

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

December 6th 2017

BROMSGROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY FUND AND SCHEME

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Key Decision	No

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 In order to maximise the benefit of the remaining Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Funding for 2017-18, it is proposed to realign the eligibility criteria in order to focus on the most in need households.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Council is asked to RESOLVE that:

- 1) The eligibility criteria detailed in Appendix 2 are adopted for the Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Scheme and Fund.

3 KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Scheme and Fund assists with heating system improvements and other cost effective energy efficiency measures for low income homeowners, aiming to improve health, wellbeing and financial independence, reduce strain on health and social care services and maintain and improve the quality of housing stock in the District. It is delivered in partnership with local energy advice charity Act on Energy, has been replicated across Worcestershire and was Highly Commended in the West Midlands Energy Efficiency Awards 2017, at which Bromsgrove District Council won Council of the Year.

Financial Implications

- 3.2 The scheme was launched in 2016 as a three year programme but because of high demand, the Council has agreed to bring an additional £41k into the 2017-18 financial year to make provision for the coming winter. By learning from the scheme so far and re-aligning the eligibility criteria, this will enable the scheme to focus on value for money and achieving solutions for those in most need.
- 3.3 The Scheme will only be available when other funding streams are not available or appropriate. Increasing restriction of government-led energy company obligation (ECO) funding has led to increased pressure on BEEF but Act on Energy now have access to energy company funding towards loft and cavity wall insulation for those on qualifying means tested benefits and a limited amount of local authority led 'flexible' ECO funding

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towards LPG and oil boilers as well as loft and cavity wall insulation for other eligible households (see warmerworcestershire.com 'Statement of Intent' for more information). These funds will be utilised in preference to BEEF.

Legal Implications

- 3.4 The general power of competence in s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the council to undertake such a project. The council is entitled to set and adjust its own criteria for such a scheme.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 The amendments to the eligibility criteria are set out in Appendix 2 with reasons.
- 3.6 The changes to the criteria have been discussed with Act on Energy, who deliver the Scheme, and are not anticipated to have adverse operational consequences.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 It is proposed to not limit the Scheme to those with existing cold-related health conditions, as a cold home can precipitate poor health and the impacts for those without health conditions can still be significant. The March 2016 Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) profile for Bromsgrove mentions that for younger age groups, cold housing can have significant negative effects in terms of infant weight gain, hospital admission rates, developmental status and asthma. Adolescent mental health, adult physical health, wellbeing and self-assessed general health are also affected, particularly for vulnerable adults as well as those with existing health conditions. Other effects include anxiety about financial issues, using fewer rooms in order to reduce heating costs (with potential for overcrowding and psychological effects) and educational underperformance of children.
- 3.8 Following consultation with the financial independence team, it is also proposed not to limit the Scheme to households with children or pensioners. These groups are understandably frequently prioritised over childless working-age adults (single or couples), but with the net effect that the latter are significantly less supported and more vulnerable in times of crisis.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Act on Energy ensure that quotes are reasonable before approving commencement of works – either by multiple quotes or where it would be inappropriate to have multiple contractor visits for quotes due to customer vulnerability, by comparison with Framework prices for other similar schemes.
- 4.2 Act on Energy will continue to collect data to enable officers to audit the effectiveness of the programme and this will continue to be monitored by the Council's Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Officer.

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5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Original criteria

Appendix 2 Proposed Changes to Eligibility Criteria

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Report 7 September 2016 – Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Fund and Scheme
- Council Report 22 November 2017 – Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Fund Transfer

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