

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2015**

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

SUBJECT: **ENERGY SWITCHING SCHEME**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

Following earlier requests to advise Informal Cabinet and Environment Overview and Scrutiny on opportunities relating to energy switching and energy advice, this report contains updated information for Cabinet on the resulting Welsh Government's sponsored collective switching scheme called Cyd Cymru and recommends nominating someone to sign the related charter to support the scheme in Flintshire.

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. Further updated reports were submitted in September 2013 and July 2014.
- 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 has now concluded two fuel switches and the processes and procedures appear to have worked well, and without incident.
- 2.04 The recommendation to sign up to the scheme was supported by Environment Scrutiny in July.
- 2.05 The current scheme is currently open for registrations and will close on 1st March 2015. Those who have registered will then have until 16th March to confirm whether or not they want to switch.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The first Cyd Cymru switches were held in January and March 2014
- Over 6,800 people registered interest in the scheme
 - Over 1,500 switching to a new tariff deal

- £185 average saving per household
- Over £284,000 total energy bill savings for Wales
- £19,000 community fund generated for Wales

- 3.02 Residents on prepayment meters can participate in the switch. Tariffs are offered based on what the resident enters as their preferred billing method.
- 3.03 Flintshire County Council can support the scheme in our area by signing up to the Cyd Cymru Charter 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 would 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 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.
- 3.07 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 and nominate a suitable person to sign the charter and provide a statement of support
- 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 Appendix 1 – Charter – A Collective Energy Switching Scheme for Wales

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Documents: As referred to in the report.

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