

SUBJECT:	Green Deal Communities Application		
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team-	Director of Services	
	Prepared by	-	Head of Health and Housing

1. Purpose of Report

To confirm that the Council should become responsible for leading the project designed to help drive Green Deal energy efficiencies.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

The Green Deal Communities Application will assist the Council in reducing fuel poverty and raise awareness of the Green Deal which will meet the needs of our community and support the Council's aims in terms of health and wellbeing, supporting a thriving economy, and creating cohesive and strong communities.

3. Background

3.1 The Health and Housing PAG in November 2013 received a report providing details of an application that had been submitted to the Department of Energy and Climate Change for funding of £2m to help drive forward Green Deal energy efficiency improvements in the area. The bid had made in in partnership with the following 15 other local authorities that form the Green Deal Together partnership with the National Energy Foundation:

Aylesbury Vale
Cherwell
Chiltern
Cotswold
Ealing
South Bucks
Watford
West Oxfordshire
Wycombe
Three Rivers
Milton Keynes
South Oxfordshire
Vale of White Horse
Bucks CC
West Berkshire Council

3.2 The report explained that, if successful, the funding would enable the Council to lead the Consortium and the Green Deal Communities project which would enable hard to treat properties to access energy efficiency improvements by:

- undertaking street by street improvements where individual private tenure dwellings are pepper potted amongst housing association stock as a result of Right to Buy/Acquire
- working with active community groups who will act as ambassadors for the scheme and encourage local promotion and take-up of the offer on a street by street basis
- developing a supply chain of assessors and installers to support the delivery of energy efficiency improvements including the provision of solid wall insulation.

3.3 The Council was notified on 28 March 2014 that the application for funding was successful and that it is one of only 24 Local Authorities to be offered a share of £88 million from the Government under the Green Deal Communities scheme. The award of funding to South Bucks District Council on behalf of the consortium is £2,574,991. This figure includes additional support for installer training to help build supply chain readiness and to develop show homes in target areas.

3.4 The project would be delivered across the partnership areas by a project manager (a Consultancy and Energy Management company) which has yet to be appointed. The authority can use a Framework Contract through BuyforGood to appoint a project manager and avoid a costly and time consuming EU procurement process. The BuyforGood process allows mini competition to ensure best value.

3.5 Householders would access grant funding as an ‘incentive’ to undertake energy efficiency measures on hard to treat (solid walled properties). The Council has undertaken similar activity in the past in relation to cavity wall insulation with a £99 incentive scheme managed through the United Sustainable Energy Agency.

3.6 The Green Deal Communities ‘incentive’ would be combined with Green Deal loans, ECO (Energy Company Obligation), and other private finance to enable reduced cost to the householder.

3.7. Across that partnership 28 locations have been identified to deliver the scheme which will assist in generating local interest in energy improvements and knowledge of the Green Deal programme.

3.8 In addition to reducing the running cost of heating within a property, investment in the fabric and systems within a dwelling will reduce the risk of damp and mould associated with condensation. The scheme is available across all tenures and will assist private landlords to improve housing conditions arising from condensation.

3.9 The street by street approach will enable householders to benefit from reduced delivery costs as contractors will be working within the area and can reduce their set up costs. External insulation has also been shown to improve the façade of buildings helping to regenerate areas and increase property values.

4. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

4.1 As the accounting body for the funding SBDC will need to be satisfied that:

- The scheme complies with State Aid rules. Initial advice from the Head of Legal indicates that as the major fund is delivered through grants to householders that it would not fall with the rules. Estimated costs of £5k for Counsels advice was included in the application

- The process for approving contributions to individual schemes is sound and allows for transparency and prevention of fraud. The Director of Services has asked that the audit includes the initial procedures, an interim audit and final audit. Estimated costs of £18k for the audit have been included in the application
- The programme management approach is sound, and the reports to the Council are adequate for the authority to be able to manage performance. Officer costs of £17k have been included in the application.
- Failure to access households willing to install energy efficiency measures - the scheme will be delivered across all housing authorities and supported by housing associations keen to install energy measures in leasehold premises. The number of measures required to be improved per authority equate to 40-50 properties to be improved. Mitigation would be the return of the remaining capital funding to DECC on closure of the project

4.2 The award of funding and the successful delivery of the scheme across the partnership will enable and motivate officers within the shared housing team. It will also demonstrate that despite the significant change the Council is going through there are opportunities that can be taken to deliver community leadership

6. Recommendation(s)

6.1 That the Council confirms acceptance of lead responsibility for the Green Deal Communities project and authority be delegated to the Head of Health and Housing to enter into agreement with DECC and the other partners to the award of funding.

6.2 That the Council agrees to the procurement of the Consultancy and Energy Management company to deliver the project on behalf of the partnership.

Officer Contact:	Martin Holt, Head of Health and Housing 01895 837364
Background Papers:	