

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 3rd February,
2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Debbie Chance (Chair), Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Julian Grubb, Lucy Harrison, Luke Court and Anthony Lovell

Also Present:

Councillor Anthony Lovell – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change

Officers:

Matthew Bough and Sue Hanley

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

68. SUSTAINABLE WARMTH FUNDING - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Chair welcomed the Strategic Housing Manager, who was in attendance on Microsoft Teams, to the meeting. During the presentation of the Sustainable Warmth Funding report the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- There were two components of the Sustainable Warmth funding. These were the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG1) and Local Authority Delivery (LAD3) phase 3. These components would run in parallel to the current LAD funding that was already in place to improve properties with the worst energy rating. The new allocation of funding would be utilised to improve those properties Energy Performance Certificate

Chair

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(EPC) rating of E, F or G. It was noted that EPC D properties could also be included. The HUG1 funding would be specifically used for those properties who were not on the mains gas supply. The total amount of funding was noted as follows:

	Capital	Administrative Allocation (Admin and Ancillary)
Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 1	£65,000 (£6,500)	£6,500 (£650)
Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3	£260,000 (£26,000)	£26,000 (£2600)

Members were informed that the Administrative Allocation would be used to bring in additional resource to help with the project management and delivery of the programme.

- The criteria for recipients of the funding was outlined as part of the scheme. It was reported that households must be either privately owned or rented with an income of less than £30k per household. Other factors also formed part of the criteria, these included means tested benefits and food or fuel vouchers. In addition to this those who lived in Social Housing with poor energy efficiency ratings would also be eligible. It was noted that the Social Housing stock that could receive HUG1 funding was capped at 10% of the total number of homes and that LAD3 funding was capped at 10% of the total number of homes.
- The period of the grant was until March 2023 and all works must be delivered to Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 2035 using Trustmark accredited contractors.

During a detailed discussion Members queried how the funding would be publicised so that eligible households could apply. The Strategic Housing Manager reported that Act On Energy had been commissioned by the Midland Energy Hub (MEH) and would be the customer journey provider and would use their channels to promote the scheme. Alongside this, the Council would use their social media channels and other communication methods to further promote the scheme. It was also noted that

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officers had access to those properties with poor EPCs and would be able to utilise this information to identify eligible properties.

Members queried the allocation of £65k HUG1 funding. In the report it was stated that each eligible household could receive up to £15k per property which meant that, potentially, only 4 households could receive funding. Officers confirmed that this was due to the HUG1 funding is specifically for households that were not on the mains gas supply and noted that there was a smaller amount of these kinds of properties within the Borough.

Members were keen to understand what steps were to be taken to ensure that the funding would be allocated correctly, and the project managed efficiently. Officers reassured the Committee that Trustmark accredited suppliers would be used to deliver the works, monthly reporting would be provided to MEH and that inspections would be carried out in order to ensure that the works had been carried out correctly.

It was clarified that the allocation of funding would be on a first come first basis and would be done quickly as the time frames for the allocation needed to be completed by the end of the financial year 2021-2022. Further funding was expected to be received in the future and this would mean that those households that did not receive funding during this allocation could still potentially receive funding in the future.

Councillor Anthony Lovell who was in attendance on Microsoft Teams as Portfolio Holder for Climate Change was invited to address the Committee. In doing so, Councillor Lovell stated that he thought that this was an excellent initiative for Redditch particularly in light of the current fuel poverty concerns.

At the end of the debate the Committee

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Capital and Revenue Budgets (Housing and General Fund) are increased to receive Redditch Borough**

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Council's Sustainable Warmth scheme allocation of £357,500.

- 2) Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Community & Housing Services and Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services in consultation with Portfolio Holders for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.14 pm