

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER DECISION MEETING
FOR HOUSING
6TH SEPTEMBER, 2018**

Executive Board Member:	Portfolio:
Cllr. Linda Evans	Housing

**SUBJECT:
HELP TO HEAT SCHEME**

Purpose:

To approve Carmarthenshire County Council to take part in the Central Government's Energy Company Obligation (ECO): Help to Heat Scheme

Recommendations / key decisions required:

- To approve the scheme as set out in this report.

Reasons:

- The Help to Heat scheme would allow residents of the county to access funding for energy efficiency works to help reduce their fuel bills and carbon footprint.
- This scheme will provide a substantial investment in the county's private housing stock as well as providing an income for the administration of the scheme.
- If we don't take part in the Help to Heat scheme then our residents will not be allowed to access this funding.

Directorate Communities Name of Head of Service: Johnathan Morgan Report Author: Jonathan Willis	Designation Head of Homes & Safer Communities Advice and Tenancy Support Manager	Tel No / E Mail Address: 01554 899285 JMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk 01554 899232 JNWillis@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
---	--	--

Declaration of Personal Interest (if any):

Dispensation Granted to Make Decision (if any):

DECISION MADE:

Signed:

DATE: _____

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER

Recommendation of Officer adopted

Recommendation of the Officer was adopted **subject to the amendment(s) and reason(s) specified:**

Reason(s) why the Officer's recommendation was **not adopted:**

Purpose

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Help to Heat scheme is intended to help fuel poor households who are not in receipt of benefits and low income households that are vulnerable to mitigate the effects of living in a cold home.

The purpose of this report is to outline what steps need to be taken to introduce the (ECO) Help to Heat programme in Carmarthenshire.

What is Energy Company Obligation Help to Heat Scheme?

- ECO is an obligation on energy suppliers aimed to helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions. The scheme is the vehicle through which the Government meets its manifesto commitment to tackle fuel poverty.
- Under the scheme the mechanism, allows local authorities to make declarations determining that certain households meet the eligibility criteria for a measure under the affordable warmth element of ECO. The local authority's role is to support administration and determine eligibility. The provision of funding and completion of work is dealt with by the Energy Company and their intermediaries.
- This scheme will provide a new opportunity for residents who live in private sector housing. Help is available to households in receipt of means test benefits through the Welsh Government's Nest scheme to make improvements to their heating or insulation. Interest free loans are also available to households under the Council's Home Improvement Loan scheme, funded by the Welsh Government. However there will be many households in Carmarthenshire who would not qualify for help through Nest and would not be able to afford to repay a loan.

How does the scheme work?

The scheme only covers private tenure households, i.e. those in the private rented sector and owner occupiers. Social housing is excluded from the scheme.

The process will involve the following:

- A householder will make an application to their Energy Company or intermediary.
- A referral will be made to the local authority to assess eligibility who release an eligibility declaration.
- The Energy Company or intermediaries organise and fund the work.

The type of improvements that can be made to people's homes include new or upgrades to heating systems and/or insulation measures. These improvements will be funded by energy suppliers and installed by energy suppliers or their intermediaries.

In order for households in an area to benefit from the scheme the local authority must publish a Statement of Intent (see attached). This sets out the criteria they intend to use to identify households meeting the eligibility criteria.

Ceredigion and Powys councils are currently operating this scheme and Pembrokeshire are due to introduce the scheme using similar eligibility criteria. In order to achieve consistency across the region it is proposed if the scheme is introduced in Carmarthenshire that the same eligibility criteria be applied. In summary the proposed eligibility criteria are:

1. The property must have a poor rating (E, F or G) on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) **or** score over a certain figure on the property condition questionnaire; **and**
2. The household must declare they spend more than 10% of their income on fuel costs **or** a member of the household must be vulnerable and at risk due to living in a cold property.

There will be some administration required by the Home Improvement Team in determining the eligibility of the household/property and to publicise the scheme. Therefore it is proposed that a fee for this work will be charged to the Energy Company or its intermediary. Ceredigion and Powys are charging £150 per eligible household and it is proposed Carmarthenshire charge the same.

Under the scheme the Council will not retain any responsibility for the work that is undertaken as the work is not being specified or procured by the Council. The householder will receive the appropriate warranties and guarantees from the Energy Company or its intermediary direct.

In order to ensure compliance with data protection rules and the General Data Protection Regulations, the Council will enter into data sharing agreements with those Energy Companies / intermediaries who wish to provide improvements in Carmarthenshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approval be given to administer the scheme in accordance with this report and attached Statement of Intent.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	YES
----------------------------------	------------

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Jonathan Morgan

Acting Head of Homes & Safer Communities

Policy and Crime & Disorder	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Organisational Development	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	YES	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE

1. Finance

After consultation with other local authorities it is proposed to charge £150 per successful referral. This is reflective of the work involved and that charged throughout the region.

The fee is paid by the Energy Company and will support existing income targets.

5. Risk Management Issues

If we don't take part in the Help to Heat scheme then our residents will not be allowed to access this funding as the scheme would need to be endorsed by the Council.

The work is not specified or provided by the Council.

The responsibility for selecting the Energy Company is placed on the occupier. The Council's main role involves assessment of eligibility. The Energy Company or intermediaries are responsible for the completion of work and issuing appropriate guarantees.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Jonathan Morgan

Acting Head of Homes and Safer Communities

1. Scrutiny Committee

N/A

2. Local Member(s)

N/A

3. Community / Town Council

N/A

4. Relevant Partners

We have consulted local authorities within our region with regard to how the scheme is administered.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE