

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Kathy McArdle/ Paul Castle

TITLE: Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund – Acceptance of Funding

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting	20th April 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Place – Regeneration and Culture
Key Decision	Yes
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

To accept the funding allocation of £1,674,132 from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to deliver energy efficiency improvements to 150 council owned homes.

To approve the allocation of £500,000 from DFG monies to fund a further 12 months of the Affordable Warmth Programme during 2022-23.

Council Plan priority

This funding supports the following Council priorities:

- Sustainable Barnsley – through reduction in carbon emissions from housing stock and the protection of the Borough for future generations
- Healthy Barnsley – by helping residents to live in warm and healthy homes

Recommendations

That Cabinet:-

1. Approves the acceptance of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund allocation of £1,674,132, and
2. Authorises delegation to the Executive Director of PLACE to undertake all necessary steps to launch a competitive tender process and to appoint a contractor to complete the works under this scheme. To include sign off of all associated legal documentation relating to the grant terms and contract award.
3. Approves the allocation of £500,000 Disabled Facilities Grant to support the Affordable Warmth programme for an additional 12 months from 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2023.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund was set out in the Conservative Manifesto and commits a total of £3.8bn to improve the energy efficiency of social rented homes over the next 10 years. Wave 1 of this 10-year programme was launched by BEIS on the 23rd of August 2021 and provided an opportunity for Local Authorities to bid for a share of the £160m available.
- 1.2 The Council submitted a bid for Wave 1 to the total value of £1,674,132 to provide energy efficiency improvements to 150 council houses with a current energy efficiency rating of EPC Band E and F. The bid value was based on the available match funding from the HRA.

2. PROPOSAL

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

- 2.1 Under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund scheme, the 150 homes will receive a combination of different measures according to their requirements from an initial energy assessment. Measures to be delivered include external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, underfloor insulation and room in roof insulation. High retention storage heaters and air source heat pumps will be available where the cost fits within the grant and a small number of single glazing upgrades to double glazing, and energy efficient doors will be offered; but only in conjunction with other works. In each case, insulation measures will be given priority to comply with a “fabric-first” approach.
- 2.2 The grant available for the works varies according to the initial EPC level – 100 E rated properties are eligible for up to £12,000 of works, with a minimum match requirement of £6,000 per property and 50 F rated properties are eligible for up to £16,000 of works, with a minimum match requirement of £8,000 per property.
- 2.3 The households who will be targeted for this funding have been selected using information held by Berneslai Homes on their asset management system. In addition, properties registered for the Local Authority Delivery scheme – LAD2 – that have fallen outside the delivery schedule will also be brought over to the SHDF scheme.
- 2.4 The scheme will be delivered by approved contractors appointed via our Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for energy efficiency retrofit works.
- 2.5 Part of the funding secured is for administration costs, some of which will allow for the recruitment of a Retrofit Coordinator who is needed to manage the project in accordance with PAS2035 rules, a requirement of the funding.
- 2.6 An impact assessment, compiled in conjunction with National Energy Action (NEA), will be conducted with every resident benefitting from the scheme and

this data will then be analysed to provide a full scheme evaluation once works are completed. These results will then help shape the design and delivery of any future schemes as well as assist with bids for other potential sources of funding.

Affordable Warmth Programme

- 2.7 The Affordable Warmth Programme has been providing funding towards the cost of replacing gas boilers and installing first time central heating systems for the most vulnerable residents living in fuel poverty or with a long-term health condition made worse by living in a cold home.
- 2.8 The existing programme ends on 31st March 2022, and additional resources of £0.5M have been identified within the Disabled Facilities Grant to enable the scheme to continue for a further 12 months.
- 2.9 The funding will cover capital costs only; existing staff within the Warm Homes team will continue to administer the scheme and it will continue to be promoted through the well-established referral pathways.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

- 3.1.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer).
- 3.1.2 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the acceptance of £1.674M grant funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, administered by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
- 3.1.3 The grant funding will be combined with £0.837M of HRA reserves identified as part of the 2022/23 budget process (Cab.12.1.2022/6 refers), bringing the total scheme investment to £2.511M.
- 3.1.4 The project will invest in 150 HRA properties identified by Berneslai Homes that are deemed to be of the greatest need and are within the EPC rating categories of band E & F. The tables below provide a breakdown of both tenure type and the EPC bandings selected.

