

Chichester District Council

Grants and Concessions Panel

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Repurposing of the Low Carbon Chichester District Fund to the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the panel agree to transfer £77,843 from the Low Carbon Chichester District Fund to the Private Sector Renewal Budget for the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative.**

3. Background

- 3.1. The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to regularly review the condition of their housing stock. In March 2015 the Council commissioned the Building Research Establishment to undertake a house condition stock modelling exercise to assess the standard of the housing stock within the district.
- 3.2. There were several key findings including:
- The highest level of fuel poverty and cold homes are concentrated in the central and northern parts of the district and these are high compared to the national averages.
 - 14% of the private sector stock in Chichester has a category 1 hazard for Excess Cold compared with 7% in the rest of England as identified by the English House Condition Survey 2011.
- 3.3. The issues in relation to excess cold and fuel poverty including poor energy efficiency are of real concern as these matters can significantly impact on a resident's health and well-being.
- 3.4. Following the survey the Council has developed a new Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy to help prioritise limited resources. As part of the strategy it is proposed to introduce the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative to provide efficient whole-house heating systems to the most vulnerable residents who are either experiencing fuel poverty, have a category 1 hazard for excess cold or living in a property with a very low Energy Performance Certificate rating.
- 3.5. In order to deliver this initiative additional funding is required. It is proposed that monies from the Low Carbon Chichester District Fund be redirected to the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1. Providing the repurposing of funding can be agreed the most vulnerable residents living in the poorest housing in the district could be provided with an adequate and efficient heating system.
- 4.2. All applications for funding will be assessed to ensure that applicants meet the qualifying criteria and expenditure will be monitored on a monthly basis. All works carried out will be inspected prior to payment to ensure they have been carried out to a satisfactory standard.

5. Proposal

- 5.1. As a result of recent changes to government regulations, applications for low carbon funding no longer receive government or state funding and are also unable to claim the Feed in Tariffs (FiTs) for electricity generated by low carbon technology. Due to these changes, it is envisaged that applications to the Low Carbon Chichester Fund will continue to decline, which is consistent with the Annual Report of the Grants and Concessions Panel which proposed that the funding be re-purposed.
- 5.2. The proposal therefore is to redirect £77,843 from the Low Carbon Chichester District Fund to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Budget to finance the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1. No other potential funding sources have been identified.

7. Resource and legal implications

- 7.1. The cost of delivering the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative has been calculated at approximately £300,000 over a 5 year period. The existing budget available is £212,000 leaving a deficit. It is therefore proposed to reallocate the entire Low Carbon Chichester District Fund of £77,843 to fulfil the shortfall.
- 7.2. The monies will be used to fund the installation of efficient heating systems and thermal insulation for the most vulnerable residents in the district once all other funding sources including Your Energy Sussex have been exhausted.
- 7.3. The Chichester Warm Homes Initiative will be delivered by the Council's existing Energy Visiting Officers who are able to identify vulnerable clients who have an inadequate heating system.

8. Consultation

- 8.1. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy including the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative was discussed at November's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who were supportive of the initiative. Furthermore Your Energy Sussex and Chichester District Council's Health and Well-being Manager and the Environmental Co-ordinator have been consulted and agree this to be a worthwhile project.

8.2. Furthermore a full consultation in relation to the strategy is currently being undertaken with a wide range of partners.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

9.1. The risk is believed to be low and from the information provided by the Energy Visiting Officers it is anticipated there will be a high uptake of applications.

9.2. The Energy Visiting Officers are currently funded by the well-being funding the Council receive from West Sussex County Council. However there is a risk that this funding will be reduced in future years and an alternative source of funding may then need to be sought.

9.3. To date applications for the Low Carbon Chichester District Fund have been low. However this proposal would ensure the funding would be committed and directed to the most vulnerable residents in the community.

10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder		√
Climate Change: The introduction of the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative has the potential to have a positive but small impact on climate change by improving the energy efficiency of homes.	√	
Human Rights and Equality Impact: The Chichester Warm Homes Initiative is likely to have a positive impact on human rights and equality because financial resource will be targeted at improving housing conditions for the most vulnerable people including people of retirement age, disabled people and low income families.	√	
Safeguarding		√

11. Background Papers

Annual report from grants panel

11.1. Chichester Stock Modelling Report 2015

11.2. Grants and Concessions Panel - Annual Report Financial Year 2014-15