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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)

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Green Recovery
Subject:	Switched On Homes
Date of meeting:	17 th March 2022
Report by:	James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
Report Author:	Andrew Waggott, Energy Services Team Manager
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Green Recovery

2. Purpose

2.1 To provide information on Switched On Homes (SOH); a new customer facing, online service to improve residents' understanding of home energy efficiency retrofit.

3. Background

3.1 Significant year-on-year reductions in carbon emissions will be required to meet the 2030 net zero target.

3.2 The current the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) estimates¹ of gross GHG emissions from Portsmouth have been calculated as 753,837 tonnes CO₂ in 2019, of which emissions from domestic properties were estimated to be 230,117 tonnes CO₂, or 31%. Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are the industry standard for assessing how energy is used in buildings, and for determining recommendations for their improvement. EPCs are typically carried out during the sale of letting of a property; however, a homeowner may wish to get one carried out for other reasons. The government has an ambition that as many homes as possible reach a minimum C standard of EPC by 2030.

¹ <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2019>

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- 3.3 Switched On Portsmouth is the one-stop domestic energy service, run by the Council's in-house energy services team. The service was launched in November 2019, and its offer has been consistently improved and widened since that time, to provide support for all homes in the city.
- 3.4 In preparation of the Council's *Energy and Water at Home Strategy (2020-25)*, officers consulted the public to ascertain their priorities and understanding of domestic energy. A number of consistent themes emerged from this work including a demand for unbiased advice about how to improve homes.
- 3.5 The Switched On Portsmouth service offers a range of schemes offering capital improvements to properties, as well as other support. Over the past year, 5,781 households have been given some kind of support. The website receives around 81,000 visitors per year.
- 3.6 The Council launched the Switched On Solar (SOS) tool onto the Switched On Portsmouth website in February 2021. SOS uses a number of factors to determine the capacity of a home's roof to accommodate solar photovoltaics (PV) and gives an estimate of the monetary and carbon savings associated with the system. Since its inception, 3,075 people have used SOS.

4. Switched On Homes

- 4.1 The Council won £40,800 from the South West Energy Hub's Capacity Building Fund in 2021. Of this funding, a proportion was allocated to developing SOS to incorporate other energy efficiency measures, as well as solar PV.
- 4.2 Named Switched On Homes (SOH), the software tool has been developed by officers in partnership with Absolar, a start-up technology company, who worked on the development of SOS.
- 4.3 SOH uses the same data sources as SOS but adds the raw data from all EPCs in Portsmouth, available through open-source data. This allows the software to determine appropriate retrofit opportunities to advise the user's decisions.
- 4.4 SOH will be 'embedded' into the Switched On Portsmouth website (www.switchedonportsmouth.co.uk).
- 4.5 As joint bids were encouraged, and because of close ties between the authorities regarding energy, Gosport Borough Council's boundaries were also included within SOH. Gosport's SOH will be embedded in their Switched On Gosport website (www.switchedongosport.co.uk); a website that was developed under funding won by Portsmouth City Council officers in 2021.

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- 4.6 SOH will assess a home's EPC, where available. Where an EPC does not exist for the property in question, the likely EPC rating will be estimated based on identified property attributes from remote sensing technologies (such as satellite imagery analysis and LiDAR interpretation) and matching with surrounding properties that share similar characteristics. Householders will be able to alter the major assumptions made to gain more accurate estimates. The software will also look at other information, such as property height, volume and property boundaries.
- 4.7 The information will be designed to ensure a customer journey which identifies the range of appropriate to the user's home; and in particular which measures may be funded under existing schemes offered by Switched On Portsmouth. These may include:
- Free solar, loft, cavity and solid wall insulation, and low-carbon heating, such as air source heat pumps; where households qualify under a low-income criteria
 - Ethical loans to support the front-end investment in energy efficiency and renewable measures; where households do not qualify under a low-income criteria
 - Further advice about particular measures, and request a call back from the Switched On Portsmouth team which is bespoke to the individual home
 - Access to approved installer list for solar, insulation and low-carbon heat measures
- 4.8 SOH will provide bespoke advice about energy bill savings and carbon reductions associated with the recommended energy retrofit improvements.
- 4.9 SOH is currently in beta-testing. It is anticipated that it will be launched in mid-March to support the launch of the next phase of the Warmer Homes project, which has received further funding from BEIS.
- 4.10 The success of SOH will be ascertained in a number of ways:
- The number of unique users
 - The number of users that enter the Switched On Portsmouth site after obtaining information about their property from SOH
 - Number of call-backs
 - Number of installs through the approved installer network

5. The Switched On Service

- 5.1 With the launch of Switched On Homes, residents in Portsmouth and Gosport will be able to use the Switched On Portsmouth and/or Switched On Gosport website to access a package of services:
- APPLY for funded schemes and incentives to improve the energy efficiency their home. This includes fully funded insulation, solar panels

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or heat pumps, ethical, low-cost loans for energy efficiency upgrades, free home energy visits, and more.

- LEARN more about energy efficiency and water in your home; from basics such as how your utility meters work and tips to save energy and water, to information on the technology available to save carbon and reduce consumption.
- Find CONTACT details for dedicated energy advice and support via email or the free phone number.
- Access SWITCHED ON SOLAR to discover the solar potential of their home, for free, get support to understand the results, or find an 'approved' solar installer.
- Access SWITCHED ON HOMES to discover the energy efficiency upgrades suitable for their home, get support to understand the results, or find an 'approved installer'.
- View Portsmouth City Council's Energy and Water at Home Strategy, the annual Switched On Portsmouth Impact report and access news and blogs about the service.

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Signed by Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

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:

Title of document	Location
The Energy and Water at Home Strategy (2020-25); March 2020	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s26302/Energy%20and%20Water%20at%20Home%20Strategy%20report%20with%20appendices.pdf
Home Energy Support Service – Update to the Report of October 2020 (January 2021)	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s29329/Home Energy Support Service progress update from October.pdf
The Warmer Homes Project (November 2021)	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s34950/Warmer Homes Project.pdf
Portsmouth City Council - Climate Change Strategy	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s25687/Response%20to%20Climate%20Emergency%20Strategy%20appendix%20A.pdf