

Best practice guide

Funding available to ALMOs

Arm's-length management organisations have always been about more than just a decent home. With their local focus and successful record of resident engagement, ALMOs are key drivers of community success. And in these cash-strapped times, they are proving creative in accessing different sources of funding for their own initiatives or on their residents' behalf.

In this update on best practice, we take a look at some of the funding routes available to ALMOs, and focus on some of the latest success stories from the sector.

Funding routes

There are a range of opportunities available including government, European and charitable funding streams. A source of information for the latest opportunities is *Grantfinder* – <http://www.grantfinder.co.uk/>

Government funding streams

Improving energy efficiency is a key issue for ALMOs: not only for environmental reasons but, crucially, to tackle fuel poverty. ALMOs have been involved in a whole range of initiatives from Salix Homes' trailblazing Green Deal pilot work to small scale, yet life-changing energy efficient refurbishment projects. Funding has been available through a number of streams and most recently housing providers were encouraged to apply for Renewable Heat Premium Payment money.

Newark and Sherwood Homes has recently secured £45,000 from the Department for Energy and Climate Change and a further £15,000 for CERT (Carbon Emission Reduction Target) to deliver a new renewable energy system for tenants in the South Muskham and Sutton-on-Trent areas. The funding will help with the costs of installing air source heat pumps in 20 'off gas' homes, currently heated by coal, oil or electricity. Ten of the homes will have solar thermal hot water systems fitted.

To find out more about Newark and Sherwood Homes' project contact:

Andy Dewberry, Assistant Director – Asset and Development Resources, on 01636 655654 or andy.dewberry@nshomes.co.uk

A1 Housing Bassetlaw has a strong track record of energy efficiency work, having already installed more than 220 air source systems and 147 ground source systems supported by CERT funding, the Low Carbon Building Programme and the Community Energy Saving Programme. It has more work underway and its latest grant funding of £153,000 will fund the improvement of a further 46 homes in the Tuxford area.

To find out more about A1 Housing Bassetlaw's project contact:

Don Spittlehouse, Director of Technical and Housing Services, on 01909 534536 or don.spittlehouse@a1housing.co.uk

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Berneslai Homes and Barnsley Council have recently been awarded a grant of over £77,000 to install air sourced heat pumps in 34 properties, which do not have access to a main gas supply. Berneslai Homes was awarded the grant by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), who put £10m towards a second Renewable Heat Premium Payment social landlords competition. This competition was run by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and was open to key providers of social housing including local authorities, charities, private companies and partnerships. The funds will be used to deploy selective renewable heating technologies in social housing. The aim is to increase the use of renewable heating technologies in social housing and enable DECC to capture learning about its use and impact, whilst also reducing carbon emissions.

To find out more about Berneslai Homes' project contact:

Sarah Schofield, Marketing and Communications Officer, on 01226 772779 or SarahSchofield@berneslaihomes.co.uk

Link to Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme:

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting_energy/renewable_ener/premium_pay/premium_pay.aspx

Link to Energy Saving Trust: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

European funding

A number of ALMOs have been involved in schemes which have won European Social Fund (ESF) backing. CityWest Homes, for example, had a successful work and training programme, Westminster Works, which helps residents back into employment and won the employer of the year award from the ESF. The ESF, as well as funding employment and skills projects, also has a community grants programme for small voluntary and community organisations 'working with the most disadvantaged and excluded people to help them move closer to the labour market'.

To find out more about European Social Fund in England and funding opportunities visit ESF's website: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/esf/funding-opportunities/>

The Big Lottery Fund

The Lottery Fund hands out grants of anything from £300 to £500,000 to a range of projects across the UK. There are a number of different grants programmes, some focused on smaller projects, others on larger investments.

