



Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation

Cabinet - 15 June 2023

Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP) Funding

Purpose: This report seeks retrospective approval for a Welsh Government grant application for the Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP). The ORP grant was announced by the Welsh Government to support energy efficiency measures for social housing. The grant will support insulation measures, the acquisition of renewable technologies and monitoring equipment. This will commit the schemes to the capital programme in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

Policy Framework: Welsh Housing Quality Standard

Consultation: Access to Services, Finance, Legal.

Recommendation(s): It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the Optimised Retrofit Programme bid set out in 2.0
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Place, the Chief Legal Officer and Chief Finance Officer to enter into any agreements necessary to ensure the delivery of the projects and to protect the Council's interests.
- 3) Delegates authority to the Director of Place and the Chief Finance Officer to recover all expenditure associated with the delivery of the projects from the Welsh Government.
- 4) Any further decisions relating to this funding will be delegated to the Director of Place and the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation. The funding will support schemes approved via the annual HRA Capital Budget report.

Report Author: Dave Bratley
Finance Officer: Jeffery Dong
Legal Officer: Adrian Jeremiah
Access to Services Officer: Rhian Millar

1. Introduction

1.1 Welsh Government invited social landlords across Wales to apply for Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP) grant funding to support measures that are in line with the emerging decarbonisation agenda. The Council submitted an application to support the cost of its ongoing improvement programmes. Given the short timescales involved, it was not practical to inform Cabinet of the bids before the bid submission dates so this report seeks retrospective approval for the Council's application.

2.0 Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP)

2.1. The ORP grant funding is to assist social landlords meet the costs of energy efficiency measures which contribute towards taking properties towards a low carbon rating.

2.2. The Council submitted an application to support the cost of roof and wall insulation measures as part of its wind and weatherproofing schemes, the purchase of renewable energy equipment including solar photovoltaic panels and storage batteries for 95 properties as well as environmental monitoring sensors.

2.3. The funding covers financial year 2022/23. It is anticipated the Welsh Government make further ORP funding available in financial year 2023/24 and beyond. Future grant applications will be addressed separately from this report.

3.0 Financial Implications

3.1 A breakdown of the ORP funding and total grant applied for is as follows:

Item	Grant element
Insulation Measures	£1,659,613
PV and Battery Purchase	£847,724
Designs for Renewable Technologies	£31,830
Monitoring Equipment	£64,065
Total ORP Grant	£2,603,233

3.2 The grant funding applies to programmes that have already been approved in the 2022/23 budget and funded by other resources. This report seeks to utilise the grant in place of other Council funding so as to free up resources for other use.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the Socio-economic Duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the ‘well-being goals’.
- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed and a full IIA report is not required at this stage. Each site will need to be considered in detail once the development proposals are known. This will be subject to a further report.
- 4.5 Delivery of improvements to decarbonise existing homes is a good example of the 5 Ways of Working promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and will make a significant contribution to the 7 well-being goals.
- 4.6 Improving existing housing stock will assist in the regeneration of areas, and stimulating economic growth, addressing issues such as fuel poverty, inequality, jobs and skills which directly contributes to the council’s obligations to act in a sustainable way pursuant to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Council will ensure that it complies with any terms and conditions attached to this Welsh Government grant funding. Any procurement activities in relation to the projects in this report will follow the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules.

Background Papers – None

Appendices: Appendix 1 - IIA Screening form