

18. HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMMES FOR SCOTLAND (HEEPS) 2015-16

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Construction and Building Services advising of funding awarded to West Lothian for 2015-16 for home efficiency measures in private sector housing.

The Head of Housing, Construction and Building Services explained that West Lothian Council had taken advantage of available funding for energy efficiency since 1996. This funding had come from many schemes and the funded outcomes had varied over the years, but could be summarised as including cavity insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing, water tank insulation and reflective radiator panels.

The West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017 recognised the importance of Fuel Poverty, Climate Change and House Condition and included a number of specific actions aimed at improving energy efficiency and sustainability in the housing stock.

The key objectives of the Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland : Area Based Schemes (HEEPS:ABS) were :-

- To reduce fuel poverty;
- To reduce carbon emissions;
- To encourage Energy Company Obligations (ECO) in Scotland; and
- To support the local economy and sustainable local economic development.

In March 2014 Council Executive approved arrangements for using the 2013-14 funding and these were summarised in the report. In implementing the approved arrangements Keepmoat were appointed to implement the area based insulation works and Everwarm were appointed to implement the External Wall insulation work in Howden. Scottish Gas was also appointed to carry out the Westfield study and a programme was awaited for this.

On 12 December 2014, Scottish Government confirmed that West Lothian was to receive £1,082,475 in 2015-15 for area based schemes to tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency of private sector housing stock. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a copy of the letter received from Scottish Government.

A further £12m was also available for councils that were able to show how they could spend more than their initial allocation. Details of how the council intended to allocate the HEEPS funding requirements required to be submitted to Scottish Government by 20 February 2015.

The council's managing agents for HEEPS during 2013-14 and 2014-15

was Changeworks. A tendering process had since begun to secure a managing agent for 2015-16 and Changeworks had recently been appointed as the successful contractor on 23 January 2015 and had started to prepare the West Lothian bid.

Given the imminent deadline for submission of the West Lothian HEEPS bid, Council Executive was being asked to agree that the final content of the West Lothian bid was delegated to the Head of Housing, Construction and Building Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Councillors for Services for the Community to agree that the bid should focus on those themes and areas listed in the report, as detailed in the report.

Therefore it was recommended that the Council Executive :-

1. Note the allocation of funding of £1,082,475 to West Lothian for 2015-16 under the government's Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland (HEEPS);
2. Note a further £12m was available to council's that were able to show they could spend more than their initial allocation and agree that the council should bid for a share of this additional funding;
3. Note that Changeworks had been appointed as the managing agent for the West Lothian HEEPS programme for 2015-16 and were currently finalising the bid setting out the council's expenditure for Scottish Government approval;
4. Note that the council's bid had to be submitted to Scottish Government by 20 February 2015 and that the outcome of the bid for a share of the additional funding should be known around 23 March 2015;
5. Agree that the council bid should focus on those areas listed in Section D2 of the report and given the imminent deadline for the submission of the West Lothian HEEPS bid, that the final content of the West Lothian bid was delegated to the Head of Housing, Construction and Building Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Services for the Community;
6. Agree that the council should submit a bid to Scottish Government for a share of the Green Homes Cashback funding for social landlords when bids were invited so that the number of council houses that could benefit from the installation of energy efficiency measures could be increased; and
7. Agree that the council would develop capacity to manage the West Lothian HEEPS programme in-house from 2016-17.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report

