

Item number: 6

Title: Accept up to £3.29m of grant funding from the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund

Report

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Lead Officer: Gillian Cox – Housing Energy Manager &
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Ward(s) affected: All Wards

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1.** This report seeks approval to accept up to £3,290,823 of funding from the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (WH: SHF) programme. The funding will be obtained through the London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium, and Camden Council as the Lead Authority of the pan-London partnership.
- 1.2.** Haringey Council will enter into a funding agreement with the consortium, and an agreement with the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ).
- 1.3.** The funding will be used to support a programme of retrofit / energy efficiency works for up to 403 properties over the next three years.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning approves:

- 3.1.** entering into the Consortium with London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium, and Camden Council as Lead Authority, for the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (WH: SHF) Wave 3.
- 3.2.** the acceptance of up to £3,290,823 of funding allocated from the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (WH: SHF) programme via the London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium.
- 3.3.** entering into legal agreements with the London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium and the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ). This includes a grant funding agreement and collaboration agreement.

- 3.4.** up to 5% of grant funding taken from the administration & ancillary 15% (A&A) being retained by London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium as per their management fee of the Consortium.
- 3.5.** the overall programme budget detailed in the Background Information of the Exempt Information Report.
- 3.6.** that any additional grant (and match funding allocation) available via the Consortium throughout the three-year programme, can be accepted via delegated authority by the Director of Housing in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance up to a value of £1.5m.
- 3.7.** the main consultant appointment (MDC / Retrofit Designer / BRPD) can be procured and approved under delegated authority by the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance, and as part of the budget agreed in recommendation 3.5 up to a value identified in the Exempt Information Report.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1.** The funding will support delivering the retrofit works to our social housing stock, whilst making our social homes decent as per the regulatory standard. This supports our objectives set out within the Housing Asset Management Strategy & Housing Energy Action Plan.
- 4.2.** Being a part of the pan-London approach offers Haringey Council the chance to both learn and collaborate on a regional level. London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium consists of 27 total members (21 boroughs and 6 housing associations).
- 4.3.** This programme can be accommodated for within the budget allocation for carbon reduction and major works within the latest Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1.** There is a financial shortfall for the retrofitting and decent homes works required for our social housing, and therefore not seeking government grant funding to support our capital works programme would mean that this programme is not financially viable.
- 5.2.** The Council could have applied for government grant funding without joining the pan-London consortium; but the level of internal resource required for the application and administration of the grant is deemed too extensive. Plus, the learnings and support offered by other boroughs, housing associations, and London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium was considered too great to dismiss. Being in a large consortium also has other benefits such as being able to increase or decrease the number of homes delivered (and grant funding amount) depending on supply chain capacity and performance.

6. Background information

- 6.1.** The delivery window for this programme begins in April 2025 and runs until September 2028. The grant funding average amount is £7,500 per property, and the minimum average match funding is £7,500 per property excluding A&A.
- 6.2.** The Council has been collaborating with London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium during the bid process and prior, primarily on developing the retrofit approach specifically for London's social housing stock.
- 6.3.** The London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium is made up of 27 registered providers, including local authorities and housing associations. Managing this is the reason for the 5% A&A fee requested by London Councils (Retrofit London) Consortium.
- 6.4.** Haringey Council's London Construction Programme has been promoted to members of the consortium for their procurement needs. This has the potential to generate revenue for the Council, in the form of procurement levies.
- 6.5.** The Council has identified 403 properties which would be eligible for funding, meeting the criteria set by WHSHF. Approximately half of these also require decent homes component renewal works. All properties which receive energy efficiency works will reach an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C rating as a minimum.
- 6.6.** The Council will take an equitable approach to retrofitting its social housing stock in this programme, meaning that some properties will require more investment than others depending on the homes condition and energy performance.
- 6.7.** The programme will follow PAS 2035, which is the compliance process for the retrofit of domestic dwellings. Following this standard will safeguard the residents and the Council by ensuring there are no unintended outcomes from retrofitting properties. It is also mandatory to follow when accessing government grant funding.
- 6.8.** Lessons have been learnt from the Councils pilot retrofit project, most notably: the time and cost requirements of domestic retrofit works, the equitable rather than equal approach to energy efficient measures, and the data and procurement requirements of the funding body and quality assurance system (Trustmark).
- 6.9.** There is no guarantee that Haringey Council will obtain the maximum amount of grant funding available, this could be due to under delivering within the set timeframes, or the reallocation of funds either from the Consortium or DESNZ.

