

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **WEDNESDAY, 9 JULY 2014**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT)**

**SUBJECT:** **ENERGY SWITCHING SCHEME UPDATE**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 Following earlier requests to advise Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on opportunities relating to energy switching and energy advice, colleagues attended a Welsh Government organised event focussed on various models of collective energy switching. This report contains updated information on the resulting Welsh Government's sponsored collective switching scheme called Cyd Cymru.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 In March 2013 the Director of Environment brought a report on Energy Switching schemes to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A further updated report was also submitted the following September.

2.02 Following funding by the Department for Energy and Climate Change of several fuel switching projects in England, the Welsh Government agreed to fund Cardiff City and Vale of Glamorgan Councils to develop a Welsh Fuel Switching scheme which became known as Cyd Cymru.

2.03 Cyd Cymru have now completed two fuel switches and the processes and procedures appear to have worked well, and without incident.

2.04 Flintshire County Council were invited to sit on the Cyd Cymru project board and has therefore had input on how the scheme has developed. Unfortunately, there has been a delay since the last Fuel Switch in February, caused by uncertainty surrounding future funding, however it has been now confirmed that funding is available and the scheme will continue for the foreseeable future.

2.05 The two previous switches were managed by the Energy Savings Trust, but it is presently uncertain whether they will continue in this role for future switches.

### **3.0 CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.01 The first Cyd Cymru switch closed on the 12th January 2014 and collected 5373 registrations, of which 870 or 16% actually switched suppliers achieving an average saving of £155 per household.
- 3.02 The second switch registration ran from 27<sup>th</sup> January to the 2<sup>nd</sup> March with 1962 registrations logged, but due to the uncertainties following the second switch about the future of the scheme, these figures have not been made available as yet.
- 3.03 It is anticipated that Flintshire County Council will sign up to the Cyd Cymru Charter in the near future (within weeks) entitling us to “partner status”. This will enable Cyd Cymru promotional material to be printed, utilising Flintshire’s logo, and engagement packs containing all necessary information can then be produced.
- 3.04 As the Cyd Cymru scheme will be badged as a Council supported initiative, this will give Flintshire residents confidence in the scheme and should improve numbers registering, and ultimately switching supplier .
- 3.05 The engagement packs will be made available to all Councillors, front line staff and community groups upon request.
- 3.06 The next Fuel Switch date has not been formally announced but is anticipated to be in the Autumn of 2014
- 3.07 Although worthwhile savings are available through switching suppliers, it is important not to lose sight of the importance of energy efficiency measures and actions. These are the only long term way to ensure a prolonged reduction of energy costs, and therefore a reduction in the incidence of Fuel Poverty.
- 3.08 The Council will need to continue its work in partnership with other Local Authorities, Registered Social Landlords and other organisations to identify and tackle the causes of fuel poverty in Wales.

### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Members support this initiative.
- 4.02 That Members utilise the engagement packs (when available) to promote the Cyd Cymru fuel switching scheme, and promote energy efficiency when doing so.

### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 Due to the existing structure and administration of Cyd Cymru , (having been set up and run by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan) there are no unknown costs or financial implications of additional staff resources etc. The only cost being

the printing of promotional materials which can be covered from within existing budgets.

## **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 Beneficial to those who switch, and further enhanced when linked to advice on energy efficiency and support with energy conservation measures.

## **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 Neutral in isolation, or beneficial when linked with advice on energy efficiency and support with energy conservation measures. Although households who have been under heating their homes previously are expected to be warmer, there is still anticipated to be overall reduction in domestic emissions levels which mitigates the impacts of Climate Change.

## **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 An aim of this scheme should be to reduce inequality specifically relating to access and fuel poverty due to rural location and tenure.

## **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 There may be a small increase in the numbers of telephone enquiries about the scheme, but is not anticipated to be significant or cause resource implications

## **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.1 None in respect of the Cyd Cymru scheme.

## **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Discussions, meetings and seminars with Eco centre Wales, North Wales Energy Advice Centre, WLGA, South Lakeland District Council Cheshire East Council, Birmingham and Solihull Together, Moneysupermarket.com, National Energy Action, Consumer focus, and other North Wales Local Authorities and registered Social landlords have all fed into this and previous reports on the same topic.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 None

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

### **Background Documents:**

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