

Report to:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Relevant Officer:	Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health, Blackpool Council
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Eddie Collett, Cabinet Member for Public Health
Date of Meeting :	28 th January 2015

DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE WARMTH INITIATIVES ACROSS BLACKPOOL AND THE WIDER LANCASHIRE FOOTPRINT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To provide information on the current delivery of Affordable Warmth initiatives across Lancashire and to provide an overview of the planned changes that are currently in development. The changes aim to maximise the opportunities available to Blackpool and the other Lancashire authorities.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To note the report and discuss the opportunities arising from the changes.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 A study jointly funded by the Lancashire Directors of Public Health, was commissioned to investigate the most effective way to both access national grants and maximise delivery for Affordable Warmth initiatives across Lancashire.

The report recommended that the county wide Local Authorities (district, upper tier and unitary) could maximise their opportunities by developing an alternative model that could deliver across the whole county, in a more equitable and efficient manner, than each individual authority is able to achieve on its own.

This development process has the support of the Lancashire Chief Executives and Chief Financial Officers and is being led by Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health for Blackpool.

- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? Yes

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? No

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priorities are

- Tackle child poverty, raise aspirations and improve educational achievement
- Safeguard and protect the most vulnerable
- Improve health and well-being especially for the most disadvantaged
- Attract sustainable investment and create quality jobs
- Improve housing standards and the environment we live in by using housing investment to create stable communities

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The population of Blackpool experiences on average poorer health and lower life expectancy than the majority of the UK. Certain health conditions are exacerbated by the cold and environmental factors including cold damp housing, and these contribute to excess winter deaths and high levels of unscheduled hospital admissions. There is also evidence to suggest that living in a cold home can result in poor mental health as well as lower educational attainment.

5.2 Blackpool has one of the highest levels of fuel poverty in England and a greater percentage of hard to treat houses than other areas. Hard to treat houses are those without a cavity wall or with a roof lift into the attic and therefore require expensive solid wall insulation.

5.3 Against this background the NHS and Local Authority have consistently provided financial support to initiatives aimed at improving the housing conditions of the most vulnerable, particularly those at risk of hospital admission or to facilitate safe hospital discharge. In particular, to make thermal improvements and heating for properties that otherwise would not be able to have the measures installed because of the funding from the energy companies, not covering the cost of the expensive measures or the inability of the vulnerable householder to access the complex grant funding, that is available.

- 5.4 Initiatives have included grants towards measures in individual homes, for example where a national grant for a heating system could not be accessed because of lead pipes. Also strategic initiatives, where whole streets of hard to treat properties have been organised into an offer to an energy company, to provide expensive solid wall insulation to the whole area, with a secondary outcome of improving the appearance of the street.
- 5.5 The increasingly volatile nature of the Energy Efficiency market has resulted in delivery being driven by commercial considerations rather than the need to ensure that the homes of the most vulnerable are as warm and energy efficient as possible, so that the occupants avoid the health risks associated with living in a cold home.
- 5.6 The Lancashire authorities, including Blackpool, have historically worked informally together to deliver measures across the county, however the increasing complexity and commercial nature of the market meant that a more formal arrangement needed to be developed in order that Blackpool can benefit fully from the current and future Central Government schemes.
- 5.7 Energy companies currently control the limited funding streams available for thermal improvements and Blackpool on its own cannot compete with areas such as Greater Manchester and Birmingham to attract those funds.
- 5.8 There are considerable potential employment opportunities from ensuring that energy efficiency measures are delivered by companies recruiting people from the Fylde Coast and Lancashire. Making the most of the national grants available and bringing control of the implementation of those grants to Lancashire should make it possible to obtain additional social value from the work. So that local people benefit from both having a warmer home, that's affordable to heat and also employment.
- 5.9 The report commissioned by the Directors of Public Health recommended a formal structure be established between the Local Authorities. A number of options were explored and these are currently being discussed by the Chief Financial Officers to determine the best fit for Lancashire.
- 5.10 A Steering Group will be established to oversee the implementation of the new model.
- 5.11 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.12 List of Appendices:

None

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 Still to be determined depending on the model chosen.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 Still to be determined depending on the model chosen.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 An equitable and robust delivery model will reduce health inequalities of marginalised groups, the elderly and people with a disability.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 A full financial analysis and assessment is being carried out by the Chief Financial Officers across Lancashire.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Still to be determined depending on the model chosen.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 The new delivery model will support local business and employment in the delivery of Energy Efficiency measures

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Consultation undertaken as part of the commissioned report