

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 12th February 2026

REPORTING OFFICER: Assistant to the Chief Executive

PORTFOLIO: Housing and Environmental Sustainability

SUBJECT: Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund – Picow Farm Road Depot

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To outline details of grant funded awarded to the Council via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund and to seek approval to implement energy efficiency measures at Picow Farm Road.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

That Council be asked to include £1,161,300 total estimated cost of the energy efficiency works at Picow Farm Road within the capital programme, to be funded by grant funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund and including a Council contribution of between £162,000 - £200,000

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme provides grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures such as solar PV and LED lighting.
- 3.2 During 2025 the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority submitted a bid to Phase 4 of the Fund which included the following buildings in Halton.
- Picow Farm,
 - Kingsway Learning Centre
 - Runcorn Town Hall
- 3.3 The Bid was successful with the City Region awarded £30.5m. In respect of Halton a total of £2,816,409.20 was awarded. The overall costs of the works are estimated at £3,200,465 which includes a Council contribution of £448,065.10.

Picow Farm	£1,161,330
Kingsway Learning Centre	£716,150
Runcorn Town Hall	£ 1,322,985

3.4 To draw down the funds the Council needs to provide total match funding of £448,065.10

3.5 The initial focus of work following the bid has been on Picow Farm Road as there is a requirement to commence works prior to March 2026. The work at Kingsway Learning Centre and Runcorn Town Hall will be subject to further design work following a tender process with work needed to be completed by March 2027. These schemes will be subject to a further report when more detailed costing are known.

4.0 **PICOW FARM ROAD**

4.1 The Combined Authority had run a tender process and Optimus were appointed as the approved contractor for Picow Farm. Since their appointment they have completed design works at Picow Farm with a view to installing Air Source Heat Pumps, Solar PV, LED Lighting and wall insulation

4.2 The total cost of the work is £949,478.68 excluding any District Network Operator costs. None are anticipated for these works but some network improvements will be needed as the Council shifts its Data Centre facility to Picow Farm Road and these costs will be picked up as part of that project. The current estimate of £949,478.68 for the works will likely increase as the contractor will have to provide more temporary welfare accommodation over and above what they have allowed for at Picow Farm but it is anticipated will remain in budget.

4.3 The cost of the works are within the overall projected costs of £1,161,300 but the Council would need to make a contribution of between £162,000 and £200,000 towards the costs of the works.

- 4.4 The works will lead to costs savings from the installation of the Solar PV and LED. The 135kw Solar system would generate savings in the region of £559,491 over the 30 year life time of the panels. It is also estimated that the LED would reduce annual running costs by £10,000 per annum. Whilst the Air Source Heat Pumps will increase the electric load and running costs overall the savings from the Solar PV and LED will provide a net saving per annum.
- 4.5 The savings/income generated would be sufficient to repay the Council's contribution in approximately 6 years. The estimated carbon saving over the life time of the project is in the region of 1646 tonnes of CO2 emissions.
- 4.6 It also needs to be factored in that the current gas boilers at the buildings chosen for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme are reaching the end of their useful life. The boilers at Picow would need to be replaced in the next 2-3 years and costs would be in the region of £200,000. In progressing the current scheme there is an avoidance costs in future years for new boilers.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The implementation of energy efficiency measures at Picow Farm are consistent with actions and commitments in the Council's with the Climate Change Action Plan. The Plan commits the Council to decarbonise its accommodation, where financial practicable, over the lifetime of the Plan. The implantation of the project will saving approximately 1646 of CO2 emissions over the lifetime.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Investment in energy efficient measures has the potential to reduce the Council's energy costs, reduce carbon emission and generate future income streams or the Council. Whilst the scheme requires an initial financial contribution from the Council over the lifetime of the scheme this will be repaid and ongoing savings realised in the long term.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing, and Supporting Greater Independence

Reducing CO2 can bring about improved air quality.

7.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Encouraging investment in energy-efficiency will benefit from lower carbon emissions, job creation, supply chain development and

increased competitiveness and security of energy supply.

7.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None identified.

7.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None identified.

7.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The actions within this report support the Council's response to the environment and climate emergency by promoting energy efficiency; limiting/eliminating fossil fuel use for heat, power and transport; limiting/eliminating waste and encouraging re-use of resources and encouraging procurement of local suppliers.

7.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None identified.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 A detailed risk register will be provide by the contractor prior or installation of the measures.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 None identified.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 See 5.1 above

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

11.1 None under the meaning of the Act.