

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

meeting date: THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2021
title: GREEN ENERGY GRANTS
submitted by: NICOLA HOPKINS – DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING
principal author: COLIN HIRST – HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To receive information on current energy efficiency projects in the borough.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Community Objectives – To meet the identified needs of households in the borough. To help keep the community safe and healthier.
 - Corporate Priorities – None.
 - Other Considerations – None.

2 INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Government announced a Green Homes Energy Scheme as a package of support promoted to help with installing energy efficient improvements in residential houses. It is aimed at making homes more energy efficient from both a fuel poverty fuel point but also from a reducing carbon consideration as well.
- 2.2 At present there are two broad elements of the scheme; one delivered by way of vouchers and independent installers and the other is known as the Local Authority Delivered Scheme (LAD) which the Council is more directly involved in.
- 2.3 Homeowners or residential landlords can apply for green homes grant vouchers to help fund the costs of installing energy efficient improvements to their houses. It cannot be used on new properties and whilst it is means tested most households will be eligible for some form of contribution. The maximum Government contribution is £5,000 to cover two thirds of the cost of eligible improvements. For households that qualify on a low income, the costs come up to £10,000 of support. More information is available on the Government's website at:
www.gov.uk/guidance/applyforthegreenhomesgrantscheme
- 2.4 In addition to the general scheme a separate part of the Green Homes Grant Scheme is delivered through local authority partnerships. In Lancashire home energy issues have been dealt with by way of a long-standing partnership of the Lancashire Energy Officers' Group of which this Council has been a member for many years.
- 2.5 In terms of projects, delivery of any funding is through the partnership known as CHil (Cosy Homes in Lancashire) which for some years now has taken forward affordable warmth and home energy support.
- 2.6 As part of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (Phase 2) the Northwest of England will receive up to £52.8m to support local authority delivery from January 2021. Northwest England covers Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Cheshire and Warrington. The estimated share for Lancashire is some £10.5m plus to 12% costs for admin. The local authority partnership across Lancashire did not submit a bid to Phase 1 of the project due to time and operational constraints, however LAD Phase 2 aims to support low income households living in energy

inefficient homes, without the Council being part of the LAD scheme, local residents would be ineligible to apply for any of the grant support.

2.7 The LAD scheme will upgrade homes delivering progress towards the statutory fuel poverty target for England, the phasing out of the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating systems and reducing air quality emissions and helping to contribute towards the UK's target to be carbon net zero by 2050.

2.8 The current proposal submitted on behalf of all Lancashire Authorities by Blackpool seeks to deliver the following energy measures to improve SAP/EPC ratings. for residents:

- air source heat pumps,
- solid wall insulation
- solar voltaic cells

The measures are particularly targeted towards both rural and non-rural areas. In Ribble Valley addressing low carbon fuel is often a problem due to the nature of the housing stock and the fact that so many premises are off grid making fuel choices limited.

2.9 Within the LAD scheme, to be eligible, low income households are considered households with a combined annual income of less than £30,000 or where residents are on predetermined, qualifying benefits. It is also important to recognise that private homeowners will also be eligible for grants together with those in rental properties, social or private, which broadens the opportunity for people to access support for home energy improvements.

2.10 Under this project Blackpool Council will be the accountable authority and a procurement process has taken place to appoint RHEA projects on behalf of Chil to administer the grant. The grant proposals are now live and a copy of the promotional literature is attached at Appendix 1 for reference. In terms of the commitment from this Council we are asked to provide addresses and areas of properties with the lowest SAP/EPC ratings from data that we can access and also to ensure that this process is promoted within the area following the launch of the grant scheme on 15 March.

2.11 Under the scheme, whilst households with a combined annual income of less than £30,000 are eligible, all properties in the borough with a combined income of over £30,000 can still apply individually for grants up to £5,000 per properties for initiatives to improve the SAP rating. This is done through the Green Homes Grant Improvement Scheme referenced above.

