

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION RECORD



Report subject	'Climate Action' insulation scheme
Decision maker	Councillor Mike Greene, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Sustainability
Decision date	Not Before 24 November 2021
Decision taken	Approve budget for use to assist eligible residents to install grant-funded insulation measures in homes with poor energy ratings.
Reasons for the decision	Reduce domestic energy use in line with the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency commitments and national targets.
Call-in and urgency:	This decision will not come into force until the expiry of 5 clear working days after the decision was made, recorded and published.
Corporate Director	Chief Operations Officer
Responsible officer	Neil Short, Sustainability Manager
Wards	Council-wide
Status	Open
Background	Following declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency, the Council wishes to launch an insulation scheme to improve the energy efficiency of homes, contribute to the target of a carbon neutral area before 2050 and help achieve Government targets.
Options appraisal	<p>Option 1 (recommended) approval of £90k budget for grant scheme – this allows the improvement of home energy efficiency in properties that cannot gain grant funding from other means, assisting towards local and national carbon and fuel poverty targets.</p> <p>Option 2 (do nothing) non-approval of £90k budget for grant scheme – this prevents the improvement of home energy efficiency in properties that cannot gain grant funding from other means, and will not assist towards local and national carbon and fuel poverty targets.</p>

<p>Consultation undertaken</p>	<p>The following have been consulted on this decision to finalise relevant scheme details:</p> <p>Councillor Mike Greene, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Sustainability</p> <p>Ian Poultney, Head of Sustainability & Strategic Development</p> <p>Roxanne King, Strategic Lead – Climate, Resource and Sustainability</p> <p>Olly Sanders, Senior Procurement Officer</p> <p>Steve Wade, Management Accountant – Communities and Environment</p> <p>The Council Equalities Panel</p> <p>Members of the public: The ‘2050 Climate Action Plan’ public consultation, conducted between January and March 2021, received over 1700 responses. 1601 respondents commented on the option to ‘Help residents save energy at home and get grants to improve their homes’. Over half of these (62%) felt this action was a high priority, which has prompted the proposed grant scheme.</p>
<p>Financial/Resource implications</p>	<p>The council has base budget available to support action to reduce climate change and will make available a budget of £90k for 2021/22, to fund a ‘Climate Action’ grant scheme for owner-occupiers and private tenants named on their energy bills in homes with an energy rating of E, F or G. This will provide free insulation for those with a household income of up to £42,900 - a wider group than national grant schemes allow. A maximum grant of £2k per property will allow multiple measures and associated works as required for complex installations, whilst ensuring most householders have nothing to pay. Council funds will be combined with national funding streams to achieve best value and will be used as a ‘fund of last resort.’ To incentivise the lowest-rated properties to upgrade insulation, provision is also made to grant-fund works in households where the household income is above £42,900. In these cases, the maximum grant is as follows: household income between £42,901 and 50,000 = 40% of the cost up to a maximum of £800, household income between 50,001 and 60,000 = 20% of the cost up to a maximum of £400, and household income of £60,001 and over = 10% of the cost up to a maximum of £200. Funds will be allocated on a ‘first-come, first-served’ basis. Free assessments will determine suitability of properties and grant amounts will include the cost of providing an updated Energy Performance Certificate once works are completed.</p>
<p>Summary of legal implications</p>	<p>It is within the Council’s legal powers to fund initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of housing in its area and to set parameters for this. Furthermore, under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 the Council is a designated Energy Conservation Authority and must compile regular energy conservation reports to</p>

	Government on actions taken to reduce carbon emissions from homes, of which this project will form part.
Summary of sustainability impact	DIA Ref 268 rates this proposal as having a 'low' carbon footprint. The grant scheme is intended to improve the energy efficiency of homes in the area, thus reducing energy demand and carbon emissions, producing a positive impact in regard to the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Energy Performance Certificates will be produced to evidence the improvements achieved.
Summary of public health implications	This scheme will improve the health and wellbeing of the population, as it is proven that warmer homes reduce illness and emergency admissions to hospital in winter and reduce health inequalities locally.
Summary of equality implications	The Council Equalities Panel was 'satisfied that equality issues have been considered and may wish to take mitigating actions to address the equality related issues identified. These include selecting the most appropriate delivery agent with a track record in assisting vulnerable clients and not engaging in doorstep selling or cold calling practices to further safeguard vulnerable residents from harassment. This is mitigated by the appointment of the Council's LEAP delivery partner as the managing agent. The setting of a single fully funded income threshold levels the playing field for single parent families and families of any size, that are frequently treated differently in grant schemes. As all homeowners and private tenants named on their energy bills in low energy-rated properties with a household income of up to £42,900 are eligible for help, eligibility is extended beyond the financial threshold set for nationally available grants. To further increase inclusivity and incentivise low-rated properties to upgrade insulation, provision is also made to grant-fund works in households where the household income is above £42,900. In these cases, the maximum grant is as follows: household income between £42,901 and 50,000 = 40% of the cost up to a maximum of £800, household income between 50,001 and 60,000 = 20% of the cost up to a maximum of £400, and household income of £60,001 and over = 10% of the cost up to a maximum of £200. Funds will be allocated on a 'first-come, first-served' basis.
Summary of risk assessment	Summary of risks considered include: (Political) failure to achieve anticipated energy savings – mitigated by engaging the best-placed delivery partner, (Financial) ensuring contractors have appropriate insurance, and (Reputational) works to be guaranteed and contractors to be certified to appropriate standards.
Conflicts of interest declared by Cabinet member consulted on this decision	Not applicable

