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|  |  |  |  |  | **Timescales** |  |  | **FUEL POVERTY ACTION PLAN** |
| **Category** | **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Available to** | Short  1-3 months | Medium  4 - 9 months | Long  9+ months | **Key themes** | **UPDATE ON ACTIVITY**  **31st January 2023** |
| **Property** | Order and obtain programme of works for pipeline infrastructure for viable connections | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | Avonbridge, California, Slamannan Whitecross & Letham to be taken forward with gas infrastructure programme followed by individual property connections. | **Ongoing**  Scottish Gas Network (SGN) are undergoing their own procurement exercise to appoint contractors to deliver this project. Until these resources are in place SGN cannot provide a firm work programme, however, have intimated that the work is likely to be carried out in three sections: -   * Letham * Whitecross * Slamannan/California/Avonbridge   The SGN design and route identification process is nearing completion and an external land agent has been appointed by SGN to assist in obtaining the necessary land permissions and consents along the proposed pipe routings.    SGN are progressing well with their own procurement exercise to bring in suitable resources and contractors to augment their own resources to deliver the project. At present a prequalification process has commenced and is due for return by the end of January 2023. Thereafter tenders will be issued to the selected contractors and SGN anticipate being able to appoint the successful contractor in early April 2023.    Following appointment, the successful contractor is likely to have a significant mobilisation period to obtain the necessary road and other consents. It is anticipated that physical works will commence during the 3rd quarter of 2023 with gas becoming available as the works proceed during 2023 and thereafter.    Gas supply will be available to progress to installations after each individual area is completed.  Once this programme is available, a further letter to all tenants will be distributed. This will allow tenants to make an informed choice whether to wait for gas heating or consider alternative renewable solutions, subject to available funding.  SGN will have a dedicated comms team to ensure consistency, with a dedicated webpage set up for information accessed through links and QR codes. They will also arrange temporary drop-in centres prior to the works starting to allow residents to pop in, get info and ask questions.    When all is available the intention is for information regarding location of works, temporary traffic lights, and roads closures to be accessible to residents to allow them to plan and be aware of what is happening when. |
| **Property** | Further assessment of options for the remaining villages including renewable technologies | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | Blackness; Standburn; South Alloa, Torwood and Limerigg covers all areas with no gas infrastructure. | **Ongoing**  **Phase 1**  ASHP installations to properties included in Phase 1 are complete except for one property in a communal block where consultation with owners is ongoing.  A follow up survey will take place 6 months after the installation date of the new heating system to review findings.  To date, 3 tenants have refused the proposed change of heating.  **Phase 2**  Scottish Government (SG) Funding approval for Phase 2. Email confirmation of match funding received by Falkirk Council 17/11/22, SG draft grant letter has been received and awaiting confirmation of dates and signature to return to accept. The tender document for Ph2 installation contract for 100 addresses has been returned. The tenders have been checked and assessed and tender report has been completed. The Client Confirmation to Proceed Form is ready to be signed and the successful contractor will be informed once this is signed.  The Energy Officer has installed internal temperature and humidity monitoring devices in 1 property in Limerigg prior to the new heating being installed in Phase 2. This will provide comparative data and assess the impact on the thermal comfort of the new heating.  We are in early stage of discussions with service providers. |

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| **Property** | Recommendations from property visits will be implemented, radiators / thermostat issues. Ongoing support for tenants experiencing issues | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | Fabric of buildings meeting SHQS and EESSH.  Energy Performance Certificate’s show all at Band C or D rating.  Servicing and responsive repairs to existing heating systems ongoing. | **Ongoing**  Servicing Programme update: Up until the 18th of January 2023, 643 properties have received an annual service. In addition, 4 existing boiler units have been fully refurbished and 21 Thermaflow boilers replaced due to major faults. Servicing Works are ongoing, but access problems continue to hamper progress. Our servicing contractor Neat Heat have advised they are still operating on a day to day call out basis while trying to gain access. |
| **Property** | Window & door programme estimated to commence late 20/21 | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | Doors and windows at the end of their useful life. Forms part of the Council strategy of a fabric first approach to meeting EESSH2. | **Ongoing**  87% of addresses in the off-gas areas have now received new doors and windows.  Customers have expressed high levels of satisfaction with over 90% of tenants reporting satisfaction on the post installation customer feedback surveys. Year 2 is now progressing well with only 92 addresses in the off-gas areas still to receive new doors and windows. |
| **Property** | Investigate new funding and loan options for owner occupier and private residents to participate on the opportunity for a new system or gas connection | Falkirk Council | All residents |  |  |  | Home Energy Scotland can offer advice for non-council properties. FC staff will also investigate funding options. | **Ongoing**  Further information can be found at  [www.homeenergyscotland.org](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org) |
| **Communication Strategy** | Develop a Consultation Strategy support and engage with its tenants and residents facing difficulties with the heating systems. | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | Communication Strategy developed and passed to SHR as Part of Engagement Plan. | **Complete**  Communication Strategy is available on the Council’s website. And can be viewed here - [Help maintaining, adapting or repairing your home - Wet electric heating systems | Falkirk Council](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/homes-property/housing-support/repairs-maintenance/wet-electric.aspx)  In the last quarter, October to end December there were 160 visitors to the web page with 88 unique views. 63% of these were from a mobile device.  We know that not all our tenants use digital devices, and we will ensure that information is included in a range of ways and is inclusive by including personal contact and written communication.  Tenant representatives worked with us on the Communication Strategy to help us to prepare communication that meets tenants needs. |

