

FLOOD SUPPORT – REPAIR & RENEW GRANTS – REVISED GUIDELINES

Cabinet – 5 June 2014

Report of Chief Officer Communities & Business

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: DEFRA has made changes to the Repair & Renew Grant that require this Council to make changes to its own Repair & Renew Grant guidelines. Members are asked to agree the amended guidelines.

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 amended guidelines for the Council's Repair and Renew Grant, as set out at Appendix A, are agreed.

Reason for recommendation: Since the Repair & Renew Grant guidelines were agreed by Cabinet on 8 May 2014, DEFRA has changed their guidelines for the scheme. The Repair & Renew Grant guidelines have been amended in line with the updated DEFRA requirements.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Members will remember that guidelines for the Repair & Renew Grant were agreed by Cabinet on 8 May 2014.
- 2 Since the guidelines were agreed, DEFRA has changed the guidance for the Repair & Renew Grant. A summary of the changes DEFRA has made to the scheme is set out as follows:
 - a. Applicants no longer need to seek three quotations for any flood resilience work to their property.
 - b. Applicants should be asked how they have identified the proposed costs for the resilience and/or resistance measures they are applying for and set out any steps they have undertaken to ensure that they are receiving value for money.

- c. Applicants no longer need to seek a third party independent survey.
- 3 Although there is now no requirement for applicants to provide three quotations or seek a third party independent survey, DEFRA still expect participating councils to undertake cost verification to ensure value for money. This will be undertaken by requesting applicants to provide at least one quotation and officers assessing the applicant's statement relating to value for money.
- 4 The reason that DEFRA has made these changes to the Repair & Renew Grant is that, in other areas, the requirement to supply three quotations is seen as deterring potential applicants from applying.
- 5 Proposed changes to the Repair & Renew Grant Guidelines are set out at Appendix A, highlighted in red.
- 6 The proposed changes to the Guidelines are within the requirements set out in the Council's Code of Practice for Grantmaking (Appendix B).
- 7 The appraisal process for the Repair & Renew Grant will remain unchanged. 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 applicant has demonstrated that they have sought 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.
- 8 The maximum level of grant as set out by DEFRA is unchanged, at £5,000 per applicant.

Key Implications

Financial

- 9 Funding for the Repair and Renew Grant has been allocated by the Government.
- 10 The Council will be required to forward fund this and claim back from Government retrospectively.

Resources (Non-financial)

- 11 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.

- 12 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.
The Council has reduced assurance that this represents value for money.	One estimate will be requested and the Appraisal Panel will consider the applicant's statement concerning value for money.

Equality Impacts

- 13 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. Changes to the guidelines will make it easier for owners of affected properties to apply to the scheme.
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		No negative impacts identified

Sustainability Checklist

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

Conclusions

- 15 Members are asked to agree the amended Guidelines for this Council to distribute Repair & Renew Grant funding to households and businesses affected by flooding in the District.

Appendices

Appendix A – Repair & Renew Grant draft updated guidelines

Appendix B – SDC's Code of Practice for Grantmaking

Background Papers:

See Appendix B

Lesley Bowles
Chief Officer Communities & Business