Background papers	Published works: Response to Climate and Ecological Emergency (report to Council 17 December 2019) 2050 Climate Action Plan Consultation Report
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Equality Impact Assessment: conversation screening tool

[Use this form to prompt an EIA conversation and capture the output between officers, stakeholders and interested groups. This completed form or a full EIA report will be published as part of the decision-making process]

Policy/Service under development/review:	'Climate Action' Insulation Grants
What changes are being made to the policy/service?	New scheme
Service Unit:	Environment
Persons present in the conversation and their role/experience in the service:	Ian Poultney, Head of Sustainability & Strategic Development Roxanne King, Strategic Lead – Climate, Resource and Sustainability Neil Short, Sustainability Manager
Conversation dates:	1 July 2021
Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?	Yes. Homeowners and private tenants named on their energy bills residing in properties in the BCP Council area with an energy rating of E, F or G.
Do different groups have different needs or experiences in relation to the policy/service?	Needs are the same for homeowners and private tenants residing in properties with an energy rating lower than D and a household income of up to £42,900. Any are eligible, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, members of the armed forces community, carers, human rights or socio-economic group. (Social housing properties are excluded as Housing Providers can bid to the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve the energy efficiency of their stock).
Will the policy or service change affect any of these service users?	Yes, all that are homeowners and private tenants named on their energy bills residing in properties with an energy rating lower than D and a household income of up to £42,900.
[If the answer to the three questions above is 'don't know' then you need to gather more evidence and do a full EIA. The best way to do this is to use the Capturing Evidence form]	
What are the benefits or positive impacts of the policy/service change on current or potential service users?	The grant funds basic loft and/or cavity wall insulation in eligible properties in order to reduce the likelihood of fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions from energy use. The aim of the grant criteria is to fill any void left by the eligibility criteria of existing national grant schemes. Many people with the characteristics of age, disability and low income will already be eligible for other grants. Any household falling outside the existing national grant criteria (e.g. not in receipt of benefits or with a household income over £30k) will be eligible for the 'Climate Action' grant, which uses a single level of financial eligibility for funding 100% of works (up to £2k) for households with an annual household income of £42,900 or less. The significance of this figure is that it is an existing threshold for families consisting of 2 adults and 4 children, but this new grant will treat any size of household equally.

What are the negative impacts of the policy/service change on current or potential service users?	None identified
Will the policy or service change affect employees?	Employees can utilise the grants if they and their property are eligible.
Will the policy or service change affect the wider community?	Any homeowner and private tenants named on their energy bills can utilise the grants if they and their property are eligible.
What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by the policy/service change?	No groups have been identified to be negatively affected.
Summary of Equality Implications:	<p>The Council Equalities Panel was 'satisfied that equality issues have been considered and may wish to take mitigating actions to address the equality related issues identified.' These include selecting the most appropriate delivery agent with a track record in assisting vulnerable clients and not engaging in doorstep selling or cold calling practices to further safeguard vulnerable residents from harassment. The setting of a single income threshold levels the playing field for single parent families and families of any size, that are frequently treated differently in grant schemes. As all homeowners and private tenants named on their energy bills in low energy-rated properties with a household income of up to £42,900 are eligible for help, eligibility is extended beyond the financial threshold set for nationally available grants, to increase inclusivity.</p> <p><u>Update note:</u> since completion of the original EIA, the following modifications have been made to eligibility: the fully-funded grant threshold has increased to £42,900 to stay aligned with that of other grants, and to increase inclusivity and incentivise low-rated properties to upgrade insulation. Furthermore, provision is also made to grant-fund works in households where the household income is above £42,900. In these cases, the maximum grant is as follows: household income between £42,901 and 50,000 = 40% of the cost up to a maximum of £800, household income between 50,001 and 60,000 = 20% of the cost up to a maximum of £400, and household income of £60,001 and over = 10% of the cost up to a maximum of £200. Funds will be allocated on a 'first-come, first-served' basis. Eligible energy rating has changed from below a C to now target properties below a D, as a regional grant is now available that targets this band. Eligibility has also been further extended to include private tenants named on their energy bills.</p>