



Officer Decision Report

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Catherine Hughes, Service Manager, Private Housing Standards

Tel: 07867 152647

Report to: *Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing Services*

Date of Decision: *20th March 2024*

Subject: *Decision to Accept Private Rented Sector Healthy Homes Project 2024 Funding*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i>				

Purpose of Report:

To approve the acceptance of the Private Sector Healthy Homes Grant from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

To approve that Sheffield City Council agree the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DLUHC to accept the funding.

Recommendations:

To approve the acceptance of the Private Sector Healthy Homes Grant from the DLUHC.

To approve that Sheffield City Council agree the MOU with DLUHC to accept the funding.

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>Sonya Oates</i>
	Legal: <i>Tarina Saville</i>
	Equalities & Consultation: <i>Louise Nunn</i>
	Climate: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission: <i>Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing Services</i>
3	Relevant Policy Committee <i>Housing Policy Committee</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Catherine Hughes</i>
	Job Title: <i>Service Manager, Private Housing Standards</i>
Date:	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have launched a joint project with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to test approaches to damp and mould enforcement in the private rented sector. This project is called the Healthy Homes Project.

1.2 Sheffield City Council are one of 40 local authorities invited to participate. The Healthy Homes Project has been established with the overall aim of supporting damp and mould enforcement. The funding is being used to test whether a package of interventions have the intend impact and to evaluate the wider societal impacts of enforcing on damp and mould.

1.3 The project is intended to strengthen the evidence on what works when it comes to damp and mould enforcement and will deliver benefits for local authorities, central government and, most importantly, tenants.

1.4 The project will be evaluated and DLUHC have worked closely with external evaluation experts so will be running the Healthy Homes project as a randomised controlled trial. This approach will allow DLUHC to confidently draw conclusions about how effective the approach is.

1.5 For the randomised controlled trial to work local authorities will be randomly assigned into two groups: the group implementing the interventions; and a partly funded control group where members provide data but do not implement the interventions.

1.6 A MOU has been issued to Sheffield City Council and once this is agreed and signed we will be randomly allocated into one of 2 groups, either the treatment group or control group

1.7 **Treatment Group**

This group will be allocated £130,000 in 2024/25 to deliver the following interventions to support damp and mould enforcement:

- Additional resources.
- Standardised training for existing staff.
- Improved communication and engagement with landlords and tenants.
- Purchasing of equipment to measure damp and mould.
- Improved data collection, tools and support.

1.8 If in this group, Private Housing Standards (PHS) will have to provide data to support the evaluation at the outset of the fund, which is likely to be April 2024 and at the end of the funding, March 2025.

1.9 Full guidance will be provided to local authorities if placed into this group.

1.10 **Control Group**

- 1.11 This group will be allocated £11,000 in 2024/25 to provide data returns to support the evaluation. This group will not be required to implement any specific interventions but will be required to commit to providing data as required.
- 1.12 Full guidance will be provided to local authorities if placed into this group.
- 1.13 Once DLUHC confirm which group Sheffield has been placed into further details will be set out as to how the project will be delivered in line with the MOU.
- 1.14 Should Sheffield be assigned into the control group there will be no interventions to deliver but we will be required to provide data.
- 1.15 Until we are assigned into a group, PHS can not set out in detail what interventions will be delivered but the project will be evaluated to measure the effectiveness. It will also be delivered in line with the accompanying guidance.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 Until DLUHC confirm which group Sheffield has been placed into details of how this project will be delivered are difficult to set out.
- 2.2 However, the Healthy Homes Project aims are to improve damp and mould enforcement which will help to reduce inequalities across the city.
- 2.3 Should we be placed into the Treatment Group the funding will enable the service to further support outcomes within the Together we get things done: Sheffield City Council Plan 2024 to 28.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 As the funding allocation has not been announced no consultation has been able to take place. However, if Sheffield is in the Treatment Group consultation will be undertaken as part of the project. This will be in line with guidance which DLUHC will provide.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 As funding has not been allocated it is not possible to complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). If Sheffield is in the Treatment Group guidance will be provided by DLUHC, at this point and EIA can be completed.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in order to support the Healthy Homes Project. The Council will receive one of two allocations, either as a treatment group to deliver interventions, or to participate as a control group and submit data. Key features and terms and conditions of the grant are highlighted below:

4.2.2 The MoU will commence in March 2024 and shall continue for two years, which may be extended by written agreement of both parties.

4.2.3 Allocation to the intervention group or the control group will be randomly assigned, and notification of the assignment will be made upon DLUHC's receipt of the signed MoU.

4.2.4 The MoU is not legally binding; however it is expected that the terms and conditions are honoured.

4.2.5 Control Group

The control group will receive up to £11,000 as a resource grant and will be expected to submit data as detailed in the MoU and guidance provided by the funder.

Data requests may within reason extend beyond the grant period (April 2024 to March 2025).

4.2.6 Treatment Group

The treatment group will be allocated up to £130,000 as a resource grant and will be expected to deliver interventions as detailed in the MoU and with guidance provided by the funder.

There is flexibility to vary expenditure against each of the activities specified in the guidance (e.g., increasing the funding allocated to one type of staff cost and decreasing another); however any significant changes to the delivery plan must be agreed in advance and in writing by the funder.

4.2.7 Conditions applying to both allocations:

The grant will be transferred in two equal tranches in April and October 2024, subject to meeting the outputs specified in the guidance. Funding for the second tranche may be reduced/clawed back if the project is underspent.

Quarterly performance reports must be provided to the funder.

MoU representatives shall meet at least twice a year to review activities and address any issues.

Funding will be conditional on written assurance from the Section 151

Officer that funding is aligned to activity and expenditure within the scope of the Healthy Homes project.

4.2.8 Procurement:

All public sector procurement is governed by and must be compliant with the Grant Agreement and UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in SCC must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as 'Contracts Standing Orders' (CSOs).

Contracts Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase/acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process. The Portfolio / Service Grant Manager will need to contact the Commercial Services Team for detailed guidance on adherence to these rules when spending grant monies.

4.2.9 The Project Manager will need to read, understand and comply with all of the grant terms and conditions, and the [Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients](#).

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 This report seeks approval to enter into an MOU with DLUHC in order to obtain grant funding for the Private Sector Healthy Homes Project.

4.3.2 The Council is able to enter the proposed MOU by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, which provides the Council with a 'general power of competence' enabling it to do anything that an individual can do as long as the proposed action is not specifically prohibited.

4.3.3 The terms of the MOU have been reviewed by legal and comments provided.

4.3.4 The Council would need to ensure the proposed grants to be provided to the Council under MOU complies with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, and all applicable legislation and regulations including but not limited to the Subsidy Control Act, UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act and the Equality Act.

4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 As funding has not been allocated it is not possible to complete a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA). If Sheffield is in the Treatment Group guidance will be provided by DLUHC, at this point and CIA can be completed.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 N/A

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 As this is Government funding there is no alternative proposal as the City Council cannot use their own funds for this work.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 This is funding allocated from Government to support the regulation of homes in the private sector with a focus on improving standards in relation to damp and mould.

6.2 It is recommended that the MOU is agreed with DLUHC by the deadline of 29th March 2024 to enable to drawn down of funding.