

Subject: Rossendale Energy Efficiency
Grant Scheme
Be A Rossendale Saver - BeARS

Status: For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 22nd October 2008

Report of: Head of Regeneration

Portfolio

Holder: Regeneration and Leisure

Key Decision: Yes

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request that Cabinet approve £40,000 health funding to support the establishment of the 'BeARS – Be A Rossendale Saver' project; a Council recommended home Energy Efficiency Scheme run in partnership with Rossendale's LSP Health and Wellbeing Thematic group.
- 1.2 To authorise the Strategic Housing and Partnerships Manager to undertake all necessary actions to establish; market; and deliver this programme on behalf of the Council and the LSP Health and Wellbeing Thematic.
- 1.3 To delegate authority to the Executive Director for Business to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between Rossendale Borough Council and Home Carbon Savers who will deliver the BeARS project.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.
- Delivering Quality Services to Customers (Customers, Improvement)
 - Delivering Regeneration across the Borough (Economy, Housing)
 - Keeping Our Borough Clean and Green (Environment)
 - Improving health and well being across the Borough (Health, Housing)

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Lack of staffing resources to undertake the management and marketing of the scheme.
- Lack of buy in by residents to undertake or apply for energy efficiency measures for their homes. This could be a result of lack of publicity or nature of marketing materials regarding the scheme.
- Potential complaints regarding the workmanship of the energy efficiency measures installed in households which could lead to adverse publicity.
- Success of the scheme through the subsidised 'able to pay' pilot initiative may result in allocation of funding from the LSP Health and Wellbeing Group expiring before the end of the three year programme.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 ***'A household is defined as being in fuel poverty when over 10% of its income is used to pay heating costs.'*** Given the recent increases in energy prices, the number of households in fuel poverty has increased dramatically. There are a number of schemes available nationally which specifically target **'priority'** households (over-70s, or those in receipt of various benefits).

4.2 Whilst these schemes are successful in reducing fuel poverty in priority households, there is a significant problem in households that do not qualify for these schemes, but nevertheless cannot afford to heat their homes to the recommended standard. This is known as the **'able to pay'** sector.

4.3 Rossendale Borough Council is committed to achieving affordable warmth and reducing fuel poverty for as many residents as possible, and this project, will allow residents to access energy efficiency measures to reduce fuel costs. The project, with Home Carbon Savers will offer three forms of assistance to the following groups:-

- Priority Target groups
- Able to Pay Sector
- Subsidised Able to Pay groups

4.4 This project will link to the Council's existing Environmental and Housing Strategies; the LSP Health and Wellbeing Group Action Plan; as well as contribute to several local and sub-regional initiatives and target indicators particularly NI 187 Fuel Poverty (identified as a key priority reward target for the Lancashire LAA2).

4.5 BeARS will use existing staff resources to project manage and maintain a three year programme, which will include an element of marketing and promotion of BeARS through Rossendale Council's Communications Department as well as signposting through the One Stop Shop.

- 4.6 The work of the energy surveyors will be funded through Home Carbon Savers who are acting as a brokerage service between the Council and the Energy Companies. Home Carbon Savers time and resources will not be subject to any funding from the Council.
- 4.7 It is envisaged that the Scheme will attract around £750,000 from Energy companies, two thirds of which will fund energy saving measures in priority households. Energy saving measures through this project will include Cavity wall insulation, Loft insulation, Radiator reflector panels, Draught proofing and Hot water tank jackets.
- 4.8 The current proposal is for 'able to pay' customers to benefit from £250,000 of grant, which would be topped up by customer contributions at a 50% grant rate. It is proposed that households with children under 16, whose income is above the threshold for 'priority' status (c. £16,500), but is below the average combined household income for Rossendale (currently £32,000) should qualify for a £50 contribution towards the costs that have to be met by the householder. This would be funded by £40,000 secured from the Council's health inequalities funding programme, and would be on a strictly first come, first served basis until the grant is fully expended. This would provide additional help to 800 households across the Borough.
- 4.9 Enquiries received from households in rented accommodation, either private landlord, or RSL will be signposted to a scheme that is relevant to their accommodation.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 £40k Grant funding for the above health inequalities programme has already been received. Other energy efficiency work will only be offered to the value of grants received from the energy companies. There should be no other cash costs to the Council from this project.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 The Memorandum of Understanding will be considered by legal services who have requested a copy.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 7.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed scheme would provide a recommended and approved way for allowing all residents the opportunity to access energy efficiency grants. It would also contribute positively to several performance monitoring indicators locally and regionally that the Council currently measures against including the Local Area Agreement Indicator NI 187 Reducing Fuel Poverty.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 To request that Cabinet approve the establishment of the ‘BeARS – Be A Rossendale Saver’ project; a Council recommended home Energy Efficiency Scheme run in partnership with Rossendale’s LSP Health and Wellbeing Thematic.
- 9.2 To authorise the Strategic Housing and Partnerships Manager to undertake all necessary actions to establish; market; and deliver this programme on behalf of the Council and the LSP Health and Wellbeing Thematic.
- 9.3 To delegate authority to the Executive Director for Business to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between Rossendale Borough Council and Home Carbon Savers who will deliver the project.
- 9.3 That the £40,000 funding allocation from the LSP Health and Wellbeing Thematic is identified as rolling funding over the next three years to be allocated to and managed through the Housing Capital Programme Budget.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Consultation through various groups including:
LSP Health & Wellbeing group, Council departments, project steering group, Lancashire Local Area Agreement Environment (Energy Efficiency) Group.

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Is an Equality Impact Assessment required Yes / ~~No~~
- Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached Yes / ~~No~~

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required Yes / ~~No~~
- Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached Yes / ~~No~~

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Project File	Room 120, Futures Park
Report to LSP Health & Wellbeing Group 22 nd July 2008	Room 120, Futures Park