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**(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)**

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Full Cabinet
<b>Subject:</b>	Switched On Impact Report
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
<b>Report by:</b>	James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
<b>Author:</b>	Andrew Waggott, Energy Services Team Manager
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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**1. Requested by:** the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Environment and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Green Recovery

**2. Purpose**

- a. To highlight the impact of the work undertaken by the council's in-house Switched On Portsmouth service over the preceding twelve month period; via the publication of their annual *Switched On Portsmouth Impact Report*
- b. To detail the progress made to the scope and scale of the services now being delivered within Portsmouth and the surrounding areas by the team; and highlight future areas of activity to further improve the service's coverage.
- c. To show in detail the monetary and energy savings in Portsmouth households; and highlight progress against the action plan set out in the *Energy and Water at Home Strategy 2020-25* and the *Home Energy Support Service* cabinet papers of October 2020 and January 2021.
- d. To highlight in particular the carbon savings that have been achieved through the delivery of the Switched On Portsmouth service. Over the past twelve months, activities delivered by the team have reduced annual emissions by 426 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

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### 3. Information Requested

#### 4. Background:

- a. For the full details of the service, please refer to the *Switched On Portsmouth Impact Report 2020-21* in Appendix A. The report details the work of the service between the start of June 2020 and the end of May 2021. This is the second year in which the Switched On team has published an impact report; the first being in 2019-20.
- b. Switched On Portsmouth was launched in November 2019 as part of the development of new domestic energy services and branding, in line with the development of the *Energy and Water at Home Strategy*. For more details of the Switched On Service, and what it offers to residents of Portsmouth, please visit [www.switchedonportsmouth.co.uk](http://www.switchedonportsmouth.co.uk)
- c. The Switched On Portsmouth service aims to offer all households in the city support on matters relating to domestic energy appropriate to their circumstances. This can range from simple advice and home energy visits; through to fully funded installations, such as solid wall insulation and solar panels.
- d. The services offered by Switched On Portsmouth have evolved during the past 12 months to take into account a number of key new challenges and opportunities:
  - i. The Covid 19 pandemic meant a change to many of our face-to-face services; with many being switched to phone or online
  - ii. New service offerings were developed to support those residents not in direct risk of fuel poverty off the back of the *Home Energy Support Service* work
  - iii. The success in securing funding from Phase 1 of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) funding has allowed a rapid expansion of the offers of larger, fully funded energy efficiency measures in private homes; as well as an increased marketing presence
- e. The Switched On Portsmouth service, and energy services team generally, have continued to be recognised over the past year for the work they do. This has included winning the award for *Social Responsibility* at the *National Energy Efficiency Awards* and *Council of the Year* in the *South East Energy Efficiency Awards*. They have also been awarded the Gold medal for "Green Public Service" at the recent national *iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021*.
- f. The Switched On Portsmouth team has increased the number of peer local authorities with whom it works over the past twelve months. This has built on the existing Warmer Homes Partnership to include a total of 19 other councils. The Council leads this consortium by successfully acting as lead authority for both the



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LADs and Warm Homes Fund grants. Further bids for funding have been submitted in recent weeks which would see this consortium of partner authorities extended to 21.

### **5. Key Impacts**

- a. The report highlights a series of key impacts which reflect the Switched On Portsmouth service's aims; to help residents save energy, save money and save carbon.
- b. The service was able to secure significant external, funding in addition to monies already secure during the 2019-20 reporting period. A total of £9.2 million was awarded under Phase 1 LAD funding. This allowed for the installation of free insulation measures, air source heat pumps and solar panels. Portsmouth City Council were the lead authority within a consortium of 18 other councils; and, at the time of the report, over 1,000 homes within Portsmouth had applied to receive measures under the scheme.
- c. More than 650 households were assisted with 'large' measures; including insulation, new heating systems and renewable installations. Support services including the Freephone line, website and home visits were accessed nearly 50,000 times.
- d. The Impact Report reports a combined monetary saving for all households of over £500,000; and a total reduction in carbon emissions of 426 tonnes of carbon dioxide.
- e. As well as the aggregate savings, the Impact Report also highlights two case studies featuring Portsmouth residents, supported by the Switched On service. The case studies show the range of support on offer, and how this can be tailored according to the specific need of the household.
- f. The Switched On Portsmouth team continues to work with other services within the city to ensure a holistic service can be delivered for those who most need it. This includes supporting key agencies such as *Advice Portsmouth*, *Age UK* and *Citizens Advice* by taking on enquiries; and training their frontline staff on matters related to energy and fuel poverty.
- g. The majority of the schemes detailed within the Impact Report act to mitigate climate change by reducing household emissions. These schemes typically reduce the quantity of energy used, through efficiency measures, or contribute renewable energy to homes through the application of solar panels. In most instances, the right thing to do for a fuel poor household, is also the right thing to do to reduce carbon emissions.

