

OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS FORM

Subject of decision:

On the 20th February 2018, the Executive approved Middlesbrough's Energy Company Obligation Flexibility Statement of Intent. The Statement of Intent allows the Council to identify households that would benefit from energy efficiency improvements.

Text of decision:

It is requested that delegated authority is granted to make the following amendments to the Statement of Intent as outlined below:

AMENDMENT 1

When creating the eligibility criteria, officers were keen to produce a criteria which would help as many residents in Middlesbrough living in fuel poverty. Using the Governments figure of £21,000 as an average income, and linking this to health conditions exacerbated by cold living conditions, the Council created Route 2.

A number of Tees Valley Authorities have now published a Statement of Intent (SOI), and having read these statements, most have used an income level of £26,000. I propose that Delegated Authority is given to allow Middlesbrough Council to amend its SOI income threshold to coincide with those living within neighbouring Authorities.

Also it has been noted by delivery partners that evidencing Route 2 is problematic and have requested that the Council makes this route less complicated, opening it up to allow more residents access the ECO Flex funding.

Route 2 – Individual circumstances (low income living in a cold or inefficient home). Households outside the area based route will be considered at risk of fuel poverty if they are determined to be a Low Income household, ie with a household income of below £26,000 and not in receipt of qualifying benefits, and living in a cold or inefficient home.

**cold or inefficient home will be determined if an ECO survey recommends an energy efficiency improvement.*

AMENDMENT 2

It is also proposed to amend Route 3 to include a more focused approach to the links between cold homes and householder's health.

Route 3 – Direct referral or letter from a health practitioner – Affordable Warmth on Prescription. A provision for direct referral from Health Practitioners is currently being brought forward by The Affordable Warmth Partnership, whereby targeted GP practices, GPs and other health practitioner's medical staff will be able to refer patients directly to the Middlesbrough Affordable Warmth referral hub, particularly those whose health makes them vulnerable to living in a cold home.*

This route will accept referrals from households with a combined income of £32,000 or less.

*This route will be monitored to ensure referrals are equitable. A medial letter or a pro forma, signed by a health professional, stating one of the following health condition** made worse by cold, will also be accepted as a referral from a health practitioner:*

- a) people with cardiovascular conditions
- b) people with respiratory conditions (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma)
- c) people with mental health conditions, and
- d) people with disabilities (made worse by cold)
- e) people who are terminally ill
- f) people with suppressed immune systems (e.g. from cancer treatment or HIV)

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**cold or inefficient home will be determined if an ECO survey recommends an energy efficiency improvement.*

***These are based on NICE guideline NG6 on "Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes" with additional criteria including terminally illness and suppressed immune systems.*

AMENDMENT 3

The last amendment to the qualifying criteria will look to introduce a new eligibility route. Route 4 will look to pick up the remaining people who might slip through, but still require assistance to alleviate fuel poverty.

Route 4 – Applicant in receipt of Council Tax and / or Housing Benefit – As recipients of either Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit, household have already been means tested and identified as requiring financial support. Household will be eligible if in receipt of either of the two benefits and living in a cold or inefficient home.*

**cold or inefficient home will be determined if an ECO survey recommends an energy efficiency improvement.*

AMENDMENT 4

If a resident of Middlesbrough, living in fuel poverty, does not meet any of the qualifying criteria's set out within the Statement of Intent, it is proposed an exceptions panel is created to review and agree access to funding on a case by case basis. It is proposed that the panel will be made up of a representative from each of the following organisations:

- a) The referring agency;
- b) Middlesbrough Council;
- c) Middlesbrough Environment City; and,
- d) Public Health.

Each case will then be presented to the Executive Member for sign off.

Route 5 – Exception Cases – Referral Agencies can make exceptional case referrals, if a resident of Middlesbrough, who the referring agent feels are living in fuel poverty and are in need of assistance, but do not meet any of the eligibility routes outlined within in Statement of Intent. Each case will be review on a case by case basis by a exceptions panel made up from representatives from all of the following organisations:

- a) The referring agency;
- b) Middlesbrough Council;
- c) Middlesbrough Environment City; and,
- d) Public Health.

Each case will be presented to the Executive Member for final sign off.

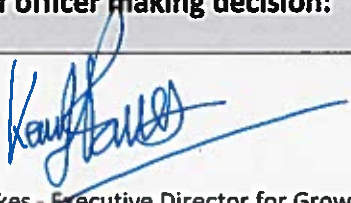
Declarations of Interest by any member or relevant local government body:

N/a

Date of decision:

TBC

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Reason for decision:
To maximise the opportunity for Middlesbrough residents access funding to alleviate fuel poverty.
Service area:
Economic Development
Name of officer making decision:
 Kevin Parkes - Executive Director for Growth & Place, In consultation with Cllr Lewis Young - Executive Member for Economic Development and Infrastructure.
Other options considered (if any):
N/a
List of background papers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7th September 2017 –Warm Homes Fund LMT Report• 20th February 2018 - Energy Company Obligation, Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent (link)• 28th March 2018 – Delegated Authority Amendment for Data Protection

