
Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration

21st October 2020

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration - Councillor J O'Boyle

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Business, Investment and Culture

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Green Homes Grant LAD Scheme Funding

Is this a key decision?

No - Although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive Summary:

Coventry City Council (CCC) has secured £530,000 funding as part of BEIS' (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) Green Homes Grant (GHG) Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme. The scheme aims to raise the energy efficiency rating of low income and low EPC rated households (those rated at EPC Band E, F or G), allowing the council to support some of the most vulnerable residents in the City. CCC will work with our existing Affordable Warmth delivery partner, Act on Energy (AOE), to ensure all grant funding is spent by the end of this financial year (March 2021). AOE are a local energy conservation charity that have been procured by CCC to deliver the existing 'Keeping Coventry Warm' scheme, including operating an advice line for residents, and ensuring delivery of physical interventions through our existing funding streams.

The LAD scheme will be used to support at least an additional 46 low-income households within the City with £10,000 grants towards the cost of energy efficiency measures, including but not limited to, external wall insulation (EWI), cavity wall insulation (CWI), roof insulation and heat pumps. This scheme will complement the existing 'Keeping Coventry Warm' scheme that has been operating in Coventry for several years, by bringing in an additional £530,000 of funding to support residents under a slightly different eligibility criteria.

This funding is essential to support some of the most vulnerable residents in our community to improve the energy efficiency of their home, make their homes warmer and reduce the levels of fuel poverty across the City. This could in turn lead to:

1. Reduction in health-related morbidity and mortality associated with living in cold homes.
2. Reduced demand for health and care services.
3. Improved energy efficiency for the houses supported, reducing their energy bills and carbon footprint.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration is recommended:

- 1) To approve the acceptance and act as accountable body for the grant funding from BEIS totalling £530,000 to deliver the Green Homes Grant LAD Scheme.
- 2) To delegate authority to the Director of Business, Investment and Culture and the Director of Finance, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, to negotiate final terms and approve entry into:
 - a) A Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Coventry City Council.
- 3) That following completion of the actions set out in Recommendation 2 above, to delegate authority to the Director of Business, Investment & Culture to manage and administer the Grant Funding Agreement with BEIS and the agreements with the Council's delivery partner (Act On Energy).

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Fuel poverty is a significant problem for some Coventry households, with many low income and vulnerable individuals affected. Across the city, 12.1% of all households are fuel poor, consequently, are unable to afford to stay warm in their homes.
- 1.2 The Green Homes Grant (GHG) Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme will provide £530,000 additional funding used to tackle fuel poverty in the City. This funding will need to be spent by end March 2021.
- 1.3 The funding will be used to support some of the most vulnerable residents (at least 46 households) in our community to improve the energy efficiency of their home, make their homes warmer and reduce the levels of fuel poverty across the City. The measures will include, but not be limited to, external wall insulation (EWI), cavity wall insulation (CWI), roof insulation and heat pumps. All homes targeted for support will need to be owner-occupied, have an income less than £30,000 and an EPC rating of E, F or G.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The first option could have been to decline the opportunity to apply for the GHG Lad Scheme funding, but this is not recommended as the Council is committed to tackling fuel poverty and reducing carbon emissions within the City. The GHG Lad Scheme supports many objectives of the Council Plan, namely:
 - Reducing the impact of poverty.
 - Reducing health inequalities.
 - Protecting our most vulnerable people.
 - Improving health and wellbeing.
- 2.2 The recommended option is for the Council to act as accountable body for this funding scheme. This will allow the existing 'Keeping Coventry Warm' frameworks to be utilised for delivery but ensure an additional £530,000 is drawn into the Council to support some of the most vulnerable residents within the City. Working with our delivery partner, we will ensure delivery of the scheme by the end of March 2021. Not only will this funding support some of the most vulnerable residents in the City, it will also improve employability for local contractors who will be engaged with the project.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The GHG LAD Scheme bid was developed by multiple teams within the Council (Climate Change & Sustainability, Public Health & Facilities Management) in addition to our procured 'Keeping Coventry Warm' service providers, Act on Energy. Each of the above had the opportunity to influence the GHG LAD bid. Very tight timescales in the opportunity to bid prevented further consultation.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The LAD scheme bid application has been reviewed by the relevant funding body, BEIS, and has been successful.
- 4.2 BEIS will issue Funding Agreements which will allow the project to start within 10 days of the Council having accepted and signed the MoU.

