

Title of Report:	DfC Response to Request for Reinstatement of Affordable Warmth Scheme Funding
Committee Report Submitted To:	Environmental Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	8th November 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Climate Change and our Environment
Outcome	Delivery of Affordable Warmth Scheme
Lead Officer	Head of Health & Built Environment

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	NIL (Funded by DfC)
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	21656
Staffing Costs	NIL (Funded by DfC)

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the response from the Department for Communities (DfC) to a letter sent by Council expressing concern regarding the reduction in funding for the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Further to committee report ES220510 and CM220607 in relation to correspondence from DfC on the Affordable Warmth Scheme budget for 2022-23 it was agreed that Council would write to DfC to express concern about the reduction in funding and request that funding be restored to allow Council referrals to the scheme to be reinstated to 30 per month.
- 2.2 A copy of the letter sent to DfC is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.3 A copy of DfC's response is attached as Appendix 2. DfC advise that the monthly referral rates cannot be changed but will be reviewed on a quarterly basis and if there is an opportunity to increase the referral rates Council will be notified.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Environmental Services Committee note the above.



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

Our Ref: ES/230/SMcA/smcl

26 September 2022

Ms Donna Knowles
Head of Affordable Warmth & Energy Branch
Affordable Warmth & Energy branch
Level 3
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Dear Ms Knowles

Re: Affordable Warmth Scheme

I refer to your letter of 6th April 2022 to Council Senior Officials regarding the Affordable Warmth Scheme budget for 2022-23 and the reduction in referrals Council can submit from June 2022 onwards.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council wishes to express its concern regarding this reduction in scheme referrals given the ongoing cost of living crisis and soaring energy costs.

Delivery of the Affordable Warmth Scheme is more important now than ever and for the number of referrals Council staff can make to be reduced to just 20 per month, at a time when need is greater than ever, will be at great detriment to those most in need within our communities.

It is acknowledged that the Department had been unable to set a budget for 22-23 and the current funding was provided via contingency arrangements however the level of funding available to Departments under said contingency measures has recently been increased.

Council would therefore respectfully request that the funding for the Affordable Warmth Scheme be restored allowing Council referrals to the Scheme to be reinstated to 30 per month.

Executive Departments will be fully aware of the ongoing cost of living crisis and Council requests that priority for available funding be given to the Affordable Warmth Scheme as it is a practical measure to mitigate against the unprecedented rise in fuel and energy bills.

Continued delivery of the scheme at previous levels is of vital importance to alleviate the very real hardship caused by fuel poverty.

I trust you will give Council's request due consideration.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

David H Jackson

David Jackson
Chief Executive



From: Oliver McHugh
Affordable Warmth and Energy

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Date: 20 October 2022

David Jackson
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Civic Headquarters
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
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BT52 1EY

Via email: info@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Dear David

AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME FUNDING

As you are aware in the absence of an Executive, it is not possible to set a budget for 2022/2023. However, legislative cover provides for contingency arrangements to allow spend to be incurred in the year ahead. In this context, the Finance Minister has proposed a contingency planning envelope to enable public services to be maintained.

We were advised that a reasonable planning assumption for the Affordable Warmth Scheme is for a capital budget of £16 million for 2022/2023. This was the full allocation and additional funding would require approval from Department of Finance and Minister.

Unfortunately, the monthly referral rates cannot be changed and have been calculated to provide the maximum spend against the budget. The referral rates are dependent on the average spend per home and the available budget. They will be reviewed on a quarterly basis and if there is an opportunity to increase the referral rates in year the Department will notify Councils with 2 months' notice as soon as possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your continued support in the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

Yours sincerely,



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

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Department for
Communities

Oliver McHugh
Affordable Warmth and Energy Branch