

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	22 October 2019
Subject:	Warm and Well Scheme Update
Report of:	Head of Community Services
Corporate Lead:	Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Housing
Number of Appendices:	1

Executive Summary:

Tewkesbury Borough Council is committed to achieving affordable warmth and tackling fuel poverty. To achieve these aims the Council has formed partnerships with the other Councils within the county and with South Gloucestershire Council to deliver the “Warm and Well Scheme”. The scheme is available to eligible households and is targeted at vulnerable people allowing them to live affordably and in comfort in their own homes.

The report is a review of how the scheme performed for the period 2018/19. During this period the scheme achieved the following:

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the achievements made to date through the Warm and Well Scheme.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To provide an update to Members on the performance of the Warm and Well Scheme for 2018/19 illustrating the significant benefits to both vulnerable households and the environment from a relatively modest investment of £20,000.

Resource Implications:

Staff and Member time. Resource implications will be met from existing budget allocations and, where they cannot, will be subject to a growth bid within the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and a separate report to Members.

Legal Implications:

The Warm and Well Scheme is part of the Council’s commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of local people under Tewkesbury Borough Council’s Housing Strategy 2017-21. This report provides an update in relation to the scheme.

Risk Management Implications:

There are no risks identified arising from this report.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Quarterly performance meetings are held with Severn Wye Energy Agency, partner authorities and the Clinical Commissioning Group. A quarterly report is produced and progressed assessed against the specified objectives.

Environmental Implications:

There are positive environmental implications in the delivery of the scheme e.g. improving the energy efficiency in the existing housing stock across the borough reducing carbon emissions

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Council is committed to achieving affordable warmth and tackling fuel poverty across the Borough. The effect of this is to reduce winter deaths and allow people to live independently in their properties for longer. This has not only been proven to result in overall better health outcomes but it also reduces social care costs.
- 1.2** In order to achieve the affordable warmth and fuel poverty objectives, since 2001 the Council has been working in partnership with the other Gloucestershire Councils, South Gloucestershire Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group. This partnership allows for more efficient use of resources due to economies of scale, shared and consistent messaging and shared knowledge and expertise.
- 1.3** The Warm and Well Scheme is currently delivered on behalf of the Councils by Severn Wye Energy Agency which is a not for profit, charity that provides expert advice on energy efficiency and available funding streams.
- 1.4** Each Council contributes £20,000 annually, to pay for the services provided by Severn Wye Energy Agency as follows:
- Raises public awareness regarding fuel poverty and energy efficiency.
 - Provides specific and appropriate advice by telephone, referrals from partner organisations and engagement at events.
 - Delivers home visits to vulnerable customers that include an energy survey and bespoke advice report.
 - Makes referrals into grant and discount schemes.
 - Liaises with installers to negotiate best value.
 - Gathers statistics and produces quarterly performance reports.
- 1.5** There are a number of funding sources that can be accessed in order to assist with home insulation, efficient heating systems and efficient lighting. Energy companies have an obligation referred to as the Energy Company Obligation which they discharge in part through the provision of funding for energy efficient solutions. The eligibility for access to such funds and what funds are available can vary from year to year. Severn Wye Energy Agency as an expert in this field continually monitors this, in order that any referrals to them are accurately considered and appropriate funding is accessed by eligible applicants.
- 1.6** As stated above a key driver of the Warm and Well Scheme is to ensure better health outcomes and reduce social care costs. As such, the Clinical Commissioning Group is also a source of public health funding.