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| **Communication Strategy** | Update web page to publish advice and progress on works programmes | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | Information published and being updated | **Ongoing**  Information on the Falkirk Council website can be updated in ‘real time’ and is accessible from a variety of devices.    July 2022 Improvement Plan published on Website 11 August 2022.  Tenant representatives attended a meeting on 3 October 2022, to discuss/review web content. Work is ongoing with partners to gather information to update the web page taking account of feedback. |
|  | Provide tenants with regular updates by their preferred method of communication (Letters) | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | Individual letters issued to tenants February 2022.  Postal survey seeking views of tenants affected issued and findings considered and published.  Update letter delayed until we have a confirmed programme from SGN. This was agreed with tenant representatives as they felt this would allow tenants to make for informed decisions whether to wait for gas or consider ASHP & PVs. | **Complete, with further letters and communication to follow.**  Information is shared in a range of ways including direct communication with those affected as detailed above. |
|  | Prepare regular newsletters | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | First Newsletter issued with letter in February 2022. | **Complete, with further newsletters to follow.** |
|  | Prepare updates for the Tenant Talk Magazine | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | The Tenant Talk magazine is sent to all our tenants three times per year. The magazine will be used to updated tenants on programme information, advice and support on fuel cost and energy saving tips. So far this has included an article in the May edition and July edition. Work is underway to review what information (if any) could be included in the Spring 2023 edition of the magazine. | **Complete, with further articles to follow.**  Articles on the Energy Price Cap, Help towards Fuel Bills, the Warm Homes Discount and the Priority Services Register have all been included in issues of Tenant Talk this year. Further energy related articles will be included in 2023 editions. |
|  | Continue to engage and support the network of community groups | Falkirk Council | All residents |  |  |  | Falkirk Council Community Engagement Team and Community Planning Team will provide support and advice to people within the community who are considering establishing a group such as a Registered Tenants Organisation and will work together with the community to address needs locally. | Housing Service Community Engagement Team have met with various community representatives on various occasions to discuss the possibility and benefits of setting up a Registered Tenants’ Organisation (RTO). However, to date, no volunteers have come forward to set up such a group. The option of setting up an RTO will remain open. |

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| **Communication Strategy** | Housing Operations kept fully informed | Falkirk Council | Falkirk Council Tenants |  |  |  | The front-line Housing Officer plays a crucial role in communication with tenants. | **Ongoing**  Housing Operations Teams are informed of plans and progress to assist with any enquiries. We are also using a range of methods including Tenant Talk and digital on the web. |
| **Communication Strategy** | Provide confidential personal advice and guidance for:  - Welfare benefits  - Income maximisation and debt management | Falkirk Council | All residents |  |  |  | The following links are available on Falkirk Council Website. Residents are asked to:   1. Residents can check they are getting all the income to which household is entitled. This can be done via <https://falkirk.entitledto.co.uk/home/start>      1. If it is identified that a resident has entitlement to any other benefits but have difficulty in successfully applying for this, we can assist - <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/benefits-support/help-with-welfare-benefits.aspx> 2. If a resident has debt or difficulty budgeting, because of energy costs we can offer independent advice - <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/benefits-support/money-advice.aspx>   If anyone needs help to access these services, they can visit any Advice and Support Hub. <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/places/oss-ash/> | **Ongoing**  Access to advice and guidance is widely promoted across the Falkirk area.  There will be other financial support available this winter: -  Energy Bills Support Scheme - £400 grant to be paid in instalments between Oct 2022 – March 2023.  Extra Winter Fuel Payment - Pensioner Households to receive an additional £300 paid with the usual Winter Fuel Payment, Autumn 2022.  Cost of Living Payment - Households in receipt of disability benefits will receive a one-off payment of £150, from 20 September 2022.  Households in receipt of means tested benefits will receive £650, two payments, summer and autumn 2022.  There is now a link on the Falkirk Council web site with this information and more:-  [Benefits & support - Energy grants | Falkirk Council](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/benefits-support/energy-grants.aspx) |
| **Communication Strategy** | Provide financial support to assist with energy costs | Falkirk Council | All residents |  |  |  | The Council is providing a one-off payment of £100 to households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and living in an off-gas area. This is currently being reviewed and the website will be updated accordingly.  427 off-gas households have been referred for a payment through the Household Support Fund.365 households (85%) have received this support to date. This fund has been set up to support low-income households struggling with the rising cost of living. | **Ongoing**  We recently wrote to 48 households eligible for financial assistance but received no response, therefore Housing Officers will engage with these households directly regarding their entitlement to the payment.  Addresses in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will receive a £75 payment through Local Authority Economic Covid Recovery Fund (LACER) funding – letters to be sent out in December, with each eligible household being offered the chance to receive a payment before Christmas - (**due to a number of issues, these letters have been delayed, however every eligible household will have received their letter by January 31st at the latest with payments being offered to all who apply by February 28th at the latest).**  The Household Support Fund is now open as of September 1st.  Whilst the Household Support Fund is a referral-based fund - I.e. only Falkirk Council Services and trusted partners such as CABs and RSLs are able to refer individuals, come early October members of the public will be able to declare an interest in being referred for the fund, via a separate webform. This will allow us to provide individuals with a one-off payment as well as identify other areas of support available. The above form is now live and being circulated to target groups. |
| **Communication Strategy** | Offer advice on financial support | Falkirk Council | All residents |  |  |  | Advice and information have been provided. | **Ongoing**  Advice and information have been provided on the Council’s website, letters, Newsletter and Tenant Talk magazine. Updates will be provided as an when necessary. |