation.



**REGISTER NOW**


