

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

PROJECT MANDATE

Tackling Fuel Poverty

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Responsible Directorate: Chief Executive's Office

1. Project Overview

The project aims to reduce the cost of gas and electricity to Chorley residents through partnering with other local authorities and a collective switching company to purchase fuel at a reduced price.

2. Project Background

Household budgets are increasingly under pressure, and this continues to be impacted by the high and increasing cost of gas and electricity.

Many households are expected to cut back on heating their homes due to worries over cost, and this in particular could pose serious risks to the health of older people.

To address these issues the Council has already put in place a number of initiatives such as warm homes health people project which aimed to help vulnerable older people both to stay warm in their homes and to access health services. This included carrying out simple draught exclusion work, heating system maintenance and service and, if required, local gritting service for private paths, provision of an integrated transport service which ensures vulnerable people are able to keep medical appointments and 'fuel poverty' checks to vulnerable older people, to provide advice on energy suppliers, undertake benefit checks and look at their personal finances.

The Council also signpost residents to grants to provide assistance for cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, and draft proofing etc.

3. Corporate Priorities

The project support the Council's strategic objectives to be an ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area, and clean safe and healthy communities.

4. Objectives

The main objectives of this project are to:

- Work in partnership with other Council's in the region in order to achieve the best prices fuel prices for our residents; and
- Generate income through commission that will be paid to the Council in relation to each switch, which can be fed back into addressing fuel poverty in the borough, for example through supporting the budgets of existing initiatives or the creation of new initiatives such as a boiler modernisation programme which would also support the Council's green agenda

5. Scope

The scope of the project includes:

- further investigation of collective switching to understand how it can be effectively implemented in Chorley;
- a review of the approaches taken by other Councils;

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- agreement of a partnership deal;
- marketing and promotion of the scheme;
- implementation of the scheme for the first 12 months, after which, if successful it would become business as usual; and
- a review of the scheme following the first 12 months.

Excluded from the scope of this project is the implementation of any additional scheme to tackle fuel poverty that could be funded or part funded from the income generated by this project.

6. Constraints

The project will be carried out over a 12 month period starting 1 October 2012

7. Impact on other Directorates/Projects

Promotion and marketing of the project will require support from Policy and Communications. The project should also link into other similar pieces of work currently being undertaken in Strategic Housing and Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods, to ensure everyone has a clear overview of all the ways in which fuel poverty is being addressed.