3 LOW CARBON COMMUNITY HEAT PROJECT

3.1 Government have allocated funding through the Rural Community Energy Fund Grant for replacing costly energy provision in rural communities with renewable energy sources as part of an initiative to help promote the shift towards low carbon heating. The project was open for communities to bid into where relevant criteria could be met.

3.2 Within Ribble Valley initially a number of villages were researched to identify those that could be put forward typically being off the gas grid, having clusters of properties which were both privately owned and social housing and had a mixture of house types particularly those that were hard to heat.

3.3 Chipping Community Land Trust, together with the Parish Council, sought support to use Chipping as a Community Heat Pilot Project under this scheme, looking at options around lower carbon heating for the village. The Rural Community Energy Fund Grant was available to bid in to and a bid was made by the partners into this initial application stage. A strength of the bid is that the Parish Council and the Community Land Trust

DDRA

sought to bring together the clusters of housing and ownership issue with community interest and that the Parish Council through its own control of the playing field in close proximity to village housing clusters has the ability to deliver an alternative Community Heat Project.

- 3.4 The grant team is now in the process of selecting an organisation to carry out a feasibility study and it is hoped that the Chipping Partnership will be selected as one of the pilots, particularly as it is able to offer the pilot criteria the project was seeking.
- 3.5 If, as a result of the feasibility study, it is shown that it is feasible to deliver further community heat projects, further funding can be applied for by way of development grants with the scheme ultimately becoming a demonstration model for other villages, not just in Ribble Valley but throughout the Northwest. This project is being led by the Rural Community Energy Fund Northwest and Members will be kept informed of progress.

COLIN HIRST
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

For further information please ask for Jill Brown (Housing Officer – Energy) ext.4567 or Colin Hirst, extension 4503.

REF: CH/CMS/H&H/18 March 2021



LIVING IN A COLD HOME?

WE CAN PICK UP THE BILL TO MAKE YOU WARMER



The Government's 'Green Homes Grant' is now available to Lancashire residents.

If you are a homeowner and/or a landlord, you may be able entitled to receive up to £10,000* to improve the energy efficiency of your property! This means you can get warm and stay warm whilst your heating bills fall.

Call us now to speak to a friendly advisor

03306 061 488

www.chil.uk.com



What is a Green Homes Grant?

In July 2020 the Government announced a £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme, £500 million of which was allocated to Local Authorities to improve the energy efficiency of homes of low-income households by installing insulation measures and renewable heating technologies. The Lancashire Authorities have successfully secured funding to enable Green Home Grants to be offered to eligible residents.

The grant is worth up to £10,000 per property and is free for owner occupiers. A small contribution will be required from Private Landlords.

More information can be found at www.chil.uk.com

Will I qualify?

You'd be surprised who qualifies for the Green Homes Grant scheme.

If you are in receipt of any benefits then it's more than likely that you will qualify. You can also qualify by meeting other certain criteria too, such as: earning less than £30k pa, savings under £16K and with a health vulnerability.

One quick phone call is all it takes to assess your eligibility - so contact us today on 03306 061 488

How do I know the scheme is legitimate?

The scheme will be delivered with the support of your Local Authority. All work undertaken will be in accordance with current Government Retrofit standards (PAS 2035:2019) and will be carried out by Trustmark-registered installers.

How do I access this grant?

Apply online at www.chil.uk.com or call our local rate number so we can establish your eligibility and explain the process to you. Surveys will be carried out by one of our expert council-approved energy and heating specialists.

Following the survey, recommendations will be made to you about the most suitable energy efficiency improvements for your home to improve the thermal comfort and save you money on future energy bills.



Funding has been secured by Blackpool Council on behalf of all Lancashire Authorities with the aim of reducing fuel poverty across the County.

Administered by Rhea Projects Ltd.



IS YOUR HOUSE WINTER READY?

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WINTER IS COMING

WITH OUR HELP

YOU CAN BE PREPARED



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