

**Report of the Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Team****Report to the Director of Environment and Housing****Date: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016****Subject: Warm Well Homes Project**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority approved a grant of £284,000 from the Leeds City Region Local Growth Fund to Leeds City Council to undertake the Warm Well Homes scheme.
2. The Warm Well Homes Scheme is intended to provide heating and insulation improvements to the homes of lower income residents suffering from a cold related illness, such as cardiovascular, respiratory illness, or mental illness which is known to be heavily exacerbated by cold living conditions.
3. The scheme has been designed to match fund existing funding streams, such as Energy Company Obligation funding and the Discretionary Fuel Poverty Fund to provide grant assistance averaging £5,000 to eligible households.
4. There is a need to amend the duration and eligibility of the Discretionary Fuel Poverty Fund to make sure that it aligns as closely as possible with the Warm Well Homes local growth funding.
5. The main delivery of the scheme will be through the Better Homes Leeds programme, with some customer liaison and outreach undertaken through Groundwork Leeds' Green Doctor programme.
6. Leeds City Council currently funds the Green Doctor scheme through a long running grant arrangement with Groundwork Leeds. There is a need to amend this arrangement to enable the Green Doctor to use some of this capacity to undertake preliminary work as part of the Warm Well homes Scheme.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the use of the £284,000 Local Growth Funding for the Warm Well Homes scheme.
2. That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the injection of, and authority to spend £280,000 of the Local Growth Funding into the Better Homes Yorkshire capital spending programme.
3. That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment of the duration of the discretionary fuel poverty fund to run until March 2019 to align it with the duration of the Warm Well Homes Scheme.
4. That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment of the eligibility criteria of the discretionary fuel poverty fund to where “A member of the household suffers from a long term cold related illness and is either in receipt of council tax benefit or has a net household income of £21,000 per annum or less (depending on disposable income)”.
5. That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment of the discretionary fuel poverty fund to support in most circumstances up to £2,000 towards the cost of heating improvements.
6. That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment to the grant agreement with Groundwork Leeds to enable some existing Green Doctor capacity to be used for preliminary work as part of the Warm Well Homes scheme.
7. That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment to the grant agreement with Groundwork Leeds to enable them to undertake aftercare/evaluation visits to households who have received measures under Warm Well Homes in addition to their existing home visiting targets.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To facilitate the commencement of the Warm Well Homes scheme and the use of the Local Growth Fund grant for that purpose.
- 1.2 To amend the duration and eligibility criteria of the Discretionary Fuel Poverty fund to better align with the Warm Well Homes scheme.
- 1.3 To amend the grant agreement between Leeds City Council and Groundwork Leeds to enable some Green Doctor capacity to be used for preliminary work as part of the Warm Well Homes scheme.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 In June 2016 the Funder's Investment Committee and West Yorkshire Combined Authority approved a Leeds City Region wide Tackling Fuel Poverty Programme as part of the Better Homes Yorkshire Programme.
- 2.2 As part of the programme, the sustainable energy and climate change team in collaboration with public health, Better Homes Yorkshire, Groundwork Leeds and potential referral organisations such as Care & Repair Leeds, Leeds Community Healthcare, the three Clinical Commissioning Groups and Adult Social Care developed a proposal for the Warm Well Homes scheme which would fund the installation of heating and insulation measures in the homes of lower income households suffering from a cold related illness or mental illness.
- 2.3 A grant of £284,000 to Leeds City Council was approved by the Combined Authority in December 2016 to undertake the Warm Well Homes scheme.

## **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The Local Growth Funding will be used in conjunction with existing funding streams to install heating and insulation in the homes of lower income households suffering from cold related illnesses such as cardio-vascular illness and respiratory illness, and mental illness which is known to be exacerbated by cold living conditions. People suffering from these conditions have been identified in the NICE guidance on [Excess Winter Deaths and Illness and the Health Risks Associated with Cold Homes](#) as being particularly at risk from having their illness exacerbated by living in cold homes.
- 3.2 The Local Growth Funding is designated as capital funding, with £280,000 to be spent directly on measures, and the remaining £4,000 intended to facilitate the spending of the rest of the grant through promotion and evaluation.
- 3.3 The local growth funding will be combined with other funding streams including the discretionary fuel poverty fund, energy company obligation funding and energy repayment loans to enable approximately 112 homes to have on average £5,000 worth of heating and insulation installed per home. This is to enable those most vulnerable from cold related illness and mental illness exacerbated by the cold, to access enough funding to install improvements that will make a real difference to their health and reduce costs to the health and social care sectors.
- 3.4 Applicants to the scheme will be generated by referrals from partners in the health and social care sectors, including Public Health, Leeds Community Healthcare, the three Clinical Commissioning Groups and their social prescribing schemes, Adult

Social Care and Care and Repair Leeds' Warm Homes Service and promotion of the scheme within their client base.