Visit Big Lottery Fund UK website: <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/index>

A recent example of a successful partnership bid was in Nottingham, where the Nottingham City BIG Improving Financial Confidence Partnership was awarded £999,449 this summer to help young social residents learn more about managing their money. The project, led by Nottingham Community Housing Association and involving Nottingham City Homes, will see first-time social tenants under 25 getting a financial 'health check' when they sign up for their new home. There will also be one-to-one support including budget planning and debt management as well as an online resource and smart phone application.

To find out more about the project please contact:

Holly Dagnall, Business Operations Manager at Nottingham Community Housing Association, on 0115 844 3521 or holly.dagnall@ncha.org.uk

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Wolverhampton Homes is working with Wolverhampton Citizens Advice Bureau, which received more than £560,000 for a similar initiative under the same Big Lottery funding stream. Poole Housing Partnership jointly with the National Lottery funded a £100,000 Bourne Valley play area in a disadvantaged part of Poole, and also has received lottery funding over three years to engage the community in growing food and promoting health and wellbeing.

Barnet Homes has launched a new project to prevent homelessness among ethnic minority tenants. The two-year Building Minority Engagement Project, which secured just over £95,000 in Big Lottery funding, will help residents with financial management and will promote training and employment opportunities. The ALMO applied for funding after analysis suggested residents from certain ethnic groups were more likely to be in rent arrears and so more at risk of losing their homes. It will now have a community link officer, responsible for training community representatives on welfare and budgeting issues and helping to direct residents into training.

To find out more about the project please contact:

Anne-Marie Isaacs, Rental Income Manager, on 020 8359 4995 or Anne-Marie.Isaacs@barnethomes.org

Link to Barnet's Big Society Innovation Bank with offers of community projects funding:

<http://www.innovationbankbarnet.org.uk/>

Charitable trusts

There are some 4,000 trusts and foundations across the UK, giving out around £3billion a year to charities and community organisations. Some may have a particular focus on a particular issue, such as tackling homelessness, others a particular target group, such as young people. Some may only fund registered charities, others may consider grassroots groups, making this a good potential route for ALMO community projects. *Grantnet* <http://www.grantnet.com/> allows you to search for funding sources which might be able to help with a particular project.

Community Foundations

There are 55 community foundations across the UK working to develop 'community philanthropy' where individual and business donors can contribute to projects in their area. Together they provide some £70m in grants a year.

Visit Community Foundation Network website:

http://www.communityfoundations.org.uk/community_foundations/map/

Case studies

Berneslai Homes: Funding and apprenticeship scheme

Berneslai Homes and Barnsley College applied to the CLG for an Empty Homes Community Grant and has been successful in receiving £270,000 over a three year period. The scheme will bring back 30 long-term empty private sector dwellings back into use. The private sector owners will lease the properties to Berneslai Homes for a period of ten years at a low value. The properties will be brought up to the HCA home standard, and the work will be undertaken by Barnsley College apprentices. Each property will have £15,000 spent on it with the money coming from the grant and a contribution from the college. Berneslai Homes will let the property on a fixed-term tenancy at affordable rent and the rental income will cover the costs of management and maintenance and the repayment of the college loan. At the end of the 10-year period the property will be returned to the owner.

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To find out more about Berneslai Homes' project contact:

Sarah Schofield, Marketing and Communications Officer, on 01226 772779 or SarahSchofield@berneslaihomes.co.uk

Link to CLG's Empty Homes Community Grant:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/emptyhomeappguidance>

Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing: A multipronged approach

Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) has tapped into funding from a number of sources. Among its successes is energy efficiency work: £1.92million was brought in over two years – two-thirds from the now discontinued Low Carbon Building Programme, with the rest from CERT and other grants. More recently, funding has come from the European Regional Development Fund and the Community Energy Saving Programme. KNH's share of a successful consortium bid to these funding sources was around £1.6m. Future schemes, which are currently in development, will take advantage of the new FIT (Feed In Tariff) and RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive) funding streams. KNH is also part of a regional multi-agency gas safety group, which has won funding both from energy companies and the CORGI Trust – now the Gas Safety Trust – for carbon monoxide awareness campaigns.

