

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

BRIEFING NOTE

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES & OLDER PEOPLE POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

22 JULY 2009

HEAD OF HOUSING

PROVISION OF CAVITY WALL INSULATION TO THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK

1. Purpose of the Briefing Note
 - 1.1 To outline the current situation regarding the provision of cavity wall insulation to the Council's housing stock.
 2. Recommendation
 - 2.1 That the Healthier Communities and Older People Select Committee note the contents of the briefing note and determine the further action required.
 3. Background
 - 3.1 The Healthier Communities and Older People Policy Development Committee on 16 June 2009 expressed concern that a number of Council dwellings did not have the benefit of cavity wall insulation.
 - 3.2 The Committee agreed that Councillor Ball should research this matter and report his findings to the next meeting. Councillor Ball subsequently requested that a briefing note was prepared on the provision of cavity wall insulation and this is now submitted to your Committee for consideration.
 4. Key Issues
 - 4.1 Some 3,100 Council properties have cavity walls, which are suitable for cavity wall insulation. The remainder of the housing stock is either solid wall or non-traditional construction and these properties are not capable of having cavity wall insulation installed.
 - 4.2 The Council as part of the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes for the period 1997-98 to 2002-03 provided cavity wall insulation to some 1,950 properties. It was not however possible to continue the programme during 2003-04 as a result of financial constraints at that time.
 - 4.3 A proposed Decent Homes Investment Strategy was considered by Council on 18 December 2003. It was agreed that the Council's improvement programmes should be
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limited to the array of works which (in accordance with the results of the 2003 stock conditions survey) were required to meet the decent homes standard. As cavity wall insulation does not form part of the decent homes standard, the programme was discontinued.

- 4.4 An estimated 1,150 properties remain without cavity wall insulation. A large proportion of these are dwellings, where the provision of cavity wall insulation was refused by the tenant (or where access could not be obtained) as there was (at the time the programme was implemented) adverse publicity regarding households who had had cavity wall insulation installed, who subsequently suffered health problems.
- 4.5 Resident concerns about cavity wall insulation have however, now disappeared and as a result of increased energy costs and greater awareness of the "green agenda", the vast majority of households now appreciate the benefits of having cavity wall insulation installed.
- 4.6 The Council recently promoted a scheme provided by Hestia whereby private sector households who receive a means tested benefit or are aged over 70 can have cavity wall insulation installed "free of charge". Unfortunately, Council tenants are ineligible for this scheme and as a result a number of households have contacted the Council to request that the Council install cavity wall insulation to their homes.
- 4.7 The cost of providing cavity wall insulation to the 1,150 Council properties which remain without this facility is estimated to be £362,500, which equates to an average cost of £315 per property.
- 4.8 As previously stated, cavity wall insulation does not form part of the decent homes standard and as a result there is no provision for this work within the agreed HRA Capital Programmes for 2009-10 and 2010-11.
- 4.9 However, the Government through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) recently made £83.8 million of additional funding available nationally to help social landlords to insulate "hard to treat" cavity walls. Whilst the un-insulated cavity wall properties within the Council's stock do not meet the "hard to treat" criteria (as prescribed by the HCA) the Council nevertheless made a bid for £235,000 in June 2009 to provide cavity wall insulation to those properties which best met the HCA criteria. This would provide 100% of the required funding for certain properties and the results of the bid are currently awaited.
- 4.10 The Council currently have an agreement with British Gas which results in British Gas providing the Council with a financial contribution towards certain energy efficiency measures, in accordance with the Home Energy Efficiency Programme. In 2008-09 a total of £120,420 was received under the terms of the current agreement, to "part fund" external wall insulation to properties with solid walls (undertaken in conjunction with re-rendering), condensing boilers and loft insulation.
- 4.11 As the Council's bid for resources from the HCA may not be successful, discussions are in progress with British Gas to ascertain the possibility of extending the terms of the Council's current agreement to include financial assistance for cavity wall insulation. The initial response has been favourable and in principle British Gas would

ENCLOSURE 4.3

be prepared to fund part of the cost of providing cavity wall insulation. The grant rates have not however been finalised and would be subject to the Council meeting the "balance" from its own resources.