Energy Efficiency Ratings	Number of Properties
EPC Rating E	100
EPC Rating F	50
	150

Property Type	Number of Properties
Terraced	75
Semi Detached	41
Bungalow	34
	150

- 3.1.5 The estimated capital costs have been set based on the overriding assumption that every property will require works for the full maximum value of the grant. It is expected however, that the majority of EPC 'E' rated properties will not require this level of works, particularly where the rating is towards the top of the 'E' band, in which such cases will only require low-cost measures such as loft or underfloor insulation to take them in to EPC 'D'.
- 3.1.6 In respect of the EPC 'F' rated properties, it is expected that more significant investment will be required at such properties, which is currently estimated at £16,000 per property. This estimate is based on the typical expenditure requirement which has been incurred on the Council's other retrofit schemes on properties with EPC 'F' rating.
- 3.1.7 In each case, the retrofit plans will be used to judge how best value can be achieved in terms of spend and carbon reduction, and these measures will be prioritised for installation. In cases where not all measures can be carried out, they will be identified in the medium-term plan and recorded on the PIMSS system for future investment opportunities.
- 3.1.8 The grant funding bid also included an element of project support costs expected to be incurred through the management of the scheme, which totals £0.293M [£0.195M grant and £0.098M HRA resources].
- 3.1.9 The table below provides a breakdown of the planned measures and an analysis of how resources will be utilised detailing the split between grant and match funding.

Project Costs Breakdown & Funding Analysis				
Measures	No. of Estimated Installations	Grant Funding	Match Funding	Total Scheme Funding
External Wall Insulation	99	£1,221,000	£610,500	£1,831,500
Cavity Wall Insulation	45	£42,000	£21,000	£63,000
Underfloor Insulation	98	£163,333	£81,667	£245,000
Loft Insulation	34	£30,940	£15,470	£46,410
Contingency	-	£21,667	£10,833	£32,500
Project Support Costs	-	£195,192	£97,596	£292,788
Total Social Housing Decarbonisation Investment	276	£1,674,132	£837,066	£2,511,198

- 3.1.10 The funding provided by BEIS can only be used for the purposes specified in the grant bid. If the funding was to be used for any other purpose, then BEIS can reclaim the relevant amount of funding paid. The Council plans to mitigate the risk of claw back by implementing an agreed specification for the appointed contractors to work to.
- 3.1.11 Again, as per the grant conditions, the SHDF funding must be spent by 31st March 2023 and so timescale for delivery is limited. The Council aims to mitigate this risk by engaging in early consultation with colleagues in procurement so that the tender exercise via the DPS can begin in April 2022, with the aim of completion within 6 to 8 weeks.

Affordable Warmth Programme

- 3.1.12 Included within this report at 2.7 is the proposal to allocate £0.5M from Disabled Facilities Grant resources to the Affordable Warmth Programme for a further 12 Months.
- 3.1.13 The Affordable Warmth scheme delivers Heating system upgrades to private properties. The levels of support awarded to tenants varies dependent upon eligibility of property types and personal circumstances.
- 3.1.14 The financial implications of these proposals are summarised in the attached Appendix A.

3.2 Legal

From 1 January 2021 public authorities will need to determine whether their subsidy carries any appreciable risk of triggering a dispute with a trade partner under the terms of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures rules or the UK's other Free Trade Agreements

A subsidy is a measure which is given by a public authority, such as BEIS to an enterprise, conferring an economic advantage that is not available on market terms and affecting international trade. An enterprise is anyone who puts goods or services on a market. An enterprise could be a government department or a charity if they are acting commercially. Subsidies to truly local companies or a small tourist attraction are unlikely to be caught as this is unlikely to affect international trade. All of these tests must be met for a measure to be deemed as a subsidy. If the measure meets the definition of a subsidy, the enterprise must determine which international obligations apply. **It is not considered that this funding meets the definition of a subsidy.**

3.3 Equality

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. Key findings of this show that the scheme will have a positive impact on protected groups as they are most likely to be at risk of living in fuel poverty. It also highlights the need to promote other fuel programmes via the Warm Homes Service to ensure that those residents who live in privately owned and rented properties also have the opportunity to upgrade the insulation levels in their home (e.g via Local Authority Delivery schemes).