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- h. The first-time gas central heating programme is an example of where there is a clear tension between the need to alleviate fuel poverty and the mitigation of carbon emissions. Although gas has a lower carbon factor than electricity today, grid decarbonisation at a national scale will mean that in the lifetime of the system installed, carbon emissions will be higher than if the household had remained on electric heating. However, electricity prices are around 4 times higher than gas per unit; so even the most efficient electric heating systems, such as air source heat pumps, will inevitably push up bills versus a traditional central heating system.
- i. The decision about when to install first-time central heating is nuanced and household-specific. This measure is only used in circumstances where the household is clearly in, or vulnerable to, fuel poverty. If a lower-carbon alternative exists, can be funded and is appropriate for the situation; then this technology is prioritised. The Council has applied for additional funding, under the Sustainable Warmth Grant, in order to specifically target electrically heated properties with low-carbon alternatives.

**6. New and Future Services**

- a. The Impact Report details a number of Switched On Portsmouth services which have been launched during the latest reporting period. A number of services scheduled to be launched over the coming 12 months are also identified.
- b. Services which have been launched over the past 12 months include:
  - i. Switched On Solar; a tool for assessing the solar potential of residential properties
  - ii. Low cost loans; for households which do not qualify for free measures on the basis of means, in order that they are able to access cheap finance
  - iii. A freephone advice service
  - iv. LAD funded measures such as solar panels, low carbon heating systems and insulation
- c. Services planned to be launched in the coming 12 months include:
  - i. A new innovation project looking at midfloor smart air vents to reduce heat loss in social housing
  - ii. Post occupancy interventions and university-led research to review households' ability to interact with low-carbon and energy saving measures

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- iii. Completing development of an approved installer list, from which residents can access trusted contractors to install energy saving and renewable measures
- iv. The launch of a Minimum Energy Efficiency Service; which landlords can access for support with making their homes more energy efficient
  
- d. The team has bid for significant additional external funds through an extension of the LAD programme and Sustainable Warmth Funding. If successful, this funding will allow the team to continue to support homes with large, funded interventions until March 2023.
  
- e. The Switched On Portsmouth team will continue to improve and adapt the services on offer; applying for funding and continually reviewing support to ensure that all households in the city can benefit from reducing the energy they use in their homes.

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Signed by James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

**Appendices:**

- Appendix A: Switched On Portsmouth Impact Report (2020-21)

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
The Energy and Water at Home Strategy (2020-25); March 2020	<a href="https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s26302/Energy%20and%20Water%20at%20Home%20Strategy%20report%20with%20appendices.pdf">https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s26302/Energy%20and%20Water%20at%20Home%20Strategy%20report%20with%20appendices.pdf</a>
Home Energy Support Service (October 2020)	<a href="https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s28190/Home%20energy%20service%20report.pdf">https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s28190/Home%20energy%20service%20report.pdf</a>
Home Energy Support Service – Update to the Report of October 2020 (January 2021)	<a href="https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s29329/Home%20Energy%20Support%20Service%20progress%20update%20from%20October.pdf">https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s29329/Home%20Energy%20Support%20Service%20progress%20update%20from%20October.pdf</a>

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Switched On Portsmouth Impact Report (2019-20)	<a href="https://switchedonportsmouth.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/10.466-Switched-On-Impact-Report_WebReady.pdf">https://switchedonportsmouth.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/10.466-Switched-On-Impact-Report_WebReady.pdf</a>
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