

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

meeting date: THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2024
title: REVIEW OF FIRST TIME BUYERS' GRANT AND APPROVAL TO CONTINUE WITH THE SCHEME
submitted by: REA PSILLIDOU – HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND HOUSING
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide an overview of the First Time Buyers' Energy Efficiency grant delivery in the borough and to request approval to continue the scheme in 2024/25.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To address the housing needs of the borough.
- Corporate Priorities – To match the supply of homes in our area with identified need.
- Other Considerations – To make effective use of all grant monies and to be an environmentally sustainable area.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The First Time Buyers' Energy Efficiency grants were first introduced in April 2022. After approval at the March 2022 Health and Housing Committee this new grant initiative has been well received across the borough. The grant encourages first time buyers to consider buying existing older stock in the borough and to make improvements to these to the energy efficiency of the property. Appendix 1 shows the approved grants since April 2022 all of which have been reported to Committee. There are a further two enquiries moving towards approval stage. All work to the properties has enhanced the EPC rating and improved the overall efficiency of the property.

2.2 The grant offers up to £15,000 as a 50% renovation cost towards any works recommended works under the EPC assessment.

2.3 The following bullet points summarise the works completed in the first six grant approvals for this grant:

- Replace existing boiler and immersion heater with energy efficient combi boiler, new lockshield valves, thermostatic controls. Replace eight windows and 2 doors to energy efficient A rated and other associated works.
- Replace existing back boiler and immersion heater with energy efficient combi boiler, seven radiators with thermostatic controls and other associated works.
- Installation of a new boiler, radiators with thermostatic controls, re-roof and other associated works.

- Install damp proof course, replaster and board using insulation boards, contribution towards installation of new central heating system, re-roof, replace patio doors and bathroom window and other associated works.
- Installation of windows and doors, rewire the property and install new consumer unit, connection to mains gas to allow central heating to be installed in the property, full re-roof with felt and other associated works.
- Installation of energy efficient windows and doors to the property. Install oil fired boiler/tank and heating system with thermostatic controls throughout the property. Replace the render to the rear of the property and the chimney.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 To continue to offer the First Time Buyers' Energy Efficiency grant scheme in 2024/25 following the same grant conditions and eligibility and to utilise the capital funding in the landlord tenancy grant budget. The proposal is to transfer £100,000 from the landlord tenancy grant budget to be ringfenced to deliver this scheme. The current budget in the landlord tenant grant is reported in the capital scheme status report at Agenda item 8. The grant conditions and eligibility are set out in Appendix 2.

4 ISSUES

- 4.1 The scheme has been well received with first time buyers in the borough. The scheme has completed 19 number of grants in total and made significant improvements to the energy efficiency of the property.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications
- Resources – The landlord tenant grant update has been slow due to a national issue of landlords exiting the private rented sector market. Therefore, this transfer of budget will guarantee the grant monies are committed.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – Technical input into the grants is minimal as the work is guided by the EPC report. Environmental impact of the scheme is significant as the grant investment is to improve the efficiency of the property and to ensure the property is more affordable to heat.
 - Political – The grant has been well received and positive feedback has been received from all applicants.
 - Reputation – Addressing affordable housing and energy efficiency are both priorities for the Council.
 - Equality & Diversity – The scheme is open to all and accessible.

6 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 Approve continuation of the first time buyers' energy efficiency grant scheme in 2024/25.

6.2 Refer to Policy and Finance Committee to request approval of the allocation of £100,000 from the landlord tenancy budget to enable delivery of the scheme.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

(If any)

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