

1. **Flexible Eligibility Statement Of Intent (ECO FLEX) Update** (Pages 1 - 10)

CABINET MEMBERS DELEGATED DECISION

Open		Would any decisions proposed :		
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide	YES/NO	
	Discretionary /	Need to be recommendations to Council	YES/NO	
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision	YES/NO	
Lead Member: Clr Adrian Lawrence E-mail: clr.adrian.lawrence@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
		Other Members consulted:		
Lead Officer: Gordon Jackson-Hopps E-mail: Gordon.jackson-hopps@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial:01553 616301		Other Officers consulted: John Greenhalgh, Assistant Director, Communities and Partnerships		
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is (are) paragraph(s)				
Date meeting advertised: 30 th April 2020		Date of meeting decision to be taken: 7 th May 2020		
Deadline for Call-In: 15 th May 2020				

FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT OF INTENT (ECO FLEX) UPDATE

Recommendation

To update and amend the existing Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent so as to permit the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk to continue to make declarations determining that certain households meet the eligibility criteria for energy efficiency measures under the Affordable Warmth element of Energy Company Obligation (ECO3) funding including;

The adoption of new low income thresholds in Section A in accordance with government guidance.

Reason for Decision

The adoption of an amended Statement of Intent will allow the Borough Council to support and assist fuel poor and vulnerable households.

Background

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO3) is an obligation placed upon larger energy companies by the Government to help households reduce their energy bills and associated carbon emissions.

Changes to ECO have enabled obligated energy companies to achieve up to 25% of their Affordable Warmth targets in conjunction with local authorities via a mechanism called ECO Flexible Eligibility.

ECO Flexible Eligibility (ECO Flex) allows local authorities to work with energy companies to identify eligible households for the installation of energy efficiency measures.

There are two main categories of household that government intends ECO Flex will benefit;

1. Fuel poor households, especially those that are not in receipt of ECO eligible benefits, and the estimated 20% of fuel poor households that are not in receipt of any benefits.
2. Low income households that are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.

A prerequisite of the ECO Flex mechanism is that local authorities produce and publish a Statement of Intent. The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk (the Council) published a Statement of Intent in May 2018 (Version 1) and Version 2 attached updates that statement to take account of changes to ECO3.

The Statement of Intent attached is broadly in line with the Broadland District Council, South Norfolk District Council and Norwich City Council Statements of Intent save for some minor differences to the low income thresholds.

Principle Changes

To update the low income thresholds in Section A of the Statement of Intent in accordance with government guidance.

Policy Implications

The potential opportunities arising from ECO Flex complements the work currently taking place within the borough to address the issues surrounding fuel poverty and excess winter deaths.

The Council's Home Energy Conservation Act report (HECA report) makes reference to the Council's priority areas, in terms of reducing fuel poverty levels and excess winter deaths.

It is proposed that any adjustment to Statement of Intent will for example, to adjust income thresholds, will be authorised by the Assistant Director, Community and Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet member.

Financial Implications

It is not anticipated that there will be any financial implications.

Personnel Implications

Existing Housing Standards officers and Care & Repair staff will continue to make assessments where appropriate and as they have done under Version 1. They will prepare declarations for sign off by nominated senior officers. It is proposed that the Housing Standards Manager and the Home Improvement Agency Manager will authorise relevant declarations on a day to day basis.

Statutory Considerations

The adoption of a SOI is complementary to those objectives identified in the Council's Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report published in accordance with the Energy Conservation Act 1995 and the adoption and governance will be in accordance with government guidance published to support the ECO Flex scheme.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Pre-screening complete and attached.

Risk Management Implications

None identified.

Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None

.....
Signed
(Cabinet Member)

.....
Date

ECO: Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

01/06/20

Version 2

1. Introduction

The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk will utilise the Flexible Eligibility stream of the Government's Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to assist vulnerable households living in fuel poverty.

Upon identifying a household as eligible under this scheme, a declaration of eligibility will be authorised and issued to an ECO provider. The case will then fall under standard ECO regulation, further detail for which can be found on the Ofgem website¹. Qualifying through Flexible Eligibility does not guarantee the installation of measures, this rests with the obligated energy suppliers or their contractors. The final decision will depend on

- (i) the survey conducted by the supplier's agents or contractors and subsequent installation costs;
- (ii) a property's potential energy savings;
- (iii) whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures in order to meet ECO targets.

2. Identifying Eligible Households

The Council has formulated the following eligibility criteria to identify private sector households that may benefit from installation of measures through the Energy Company Obligation. This approach was created with regard to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) guidance on targeting².

To qualify, the resident must meet one of the Low Income criteria (section A) in addition to criteria from either High Costs (section B) OR Vulnerable to Cold (section C). Possible routes of eligibility are therefore -

(A) Low Income + (B) High Costs

OR

(A) Low Income + (C) Vulnerable to Cold

¹ <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/eco>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-company-obligation-eco-help-to-heat-scheme-flexible-eligibility>

Criteria for Identifying Fuel Poverty

Section A: Low Income

- (i) In receipt of one of the following income-related benefits:
- Housing benefit
 - Council tax reduction/support (not single occupancy discount)
 - Pension savings credit

OR

- (ii) Households not in receipt of an income-related benefit but below state pension age or only claiming child benefit should use the relevant income threshold as shown in the table below. This comprises income from all sources, such as net earnings (after tax), income from savings and investments, pensions, all benefits (including housing benefit), and net council tax payments.

