

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2010

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW HR & ASSET MANAGEMENT

### COMMUNITY ENERGY EFFICIENCY FUND

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#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To seek approval to the proposed mechanism and qualification criteria for the setting up and administering of a Community Energy Efficiency Fund for the allocation of energy efficiency grants to community groups.

#### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 One of the Council's strategic objectives for 2008-11 is "to create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment" and one of the key 2010/11 priorities below this objective is "to reduce Wirral's Carbon Footprint". The Council's 2006 Climate Change Strategy vision statement underpins and supports this priority and the overall strategic objective, it states:

*"Working with residents, communities and local businesses to tackle Climate Change by reducing Wirral's carbon emissions, thereby helping to meet our present needs in a sustainable manner without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*

- 2.2 The Council realised, at an early stage, that tackling the effects of climate change and reducing Wirral's carbon footprint are challenges that the Council cannot tackle alone. It requires the support and involvement of local partners, communities and businesses.
- 2.3 Cabinet, on 22nd February 2010, approved the 2010/11 Council Budget, which included a number of initiatives to 'Improve the Environment, Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction'. One of these initiatives was an allocation of £66,000 for 2010/2011 to set up Energy Efficiency Grants for Community Groups. This important project will enable the Council to support the long term sustainability of community groups running community buildings, giving these groups access to appropriate energy efficiency technologies to help them reduce their energy bills and carbon emissions. This project will therefore help community groups to tackle and reduce Wirral's carbon footprint.
- 2.4 This report proposes a mechanism and qualifying criteria for a Community Energy Efficiency Fund to allocate energy efficiency grants to community groups.

#### 3.0 Proposed Community Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF)

##### 3.1 Purpose

To support the long term sustainability of community groups running community buildings by investing in energy-efficient technologies to reduce energy costs, climate change levy payments and the impact of climate change. Grants will be available for a number of different energy efficiency technologies, including building insulation, heating and lighting upgrades and IT energy efficiency improvements.

### 3.2 **Grants**

There will be two levels of grant available depending on the commitment of individual organisations. Grants of up to £2,000 will be available to organisations meeting the criteria for the scheme. For organisations willing to provide matched funding, a grant of up to £4,000 would be available. Grants would be allocated on an individual technology basis i.e. more than one grant could be requested by an organisation, say for (1) Boiler replacement and (2) Insulation. Grants will only be payable on completion of a project and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

### 3.3 **Criteria**

Projects must deliver energy efficiency benefits and comply with the following criteria:

- Maximum 5 year payback period.
- Payback of projects implemented must be shorter than the expected life of the building or the technology must be transferable.
- If the expected lifetime of the building or lease is shorter than the expected lifetime of the technology, then the compliancy calculation will be based on the shorter of the two.
- Projects must be seen as being additional and not mandatory.

3.4 The scheme will be promoted through Area Fora, the Council's website and through Wirral's third sector community networks. Simple application forms will be available for download from the website or upon request.

## 4. **Financial implications**

4.1 Cabinet at its meeting of 22nd February 2010 allocated £66,000 from the budget for the energy efficiency fund for communities.

4.2 The Council's Sustainability Unit will undertake technical evaluations of any proposed scheme which is the subject of a grant application and submitted under the qualifying criteria outlined at section 3.3 above. The nominal cost of these evaluations will be funded from existing budgets.

## 5. **Staffing implications**

5.1 The fund will be administered within existing staffing resources.

## 6. **Equal Opportunities implications/Equality Impact Implications**

6.1 The fund will be available to all community groups running community buildings.

## 7. **Community Safety implications**

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **8. Environmental Sustainability Implications**

8.1 The fund will enable community organisations to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, thereby helping community groups to tackle and reduce Wirral's carbon footprint, as measured by NI 186.

## **9. Planning implications**

9.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **10. Anti-poverty implications**

10.1 None arising directly from this report

## **11. Human Rights implications**

11.1 None arising directly from this report

## **12. Social Inclusion implications**

12.1 None arising directly from this report

## **13. Local Member Support implications**

13.1 The fund will be available borough wide and will be of interest to all members.

## **14. Background Papers**

14.1 Cabinet 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010 minute 332.

## **15. RECOMMENDATIONS**

15.1 That Members approve the mechanism and qualification criteria detailed in this report for the setting up and administering of the Community Energy Efficiency Fund.

**Bill Norman**

Director of Law HR & Asset Management