



Subject:	Affordable Warmth Scheme
Date:	10 August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services
Contact Officer:	Ian Harper, Building Control Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	Belfast City Council has been engaged in a partnership with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Scheme (AWS) since 2014.
1.2	The scheme aims to address fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households in the city by targeting those households that meet certain criteria, as identified by Ulster University to provide home improvement measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation, replacement boilers and new double glazed windows.
1.3	The purpose of this report is to bring to members a request from DfC to sign the interim Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2021-2022.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to the request from DfC to sign the interim 2021-2022 SLA provided and 2. Note the ongoing review which will be used in drafting the SLA for the next financial year.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues & current position</u>
3.1	An update report was provided to Members in January where it was agreed that the 2020-2021 SLA would be signed, subject to of areas of concern to BCC being raised with DfC. Members also had an update from David Polley, Director Housing Supply Policy, in May.
3.2	DfC have worked with Councils to provide an interim SLA for 2021-2022 (Appendix A), while a review into the main issues raised is being completed as outlined in the proposed SLA:
3.3	“The Department has agreed to work with Councils to review a number of issues raised by Councils. To inform the process going forward DfC has commissioned Business Consultancy Services (BCS) to undertake an evaluation of the current targeted approach of the Affordable Warmth Scheme and to examine and consider the appropriateness of the current funding model. Councils will participate in that study and the outcome of the BCS report will inform a new SLA for 2022/23 onwards.”
3.4	“The purpose of this Service Level Agreement (SLA) is to set out the interim arrangement between the Department and Councils pending the BCS report and further consideration of the way forward in the development of a future SLA. It sets out the relationship between Councils and DfC, the duties and responsibilities on each and the outworkings of delivering the Affordable Warmth Scheme.”
3.5	BCC officers continue to engage at the senior managers meetings, attended by councils, DfC and NIHE officials. They also continue to engage directly with BCS to provide feedback and information for the review being carried out.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>

3.6	<p>AWS continues to operate the payment per referral model, pending the ongoing review. The referral rate is set at 360 for the year, which will cover the costs of the direct staff employed to work on the scheme.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.7	<p>There are no equality, good relations or rural needs issues.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Affordable Warmth Scheme - Service Level Agreement 2021-2022