

ANGUS COUNCIL

Housing Committee - 23 May 2000

WARM DEAL PROJECT WITH PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

REPORT by DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of an energy efficiency project in partnership with the Personnel Department, designed to maximise the use of Angus Council's Warm Deal grant allocation from the Scottish Executive.

1. RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to approve the Warm Deal project in partnership with the Personnel Department.

2. BACKGROUND

As part of the Government's long-term objectives of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and alleviating fuel poverty, the Scottish Executive administers a grant scheme known as "The Warm Deal". Part of "The Warm Deal" scheme allows any householder on benefit to access a grant of up to £500 for energy efficiency measures in their home. The other part of the scheme involves the Scottish Executive allocating resources to Scottish authorities for upgrading of energy efficiency measures in local authority housing stock, dependent on strict qualifying criteria.

3. 1999/2000 WARM DEAL

In 1999/2000 the available grant allocation for Angus Council was £50,000, whereas the actual uptake of funds was £10,769. This low uptake of the allocation was due to a number of reasons:

- the grant is dependent on energy efficiency measures being installed under the "New Deal". Grant money is tied to the number of days that are worked by these New Dealers (the scheme is as much about training as it is about energy efficiency);
- the grant represents only some 30 - 40% of the total cost of any work - the Department must therefore find the rest from the Planned Maintenance Energy Saving budget - in 1999/2000 this amounted to £50,000 but included projects other than Warm Deal;
- the work is undertaken by local approved installers who are responsible for the actual employment of New Dealers - under performance by these installers is outwith the Council's control, as is the uptake of New Deal places by unemployed people;
- the Warm Deal Scheme is cumbersome to administer and is not an efficient way of improving the energy rating of Council properties.

4. 2000/2001 WARM DEAL

The allocation of grant funding from the Scottish Executive for the current financial year is again £50,000. £60,000 was requested by the Housing Department and depending on performance the extra £10,000 may be available if funds allow.

The Department intends to maximise the use of the allocated funds in this current year by means of two initiatives.

- An approved installer, Tayside Energy, have a successful track record of delivering energy efficiency measures in Angus Council's Kirriemuir houses as part of the Community Energy Efficiency project in 1998/99. They have been allocated some 2,000 or so addresses in the Forfar area to survey for loft insulation requirements. Once the needs are identified, funds can be allocated from the Planned Maintenance budget to instruct work to the relevant addresses.
- A partnership has been formed between the Housing Department and the Training Services section of the Personnel Department, to upgrade loft insulation throughout the Council housing stock in Arbroath. Some 3,000 addresses have been allocated to Training Services for survey, and resultant improvement, where required.

5. WARM DEAL PROJECT WITH PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

To help Housing tackle the Warm Deal in Arbroath, Training Services intend to create five positions for unemployed people as part of the New Deal work option. These positions will be for six-month periods (as per the New Deal Regulations) and will be paid positions - i.e. each person will be paid an actual wage over and above the New Deal allowance. This will allow Training Services and Housing to interview the applicants, and therefore identify people suitable for working in tenants' homes. As each person finishes their six-month contract, further staff will be employed to continue the project.

The teams of five New Dealers will be trained and overseen by Training Services Supervisors, and will be based at Ladyloan, Arbroath. The teams will purchase and install loft insulation, in any Council house in Arbroath which requires extra insulation in the loft, to bring it up to the recommended depth of 200mm.

Addresses will be surveyed first to identify where the work is required, and the installation will then follow on in the subsequent few weeks.

Arbroath will be split into four areas corresponding to Housing Department Inspector patches. The Warm Deal Team will work through each patch, allowing the Area Housing Manager and local Inspectors to keep tabs on the project. The intention is that work will begin in the coastal patch of Arbroath, in June 2000.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Energy Initiatives budget in Planned Maintenance has £70,000 available for 2000/2001, and this will be utilised to fund the project, as well as to fund the parallel work being undertaken by Tayside Energy in Forfar.

As Training Services will be creating paid positions, a proportion of the costs from this, as well as the cost of insulation materials will be borne by the Housing Department. A net shortfall of £36,651 is projected by Training Services for capital costs and creating five paid positions for a year - this shortfall can be met from the Energy Initiatives budget in Planned Maintenance.

Grant claims are made to the Scottish Executive on a quarterly basis, and moneys are made available on the number of New Dealer days worked in that quarter. It is envisaged that the full £50,000 grant allowance for 2000/2001 will be utilised.

7. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Law & Administration and Director of Personnel have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8. CONCLUSION

By working in partnership with the Personnel Department's Training Services, it is hoped that the Housing Department can fully utilise the Warm Deal grant allocation for 2000/2001. With the Training Services Project Team working in Arbroath, and Tayside Energy working in

Forfar, a large proportion of the Council's housing stock will have its loft insulation improved to the recommended standards.

Ron Ashton
Director of Housing

Note:- No background papers, as defined by Section 50d of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied upon to any material extent in preparing this report.