

Divisions Affected – N/A

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

11 MAY 2026

Approval to Sign Space Clipper Sub-Contract

Report by Director of Economy and Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Agree that the Council enters into a sub-contract agreement with Space Clipper for the purpose of supporting delivery of an innovation project to improve visualisation of Local Area Energy Plans and EV charge point plans.**

Executive Summary

1. Oxfordshire County Council were approached by software developers Space Clipper last year to act as a sub-contractor in a bid Space Clipper were making for funding from UK Research and Innovation . The bid was to trial how the rapid development of 3D visualisations from GIS based systems can be used by local authorities to improve stakeholder engagement. The bid was successful and following consideration of the sub-contract by council officers, the council is now in a position to sign the sub-contract agreement: Annex 1

Background

2. Oxfordshire County Council have been engaged in the development of Local Area Energy Plans, and EV charge point plans which at one level use visual representations to help build understanding amongst stakeholders and decision makers. The Council was approached by Space Clipper in June 2025 to support a funding application for UK Research and Innovation funding for a project to assess how 3D visualisations of the energy system can be used to support local authority stakeholder engagement.
3. The Climate Action Service and Innovate Oxfordshire provided a letter of support for the application which was ultimately successful. Both parts of the council were asked by Space Clipper to act as sub-contractors to trial developments in the software and to introduce Space Clipper to energy system stakeholders during the 9-month project. Space Clipper have provided a sub-

contract agreement which has been reviewed by legal services. Each service will have its own sub-contract. The total value of each sub-contract is £4,042.5 exc. VAT. In accordance with rules on local authority charging and trading the payment only covers our costs in delivering sub-contracted services.

4. Under the Financial Regulations External Arrangements Section 10.4.1: work can only be undertaken for third parties where the council has the legal powers to undertake the work. The Council has such powers as set out in the Localism Act 2011. Pursuant to Financial Regulations, Cabinet Member approval for contract signing must be sought.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

5. This project supports the County Councils Corporate Plan in the following way:

The Space Clipper work to develop 3D visualisation tools for our Local Area Energy Planning platform will improve our ability to communicate important aspects of the energy system and build stakeholder understanding and participation in the energy transition. This will include decisions related to EV charge point roll out and the implementation of Local Area Energy Plans currently being developed by the Council. Any improvements in the delivery of EV charge points and Local Area Energy Plans will contribute to the Council's greener and fairer strategic priorities.

Financial Implications

6. In return for providing limited professional feedback on the ongoing development of the software tool as funded via Innovate UK, the two parts of the Council involved (Climate Action Service and Innovate Oxfordshire) will receive fee income of £4,025 (total £8,050). As the council will be providing a service this charge will be subject to VAT

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

7. The Council has the power to enter into the sub-contract and provide the services set out in this report under its general power of competence pursuant to section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. It is important to note that the Council's charges for the services must cover costs only and there must be no element of profit to comply with the rules on local authority trading. The definition of "costs" is however quite wide and can encompass all types of expenditure including staffing and other administrative costs. The sub-contract has been reviewed and amended by Legal Services and the terms and conditions are generally fair and reasonable

Staff Implications

8. Both the Climate Action Service and Innovate Oxfordshire have allocated 10 days from relevant officers respectively over the course of the 9-month project. This is to attend regular meetings with Space Clipper and follow up on any review actions as agreed. Both teams are already involved in work that has enabled the Council to deliver services with minimal impact on respective work programmes.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

9. There are no equality and inclusion implications of the Council's involvement in this innovation project, indeed the software tool has been trialled to help people living in deprived neighbourhoods to better understand the energy system and how it affects them.

Sustainability Implications

10. This project enables council knowledge and expertise to help develop GIS visualisations tools for Local Area Energy Planning and other areas that would benefit from 3D visualisation. This will ultimately mean councils and other organisations using these tools will benefit from a better product which will improve access and understanding of sustainability information.

Risk Management

11. This is a very small project with only two touch points for the Council with very limited and well-defined requirements for Council officers. Key risks are covered in the sub-contract to the satisfaction of the Council's legal team

Consultations

12. No consultations have been undertaken or required

Robin Rogers
Director of Economy and Place

Annex: Sub-contract agreement

Background papers: Space Clipper innovation funding application

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