- 3.5 The scheme will run until March 2019. This is to ensure that it is available to provide assistance to vulnerable residents over the three winter periods of 2016/17, 17/18 and 18/19 when we know that there will be an upsurge in the need for assistance with heating from vulnerable people.
- 3.6 The Leeds discretionary fuel poverty fund was set up in 2013 to support the installation of heating and insulation measures in the homes of fuel poor residents on low incomes whose measures aren't fully funded by the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation or the Warm Homes Service.
- 3.7 The fund was set up to run for five years from 2013 – 18 with a spend of £100,000 a year over that period.
- 3.8 Up until 2016, spend from the fund has been largely on target, however with the decreased availability of ECO match funding recently, spend from the discretionary fuel poverty fund has begun to fall behind its target and by November 2016, £298,000 has been spent, with the remaining £202,000 due to be spent by the end of March 2018.
- 3.9 We therefore propose that the duration of the discretionary fuel poverty fund should be extended to March 2019 to run concurrently with the Warm Well Homes scheme enabling the £202,000 to be match funded with the local growth funding.
- 3.10 The discretionary fuel poverty fund currently states that a household can be eligible where "A member of the household suffers from a long term cold related illness and is either in receipt of council tax benefit or is eligible for council tax benefit". In order to bring the eligibility criteria in line with the local growth funding, this should be amended to "A member of the household suffers from a long term cold related illness and is either in receipt of council tax benefit or has a net household income of £21,000 per annum or less (depending on disposable income)" This will bring the eligibility of the fund in line with the Warm Well homes eligibility criteria.
- 3.11 The discretionary fuel poverty fund currently stipulates that we would normally limit the contribution from the fund to "£2,500 per household for insulation measures and £1,000 per household for heating measures". The recent success with the DECC central heating fund has illustrated that there is still a pressing need to support vulnerable residents living in homes currently without adequate heating to obtain a full heating system. At present this isn't supported through ECO and £1,000 match funded with the local growth fund to provide a contribution of £2,000 doesn't cover a great enough proportion of the cost of installing a heating system to make this viable option for low income residents. We therefore propose that we should limit the contribution from the fund to "2,500 per household for insulation measures and £2,000 per household for heating measures".
- 3.12 Currently the Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Team has a grant agreement with Groundwork Leeds to provide 350 home visits to vulnerable residents a year. Since the Commencement of Public Health's Warmth for Wellbeing scheme in October 2015, Groundwork Leeds has a target to visit a further 900 vulnerable resident per annum through that scheme.
- 3.13 Under the Warm Well Homes scheme, there will be an initial home visit during which the household will be assessed for their eligibility for the scheme and the property surveyed to assess which improvements will be required. Groundwork Leeds' staff are qualified to undertake this assessment, and with the additional

targets for home visits provided through the Public Health Warmth for Wellbeing scheme, there is capacity for some of the 350 visits per annum funded through the SECC grant to be used to undertake these visits. We therefore propose that the grant agreement with Groundwork Leeds is amended to enable some of the 350 home visits to be used to provide the initial home visits to residents under the Warm Well Homes scheme.

- 3.14 Under the Warm Well Homes scheme, some of the local growth funding has been budgeted to provide an aftercare/evaluation visit to residents who have had measures installed. We therefore propose that we amend the grant agreement with Groundwork Leeds to enable them to undertake these visits in addition to their existing target of visits.

## **8. Corporate considerations**

### **8.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 8.1.1 The proposal for the Warm Well homes project has been developed in consultation with funders at WYCA as well as delivery partners, Groundwork Leeds and Better Homes Yorkshire.
- 8.1.2 We have also consulted with referral partners including Public Health, Leeds Community Healthcare, the three Clinical Commissioning Groups and their social prescribing partners and Adult Social Care.
- 8.1.3 We have developed the scheme using experience from the previous energy champions scheme in Leeds and the DECC funded central heating fund.

### **8.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 8.2.1 The scheme will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable residents of the City. Residents already suffering from long term cold related medical conditions risk having their illness exacerbated by living in cold and damp conditions. By addressing this issue, the scheme should enable these residents to live healthier, more independent lives in their own homes
- 8.2.2 The scheme will positively affect some elderly and very young residents and service users in Leeds. The main barriers are reaching those most in need, which we aim to overcome by having frontline health and social care professionals referring into the scheme.
- 8.2.3 Please see the Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Impact Assessment

### **8.3 Council policies and best council plan**

- 8.3.1 The scheme helps to achieve the aims of the Best Council Plan 2015-20 by contributing to the following 2016/17 priorities:
- 8.3.1.1 Keeping people safe from harm, by enabling vulnerable residents to live in their own homes without having their medical conditions exacerbated by cold living conditions.
- 8.3.1.2 Providing enough homes of a high enough standard in all sectors, by improving the heating and insulation standards of properties.

