

Decision Record – Approval to Submit External Bid to Warm Homes Fund

Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking the decision	Councillor Les Caborn Adult Social Care and Health
Date of Decision (not before: 31 January 2019)	31/01/2019

Decision Taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health approves the submission of a Grant Funding bid to the Warm Homes Fund on behalf of the County Council in connection with the Warm and Well in Warwickshire programme of work, with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) leading on a collaborative bid with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Coventry City Council and Worcestershire County Council.

Reasons for Decisions

Bids for external funding must be approved by the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Background Information

The Warm and Well in Warwickshire programme is delivered by our commissioned provider Act on Energy to enable Warwickshire residents to be safe and well during cold weather. They provide advice, information and guidance to all Warwickshire residents around fuel bills, tariff switching, and energy efficiency via a Freephone helpline. They also work with vulnerable citizens who are experiencing fuel poverty, the elderly and those with long term health conditions to look at benefit maximisation, and where eligible, provide physical measures to move people out of fuel poverty and into a warm home. There is strong evidence that shows living in a cold home can exacerbate existing health conditions, increase pressure on health and care services and lead to excess winter deaths.

Act on Energy also have experience of delivering a 'Boilers on Prescription' work stream, along with the Warm and Healthy Homes Scheme with partners in Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Solihull. This sought to evaluate the health and wellbeing benefits of providing efficient boilers to eligible residents with long term health conditions, assessing them pre and post installation. They have also been successful in accessing £1.25 million worth of Energy Company Obligation money between April and September 2018, for the provision of heating and insulation measures to vulnerable residents across Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Solihull. They are experienced with working with a wide range of partners both locally, regionally and nationally and have the knowledge to ensure that we are delivering a programme that support local and wider national policy such as the England Fuel Poverty Strategy, and the Clean Growth Strategy.

The Warm Homes Fund is a partnership between National Grid and Affordable Warmth Solutions with £150m in funding to distribute to Local Authorities, Social Landlords and Third Sector partners working to address fuel poverty. Act on Energy are currently working with Worcestershire and Solihull councils on delivering a physical interventions fund under the same Warm Homes programme but in a different category and are therefore used to working with the requirements and reporting required of the programme.

We are seeking to bid for approximately £600,000 from the fund for:

- The recruitment of 6/7 affordable warmth engagement officers who will work for Act on Energy and aim to work within developing social prescribing programmes, alongside wider social care to enhance and increase work with health, care and wider frontline staff, including general practice, care providers, care navigators, hospital discharge teams, district nurses etc.
- The role of the affordable warmth engagement officers will be to support frontline staff to recognise people experiencing fuel poverty, and to increase referrals into affordable warmth service. The engagement officers will be crucial in training staff, developing referral pathways and ensuring those pathways become embedded within the local health and care economies.

- This bid comes at a crucial time of development of Warwickshire approach to social prescribing, and in the development of integrated care systems, and the workers will be a fundamental part of that model. This is also relevant to Coventry, Worcestershire and Solihull who are continuing to develop these processes. It will be ensured that workers are appropriately trained, in order to develop the skills to signpost and refer to other services within the social prescribing network of providers.
- Increase the information and advice element to people referred who are experiencing fuel poverty, including access to funding for physical measures and debt advice and benefit maximisation.
- To ensure that once referrals are received in to the service we will provide addition staffing support for specialist energy advice and support for income maximisation to ensure that the additional work volumes into the Warm and Well service are managed and households supported.
- The project will include a emergency budget that will provide funding to enable hospital discharge for example emergency heating to allow a patient to return to a warm home this would be followed up with longer term solutions.

Financial Implications

There are no inherent financial implications for the County Council in terms of submitting the bids other than the officer cost of working up and submitting the bid, and also the requirement to receive the funding, should we be successful. This would then be paid to Act on Energy on a quarterly basis. The cost of activity will be met from within existing resources, and any match funding will come from within already approved existing budgets.

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Head of Service	John Linnane
Strategic Director	Nigel Minns
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Les Caborn

Checklist

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or Exempt? (State the category of exempt information)	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of Reports considered

Link to published proposed decision report:

<https://democratic.warwickshire.gov.uk/cm5/Calendarofmeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/4622/Committee/589/Default.aspx>

List of Background Papers

Bid documentation: <https://www.affordablewarmthsolutions.org.uk/warm-homes-fund/overview>.

Contract WCC will need to sign should the bid be successful:

<https://www.affordablewarmthsolutions.org.uk/warm-homes-fund/contract-documentation>

Members and officers consulted or informed – please include any comments

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Les Caborn
 Corporate Board
 Legal – Jane Pollard
 Finance – Virginia Rennie
 Equality – Keira Rounsley
 Democratic Services – Paul Williams

