

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting7th February 2013

1. Title of Item/Report

Scrutiny Review of Affordable Warmth

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Environment Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Affordable Warmth.

Affordable Warmth was the ability heat a residential property sufficiently without incurring financial hardship, and the three major factors affecting affordable warmth were energy efficiency, fuel costs, and household income.

The review examined the energy efficiency of housing stock, previous and current schemes to tackle fuel poverty and energy efficiency, and future policy and funding streams. The significant increases in fuel costs and reduced levels of income due to the economic downturn were expected to have had a detrimental impact on fuel poverty levels since these were last reported 2010, and while the Committee noted the large amount of work already carried out by the Council and its partners, there was concern with this prediction that fuel poverty would increase. The overall aim of the review was to identify options for an affordable warmth strategy to ensure schemes are further developed and enhanced.

RESOLVED that:-

1. A Stockton-on-Tees Affordable Warmth Strategy and delivery plan be developed for 2012/13 – 2015/16 to address the following objectives:-

- Increase local SAP ratings;
- Reduce fuel poverty rates in Stockton (dependent on household income and fuel prices);
- Reduce carbon emissions;
- Reduce the impact of fuel poverty on health & wellbeing (using recognised measures e.g. cold related hospital admissions) and other financial and social inequalities;
- Increasing number of homes meeting Decent Homes Standards.

- Encourage Registered Providers, by working in partnership with them, to incorporate targeted fuel poverty/energy efficiency measures into their repairs and renewals programme. Also that the programme is focussed on LSOAs/wards with the highest levels of fuel poverty and deprivation (as rated by IMD).

And that the strategy should be revised in 2015/16 to ensure it is fit for purpose.

2. in order to achieve these objectives, a plan be developed to deliver the strategy. (Based on the actions set out in the main body of the report and summarised at paragraph 5.3).

3. all routes of funding are explored on an ongoing basis. This should include a dialogue with Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) over potential funding options and presenting year ROI/savings models along with other related health outcomes arising from fuel poverty measures on an ongoing basis for funding consideration.

4. SBC and delivery partners should investigate funding mechanisms potentially available to support Green Deal 'loan' deals including local authority and RP funds, CCG funding.

5. SBC should develop strategies to enable promotion and delivery of Green Deal schemes designed at tackling fuel poverty to reach fuel poor households outside the qualifying Energy Company Obligation (ECO) LSOAs. SBC should utilise the brand the Council to promote such opportunities to individual householders.

6. a 'Fuel Poverty Partnership' is formed to bring together all key stakeholders which will, as part of its remit, monitor the progress of the Stockton-on-Tees Affordable Warmth Strategy and delivery plan and report to all relevant groups and committees and that detailed terms of reference be developed for approval by the organisations involved. As the lead strategic and delivery body in securing funding and delivering programmes to tackle fuel poverty in the Borough, SBC should provide the Chair to this Partnership.

7. in addition to the regular local reporting process of the Affordable Warmth Strategy and Delivery Plan, the information and progress on this Delivery Plan be reported nationally via the Home Energy Conservation Act reporting process and Climate Local (Local Government Association mechanism for public reporting).

8. the issues of fuel poverty and affordable warmth be reflected in all relevant sections of the Stockton-on-Tees Joint Strategic Needs

Assessment (JSNA) and other strategic and policy documents covering areas such as family poverty, financial and social exclusion.

9. an evaluation of current and planned projects be carried out to measure and understand their long term health impacts, carbon efficiency, social and economic impacts.

10. Stockton Borough Council sign up to the Local Authority Fuel Poverty Commitment.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Affordable Warmth impacts on both the financial situation and health and wellbeing of the individual, and also the economic and environment on society as a whole. The significant increases in fuel costs and reduced levels of income due to the economic downturn are expected to have had a negative impact on the fuel poverty levels in the borough when next reported and there are also important changes within the policies and funding of affordable warmth, with the national CESP funding being replaced with Green Deal loans and Energy Company Obligation.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal interest in respect of this item as he was a member of Tristar Management Board.

Councillor Mrs Ann McCoy declared a personal interest in respect of this item as she is on the board of Stockton District Advice and Information Service.

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 15th February 2013

Proper Officer
11 February 2013