

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

2 NOVEMBER 2021

Report Title	GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE WARM & WELL PARTNERSHIP RENEWAL
Purpose of Report	To update Members on the Gloucestershire & South Gloucestershire Warm & Well Scheme and to recommend renewal of the partnership for a further five years.
Decision(s)	<p>The Committee RESOLVES to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Continue to provide advice and support to those in fuel poverty in the district by renewing the Council's membership of the Warm & Well Partnership for up to a further five years; andb. To provide Core funding to support the partnership of £20,000 per annum from the Better Care Fund Disabled Facilities Grant wider social care budget; andc. To approve the extension of the Warm & Well delivery contract for a further two years; andd. Approve as the lead authority the submission and acceptance of the bid for £5.2 million to the Sustainable Warmth Competition for the energy efficiency improvements to the homes of those in fuel poverty across Gloucestershire & South Gloucestershire under the Warm & Well Scheme; ande. To authorise the Chief Executive to undertake all action as necessary to ensure the delivery of the Sustainable Warmth project, including, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor, the entering into of any legal arrangements or other documentationf. If successful, recommend to council the addition of the Sustainable Warmth Bid to Stroud District Council's capital programme.
Consultation and Feedback	Consultation has taken place with all Gloucestershire District Councils, South Gloucestershire Council and Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.
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Options	Not to renew membership of the Warm & Well Partnership which would mean; either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer providing support and advice to those in fuel poverty, at a time when household income is diminishing, fuel prices are rising and we are facing a climate challenge, or • Establishing an alternative system of support for those in fuel poverty, this is likely to be resource intensive and it is unlikely that a single district is going to be able to achieve as much as the partnership has been able to achieve especially when bidding for external funding. 			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	None			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	Yes	No	Yes

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire have benefitted in having a successful locally managed and controlled, non-profit delivery partnership for energy advice and support for home energy improvements known as Warm and Well since 2001
- 1.2 SDC are the lead partner in the partnership between the six Gloucestershire district councils and South Gloucestershire Council which has been delivered since 2001 by local sustainable energy agency, Severn Wye, a registered charity. Whilst not formal partners the scheme works closely with Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and Gloucestershire County Council.
- 1.3 The Warm and Well Scheme promotes the health benefits of energy efficiency in the home, and delivers a programme of energy efficiency improvements which offers the benefits of personalised support from a dedicated local team, with the flexibility to offer tailored support for vulnerable households.
- 1.4 The Warm & Well Scheme annual reports can be viewed here www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/energy-efficiency/affordable-warmth-strategy
- 1.5 Stroud District Council contributes £20,000 per annum towards the core costs of the scheme which enables advice and support to be offered to households. This funding currently comes from the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation received from the Better Care Fund.
- 1.6 During the last four years the Warm & Well partnership has offered advice and support to 13,618 households (1,882 in Stroud District) and enabled the installation of 3,015 energy efficiency measures (476 in Stroud District).
- 1.7 The partnership has brought in a total £3.8 million in funding for the measures from Energy Company Obligations (ECO), Public Health and Better Care Fund.

- 1.8** In December 2017 a successful bid was made to the National Grid Warm Homes Fund for £5 million for the installation of first time heating systems to 1200 homes.
- 1.9** In September 2020 a successful bid was made to the Government Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Fund (LADS) phase 1A for £1 million to externally insulate 100 park homes and provide 50 air source heat pumps.
- 1.10** In December 2020 a further successful bid was submitted to LADS phase 1B for a further £1 million to insulate a further 100 park homes.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** For every £1 invested by the local authorities in the core Warm & Well Scheme in 2020/21 residents benefited from support and funding worth £8.76.
- 2.2** The current partnership agreement between the councils will end on 31st March 2022.
- 2.3** If the councils are to continue to work together to support those in fuel poverty through the successful Warm & Well Scheme, then a new formal partnership agreement will need to be entered into. It is the existence of a successful partnership that has enabled the successful bids to have been made.
- 2.4** A further funding opportunity became available in August 2021 when Central Government opened up the Sustainable Warmth Competition to bids. Bids had to be submitted before the end of August with the outcome expected mid October 2021.
- 2.5** As the lead partner for the Warm & Well Partnership SDC submitted a bid for £5,247,985 to install 675 measures including insulation and heating including renewables. The bidding timetable did not enable the matter to be brought before Committee for a decision before submitting and accepting. The project delivery timetable is from January 2022 until March 2023.
- 2.6** If a new partnership is not agreed, then we will have to withdraw from the Sustainable Warmth Competition.
- 2.7** The current delivery contract undertaken by Severn Wye Energy Agency will also end on the 31st March 2022. In order to be able to effectively deliver the Sustainable Warmth programme without interruption the current contract will need to be extended for a further 2 years.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1** That at a time of rising fuel prices and increasing pressure on household income, in order to continue to effectively support those in the district living in fuel poverty, the appropriate action for the Council to take is to renew its membership and lead role of the Warm & Well Partnership for up to a further five years.
- 3.2** That a contribution of £20,000 per annum to support the core activities of the scheme be provided from the Better Care Fund Disabled Facilities Grant wider social care budget.

- 3.3 That as the lead partner, the Council extends the current Warm & Well delivery contract with Severn Wye Energy Agency for a further 2 years.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. The £20,000 per annum core funding to support the Warm and Well partnership being funded from the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation received from the Better Care Fund (via Gloucestershire County Council).

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4.2 Legal Implications

The Council has a contract with Severn Wye Energy Agency expires on 31 March 2022. Officers have been given legal advice as to how the contract can be lawfully extended for a further two years.

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4.3 Equality Implications

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

4.4 Environmental Implications

The Warm & Well Scheme has actively encouraged the installation of renewable technologies through the provision of bespoke energy advice and surveys and the development of the installer network. The use of such technologies is particularly important not only in the reduction of carbon but in rural areas they are often the most cost effective means of achieving affordable warmth.

In the first four years of the current Warm & Well delivery cycle an average of 687 tonnes of Co₂ has been saved per annum.