

Decision Record – Bid to the Department for the Environment and Climate Change (DECC) to secure Funding to reduce fuel poverty in Warwickshire

Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking decision

Councillor Alan Cockburn – Sustainable Communities

**Date of Decision:
(NOT BEFORE – 23rd November 2012)**

26 NOVEMBER 2012

Decision taken

That I, as Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities, approves:

- 1) The submission of the bid for Fuel Poverty & Green Deal funding to DECC; and
- 2) That Warwickshire County Council being the accountable body for the funding.

Reasons for Decisions

Warwickshire County Council is applying for up to £400k from the Fuel Poverty Fund, and a further £20k from the Green Deal Pioneer Places Fund. The £400k is to target up to 50 rural households within the County with some of the highest levels of fuel poverty and to install energy saving measures that will decrease house holders fuel bills and ultimately contribute to improving quality of life. This target will be subject to agreement from individual homeowners and depend on the types of measures that are required. The £20k will contribute towards a web portal to enable information and learning to be shared about the process and payback of the measures. We will not receive the funding as a lump sum but DECC will pay the grant on receipt of monthly invoices.

The project will be a rural pilot within Rugby Borough, with the aim of establishing a blueprint for rolling out further in the Borough and to other areas of Warwickshire, using funding from the major energy companies under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). The scheme will dovetail with Coventry's proposal to tackle urban fuel poverty, but will be managed separately due to the contrasting urban/ rural agendas.

Eligible households will be identified by overlaying datasets from the Observatory with other public sector information. This includes housing stock condition surveys, fuel poverty, low income and benefit claimant data.

The types of measures to be implemented include cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, boiler replacement and double glazing. The aim will be to install the most cost effective solutions for reducing household energy bills; these currently have a payback of between 7-10yrs depending on the technology.

The intention is to use local installers and suppliers as far as possible, supporting the local economy and the Going for Growth agenda. This will be facilitated by using existing suppliers in the approved ESPO framework.

The deadline for submission of the bid to DECC is 30th November. Successful bidders will receive confirmation in early January 2013 and the money has to be spent, including measures installed, by 31st March 2013.

Background Information/ factors considered in arriving at these decisions - (set out below and in the officer report):

Background:

Warwickshire County Council (WCC), with the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), has formed a partnership with Rugby Borough Council (RBC), Renewable Energy Technology Alliance (RETA), a local consortium of SMEs supported by WCC and Coventry City Council (CCC) and Sustainable Action Partnership – West Midlands (SHAP) with links to Public Health and Affordable Warmth.

This partnership has been working towards a coordinated approach to addressing fuel poverty in Warwickshire, including putting a submission to DECC for funding to kick start the initiative.

DECC has now launched a formal competition for local authorities to bid for part of a £25m pot to trial Fuel Poverty initiatives and an additional £10m for Green Deal.

Our original intention was to submit a bid from the LEP Low Carbon Business Group. However, DECC has stipulated that local authorities are required to be the accountable body, drawing down monies from DECC upon receipt of invoices once work has been completed. Therefore the revised plan is for WCC and CCC to submit aligned, but separate, bids in order to still achieve the original objectives.

Financial Implications:

The risk to WCC of being the accountable body is considered to be low as invoices are submitted monthly to DECC and the outcomes are instant and easily verified. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities is therefore asked to approve submission of the bid to DECC, and to approve WCC being the accountable body for the funding.

If the bid is successful then DECC will issue the specific terms and conditions with the grant letter. These will be subjected to legal review once received.

Report Author: Andy McDarmaid / Rachel Baconnet

Head of Service: Louise Wall

Strategic Director: Monica Fogarty

Portfolio Holder Councillor Alan Cockburn

Checklist

Urgent matter: yes/no*

No

Confidential or Exempt (state category of exempt information)

No

Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?

No

List of Reports considered [please attach or forward a copy]

Report from author.

List of Background Papers [please include directorate contact names and numbers for access to background papers]

DECC Local Authority Funds Guidance Notes -
<http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/funding-support/fund-opportunities/6712-local-authority-competition-fund-application-pack.pdf>

Detailed content of the bid has not been included here as this is currently being developed.

Any members and officers consulted or informed and any comments given.

Cllr Alan Cockburn (Portfolio Holder)
Cllr Helen Walton
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