KNH's new business team, which looks to bring in new sources of funding both through developing new services and by tapping into grant funding, was behind a successful bid for Big Lottery funding. The £300,000 grant supported KNH's 'Plant it, grown it, eat it' project, designed to encourage community gardening and healthy eating and to boost community cohesion. KNH has also managed to win money from a range of other sources, including through its older people's team NHS, local authority and grant funding for its work promoting healthy living among older people.

To find out more about KNH's projects contact:

Penny Allison, Communications Manager, on 01484 416440 or penny.allison@knh.org.uk
Linda Spencer, New Business Manager, on 01484 416834 or newbusiness@knh.org.uk

Link to KNH's community grants web page:

<http://www.knh.org.uk/yourneighbourhood/excelreward/communitygrants.shtml>

Poole Housing Partnership: A multipronged approach

Poole housing Partnership (PHP) also obtained funding from various sources. PHP received approximately £88,900 over a three year period from Scottish Power Energy People Trust. This funding enables the ALMO to offer advice and support to members of the community, cross tenure, on fuel poverty and financial inclusion. This money also supplements other funding and has enabled PHP to employ an additional member of staff. Its dedicated team offers services such as free energy price comparison, trail of a smart meter and free welfare benefit finance checks.

To find out more about this project contact:

Karen Toft on 01202 264484 or Karen.Toft@poole.gov.uk or Cath Carter on 01202 264485 or Cath.Carter@poole.gov.uk

Link to the Scottish Power Energy People Trust: <http://www.energypeopletrust.com/content/>

PHP is part of the Local Strategic Partnership in Poole, which exists to actively involve local people and organisations in shaping the future of the Borough and brings together representatives from all sectors: public, private, business, voluntary and community. The Partnership is supporting a five-year

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Neighbourhood Management Project for one of the poorest areas in Poole. In the past the funding for this project has been received from the CLG's Targeted Support for Empowerment and Participation programme and from the Connecting Communities programme. £228,685 performance reward grant was awarded by the Borough of Poole to cover the cost of continuing to fund the Neighbourhood Manager until 2014/15.

Stockport Homes: Pointing residents in the right direction

Residents in Stockport know exactly where to go if they have a community project that needs funding. Stockport Homes has created its own distinct funding brand on its website:



Stockport Homes has a funding officer in post who is there to help grassroots projects access the cash they need to get good ideas off the ground.

Residents have benefited from a variety of funding support, including:

- Backing from UKonline for computer and internet training
- Support from Forever Manchester to allow volunteers to keep a community cafe, formerly run by the NHS, open and to buy kitchen equipment for a tenants' association. Forever Manchester has also supported a samba band and an allotment association
- Grants from homelessness charity Crisis, the Manchester Airport Fund and Greggs Bakers for the Help the Homeless into Housing committee. The committee, known as H3, is made up of formerly homeless people who have used Stockport Homes' resettlement services. The grant support has helped support the development of allotments and play areas and the production of a health eating cookbook for service users
- A grant from Recycle for Greater Manchester to support an innovative furniture recycling scheme in Brinnington. Stockport, where mini furniture showrooms have been set up in tower blocks.

Stockport Homes' website highlights a number of projects in Stockport and Greater Manchester, which have been supported by funders including the Asda Foundation, the Allen Lane Foundation and BBC Children in Need – so helping to spread the word about the variety of funding available.

To find out more about Stockport Homes' projects contact:

Mark Rogers, Funding Officer, on 0161 474 3463 or Mark.Rogers@stockporthomes.org

To find out more about Stockport Homes' projects visit ALMO's website:

<http://www.stockporthomes.org/main.cfm?type=FUNDING&objectid=3287>

For further information regarding NFA best practice guide or ALMO contact details, please contact Maya Rehill, NFA Office Manager, on 0845 4747008 or email maya.rehill@hqnetwork.co.uk