- 1.7** Also, eligibility to the scheme can vary and is dependent upon national agreements and targets. In general, however, eligibility is determined by the following criteria:
- Low income, High Costs but not in receipt of benefits.
 - Low income, High Costs and Vulnerability to Cold.
 - Living in areas of high deprivation, but not in receipt of benefits.
 - Solid Wall insulation (SWI) 'in-fill'.
- 1.8** All parties that are part of the scheme meet quarterly to review the quarterly performance reports.
- 2.0 2018/19 ACHIEVEMENTS**
- 2.1** A detailed breakdown of the targets and achievements for 2018/19 is set out in the Q4 report attached as Appendix 1. The main achievements are highlighted below.
- 2.2** A total of 3,543 enquiries were received, of these 310 were from households within Tewkesbury Borough. This represents approximately 10% of the overall number of enquiries received. Taking into account the relative number of households across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, and the number of households within Tewkesbury, this is representative. Key to success of the scheme is ensuring that communities are aware of its existence as this will generate enquiries. In this regard every opportunity is taken to promote the scheme. This involves targeted publicity campaigns and ensuring that other Council services and partner organisations that are likely to come into contact with vulnerable people are aware of the scheme and know how to signpost to it.
- 2.3** Advice was given to a total of 2,548 households, of this 209 were to households within Tewkesbury. This again is representative of the number of households within the borough. The annual target for 2018/19 was 2,530, therefore, this target is being met. It is also a significant increase from 1,646 households given advice in 2017/18 indicating that the routes for referral are more efficient and there is a growing awareness of the scheme.
- 2.4** A total of 337 home visits were carried out, with 26 of these being within Tewkesbury Borough. The number of visits within Tewkesbury Borough is, statistically, slightly lower than expected; however, with relatively low numbers it would only take a few more visits to reach the expected number. The annual target for home visits is 255 so as a whole the scheme is performing significantly beyond the target. There does not appear to be an obvious reason for the slightly lower number of visits in Tewkesbury Borough, it may simply be a reflection of the type of enquiries that were received.
- 2.5** A total of 638 energy efficiency measures were installed across 556 properties of which 114 measures were installed to 64 properties within the borough. The target number of installed measures was 586 indicating that the scheme is delivering to and beyond that target. The number of measures installed, specifically in the borough, as a proportion of the overall total is as expected. The number of measures is significantly up from the 478 installed in 2018/19.
- 2.6** A total of 304 training places were delivered over 28 sessions. Due to trainer availability there were no training sessions in Tewkesbury Borough in 2018/19. It is the intended to run specific training sessions for both staff and Members in 2019/20. The training session lasts two hours and suitable dates are currently being explored. Further information will be provided once dates have been confirmed.

- 2.7** There have been a total of 243 referrals to other agencies; the target for this is 337, indicating there is a significant shortfall in the number of referrals. Analysis of the data and procedures does not indicate that there are any obvious barriers to making referrals. Referrals can only be made with the explicit permission of the individual. Consideration has been given to the initial engagement with the individual in order to determine how to establish whether further referral is required and, where it is, how best to gain sufficient trust in order to facilitate a referral. This is ongoing work and conversations about what information is exchanged is kept under review.
- 2.8** A total of 96 marketing events have taken place to promote the scheme across the county and South Gloucestershire. A number of these events have been common across all parties, using consistent messaging. The target number of marketing events was 94 so the scheme is delivering to target.
- 2.9** As a whole, the scheme has led to an overall annual carbon saving of 265 tonnes of CO₂ which equates to an approximate lifetime carbon saving of 10600 tonnes.
- 2.10** Through the utilisation of the expertise of the Severn Wye Energy Agency, a total of £555,670 of Energy Company Obligation funding has been secured, with a further £141,000 being provided by the Clinical Commissioning Group. This represents a significant leverage of the £20,000 contribution from the Warm and Well scheme members.
- 2.11** The Council received additional Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding of £141,363 in December 2018. The restrictions on use of this money were broader than the main DFG funding. Park Homes, due to their construction, are not currently covered by the Warm and Well Scheme; however, they do house a disproportionate number of vulnerable residents. This additional funding was directed to a project tackling fuel poverty in Park Homes. The project is currently being carried out in partnership with Severn Wye and will be reported on once it has been completed at the end of this financial year.

3.0 SAFEGUARDING

- 3.1** As stated above the scheme is primarily directed at vulnerable adults, many of whom are elderly. Reports have been received that there are companies masquerading as the Warm and Well Scheme, even using similar graphics and marketing messages and claiming to represent the Council. Members should be aware that the Council works only with the Severn Wye Energy Agency. Severn Wye use particular contractors and marketing agents. Details of these are available from either Severn Wye directly or Environmental Health. Where it is intended to carry out a specific marketing campaign then the relevant Members will be informed and information will be available on the Council's website.
- 3.2** One of the barriers to the scheme, given the demographics and vulnerability of those eligible, is the belief by those who are eligible that a scheme exists where a replacement central heating system is actually free. The paradox here being that those masquerading as the Warm and Well Scheme, claiming to offer free energy efficient measures, may well have hidden costs and are seeking to exploit the scheme to take advantage of those most vulnerable. Should Members become aware of any such concerns of offers that appear to be too good to be true, then please refer to Environmental Health for clarification.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1** None arising out of this report

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 5.1** The Housing Strategy 2017-21

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 None arising out of this report

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 None arising out of this report

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 This Warm and Well Scheme while not only delivering better health outcomes also has an impact upon reducing carbon emissions.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 None arising out of this report.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None arising out of this report

Background Papers: Housing Strategy 2017-2021

Contact Officer: Environmental Health Manager
01684 272117 gordon.buchanan@tewkesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Warm and Well Scheme 2018/19 Quarter 4 Report