

AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME – UPDATE	6th March 2018
TO: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	
FOR DECISION	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Continued delivery of the Affordable Warmth Scheme
Lead Officer	Head of Health & Built Environment
Cost: (If applicable)	Funded by DfC

Background

Members will be aware from previous updates that the Affordable Warmth Scheme is a targeted scheme whereby a host of addresses were given to Council from a research team within Ulster University as the most likely areas suffering from extreme fuel poverty. On that basis, Council has undertaken numerous assessments with interested persons from these addresses and have been able to send these to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for a technical inspection and grant approval.

The Department of Communities (DfC) have in recent months asked the Ulster University research team to undertake additional research and provide each Council within Northern Ireland additional targeted areas. Ulster University have contacted Council with a breakdown of how these addresses have been selected. Ulster University have kindly advised that each area has been scored on the following basis:

- the extent to which households were in fuel poverty (**prevalence**);
- how severe the level of fuel poverty was in that Small Area (**severity**);
- how many fuel poor households in the Small Area were likely to fit the **eligibility** criteria which were mandatory for entry into the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

In this way, an eligibility score was awarded to each area, with the least eligible areas having the lowest score, and the most eligible having the highest score. Through applying this methodology, areas with a high proportion of fuel poor households, many of which were likely to be in severe fuel poverty, and many of which are likely to fit the Affordable Warmth Scheme criteria emerged. The areas previously included within

Council's original address list were subsequently removed as these properties are likely to have been contacted at least once.

From these addresses 70 small areas with a total number of 8,096 domestic properties have been isolated as they have the highest eligibility score. Ulster University have asked Council to select 50 of these areas with the view that 5,000 new addresses will be passed on to Council from DfC.

Further, DfC is currently not in a position to confirm the funding to be allocated for this service in 2018-2019 nor the number of referrals to be made. Consequently continued delivery beyond 31st March would place Council at risk. Both the Department and NIHE (the other service delivery partner) are planning for the incoming year on the basis of funding being released.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the 50 areas with the highest eligibility scores as determined by the University of Ulster research are selected as these are the households most likely in need of assistance from the next phase of the scheme.

It is further recommended that Council accept this risk for the period 1st April to 30th June to the value £18,500.00 based on the previous year's level of funding.