6.10. For this programme; consultants (and any subsequent appointments) have been priced pro rata i.e. per property. The Council will only pay for works/services which are required and subsequently delivered. Therefore, if the grant allocation is reduced, the service provision of the consultants will reduce in parallel. Excess capacity could also be used to support the Council with future grant funded programmes and projects as well as provide resilience for homes which are not progressed. Any grant reduction will mean that the scheme is adjusted accordingly to ensure that the grant and match funding ratio remains within the 25:75 ratio as set out in the HRA business plan.

6.11. Mobilising the project rapidly is essential to successfully drawing down on allocated grant funding, this mainly includes the appointment of mandatory and statutory roles such as Retrofit Designer and Principal Designer, and this will put the council in the optimum position to potentially accept further funding allocations during the programme duration.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026 High level Strategic outcomes'

7.1. This project is part of the Council Housing Energy Action Plan (HEAP) in support of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan (2021) and Affordable Energy Strategy (2020).

7.2. It is also aligned with the Housing Asset Management Strategy (2023), and the draft Housing Strategy (2022). It supports the Corporate Deliver Plan 24/26 'Homes for the future', to 'deliver retrofit improvements in our housing stock, improving energy performance and reducing fuel poverty.;

7.3. There are estimated to be over 15,000 households experiencing fuel poverty in the borough. Improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock to reduce fuel bills is the most effective means of achieving a key objective of the Council's Affordable Energy Strategy 2020-2025. Improving the energy efficiency of homes remains the most sustainable, long-term solution to fuel poverty. With many homes requiring an extensive package of energy efficiency measures.

8. Carbon and Climate Change

8.1. This project derives from the strategy within the Housing Energy Action Plan. The properties included in scope will go through a 'fabric first' retrofit design process aimed primarily to reduce their carbon emissions, reduce energy usage, and be more resilient to extreme temperatures.

8.2. Residents in these properties will be supported by Officers and Consultants throughout the project, ensuring that changes to their homes are well understood and working as intended.

8.3. 50% of the emissions in the borough of Haringey are from domestic properties; this project can act as a showcase and catalyst for social homes

and private housing alike by demonstrating a reduction of energy usage, and emissions, for homes in the borough.

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Assistant Director of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

Finance

In exempt report.

Procurement

Strategic Procurement note the contents of this report and confirm there are no procurement related matters preventing the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning from approving the Recommendations stated in paragraph 3 above

Assistant Director of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)

The Assistant Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Where the Council receives a grant from an external body, the process for approving this mirrors the process for award of contracts as set out in CSO 9.07. As the value of the grant will be in excess of £500,000, approval would usually fall to Cabinet in accordance with CSO 17.1 (Approval for receipt of Grants by the Council from External Bodies). In-between meetings of the Cabinet the Leader may take any such decision or allocate to the Cabinet Member with the relevant portfolio.

Where a local authority function may be discharged by a Cabinet Member, the member has power under the Local Government Act 2000 to arrange for the discharge of any of its functions to an officer (S.9 E (4) (b) Discharge of Functions).

Regarding the recommendations for delegation as referred to in para 3.6 and para 3.7 of this report, further reports will need to be submitted to the Director of Placemaking and Housing for approval at the appropriate point in time in respect of these decisions.

The Assistant Director of Legal and Governance confirms that there are no legal reasons preventing the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning from approving the recommendations in this report.

Equality

The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

The proposed decision is to award a retrofit coordinator, Assessor and Evaluator contract to work on the retrofit of up to 840 social homes.

Increased energy efficiency will benefit tenants in Haringey Council housing. Black people, older people, people with disabilities, people from a low socioeconomic background and women are over-represented among current Council tenants. To the extent that the proposed decision enables Council tenants to reduce their energy bills, it will represent a measure to advance equality of opportunity for people who share the protected characteristics by meeting their needs where they are different to the needs of others.

Reducing carbon emissions has equality implications. The climate crisis will disproportionately impact younger people, lower-income people, and already marginalised groups. Therefore, measures to reduce carbon emissions represent means of preventing and mitigating future inequalities.

As an organisation carrying out a public function on behalf of a public body, the contractor will be obliged to have due regard for the need to meet the three aims of the Public sector Equality Duty as stated above. Appropriate contract management arrangements will be established to ensure that the delivery of the major works does not result in any preventable or disproportionate inequality.

10. Use of Appendices

None

11. Background papers

- a. <http://minutes.harinet.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s137026/Appendix%20A%20-%20Council%20Housing%20Energy%20Action%20Plan%20final.pdf>

- b. Exempt Information report - not for publication as it contains information classified as exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).