

FLOOD SUPPORT SCHEMES

Cabinet – 8 May 2014

Report of Chief Officer Communities & Business

Status: For Urgent Decision

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: This report sets out information about the Repair and Renew Grant.

The Government is making funding available to this Council to fund the scheme, which will help properties and businesses in the District who have been affected by flooding put flood resilience measures in place to reduce the risk of future flooding.

Members are asked to agree Guidelines for this Council to administer the Repair and Renew Grant.

This report supports the Key Aim of Supporting and developing the local economy and the Community Plan Vision for Safe & Caring Communities, a Green & Healthy Environment and a Dynamic & Sustainable Economy.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Roddy Hogarth

Contact Officer(s) Simon Davies Ext. 7374

Recommendation to Cabinet: That the guidelines for the Council's Repair and Renew Grant, as set out at Appendix B, are agreed and authority to approve grants be delegated to the Portfolio Holder responsible for economic development and emergency planning.

Reason for recommendation: Properties and businesses in the District suffered damage from flooding between December 2013 and March 2014. This Council has been allocated funding by DEFRA towards the Repair and Renew Grant. There is no ceiling to the funding, which is for a maximum of £5,000 per property. The Council will pay funding out and then claim back quarterly from DEFRA.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Members will be aware that the winter of 2013/14 has been the wettest winter on record for the UK since records began in 1910. Between 1 December 2013 and 31 March 2014, there was widespread flooding across the country and homeowners and businesses in the Sevenoaks District were impacted by flooding.
- 2 The Government set out guidance notes to provide information on schemes to help homeowners and businesses recover from adverse weather since 1 December 2013. The guidance notes are set out at Appendix A. The guidance notes set out four schemes to assist homeowners and businesses:

- a. The Repair and Renew Grant.
- b. Business Rates Flooding Relief.
- c. Council Tax Discounts.
- d. Business Support Scheme.

3 Guidance notes for the Business Flood Support Scheme were agreed by Cabinet 6 March 2014.

Repair and Renew Grant - Appraisal Process

- 4 We are now able to proceed with the Repair and Renew Grant as we have enough information from DEFRA to do so. Officers have drafted some scheme guidelines and they are set out at Appendix B. The draft guidelines reflect the parameters set out in DEFRA's guidance notes (Appendix C) and this Council's Code of Practice for Grant-making (Appendix D). Members are asked to agree the guidelines.
- 5 The Council will be expected to forward fund applications and claim back from DEFRA on a quarterly basis. There is no upper ceiling for the amount that can be claimed, but all funds must be claimed from DEFRA by 31 March 2015. It is therefore proposed that applicants must have claimed their grants in full by 31 December 2014.
- 6 DEFRA requests that participating Councils maintain a spreadsheet of each grant application received, setting out those applications approved, those refused funding, the value of funds paid out and the value of overall commitments.
- 7 Applications will be appraised case-by-case on a first come, first served basis. Applications for grants will be appraised according to the following criteria:
 - i. The extent to which the business has been affected by flooding between 1st December 2013 and 31 March 2014;
 - ii. Whether the proposed resilience measures are appropriate for the nature of flooding experienced;
 - iii. That the application represents value for money;
 - iv. Whether any other known flood defence schemes have been committed to in the same area;
 - v. Whether the applicant has received other public or insurance funds for the same measures;
 - vi. Whether applicant businesses comply with state aid legislation;
 - vii. The eligibility of applicants.

Recommended Level of Grant

8 The maximum level of grant as set out by DEFRA is £5,000 per applicant. The Council's Code of Practice for Grantmaking sets out a minimum grant of £100.

Recommended Conditions

9 It is recommended that grants be made subject to the following conditions:

- Businesses must have a bank account.
- All appropriate legal agreements, insurances and processes needed to deliver works are in place, or will be in place by the time the work commences, including any necessary planning, building regulations or other permissions.
- Any grant awarded will be used only for the improvements set out in the application and will be ring-fenced for this purpose. It must not be used for any other purpose.
- A third party independent survey is undertaken to advise the most appropriate flood resilience measures for properties or businesses.
- For works not yet undertaken, three quotations are provided for the cost of the items claimed. If an applicant is not going with the cheapest quote, they need to say why.
- Payment will be made once works have been completed. A claim form will be provided that can be submitted, along with an invoice for works completed, to claim funding awarded.
- If application is for works already completed, a copy of invoice for works completed must be submitted.
- Works must be completed and claimed by 31 December 2014.
- Evidence of flooding to properties or business premises must be provided.
- Publicity materials must acknowledge Sevenoaks District Council's support.
- Applicants should make every effort to ensure that the grant applied for does not duplicate any claim made to or paid by an insurance company. If it is found that this funding duplicates any such claim, the funding must be repaid to the Council.

Key Implications

Financial

Funding for the Repair and Renew Grant has been allocated by the Government.

The Council will be required to forward fund this and claim back from Government retrospectively.

Resources (Non-financial)

The work connected with the Repair & Renew Grant administration will require additional staff time, which will need to be found from within existing resources.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal or human rights issues relating to this report.

Risk	Mitigation
The Council pays for works completed but DEFRA does not repay the full amount	The Council has in place a robust application and appraisal process in line with DEFRA's guidance. The deadline for applicants to complete works and submit a claim to SDC is 31 December 2014 – three months before DEFRA's claim deadline.
Applicants claim for works that are not eligible under the Scheme.	DEFRA's list of measures to be supported is provided on the application form. Applicants will be asked to secure a survey from an independent third party.
Insurance claims made by applicants may duplicate this funding.	Applicants will be asked to confirm that the expenditure is not covered by their insurance policies. If it is subsequently found that the funding does duplicate an insurance payment, the funding will be clawed back by the Council.

Equality Impacts

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is summarised below:

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The Repair and Renew Grant assists properties and businesses that have been affected by flooding.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	No	The grant scheme will provide funding for those properties and businesses flooded in the 2013/14 most at risk of future flooding.

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		No negative impacts identified

Sustainability Checklist

A sustainability checklist has been completed and no negative impact has been identified.

Conclusions

Government funding has been provided that will assist businesses affected by flooding from 1 December 2013. Members are asked to agree Guidelines for this Council to distribute this funding to businesses affected by flooding in the District.

Appendices

Appendix A – HM Government – Flood Support Schemes – Guidance Notes

Appendix B – Repair & Renew Grant draft guidelines

Appendix C – DEFRA’s Repair & Renew Grant guidance notes

Appendix D – SDC’s Code of Practice for Grantmaking

Background Papers:

[HM Government – Flood Support Schemes – Guidance Notes](#)

Sevenoaks District Council Code of Practice for grant-making (Appendices A & D)

Lesley Bowles
Chief Officer Communities & Business