

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 20 February 2024

Decision No: (CAB 23/24 43682)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Cabinet Member for Adults and Health
SUBJECT:	Southampton Healthy Homes - procurement of a new contract for providing an affordable warmth programme 2024-2029
AUTHOR:	Steven Hayes-Arter

THE DECISION

- (i) To approve the procurement of an affordable warmth service contract (Southampton Healthy Homes) to start in April 2024 until April 2027 or as soon thereafter.
- (ii) To delegate to the Executive Director for Place to select the most appropriate tender that represents Best Value and to enter into appropriate contractual arrangements
- (iii) To approve the addition and spend of £2.20M to the Warm Homes project in the Wellbeing & Housing capital programme.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Southampton City Council has worked very successfully in partnership with an external provider for over ten years to provide an affordable warmth programme for the city's residents. The residents of Southampton are the main beneficiaries of this project as it is there to help them with advice, support and guidance on the following; home energy efficiency, heating advice & support (including warm home discounts and winter fuel payments), fuel & water bills (including issues and disputes), damp and mould, energy usage, vulnerable consumer support, energy efficiency standards and private rental rights and responsibilities and benefits, budgeting and debt (via referrals from Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), welfare rights). Through this the Council is supporting residents to keep their homes safe and warm, working on reducing the impact of fuel poverty on the city's residents, reducing the number of households in the city who are in or at risk of fuel poverty, reducing the carbon footprint of the residential housing market and helping the city's residents through this current cost of living crisis.

Capital funding has been identified and approved in principle to cover the costs of the programme until at least 2027. In previous years much of the funding has been financed through external grant funding so it is expected that further additional funding will also be made available from Central Government, BEIS and the energy

sector to meet national net zero targets, to continue this onto further years.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To cease the affordable warmth programme on the expiry of the current contract on March 31st 2024. If it did so Southampton City Council would not be actively working to reduce the number of its residents in or at risk of fuel poverty and not helping to reduce the carbon footprint of the private housing stock. Southampton City Council would also not be working towards the aims of the Fuel Poverty Action Plan as published in its Housing Strategy 2016-2025.

For Southampton City Council to run an affordable warmth programme ‘in-house’, rather than utilise a contracted partner. Whilst costs would be similar to ‘contracting out’ there are currently no resources or expertise available in house to run a programme, so extensive investment in resources and training would be required. This would take time to set up and in current climate recruitment may be very difficult. This would undoubtedly lead to a slow down and probable delay in advice, guidance and any practical measures being offered to Southampton’s residents. Page 6 It would also likely lead to an increase in households in fuel poverty and failure to meet the Fuel Poverty Action Plan and Housing Strategy 2016-2025 aims.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 20th February 2024

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Claire Heather

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*