- 8.3.1.3 Supporting children to have the best start in life, by reducing the likelihood of childhood asthma due to cold living conditions.
- 8.3.1.4 Preventing people from dying early, by reducing cold related ill health and excess winter deaths through installing heating and insulation improvements in the homes of vulnerable residents.
- 8.3.1.5 Building capacity for individuals to withstand or recover from illness, by ensuring that they no longer live in cold homes.
- 8.3.1.6 Supporting healthy ageing, by enabling elderly residents to live in warm homes.
- 8.3.2 The scheme helps to achieve the following outcomes of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21:
  - 8.3.2.1 People will live longer and have healthier lives, by ensuring that people suffering from cold related illness and mental illness exacerbated by cold living conditions are able to live in warm homes.
  - 8.3.2.2 People will live full, active and independent lives, by enabling residents to live in their own homes for longer.
  - 8.3.2.3 People will live in healthy, safe and sustainable communities, by enabling them to live in homes that they can keep warm
- 8.3.3 The scheme contributes towards the Leeds Affordable Warmth Strategy of ensuring that resident's health and wellbeing isn't put at risk due to being unable to heat their homes, as per the NICE guidelines on preventing excess winter deaths.

## **8.4 Resources and value for money**

- 8.4.1 The Warm Well Homes scheme will bring £284,000 worth of local growth funding into the city to improve the living conditions of some of Leeds' most vulnerable residents.
- 8.4.2 The Warm Well Homes scheme will enable some of our existing funds such as the discretionary fuel poverty fund to be more effectively targeted at those residents most in need.
- 8.4.3 The Warm Well Homes scheme will enable residents to live more healthily in their own homes and will help to reduce the burden on frontline health and social care services.

## **8.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 8.5.1 The decision is a key decision, therefore it is eligible for call-in.

## **8.6 Risk management**

- 8.6.1 There is a risk that take-up of the Warm Well Homes scheme will be less than expected and that funding will be unspent by the end of the project. We have mitigated this in the following ways:
  - 8.6.1.1 The design of the scheme has been informed by the demand for previous schemes such as the Leeds Energy Champions scheme and the central heating fund.

- 8.6.1.2 Should referrals be less than expected, we have the option of directly mailing clients of Leeds Community Healthcare who suffer from the relevant medical conditions.
- 8.6.1.3 We will be introducing the scheme to front line staff in the health and social care sectors through training sessions to ensure that they are aware of the scheme and can make referrals.
- 8.6.1.4 The duration of the scheme will include three winter periods when we know that there is more of a demand for improvements.
- 8.6.2 There is also a risk that uptake will be greater than expected and that funds will not last for the duration of the scheme. We have therefore agreed a spending profile with WYCA to ensure that the funds are spent over time.
- 8.6.3 We will hold regular management meetings with our delivery partners to ensure that scheme uptake is meeting our expectations.

## **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1 Leeds City Council has received external funding from the local growth fund to undertake heating and insulation improvements in the homes of residents suffering from cold related illness.
- 9.2 In order to make best use of the funding, there is a need for some of Leeds City Council's existing affordable warmth projects to be amended.

## **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1 That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the use of the £284,000 Local Growth Funding for the Warm Well Homes scheme.
- 10.2 That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the injection of, and authority to spend £280,000 of the Local Growth Funding into the Better Homes Yorkshire capital spending programme.
- 10.3 That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment of the duration of the discretionary fuel poverty fund to run until March 2019 to align it with the duration of the Warm Well Homes Scheme.
- 10.4 That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment of the eligibility criteria of the discretionary fuel poverty fund to where "A member of the household suffers from a long term cold related illness and is either in receipt of council tax benefit or has a net household income of £21,000 per annum or less (depending on disposable income)".
- 10.5 That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment of the discretionary fuel poverty fund to support in most circumstances up to £2,000 towards the cost of heating improvements.
- 10.6 That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment to the grant agreement with Groundwork Leeds to enable some existing Green Doctor capacity to be used for preliminary work as part of the Warm Well Homes scheme.
- 10.7 That the Director of Environment and Housing approves the amendment to the grant agreement with Groundwork Leeds to enable them to undertake aftercare/evaluation visits to households who have received measures under Warm Well Homes in addition to their existing home visiting targets.

## **11. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

11.1 Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Impact Assessment

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.