

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 5 December 2013

Subject: The REECH (Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Community Housing) Project – Interim Changes

Report of: Director of Built Environment

Wards Affected: All

Is this a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes

Exempt/Confidential: No

Purpose/Summary

To endorse the use of £1,145,964 of uncommitted REECH ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) grant by Helena Partnership.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the use of £1,145,964 of uncommitted REECH ERDF grant by Helena Partnership towards their Phase 3 scheme as outlined in this report.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

| | <u>Corporate Objective</u> | <u>Positive Impact</u> | <u>Neutral Impact</u> | <u>Negative Impact</u> |
|---|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Creating a Learning Community | | / | |
| 2 | Jobs and Prosperity | / | | |
| 3 | Environmental Sustainability | / | | |
| 4 | Health and Well-Being | / | | |
| 5 | Children and Young People | / | | |
| 6 | Creating Safe Communities | / | | |
| 7 | Creating Inclusive Communities | / | | |
| 8 | Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy | / | | |

Reasons for the Recommendation: To enable the continued delivery of the REECH Project.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no additional costs as a result of any changes introduced since the project was conceived in January 2011. This report seeks approval to transfer existing ERDF funds from one delivery partner to another, with no financial impact to the Council.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Legal None | |
| Human Resources None | |
| Equality | |
| 1. No Equality Implication | X |
| 2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated | |
| 3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains | |

Impact on Service Delivery:

There is no impact on Service Delivery as a result of this report.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance & ICT (FD2684) has been consulted and comments have been incorporated into the report. The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD1989) has been consulted and has no comments on the report

Are there any other options available for consideration?

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision Upon the expiry of the call-in period following the publication of the minutes of the Cabinet meeting

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Background Papers: None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The REECH Project, for which Sefton Council is the Accountable Body, is one of the largest projects ERDF funded project within the Merseyside element of the European Programme, and in the main entails retrofitting low income and social housing stock with energy saving technologies to deliver an area based approach that helps to stimulate local supply chain engagement and catalyse a wide range of additional local environmental and social outcomes, including:-
- Fostering skills development and local apprenticeship opportunities
 - Creating more sustainable communities through behaviour change programmes
 - Catalysing delivery partners to coordinate local environmental improvement projects
- 1.2 In accordance with previously approved structures and procedures, the actual process of allocating these European funds to REECH delivery partners is considered and agreed by the REECH Steering Group, and then approved by Sefton Council as the Accountable Body via the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing.
- 1.3 REECH Steering Group members at their meeting on 13th September 2013 were informed that Liverpool Mutual Homes were withdrawing from REECH and that Villages Housing Association no longer required the funding for their phase 3 schemes. As a result of this the total amount of uncommitted funding was £1,145,964.
- 1.4 The REECH Steering Group agreed that existing delivery partners should be approached to see if other schemes could be identified to take up the unallocated ERDF grant.
- 1.5 In response to the call only Helena Partnerships had come forward with details of a scheme that; meets the objectives of REECH, had the necessary the match funding in place, and is able to be delivered within the REECH project timetable. Consequently Steering Group agreed, subject to Sefton Council endorsement that Helena Housing be allocated the uncommitted £1,145,964 for a Phase 3 scheme to include properties in Newton le Willows, Clockface and Haydock. Focus will be on installing external wall insulation, piloting other measures including some internal wall insulation and hybrid insulation. All the properties identified are in the lowest 20% of super output areas in terms of deprivation.
- 1.6 Under Sefton Council's Constitution the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing is only able to approve virement of up to £1.0 million. In this instance the transfer of funding to another delivery partner does not constitute virement since the purpose of the funding remains unaltered. However, given that the transfer is in excess of £1million Cabinet is being asked to endorse the decision.