3.4 Sustainability

- 3.4.1 The sustainability decision-making wheel has been reviewed for this project and the overall impacts are positive, particularly around reducing carbon emissions, reducing poverty and improving health and well-being of residents.
- 3.4.2 Pollution from the insulation manufacturing process along with embedded carbon in the supply chain are highlighted as areas of negative impact.

However, work is on-going with the procurement team to address how we can build a more sustainable supply chain (within our scope 3 emissions) going forwards.



3.5 Employee

3.5.1 The council will act as project lead and administrator for the reporting and grant claims. This will be managed by existing resource in the Housing and Climate Change team.

3.5.2 To comply with PAS2035 requirements around the grant funding, a new Retrofit Co-ordinator position needs to be established. This person will act as project manager for the scheme and will be responsible for ensuring that delivery is conducted in accordance with the grant requirements. This will be a temporary 12-month contract, and funding for this post has been secured as part of the overall award for the scheme. The recruitment of this post will be via a consultancy arrangement. However, the contract will require the consultant to work alongside Berneslai Homes staff who are currently undertaking the retrofit training. Going forward, the council will have developed in-house expertise in PAS2035.

3.5.3 The Affordable Warmth programme will be managed via existing resource within the warm homes team.

3.6 Communications

- 3.6.1 Promotion of this scheme will be to a pre-determined list of residents who live in council homes with a current EPC rating of E and F.
- 3.6.2 Berneslai Homes will carry out all promotional activity including initial engagement via letter.
- 3.6.3 Availability of the Affordable Warmth scheme will be promoted to front line staff and key partners to enable them to continue to make referrals for this support.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with colleagues in Legal, Finance, Procurement, HR and Berneslai Homes.
- 4.2 Consultation has taken place with Equality & Inclusion Officers.
- 4.3 Consultation on the Affordable Warmth programme has taken place with the Health and Wellbeing Board who support the principles of the scheme.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 That the offer of funding via the SHDF scheme is not accepted. This is not recommended as the funding is specifically designed to alleviate fuel poverty in the Borough and links in directly with the ambition to provide warm, healthy and sustainable homes for residents.
- 5.2 That the Affordable Warmth programme is not continued. This is not recommended given the immediate need for financial assistance to help repair and replace inefficient and broken heating systems amongst the most vulnerable residents of the Borough.
- 5.3 That resident's requiring gas boiler systems or replacements should be moved to a low carbon heating source in line with the Council's Zero45 ambitions. This is not recommended as the transition away from gas is expected to take between 5 and 10 years and residents eligible for support through this scheme require immediate assistance.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The council is committed to reducing carbon emissions from housing stock as part of the Zero40/ 45 ambitions and this scheme helps to achieve this through installing energy efficiency measures to reduce energy consumption.
- 6.2 Participating in the SHDF scheme and procuring contractors via our DPS will help to build the local green supply chain by adding to the pipeline of works we have in delivery. It provides a good opportunity to develop new partnerships directly with local and national contractors alike and prepare for

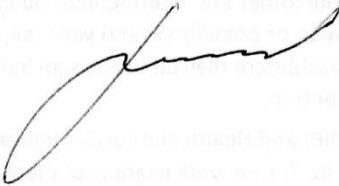
the challenge of bringing all homes in the Borough up to EPC Band C by 2050 via a long-term retrofit programme.

- 6.3 Further rounds of funding are to be made available over the next few months and so there is potential to build on this scheme in the future.
- 6.4 The Affordable Warmth programme will help to address the corporate priority to lower the rate of excess winter deaths and the objective of reducing the incidence of fuel poverty set out in the Energy Strategy.
- 6.5 The Affordable Warmth programme has been proven to improve health outcomes for residents following an independent evaluation of the first 2 years of the programme by the NEA (National Energy Action).

7. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Financial Implications

8. REPORT SIGN OFF

Financial consultation & sign off	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date  30/03/2022
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date  2/3/22

Report Author: Claire Miskell
Post: Programme Manager
Date: 18/02/22