

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Memorandum of understanding (MoU) Recovery Plan Addendum with the 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:	12 October 2021
Decision maker:	Marc Willimont, 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 were consulted and supportive of the recommendations. Political groups were also consulted and where responses were received, were also supportive.
Decision made:	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) as well as extension agreements to the MoU in April and June 2021. The signing of this addendum allows project activity and drawdown of funding to continue until 30 November 2021.
Reasons for decision:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fuel Poverty affects an estimated 13,902 out of 84,028 households (16.5%). This figure is higher than the national level of 13.4% 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, restricted access to mains gas and the resulting prevalence of expensive heating fuel systems. - The fund, administered by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is 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 Recovery Plan will allow a further seven Herefordshire and Shropshire fuel poor households to access fully funded energy efficiency measures, allowing a further £67,725 of funding to be utilised.
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 Recovery Plan activity will bring total project spend to £157,556. Project underspend of £904,944 will be returned to the funder. - The council is not required to supply any match funding to the scheme. - The council must defray the grant funding in accordance with any grant conditions as set out in the original project MOU and addendum to be entered into between the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy and the council. A draft of the original 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 and addendum as well as ensuring appropriate delivery mechanisms are in place. Further risk will be mitigated by appropriate project management and the transferring of households that have not been able to benefit from the Phase 1a project into phase 2 and potentially 3 if funding and governance allow.
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>Not to sign the MoU addendum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is not recommended as this would reduce 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.
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>N/A</p>

I am an officer delegated to make the decision
Herefordshire Council

Mr Marc Willimont
Assistant Director Regulatory, Environment and Waste