

Meeting: Full Council

Date: 12th December 2023

Author: Town Clerk

Item for Consideration: South Gloucestershire Council Consultation: Green Print Project

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Kingswood Town Council has been approached as a suitable location to trial the second year of the above project. It was trialed in Yate in the first year. As a summary, the project aims to change how public grass verges and open spaces are managed, by reducing the frequency of the cuts, and for cut grass to be collected and removed (rather than being left) and added to food waste at a processing plant, with the overall impact of reducing operational emissions, increasing biodiversity, increasing soil carbon sequestration, reducing the carbon footprint of Council verge maintenance operations. The Briefing Note is attached.

2.0 Detail

2.1 The Briefing Note was circulated to all ward members in South Gloucestershire in August and we have the following project page set up on our website:

<https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/energy-from-grass-cuttings/>

2.2 As stated in the Briefing Note, currently the grass in open spaces and highway verges in South Gloucestershire is cut and left on the ground - a process which increases the soil nutrient levels and leads to the proliferation of robust grasses and other nutrient-demanding vegetation. This does nothing to encourage biodiversity, requires more frequent mowing and generates more operational emissions. The Greenprint project is trialling cutting and collecting the grass instead, to then co-mingle the cuttings with our existing food waste collections currently transported to the Geneco anaerobic digestion (AD) plant in Avonmouth – to produce several different outputs, such as biogas, biomethane and biochar.

2.3 A key project objective is to design and scale a system toolkit or 'green print', as a replicable carbon negative green infrastructure management model – to provide other local authorities with a guide to implementing this approach in their own areas. Yate was the first pilot area and the 'cut and collect' process began there on 21st August. A second 'cut and collect' on the same selected plots in Yate is currently underway – that will be the final cut this season, (until next March).

2.4 The Greenprint involves rolling this activity out to other parishes over the 3-year life of the project, to investigate the effects on our carbon footprint, operational costs and biodiversity levels. We don't have the capacity to start doing this in all parishes at once, so are approaching selected parish councils now with a view to trialling the experiment from next season – March 2024. The potential plots of grass in Kingswood have already been mapped, following a 2021 survey by consultants Metis.

https://maps.southglos.gov.uk/Map2/Map.aspx?mapName=PC_VERGES_MAP_50

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 For Councillors to consider if they wish to receive a presentation on this project, at the January 2024 meeting, to ask questions about the proposed scheme.