Household Composition	Annual Household Income	Monthly Household Equivalent
1 adult (18+ years)	£9,300	£775
and 1 child	£12,200	£1,017
and 2 children	£15,000	£1,250
and 3 children	£18,000	£1,500
and 4+ children	£21,000	£1,750
2 adults (18+ years)	£15,200	£1,267
and 1 child	£18,200	£1,517
and 2 children	£21,100	£1,758
and 3 children	£24,100	£2,008
and 4+ children	£26,800	£2,233

OR

- (iii) If a resident is in receipt of state pension, the household may be assessed using the following income criteria:
- Where the household consists of only 1 resident's income, at least 50% must be from state pension, and the resident must have no more than £10,000 in savings and investments.
 - Where the household consists of 2 resident's incomes, at least 75% must be from state pension, and the residents must have no more than £20,000 in savings and investments.

Section B: High Costs

- (i) Resident is living in a property with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E, F or G.

OR

- (ii) If no EPC is available, a score of at least 80 is required on the questionnaire shown in the table below.

Question	Response	Score
How many bedrooms are there in the home?	1	5
	2	10
	3	35
	4+	55
What type of property is it?	Park home or other permanent caravan residence	15
	Flat	15
	Flat above commercial premises	20
	Terrace	20
	Semi-detached	30
	Detached	35
Are energy payments made by direct debit?	Yes	0
	No	10
Does the home use a boiler?	Yes	0
	No	20
What is the main fuel type?	Gas	0
	Oil	15
	Electricity	25
	No central heating	30
	Other	15
Was the home built before 1964?	Yes	20
	No	0
Does the property have 100mm or less of loft insulation?	Yes	20
	No	0

Note: Questionnaire used to determine whether a household has high energy costs. Based on BEIS guidance.

Section C: Vulnerable to Cold

- OR
- (i) The resident is in receipt of a health related benefit.
- OR
- (ii) The resident is aged 65 and over or has children aged under 5 or is pregnant.
- OR
- (iii) The resident is on the Energy Companies' Priority Services register.
- OR
- (iv) The resident has a health or vulnerability condition that can be exacerbated by living in a cold home, as referenced within the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness³.

³ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>

3. Scheme Requirements for SWI “In-fill” Projects

Currently the Council is not actively searching for in-fill properties, but will declare properties to be eligible if approached by a resident or ECO provider. This approach has been taken due to the expectation that ECO grants will be insufficient in enabling fuel-poor households to afford solid wall insulation.

Where a property doesn't meet the fuel poverty criteria they can be declared “in-fill” if they are;

- in the same terrace as; or
- in an immediately adjacent building to; or
- are in the same building as a household that does meet those criteria.

There are also minimum percentages of households that must apply.

Eligibility will be declared strictly in accordance with the ECO3 2018–22 Flexible Eligibility Guidance published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

4. Acting on Behalf of another Local Authority

The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk will not be acting on behalf of any other authority.

5. Joint Statement of Intent

This is not applicable.

6. Governance

The Housing Standards Manager and the Home Improvement Agency Manager will principally be responsible for authorising declarations. In their absence it will be signed by relevant Service Managers or Assistant Directors.

7. Referrals

The Council expect referrals for flexible eligibility to come in three ways:

- 1) Self-referrals from residents;
- 2) Referrals from other council teams or partner organisations;
- 3) Referrals from ECO providers or installers.

Declarations will be issued to contractors only where authorised by the applying household.

8. Evidence, Monitoring and Reporting

Before processing a declaration, the Council will verify that a resident meets the outlined qualifying criteria. Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. To evidence eligibility, the following information will be documented:

- Name, address and contact details;
- Details of property type, heating type and required measures;

- Official documents to support sections A, B or C criteria.

To prevent fraud, the required information will be collected through an application form which applicants must sign to declare the data is correct. Official benefit letters will be checked and if necessary will be verified by internal benefit teams. External sources will also be sought to verify answers, such as EPC data, gas grid maps and google street view.

Application forms and supporting documentation will be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policies.

10. Signature

..... **Date**

Lorraine Gore
Chief Executive, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



Name of policy/service/function	Update Flexible Eligibility - Statement of Intent				
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	Existing				
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	To update the Statement of Intent so as to permit the Council to declare fuel poor and vulnerable households eligible for ECO funding.				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			X	
	Disability			X	
	Gender			X	
	Gender Re-assignment			X	
	Marriage/civil partnership			X	
	Pregnancy & maternity			X	
	Race			X	
	Religion or belief			X	
	Sexual orientation			X	
	Other (eg low income)	X			
Question	Answer	Comments			
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	Yes / No	Not likely.			
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	Yes / No	The adoption of a Statement of Intent will be in line with government guidance and will reflect the aims of government policy.			
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	Yes / No	The policy will widen the scope of available energy efficiency measures funding for low income, fuel poor and vulnerable households.			
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	Yes / No	Actions: No actions proposed.			
		Actions agreed by EWG member:			
Assessment completed by: Name	Gordon Jackson-Hopps				
Job title Housing Standards Manager	Date 18 February 2020				

