

APPENDIX 2

FIRST TIME BUYER GRANT

In line with the Council's climate change objectives and to address a housing issue of affordability to access the housing market RVBC have introduced a grant offer to assist people to access the housing market with a first-time buyer grant. This grant is made available to first time buyers purchasing a property that needs some energy efficiency improvements. A maximum grant of £15,000 per property will be made available.

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) must demonstrate the property as existing is rated between D to H. The eligible works will include bringing the property up to EPC rating of A to C.

WHAT TYPE OF PROPERTY IS ELIGIBLE?

- You may qualify if your property is 10 years old and is within the Council Tax Bands A to C and has an energy efficiency rating of D or lower.
- The property is located in the Ribble Valley.

WHO CAN APPLY?

You can apply for a grant if you:

- are a first time buyer and have a local connection; and
- intend to occupy the property in the Ribble Valley as your main residence; and
- you are over 18 years old; and
- cannot afford to fund the cost of the works.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK IS COVERED?

Work covered by the grant can include:

- all items identified on the EPC Certificate;
- any disrepair items that would be identified during a housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) inspection;
- at the discretion of the LA, the Council cannot pay retrospectively.

Additional work will need to be self-funded.

WHO WILL ARRANGE THE WORK?

We do not arrange for the work to be completed or carry out the work; this is your responsibility. You will need to appoint the builder/contractor and arrange for any building regulations approval where necessary.

You may be eligible to get up to a maximum of £15,000 (the grant will cover half of eligible costs up to £15,000). The size of the grant would depend on the cost of the works required and the cost of the works that are deemed to be eligible. But with eligible works you will be required to provide two full sets of estimates and the grant award will match the lowest most reasonable set of estimates, evidencing value for money.

Approval of the grant award is at the Council's discretion and is subject to availability of funding. A grant approval certificate will be awarded before any payments will be made. Payment of the grant will be to the grant applicant or direct to the contractor and will follow the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration 1997 grant guidance and all audit and financial regulations.

On completion of the approved grant works the property will need to be inspected before payment can be released.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY

We will assess your income, and the total earnings of the household need to be less than £80,000 per annum for a couple, £60,000 for an individual. We will require:

- 3 months bank statements;
- 3 months wage slips or P60;
- evidence of all savings and any other income source.

The calculation will consider your family circumstances and remains at the Council's discretion. The calculation needs to show that your income and savings mean you are not in a position to fund the cost of the works entirely.

CONDITIONS OF THE GRANT

When you apply for the grant, you must occupy the dwelling as your main and only residence for the next 5 years. If during those first 5 years from the date of which the work is signed off by the Technical Officer, you break this agreement, you will be asked to repay the grant monies, unless there is supporting evidence as to why there were exceptional circumstances that meant you could no longer remain in the property. This would be at the Council's discretion and considered by Health and Housing Committee.

The value of the grant award will be placed as a Local Land Charge against the property. This will remain registered with no inflation added until the point at which the property is sold. At that point the Council will be repaid the grant monies. In the event that the property is sold after a period of 5 years the grant repayment will reduce to 50% of the total grant award. After 10 years the Charge is removed.