

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Officer approval to sign the Memorandum of understanding (MoU) extension letter with Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in respect of Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (GHG LAD) phase 1a project.
Date of decision:	23 April 2021
Decision maker:	Assistant Director for Regulation, Environment & Waste Services
Authority for delegated decision:	The authority is for the specified officer to take this decision as per the following decision notice: http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=50035111&Opt=0
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	The Cabinet Members for Environment, Economy & Skills and Housing, Regulatory services and Community Safety have been consulted and are supportive of the originally proposed recommendations. Political groups were consulted on this proposal and where responses were received, were also supportive.
Decision made:	<p>The Council signed the original Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and associated documents in November 2020 with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for the £1,062,500 GHG LAD phase 1a grant funding and delivery of the project across Herefordshire and Shropshire.</p> <p>The signing of the extension letter allows project activity and drawdown of funding to continue until 30 June 2021.</p>
Reasons for decision:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fuel Poverty affects an estimated 10,682 households in the county (12.9%). This figure is higher than the national level of 10.3% and reflects the challenges that the county faces in relation to the energy efficiency of properties including a large proportion of older, hard to treat 'solid wall' properties and restricted access to mains gas due and therefore expensive heating fuel systems due to the rural nature of the county. - The fund, administered by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is allocating funding to be used to improve the energy efficiency of low-income houses living in Herefordshire and Shropshire as well as supporting the green recovery in response to Covid-19. - The project will allow an estimated 100 Herefordshire and Shropshire households to access fully funded renewable Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) systems/Solid Wall Insulation (SWI) and/or energy efficient glazing and doors.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By adopting the proposal the council is being proactive in discharging its equality duty as the scheme will target fuel poor households, many of which will share a protected characteristic for example elderly and/or disabled residents.

	<p>The proposal will also ensure that householders are treated equally when seeking to access the scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The funding offer is £960k for capital energy efficiency measures as well as £102.5k for associated revenue and enabling costs. - The council is not required to supply any match funding to the scheme and £10k has been included to cover officer time on the project. - The council must defray the grant funding in accordance with any grant conditions as set out in an MOU to be entered into between the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy and the council. A draft of the MOU was reviewed by legal services before the bid for funding was submitted. The council will also need to have regard to the council's general duty to secure best value set out in s3 of the Local Government Act 1999 in applying the draft. - As accountable body the council is responsible for ensuring grant funds are allocated in line with the terms of the MoU as well as ensuring appropriate delivery mechanisms are in place- risk will be mitigated by putting appropriate project management and governance in place as well as varying existing contracts and utilising procurement mechanisms such as compliant frameworks.
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>Not to sign the MoU extension letter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is not recommended as this would reduce our support levels to fuel poor households across the counties as other funding streams alone are likely to result in significant funding shortfalls for fuel poor households. - This will also result in a risk of not contributing to the council's strategic objectives within the County Plan 2020 – 2024 and Health & Wellbeing Strategy and will reduce progress towards the Council's 2030 carbon neutral aspiration for the county. -
Details of any declarations of interest made:	N/A

Mr Marc Willimont
Assistant Director Regulatory, Environment and Waste