

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Council to accept the Warm Homes: Local Grant (WH:LG) capital funding of approx. £2,485,440 via the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Shropshire Council as the lead Local Authority and Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 project installation contracts to Evolve Home Energy Solutions Services, PHS Home Solutions Ltd and Therm-Eco.
Date of decision:	April 17 th , 2025
Decision maker:	Roger Allonby – Service Director for Growth – Economy & Environment
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>The authority is for the specified officer to take this decision as per the following cabinet member's decision notice dated 17 April 2025:</p> <p>Decision - Warm Homes: Local Grant - Herefordshire Council</p>
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy has been briefed and is supportive of the proposal. Political group consultation has taken place, and no further comments were received.
Decision made:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval is given for the acceptance and expenditure of the full allocation Warm Homes: Local Grant awarded to Herefordshire of approx. £2,485,440 capital and £372,816 revenue funding and any additional funding if granted 2025/26; • The Council signs a back-to-back Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils with Shropshire signing the main MoU as the Consortium lead; and • The Service Director for Growth be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to implement recommendation a) • For variation of the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 project installation contracts to Evolve Home Energy Solutions Services, PHS Home Solutions Ltd and Therm-Eco for the provision of Whole House Retrofit services to domestic properties for a period of three years on a referral basis across Herefordshire. • To delegate authority to the Senior Project Manager to spend and manage the allocated budget within the parameters of the grant scheme.
Reasons for decision:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel poverty remains a significant issue in Herefordshire, with an estimated 19,688 households thought to suffer from fuel poverty across the county which amounts to 19.2% of all households in the County and is higher than the national average of 13.1%. This has increased from just under 17% before energy costs rose significantly in 2021.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel poverty levels in the county are a result of a combination of low incomes, above average numbers of older, 'hard to treat' properties and poor coverage of the mains gas network, due to rurality. A household is said to be in fuel poverty when they're unable to keep adequately warm at a reasonable cost, given their income. Many homes in the county therefore rely on expensive heating fuel systems and as a result have poor energy efficiency ratings and high relative greenhouse gas emissions. There are an estimated 58,000 properties Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rated D to G (Building Research Establishment 2019) in Herefordshire. The WH:LG scheme aims to raise the energy efficiency of low-income and low EPC rated homes including those living in the worst quality homes, delivering progress towards reducing fuel poverty, the phasing out of high carbon fossil fuel heating and the UK's commitment to achieve net zero by 2050. The fund also aims to support the green recovery in response to the economic impacts of Covid-19 and to help take low-income families out of fuel poverty. The scheme will target support to 200 households at an average of £12,400 per home across the project. Any work carried out is fully funded with no resident contribution required. Future servicing of measures will be the responsibility of the resident This will help support the achievement of the council's strategic objectives within the Herefordshire Council Plan 2024 – 2028 and will make progress towards the Council's 2030 net zero carbon ambition for the county.
Equality Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the potential impact of this project being low, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. The public sector equality duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this project, and it has been found to have low impact for equality.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The conditions of funding and memorandum of understanding will be required to be adhered to. Contracts must be procured in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting WH:LG Funding and project implementation will help to mitigate against fuel poverty in Herefordshire as well as reducing household carbon emissions. This could have a wide variety of benefits to householders such as reduced fuel bills, warmer and healthier homes as well as showing leadership from both Herefordshire and partner councils in this area and could lead to further opportunities to leverage funding. The lessons learned from previous Green Home Grant (GHG) schemes has been implemented to ensure we maximise opportunities, which includes maintaining a strong relationship with our Contractors, as well as building a strong pipeline, which has been pivotal to the success of the previous scheme (HUG2).
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>Not to accept or part accept the grant funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is not recommended as this would make it difficult for Herefordshire fuel poor households to receive support at the levels stated within the bid, as other funding streams alone are likely to result in significant funding shortfalls for fuel poor households. This will result in a risk of not achieving the council's strategic objectives within the Herefordshire Council Plan 2024 – 2028 and will not make progress towards the Council's 2030 net zero carbon ambition for the county.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	N/A

Signed..... Date: 16 June 25

Roger Allonby - Service Director for Growth – Economy & Environment