

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Cllr Crossley, Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainability</b> <b>Cllr Bellotti, Cabinet Member for Community Resources</b>	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	<b>On or after Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b> (for single Member decision)	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: <b>E 2710</b>
TITLE:	<b>B&amp;NES Energy at Home – Top Up Grants</b>	
WARD:	100-150 homes in various locations	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>  Top Up Grant Guidance Notes for residents		

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Council was awarded £929,300 in April 2014 by the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) as part of the Green Deal Communities Programme. Of this funding, up to £804,000 is for capital top up grants to help local residents pay for energy saving improvements to their homes.
- 1.2 This is a discretionary Council grant funded entirely by Government grant. The bid for the fund was approved by the B&NES Energy at Home Senior Advisory Group, chaired by Andrew Pate, Strategic Director of Resources.
- 1.3 This funding was not included in the Council's capital programme as the award from DECC came after the Council's budgetary decision-making process.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the addition of this funding to the Council's 2014/15 capital programme, as required by the Council's Standing Orders.
- 2.2 The Cabinet Member is also asked to approve the provision of top up grants to residents.

### 3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 This decision has no resource implications.
  - i. There is no match funding required.
  - ii. There is no further draw down of grant required. The full amount of the grant has already been received by the Council from DECC.

- iii. Administration of the grant is being paid for from an allocation of up to 10% of the capital funding allowed by DECC.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The Council and its partners in housing and health have identified low energy efficiency standards in local homes as the source of a range of issues for public services, such as: 40% of the area's total carbon dioxide emissions from domestic buildings; £3.8 million annual cost to local health services from the health impact of cold homes; excess winter deaths (JSNA); potential (yet to be quantified) increased pressure on health and welfare services, especially in the face of rising energy costs and changes to welfare provision; as well as offering a potential opportunity for economic development.
- 4.2 Local Authorities have a range of duties and powers to improve health impacts and reduce inequality within their area. In particular, the Housing 2004 places a duty on Council's to assess and enforce housing conditions including addressing cold hazards. The Bath & North East Somerset Stock Condition Survey, published in 2012, found that over 11,000 of all private sector households were living in fuel poverty. A significant factor in cold housing is the large proportion of older properties in the district. Cold homes are associated with respiratory and circulatory conditions and mental ill-health; and can exacerbate other illnesses such as flu and arthritis. Just over 20% of excess winter deaths can be attributed to the coldest quarter of housing
- 4.3 The top up grants will support the Council's policy commitments made in the B&NES Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy 2012-2015 to encourage more energy efficiency measures, such as insulation and renewable energy, to be installed. As noted in the Strategy the domestic sector constitutes the largest portion of the district's carbon dioxide emissions. This is, therefore, an essential action in meeting the Council's Corporate Plan target to reduce carbon emissions across the area by 45% by 2026.
- 4.4 This proposal presents a considerable opportunity to capture local economic benefits and strengthen the economy. The Council's Green Deal Scoping Study, published in 2012, notes a potential £10-20million green retrofit market over and above current activity. This aligns with the West of England Low Carbon Initiative which recommended a 'Green and Grow' strategy to decarbonise existing businesses whilst increasing low carbon business. The Top up grant funding stream sits alongside a DECC funded project to build capacity in local installer businesses.
- 4.5 The top up grants will be available to all residents, whether home owners or tenants, in Bath & North East Somerset (except social housing tenants whose landlords are subject to addressing cold homes under Decent Homes Standard regulations). The newly appointed B&NES Energy at Home Advice Service will provide advice and guidance on energy saving measures to all residents, ensuring that its service is accessible to all. Vulnerable residents, such as older people or those with a disability, will be referred to WE Care & Repair who can provide extra support on housing issues.

## 5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 B&NES Energy at Home, of which the top up grants are a small part, has been set up by the Council, with its community partners Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE) and Curo. The scheme is part of the Council's long term strategy to tackle home energy retrofitting and will maximise local benefits from the Government's Green Deal programme. The Energy at Home Partnership aims to reduce local carbon emissions, help those residents in fuel poverty, improve health & well-being and strengthen the local economy.
- 5.2 The Council was awarded its Green Deal Communities funding alongside 24 other local authorities following a competitive bidding process. The money presents a significant opportunity to kickstart the B&NES Energy at Home scheme in its first year of delivery.
- 5.3 The DECC funding was split into four streams:
- i. £804,000 for capital top up grants
  - ii. £11,300 for free home energy assessments (the first stage of the retrofit process)
  - iii. £10,000 to support people opening their retrofitted homes to neighbours (as has already been successfully carried out through Bath Green Homes)
  - iv. £104,000 for capacity building for small & medium enterprise installers to help them maximise opportunities.
- 5.4 The capital top up grants will be used to help residents install energy saving measures to their homes, many of which can be prohibitively expensive. Up to £7,000 will be available for solid wall insulation which can cost up to £13,000 (or more in Listed Buildings). There will be up to £3,000 for other measures mentioned in the Energy Performance Certificate, such as improved heating or renewable energy.
- 5.5 The grant is being administered through the Funding & Programmes Team within Strategy & Performance. The Housing Services Team will approve the grants, including testing the reasonable of costs quoted to ensure good value for money. Up to 10% of the capital money can be used for administration and project management.
- 5.6 The process for administering this grant and the rules of the scheme have been based on the Council's existing Disabled Facilities Grant scheme, set up and delivered by Housing Services. The rules of the grant also follow the limitations on the funding set by DECC, such as the requirement for householders receiving the grant to take up Green Deal finance or pay the equivalent amount themselves.
- 5.7 This funding was not included in the Council's capital programme as its award was not announced by Government until April 2014.
- 5.8 The funding has already been paid into the Council's bank account in full.

5.9 Initial publicity has been carried out for this grant, mainly through an article in the Council's Connect magazine and as part of Bath Green Homes. This has generated a huge amount of interest with nearly 100 householders receiving their grant application packs and undertaking home energy assessments. There was also considerable interest in solid wall insulation at our recent Home Improvement Fair, attended by nearly 350 people.

5.10 Advice that residents receive when they apply for this scheme is attached for background information.

## 6 RATIONALE

6.1 This funding has been awarded by Government for the express purpose of delivering grant to householders for capital works. A memo of understanding setting out the use of this grant has been signed by the Council and DECC.

## 7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 This funding cannot be used for any other purpose.

## 8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation on the this funding was carried out with:

- i. Housing Services
- ii. Strategy & Performance: Corporate Sustainability and Funding & Programmes
- iii. Economic Development
- iv. Procurement
- v. Legal
- vi. Planning
- vii. Building Control
- viii. Curo
- ix. Bath & West Community Energy

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Jane Wildblood, 01225 477685</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<i>Public Reports Pack for the Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012: Agenda Item 12 Approach to Retrofitting &amp; the Green Deal</i>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	