

SUBJECT: AFFORDABLE WARMTH STRATEGY

DIRECTORATE: MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

REPORT AUTHOR: KATE BELL, CLIMATE CHANGE MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Council's new Affordable Warmth Strategy and request that the strategy is approved by the Executive.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council adopted the last Affordable Warmth Strategy in 2009 which set out a plan for reducing the negative impact of fuel poverty on the City. The Strategy was in place until 2016 and since then the Council's affordable warmth and fuel poverty agenda has not been reviewed or updated in line with more recent Government and City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) policies.
- 2.2 Since 2016 the Council have continued to engage with the Home Energy in Lincolnshire Partnership (HELP) which has more recently merged with North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire Councils to form the Greater Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Network (GLEEN)
- 2.3 Since 2019 GLEEN created a Project Officer post to manage the Lincs 4 Warmer Homes (L4WH) scheme support residents in Greater Lincolnshire to access ECO3 and Warm Homes funding and appoint accredited energy efficiency installers on behalf of the residents to undertake the work.
- 2.4 To date the L4WH scheme has engaged with 119 households in Lincoln, 32 in relation to ECO3 funding and 20 for the Warm Homes Fund. 23 households were able to benefit from ECO3 funding to support energy efficiency improvements to their home. Only 7 households were identified as suitable for Warm Homes Funding, of which 1 gas heating installation has been completed and 4 are due to have gas heating installations completed by February 2022.
- 2.5 The Warm Homes Fund and Project Officer post is due to come to an end in March 2022 and there are no confirmed plans in place to extend the L4WH scheme in 22/23. However, discussions are underway between Local Authorities to work collaboratively to deliver the Sustainable Warmth Programme where possible and to set up a Home Energy advice service for Lincolnshire.
- 2.6 In August 2020, Government announced £2b Green Homes Grant with the purpose of stimulating a green recovery through investment into the UK energy efficiency and low carbon sectors, significantly reducing CO2 emissions from housing to mitigate climate change as well as reducing instances of fuel poverty.

- 2.7 In February 2021 the Government published the Sustainable Warmth Strategy¹ which outlines Government support for vulnerable households in England. The Strategy sets out its ambition to work towards all homes having a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C rating by 2030.
- 2.8 In May 2021 the City Council, as part of a consortium bid with the Midlands Energy hub were allocated £479,600 capital funding to retrofit up to 40 energy inefficient homes in Lincoln during 2021/22.
- 2.9 In October 2021 the City of Lincoln Council were awarded £2,203,194 direct from BEIS and £545 500 from the Midlands Energy Hub to deliver the Sustainable Warmth Programme in 2022/23. The Council have formed a consortium with North Kesteven, South Kesteven and West Lindsey District Councils to jointly manage the scheme across central Lincolnshire and appoint a Principal Delivery Partner.

3. Affordable Warmth Strategy

- 3.1 A new and updated Affordable Warmth Strategy for Lincoln is necessary following the recent changes in national, regional and local policies to address fuel poverty.
- 3.2 The Affordable Warmth strategy brings together the success of our partnership approach to ensure that all sectors are working together to tackle fuel poverty effectively. The strategy reflects the objective of the Council's Housing Strategy 2021 – 2026 to improve housing standards for all and contributes to the Council's ongoing work to achieve a net zero carbon target by 2030.
- 3.3 Key objectives of the Lincoln Affordable Warmth Strategy 2021 - 2026:
- To reduce the number of Lincoln residents that are in fuel poverty, targeting those with the highest fuel poverty gap.
 - To improve our processes for identifying residents who are in fuel poverty or at risk of ill health due to a cold home.
 - To increase the number of homes in Lincoln with domestic energy efficiency ratings of C, one of the key ways in which the City can tackle the Climate Emergency.
- 3.4 A key challenge highlighted by the strategy is the recent increase in the level of fuel poverty in Lincoln. The latest available data for Lincoln shows that the City has the second highest level of fuel poverty of all districts in Lincolnshire. In 2019 the total estimated number of households meeting the government's fuel poverty criteria was 6568. The implications of the Covid Pandemic and the significant rise in global, wholesale gas prices are likely to have pushed more households in Lincoln into fuel poverty.
- 3.5 The Strategy sets out the following priorities to deliver affordable warmth over the next 5 years: -

¹ [Sustainable Warmth – Protecting Vulnerable Households in England.](#)

- Raise Awareness of Affordable Warmth.
- Improving the Energy Efficiency of All Housing in Lincoln.
- Deliver a Co-ordinated approach to Affordable Warmth.

3.6 The Sustainable Warmth programme for Central and South Lincolnshire is a consortium led scheme across four local authority areas to retrofit fuel poor homes. The City of Lincoln Council are the lead local authority on the legal and procurement on behalf of the consortium. A consortium approach will deliver economies of scale, reduce the administrative costs and achieve a more efficient and effective customer journey for residents in our area.

3.7 **The Affordable Warmth Strategy can be viewed in Appendix 1** and sets out what the City of Lincoln Council will do to help lift residents out of fuel poverty and overcome the health effects of cold, damp, draughty living conditions. It also explains what action the Council will take to improve collaboration and co-ordination among the wide variety of organisations that are working to tackle fuel poverty.

4. Corporate Strategic Priorities

4.1 Let's address the challenge of climate change

The priorities and actions in the Affordable Warmth Strategy contribute towards the Council's commitments to reach a net zero carbon target by 2030.

4.2 Let's deliver quality housing

The priorities and actions in the Affordable Warmth Strategy contribute towards the Quality Housing objective 'Let's Improve housing standards for all.'

4.3 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

The priorities and actions in the Affordable Warmth Strategy contribute towards the Inequality objective 'Let's provide help to the most vulnerable in our city.'

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance

The Affordable Warmth Strategy has no direct financial implications. Subject to the strategy being approved, delivery of actions will be funded under existing budgets or through external funding.

5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

The Affordable Warmth Strategy has no legal implications.

5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering

services and in relation to their own employees. It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

An Equality with Human Rights Analysis has been completed and the conclusion confirms that the Affordable Warmth Strategy (AWS) includes consideration of protected characteristics as part of the objectives and actions set out to address fuel poverty.

6. Risk Implications

6.1 Options Explored

- 1) To progress the Affordable Warmth Strategy and deliver the actions set out to address fuel poverty which delivers the Council's Vision 2025 ambitions.
- 2) To reduce the scale and ambition of the Affordable Warmth Strategy and deliver the actions over a longer timescale to relieve pressure on Council resources.

6.2 Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

The preferred approach, Option 1, relies on the Council to continue to be able to secure external funding to deliver energy efficiency measures and having the necessary Council resources. The Council will need to review the actions identified in the Strategy regularly over the next five years to ensure they remain deliverable.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Executive are asked to consider and approve the Affordable Warmth Strategy.

How many appendices does the report contain? One

List of Background Papers: None

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