

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION RECORD

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sam Hoy Portfolio Holder for Housing and Licensing	Service: Housing & Community Support
CMT and Lead Officer: Dan Horn, Assistant Director	Delegated Power Being Exercised: Part 3 - Responsibilities for Functions; Tables 4 and 5, paragraph - Para 10 agree to accept funding of up to 130k
Subject of Decision: To approve the Council taking part in the DLUHC Healthy Homes project to tackle damp and mould growth effectively in homes. Key Decision Reference: KEY/18MAR24/01	

Decision to be taken:

Fenland DC has been asked to take part in the Healthy Homes Project

Healthy Homes Project background:

- The Healthy Homes Project is a joint project with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to test different enforcement approaches to damp and mould. The primary objectives are to boost the capability and capacity of enforcement teams, and gather data on what works when it comes to enforcement of damp and mould hazards.
- The funding is being used to test whether a package of interventions have the intended impact and represent good value for money; and to look at the wider societal impacts of enforcing on damp and mould hazards.
- It's an ambitious project but one that we think will really help strengthen our evidence on what works when it comes to damp and mould enforcement and deliver benefits for local authorities, central government, and ultimately – and most importantly – tenants.

How will we gather evidence on what works?

- It is vital that we gather the strongest possible evidence from this project through the evaluation. We have worked closely with external evaluation experts and will be running the Healthy Homes project as a randomised controlled trial (RCT). This approach is considered 'gold standard' by experts and will allow us to confidently draw conclusions about how effective the approach is.
- For the RCT to work it's necessary to randomly assign areas into two groups: the group implementing the interventions; and a partially funded control group where members provide data but do not implement the interventions.

What will participation involve?

- We are hoping that every local authority receiving this email will be able to participate in the Healthy Homes Project. By signing up to participate, each local authority will be randomly allocated into either the treatment or control groups once signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been received (see below).

Treatment Group

The treatment group will be allocated up to **£130,000** in 24/25 to deliver the following interventions to support damp and mould enforcement:

- Additional resource in your team;
- Standardised training across your existing team;
- Improved communications and engagement with landlords and tenants;
- Improved equipment, i.e. tools to measure damp and mould; and
- Improved data collection tools and support.

Respondents will need to provide data to support the evaluation, at the outset of the fund (likely April) and the end of the funding (March 2025). This is still being developed but likely to capture data on PRS inspections, inspections, enforcement activity and staffing over the previous 12 months (covering April 2024 to March 2025, and where available, April 2023 to March 2024).

Full guidance will be provided separately to authorities in the treatment group.

Control group

The control group will receive up to **£11,000** in 24/25 to provide data returns to support the evaluation. They will not be required to implement any specific interventions. Group members will need to commit to providing data as above.

This control group plays a vitally important role in providing comparison data (reflecting business as usual) so that we can ensure we have a robust evaluation.

Decision

Cllr Sam Hoy approves the Council taking part in the DLUHC Healthy Homes project to tackle damp and mould growth effectively in homes, including receiving funding of either 11k or 130k as a project participant.

Reason for the Decision:

The Council will not know whether we are treatment group or control group until after signing the MOU. This must be signed by 28th March. Therefore, following consultation with the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny it has been agreed for a waiver for the normal notice period.

Alternative Options Considered (if appropriate):

Not applicable.

Background/Reports/Information considered and attached:

Memorandum of Understanding (attached)

Legal and Procurement Implications

It is envisaged the work will be undertaken by FDC but if there is the need to contract out any of the tasks required then this will be done in accordance with procurement regulations.

Financial Implications

To receive 11k to 130k dependent on whether we are given the treatment or control group role

Any Other Implications

N/A

Portfolio Holder's Signature: Councillor Sam Hoy, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Licensing	Date: 19 March 2024
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Please forward to Democratic Services upon completion

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Date copy passed to Democratic Services	Implementation Date: 27 March 2024 (if not called-in) (Allow 5 clear working days after publication of decision)

Circulation: Democratic Services, Portfolio Holder, Officer and Accountancy.