

18 November 2024

Dear

ATISN 22052

Thank you for your request which I received on 26 October 2024. You asked for information on the following regarding the Arbed scheme in Caerau, Maesteg, Bridgend:

- The sum of money released to BCBC in regard to houses in Caerau.
- When were funds released to Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)?
- Are there any clauses or caveats on the money?
- Will Welsh Government claw back any unused funds?
- What is/was the contract/business plan for this money?

Our response

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) was awarded £2.65m (two million, six hundred and fifty thousand pounds). The funding relates to the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025. Funds are claimed annually. Any unclaimed annual funding will cease to be available.

BCBC received the first payment on 28 November 2023 and has received a total of £1,293,553.36 to date.

The purpose of the funding is to contribute towards the cost of removing failed External Wall Insulation (EWI) for 79 owner-occupied properties in Caerau, Bridgend affected by the UK Government Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) scheme. Once the failed EWI has been removed new insulation will be installed.

Welsh Government does not hold the business plans for BCBC Caerau Arbed scheme. However, Welsh Government has set terms and conditions that BCBC must follow to be awarded any funding in relation to the remediation works at Caerau. These include the following.

- Regular reporting to Welsh Government on the project's progress and compliance with the requirements set out within the agreement.
- A Retrofit Co Ordinator (who is accredited to PAS2035:2019 and registered with Trustmark) is to be assigned to the project to undertake all the duties as set out in Clause 6 of PAS2035.
- A strategic advisor, with proven experience and knowledge of domestic energy efficiency retrofit works, is to be employed to advise the Council where necessary, on the approach to procurement and the management of the works.

- Works to supervise and inspect the works to ensure they are undertaken as per the design.
- A resident liaison officer is to be assigned to the project, to deal with any day-to-day queries from residents
- The main contractor is to undertake, or appoint a suitably qualified Retrofit Assessor to undertake surveys in line with the requirements of PAS2035:2019
- The suitability of the existing ventilation is to be assessed, and implemented if required, according to Annex C of PAS2035:2019
- An appropriate design and specification shall be developed by a competent person/company and procured for installation by competent contractor(s) (accredited to PAS2030:2019 and Trustmark registered), both with a proven track record in design, installation and coordination of domestic energy efficiency retrofit works.
- The design is to ensure that thermal bridging is eliminated, and that end gables will be extended to remove reliance on trims and sealants
- Appropriate safeguards will be provided to assure residents that support will be available to them following sign off of satisfactory completion of works, and that a route of redress to the contractor and/or a warranty/guarantee scheme.
- Each household shall be provided with an essential maintenance handover pack. This shall be written in an easy to understand format and include details of all relevant maintenance requirements, with required and recommended activities and frequencies clearly identified.
- The external render finish should be applied in such a way as to inhibit mould growth. The dwellings will be fully surveyed to ensure no defects or damp are present. It is a requirement to include a fungal inhibitor.

Bridgend County Borough Council is required to return any or all of the Funding if:

- BCBC fail to comply with any of the Conditions;
- The Funding, in full or in part, is not being used for the Purposes;
- BCBC fail to achieve any or all of the Targets;
- There is unsatisfactory progress towards completing the Purposes, including meeting the Targets;
- Welsh Government has reason to believe that BCBC and/or any Personnel are involved in fraudulent activity or have been involved in fraudulent activity whether or not it relates to or is any way connected to the Funding;
- Welsh Government has made an overpayment of Funding to BCBC;
- There is a duplication of funding in respect of any part of the Purposes. This includes but is not limited to any payments received by BCBC in relation to the effects of the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from your insurance provider (cancellation/business disruption insurance), the UK Government's Coronavirus Job

Retention Scheme and/or any Welsh Government fund/scheme;

- Any event occurs or circumstances arise which in Welsh Governments opinion gives reasonable grounds for believing that providing the Funding and/or the continuation of the arrangements contemplated by this letter could bring us into disrepute;
- Any event occurs or circumstances arise which in Welsh Governments opinion gives reasonable grounds for believing that BCBC may not, or may be unable, to perform or comply with any of the obligations under the Conditions.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely