

Report of: Head of Environmental Development

To: Executive Board

Date: 17 March 2008

Item No:

Title of Report : Affordable Warmth Action Plan 2008-2010



Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: The overall aim of the Action Plan is to reduce fuel poverty and adverse environmental impact by enabling energy efficiency upgrades to be targeted in the homes of low income households in Oxford. The purpose of the report is to secure Executive Board's support for the implementation of the Affordable Warmth Action Plan 2008-2010.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Van Zyl



Scrutiny Responsibility: Community

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by:

Councillor Van Zyl - Portfolio Holder

Jeremy Thomas - Legal Services

Andy Collett - Financial Services

Michael Crofton-Briggs – Interim Executive Director



Policy Framework:

Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001

Oxford City Council Private Sector Strategy 2007-2010

Recommendation(s):

1. To note the content of the Affordable Warmth Action Plan 2008-2010, which is annexed to this report and to ask Environmental Development to implement the work programme described and secure support from other relevant departments as required.

2. To respond to the recommendations from Community Scrutiny - appended



1. The overall purpose of the Affordable Warmth Action Plan 2008-2010 is to reduce fuel poverty and adverse environmental impact by enabling energy efficiency upgrades to the homes of low income households in Oxford.
2. Fuel poverty, where an excessive proportion of a household's income would be required to heat the home adequately, impacts on health and wellbeing, and can cause social exclusion, preventing full participation in life within or outside the home.
3. The Affordable Warmth Action Plan 2008-10, which is annexed to this report, outlines the national framework of fuel poverty strategy, home energy legislation, government initiatives, and provides an effective work programme to tackle the issues around affordable warmth in Oxford.
4. Programmed works to Oxford City Homes stock are the subject of separate reports to Executive Board.

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Background papers: None

APPENDIX

Community Scrutiny Committee 10 January 2008

(extract from minutes)

73. DEVELOPMENT OF AN AFFORDABLE WARMTH STRATEGY

The Head of Environmental Health submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended). Paul Robinson attended to present the report and answer questions. He explained that he had taken over responsibility for the report when another member of staff had left the Council and the annex to the report had some inaccuracies. He circulated a revised version and pointed out the recommendations in the report applied to this revised version.

The following points were raised during discussion.

- The recent steep rise in fuel prices would bring even more people into fuel poverty (10% of disposable income spent on fuel).
- There were concerns about the way in which Warm Front (Government funding) was operating, often giving grants that were too low (and so needing top up locally) and being slow and over bureaucratic.

Resolved to: -

- (1) Note the content of the Affordable Warmth Strategy 2007-10, as set out in the revised annex to the report.
- (2) Support the recommendations of the Affordable Warmth Strategy Action Plan 2008-10 (as revised).
- (3) Draw the Executive Board's attention to the fact that the report was written before the recently announced steep increases in fuel costs and that there was now an even greater need to implement as many of the actions as possible and as quickly as possible.
- (4) Ask the Executive Board to write to the Government expressing concern at the impact of fuel price increases and suggesting that fuel companies should be re-nationalised, and concern about the slow and bureaucratic way that Warm Front operated and the inadequate level of some of its grants.