

## Fuel Poverty Update 2022

Date: 08/03/2022

Report of: Chief Officer Sustainable Energy and Air Quality

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### **What is this report about?**

#### **Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions**

This report provides an update to the scrutiny board on progress in reducing fuel poverty in Leeds over the last 12 months. It covers:

- Latest fuel poverty data for Leeds and England
- Progress on specific energy efficiency capital projects
- Recent funding awards
- Future funding landscape
- Building on the success of the Holbeck Group Repair project

The detailed update is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

The council's work on fuel poverty strongly aligns with the Best City aim of tackling poverty and reducing inequalities through helping residents in deprived communities save money and live in healthier, better quality homes. Making homes more energy efficient also has the effect of reducing the city's carbon footprint and supporting the local businesses who carry out the works, which reinforces the best city priorities of safe strong communities, sustainable infrastructure, housing, health and wellbeing and inclusive growth.

### **Recommendations**

The board is requested:

- a) To note the contents of the report
- b) To endorse the development of a business case for a cross tenure neighbourhood based retrofit demonstrator project, building on the success of the Holbeck Group Repair project, and scaling it up to serve a larger community.

### Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 An annual update on fuel poverty is provided to scrutiny every year, to report on progress tackling this issue, which is underpinned by the Leeds Affordable Warmth Strategy 2017-2030.

### What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards affected:**

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

- 2 The report provides an update to the board on work to tackle fuel poverty, providing the opportunity for members to discuss and scrutinise the issues it raises.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 3 No consultation has been carried out on this specific report. Consultation on the projects covered in the report will vary but before work is carried out consultation is undertaken with residents, executive and ward members, delivery partners and funders.

### What are the resource implications?

- 4 There are no resource implications to this report

### What are the legal implications?

- 5 There are no legal implications relating to this report

### What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 6 The report details several issues that threaten to undo recent progress. These include:
  - a) Recent increases to the cost of living, in particular the energy cap which from April will have almost doubled from its level 18 months ago
  - b) A fractured funding landscape that makes it difficult to fund improvements to certain housing types and tenures that are a priority for the city and to deliver cross-tenure schemes.
  - c) Increased materials and labour costs that make solid wall insulation in particular difficult to deliver within government funding parameters

Risk is monitored on a project by project basis reflecting the specifics of each scheme and requirements of external grant funding. Risk reporting is typically between the contractor and the council in the first instance and then upwards to the funder as part of each projects reporting arrangements. Significant risks will be fed into service and directorate risk registers as appropriate.

### Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth       Health and Wellbeing       Climate Emergency

- 7 The fuel poverty programme supports all three pillars.
- 8 Inclusive growth – improving the energy efficiency of homes in deprived areas reduces fuel bills for residents and increases the amount available to spend in the local economy. Projects also benefit local businesses engaged in delivering the works to homes.
- 9 The health and wellbeing pillar is supported through improved health outcomes to residents who are less likely to suffer from cold related illnesses once their home has been made warmer.
- 10 And by making homes more energy efficient less fuel is needed to heat them which reduces the city's carbon emissions reinforcing the climate emergency pillar.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

- 11 This is not a decision making report so an options appraisal is not relevant.

### **How will success be measured?**

- 12 Each project described in the report will have its own parameters by which success is defined but there are certain performance indicators that are common to most domestic energy efficiency projects of this sort. These include the amount of carbon saved as a result of the works, the number of homes treated, the improvement in EPC band or SAP score and the savings made to residents' energy bills as a result of the works.

### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 13 This is not a decision making report so there is nothing specific to implement arising from it.

## **Appendices**

- 14 Appendix One – Fuel Poverty Update 2022

## **Background papers**

- 15 None