- 4.3 Once this is agreed, our deliver partner will be issued with an updated contract to account for the changes in terms with this additional funding being drawn down.
- 4.4 This process is expected to be completed within October 2020, to allow delivery and completion of the scheme by March 2021.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 If approved, the council would become the accountable body for the scheme as specified in the report, totalling £530,000. Whilst there is some financial risk, there is no immediate implication of being the accountable body. A breakdown on the funding is as below:
- Capital funding of £460,000. This will be held by Coventry City Council. Once works have been completed by contractors, they will invoice AOE. AOE will verify and quality check the work before invoicing the Council. Moneys will then be paid direct to AOE, who will be responsible for fulfilling the existing invoice received from their contractors. This will reduce risk to the Council by only making payment to our procured affordable warmth delivery partner and not a number of different contractors.
 - AOE revenue/admin costs of £38,880. This is to allow AOE to deliver the increased capacity of the schemes including: management fees, home visits, comms & marketing of the Programme.
 - CCC revenue/admin costs of £31,120. This includes a fee of £16,000 to utilise a bespoke data service concept to enable greater impact monitoring of the deployed energy efficiency measures. This data service will be an innovative first of a kind solution that aims to provide more in-depth visibility and validation of projects such as the GHG LAD scheme.
- 5.1.2 Successful bids will be paid to CCC in two instalments; an upfront 50% paid within 10 days of signing of the MoU, with a further 50% of the Grant being paid within 10 days following submission of the third monthly report.
- 5.1.3 No match funding is required as part of this funding scheme.
- 5.1.4 Act on Energy have recently been awarded the tender to deliver CCC's existing affordable warmth scheme 'Keeping Coventry Warm'. As a result, their economic and financial standing has recently been assessed by procurement, including analysis of commercial risk reports from Creditsafe. The Company passed all of this financial criteria.

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 The Council will act as the accountable body for the GHG LAD Scheme on the terms of BEIS. The Council will need to sign the MoU and other appropriate documentation (e.g. Data Sharing Agreement, Privacy Notice etc.) approved by the Council's legal services. The terms and conditions will be devolved to our delivery partner, Act on Energy (AOE) to ensure full compliance. These will ensure appropriate conditions and obligations which are imposed upon the Council are passed to the grant recipients who receive the funding for delivering projects.

5.2.2 There is a risk of clawback in the event of non-compliance with the terms and conditions set out in any agreement entered into between the Council and the Funding Body (BEIS). However, AOE will undertake strict monitoring of compliance, which will be spot-checked by the Council (in addition to the measures identified in paragraph 6.2 of this report) to minimise this risk.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

6.1.1 The Council Plan for 2016 – 2024 sets out the vision and priorities for Coventry. Under the heading of ‘Reducing the Impact of Poverty’, the Plan states that supporting residents experiencing fuel poverty is a priority. The GHG LAD Scheme will contribute to supporting fuel poor households, and will also support other core aims of the Council Plan, including:

- Reducing the impact of poverty.
- Reducing health inequalities.
- Protecting our most vulnerable people.
- Improving health and wellbeing.

6.1.2 Action to tackle fuel poverty also has multiple policy benefits. In addition to contributing to the Council Plan, it will have a positive effect in terms of:

- Improving the quality of housing.
- Increasing disposable incomes.
- Creating employment opportunities.
- Preventing ill health and excess winter deaths arising from the effects of excess cold.
- Improving opportunities for home study and therefore educational attainment.
- Reducing carbon emissions.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

6.2.1 The Council will act as the accountable body for a total £530,000 of BEIS funding and will be responsible for ensuring that the funding is spent in compliance with the programme’s regulations before end March 2021.

6.2.2 To reduce risk to the Council, the Council will only enter contractual agreements with our delivery partner, Act on Energy (AOE). It will be the responsibility of AOE to manage relationships with their contractor network.

6.2.3 During the duration of the scheme, a project board will be in operation. The board will meet to discuss: Progress against KPIs, evaluation of marketing, issue logs, project risk registers and individual cases where necessary.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

6.3.1 The scheme will be delivered within existing staff resources.

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

6.4.1 Fuel Poverty disproportionately affects householders who are vulnerable and on low incomes, and particularly those with ill-health or disabilities. Increasing the capacity of funding available to support these residents is of vital importance.

6.4.2 Implementing the Warm and Healthy Homes for Disabled Householders Scheme will help to support some of these householders.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

6.5.1 The housing sector is responsible for a substantial proportion of carbon dioxide emissions in the city. Energy efficiency improvements to the housing stock will play an important part in reducing carbon emissions. The scheme will also support additional jobs in the low carbon (e.g. insulation) sector.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

6.6.1 The funding received through this scheme will have potentially positive implications for partner health and social care organisations because of improvements in the health and wellbeing of households supported.

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