

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

USE OF EXISTING COUNCIL RESOURCES TO PROVIDE ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES TO HOUSEHOLDS IN TAMWORTH

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Non-Confidential

Purpose

To provide background to a proposed Warm Zones project in Tamworth that would enable residents living in the most deprived areas of Tamworth to have free energy efficiency measures installed in their home.

To request permission to use funds from the works in default capital budget to provide £30,000 to Warm Zones who will then match fund the contribution from Tamworth Borough Council with £60,000 of external funding for this project.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Tamworth Borough Council make available up to £30,000 to Warm Zones to take up the opportunity to receive up to £60,000 match funding for energy efficiency measures to operate the Warm Zones project within Tamworth..

Background

In November 2013, Cabinet approved the use of £130K Coalfields' Capital Funding to enable urgent repairs issues to be addressed in private sector homes. The use of this funding and associated policies are currently under review. As part of that review and in line with key outcome 2 as set out in the Council's Healthier Housing Strategy (Homes are healthy, warm and safe), the following objectives will underpin the Council's approach when addressing these issues:

- To provide safe, secure and healthy homes to private sector residents in Tamworth
- To reduce the number of illnesses and accidents relating to unsafe and cold housing
- To ensure the Council fulfils it's statutory duties

The ongoing review has presented opportunities to both refresh the approach to providing assistance to private sector residents and redirect £30K of the above resources in order to enable the Council to take advantage of the Warm Zones project.

There is a volume of research and evidence in relation to the health impacts suffered by those living in cold homes. These include direct and indirect impacts such as increased risks and worsened symptoms of cardiovascular, respiratory and rheumatoid diseases, and poor mental health. Cold homes are also proven to be a

significant contributor to the level of excess winter deaths in the UK. However, cold housing and fuel poverty can be successfully tackled, and we are working to achieve this in Tamworth through interventions like this project.

The new “Warm Zones Fund” is a project designed to maximise the delivery of energy efficiency measures and services, and alleviate fuel poverty, in areas where need is greatest. The Warm Zones project will bring in much needed funding into Tamworth to enable residents living in the Borough’s most deprived areas (in Council and private housing) to have free energy efficiency measures installed in their homes. However, match funding is required from the Council in order to make the project deliverable (the Warm Zones will provide £2 for each £1 match funded by the Council).

The project has been brought to the attention of the Council by consultants engaged by the Council to deliver the HEAT scheme in the town. Essentially, the project would provide free energy efficiency measures installations (including heating measures (private sector households only), solid wall insulation, cavity wall insulation and loft insulation) to residents in defined, Carbon Savings Community Obligation (CSCO) areas as part of the wider Energy Companies Obligation (ECO) initiative. The CSCO areas in Tamworth include parts of the Town Centre, Belgrave, Amington, Glascoate Heath and Stonydelph, and there are 208 postcodes that are eligible for the insulation measures.

A briefing note on the Warm Zones project including detailed eligibility criteria is attached as Appendix A.

A map highlighting the CSCO areas in Tamworth is attached as Appendix B.

A decision on match funding and commitment to participate in the project is required imminently as the project will commence from then until the end of March 2016. The project may be rolled forward into 2016/17 but this can be further explored on approval to provide match funding for the initial stage of the project to March has been granted.

Financial Implications

The Council secured funding for private sector housing renewal following involvement with a sub-regional research project that explored the implications for housing following the demise of the coal mining industry. These funds were provided with restrictions to ensure they were utilised to facilitate housing projects that would bring about housing renewal and regeneration locally and have since been used to provide Capital funding for such schemes.

Cabinet has previously agreed the use of coalfields funding to both support work on bringing empty homes back into use and in November 2013, to use £130,000 Coalfields resources to enable works in default to be undertaken and to provide loans to remedy urgent repair issues. The ongoing review of assistance provided to address issues in private sector homes has presented opportunities to both refresh the approach to providing assistance to private sector residents and redirect £30K of the above capital resources in order to enable the Council to take advantage of the Warm Zones project.

The proposed use of these funds is consistent with the intended use of these resources for housing renewal purposes. Tamworth Borough Council will retain the

£30K and will pay resource upon receipt of individual invoices following the successful completion of works. This will enable the Council to effectively monitor this project and use of dedicated Council resources.

Additionally, the use of these resources as outlined above may result in savings to the Council as a consequence of no longer requiring the additional work generated for Council staff to advise and explore alternative housing options to re-house those residents affected either by disrepair issues or having cold and poorly heated homes. A reduction in hospital admissions or the need for medical assistance arising from poor housing conditions may also reduce pressures on health services and assist in conserving resources.

OFFICER'S DECISION:

That £30K of existing Council capital resources for urgent repair issues in private sector homes is utilised to provide match funding for the above Warm Zones project.

Report Author

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