

OFFICER DECISION RECORD SHEET

Name of decision maker: Chief Housing Officer

Service Area: Housing

Title of Decision: To sign the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Decision made and reasons:

Decision:

To sign the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent, enabling qualifying private households to access energy company funding for energy efficiency measures such as insulation and solar panels.

Private residents who receive qualifying benefits may be eligible for the Energy Company Obligation. Local Authorities can widen the qualifying criteria to include households who are “just about managing” by publishing an ECO 4 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent and signing declarations for applicants who meet our criteria.

In order to do this, Dacorum’s ECO 3 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent, dated February 2021, has been updated to reflect the new requirements of the Energy Company Obligation 4, set out in Ofgem’s [Final ECO 4 Guidance: Local Authority Administration](#) issued in September 2022.

The ECO Flexible Eligibility (ECO Flex) referral pathway via the National Energy Foundation’s ECO Supplier network is to be renewed. The National Energy Foundation ([NEF](#)) is an independent charity that works in this arena and provides the [Better Housing Better Health](#) service for residents of Dacorum.

The National Energy Foundation manages a contractor list enabling any contractor who meets the accreditation requirements to participate. Contractors who wish to submit applications on the resident’s behalf pay for the cost of this service. Payments (approx. £65* per application) are paid by the contractor to the National Energy Foundation. For this fee they assure that the contractor carries relevant accreditations and assurances to complete the work. They also help residents apply and complete self-certification form.

Reason:

Sustainable Warmth funding is fully allocated in Dacorum, with a waiting list of over 200 private households in the borough. There is a clear need for alternative funding to help residents reduce both their carbon footprint and their energy bills.

The Energy Company Obligation (including ECO 4 and ECO 4 Flex) is a source of alternative funding. We have an existing Memorandum of Understanding and Data Sharing Agreement with the National Energy Foundation, which provides a relatively quick route to providing this service. Our Legal Governance Team have advised that

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the existing Data Sharing Agreement will need to be counter-signed as the previous signatory is no longer in post.

*Cost provided in 2019

Reports considered:

Dacorum Borough Council ECO 4 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent Version 5
NEF ECO Flex Supplier Network
NEF ECO Flex Management - NEF Supplier Network MOU
Dacorum Borough Council and National Energy Foundation Data Sharing Agreement

Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:

Ricky Lang, Compliance Team Leader, Property and Place

Financial Comments:

No cost to the Council identified although potential allocation of staff resources will be required. These staff resources supported by receipt of a grant totalling £5,400.

M Baxter
Accountant

Monitoring Officer Comments:

No comments to add to the report.

S151 Officers Comments:

There are no direct financial implications to the council of signing this statement of intent.

Implications

Value for Money:

The process allows Dacorum residents to access an accredited pool of contractors – which will encourage competition and customer choice.

Signing the ECO Flex Statement of Intent does not commit the council to solely having a relationship with NEF, should alternative solutions be adopted.

Financial:

The proposal with NEF will not incur a cost to the council, although staff resources will be required to carry out spot checks on customer eligibility. We are to receive £5,400 from the Greater South East Net Zero Hub for Sustainable Warmth administration completed in 2022/23, which could support this.

Risk:

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ECO participant contractors are required to be part of the [TrustMark](#) scheme that supports [PAS 2035](#), which should provide some assurance about the quality of work completed.

Officer Signature:

Darren Welsh

19th April 2023