

Executive
10 December 2020

Title: Fuel Poverty Strategy

Lead Officer: Alice Ellis Sustainability Officer, Health & Community Protection.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Alan Rhead

Public report Yes

Wards of the District directly affected: All

Contrary to the policy framework: No

Contrary to the budgetary framework: No

Key Decision: Yes

Included within the Forward Plan: Reference 1,103

Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: Once the action plan is agreed then assessments may be needed for individual actions as part of their implementation.

Consultation & Community Engagement: The Strategy has received input from WCAVA (Warwickshire Community Action Volunteers), Warwickshire County Council, Public Health, Age UK, Citizens Advice and HEART Partnership. Following approval of the Strategy by Executive, there will need to be a public consultation. The Sustainability Officer Group and Health & Wellbeing Group at Warwick District Council have also been consulted.

Final Decision:

Accessibility checked: Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	16/11/2020	Chris Elliott
Head of Service	09/11/2020	Marianne Rolfe and Lisa Barker
CMT	16/11/2020	Chris Elliott, Andrew Jones, Bill Hunt, Dave Barber
Section 151 Officer	16/11/2020	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	16/11/2020	Andrew Jones
Finance	16/11/2020	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	17/11/2020	Alan Rhead and Jan Matecki

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the Fuel Poverty Strategy for consideration. It also outlines the Council's latest position in relation to fuel poverty and the next steps and Action Plan to deliver improvement in this area.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That Executive adopt the Fuel Poverty Strategy.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires local authorities to report on the energy conservation measures that the authority considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area. The local authority is required to report on progress in this area to the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy every two years by way of a 'HECA report' update. Warwick District Council last provided an update in 2019 and so the next update will be required in March 2021.
- 3.2 In 2014, the government introduced a fuel poverty legislative target for England to improve as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable to a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by the end of 2030. This is also proposed for the Council's own housing stock. This aligns with the Council's Climate Change ambitions to reduce carbon emissions from housing by enabling all houses in the District to attain this level. It had been hoped that investment in the reducing carbon emissions from the domestic energy would include a major contribution from the Climate Action Fund. However, in the absence of the Council Tax referendum taking place, alternative sources of funding will need to be explored unless and until it is possible to re-establish a CAF of sufficient scale to meet this requirement through grant funded opportunities. In the meantime, the focus will continue to be on promoting existing grant and loan schemes.
- 3.3 In addition, the Council's Strategic Approach to Sustainability, includes the action to develop a Fuel Poverty Strategy. Progress with the Strategic Approach to Sustainability is being brought forward in a separate report.
- 3.4 The Fuel Poverty Strategy as shown in Appendix 1 outlines what fuel poverty is, the factors causing it, the effects of it, national policy instruments, the programmes already in operation within the District and the need for further work along with supporting partners.
- 3.5 The local charity Act on Energy supports residents significantly with fuel poverty through the Warm & Well Warwickshire Scheme, the latter offers a Freephone advice line, grant funding to vulnerable residents for boiler and insulation measures and free advice.
- 3.6 There has previously been an additional contract with Act on Energy

primarily aimed at promoting the free help available within the community. Although drop-in energy sessions and other promotion work has been undertaken, this has not reached a significantly large number of people. Therefore, a decision was made to progress this internally and link to the community partnership team programme to help vulnerable residents in need of financial and well-being support.

- 3.7 However, it should be noted the freephone advice line offered by Act on Energy continues for all residents as part of the funded Warm & Well Service for the next two years along with all available grant funding for our most vulnerable residents including through ECO and ECO (Flex). The Council's two Community Development Workers will also be supporting and promoting Act on Energy through outreach work. In addition, Officers continue to be able to attend the regional consortium meetings organised by Act on Energy to keep updated with local and national policy updates along with other events and seminars promoting this area of work.
- 3.8 For information, recent progress includes a joint bid being developed with Stratford District Council to apply for funding from the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme targeted to help residents on low incomes. The application will include external wall insulation measures for home owners and air source heat pumps and external wall insulation in social properties that are off the gas network.

4. Policy Framework

4.1. Fit for the Future (FFF)

4.1.1. These are the words to use:

4.1.2. The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report shows the way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council's Key projects for 'Green, Clean and Safe.'

4.1.3. The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council's website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

4.2. FFF Strands

4.2.1 External impacts of proposal(s)

People - Health, Homes, Communities - This report provides an update on progress relating to fuel poverty. Homes that are warmer and more energy efficient directly improve the health and wellbeing of residents

Services - Green, Clean, Safe - This report provides an update that supports making the Council carbon neutral by 2025 and the District as close

to zero carbon as possible by 2030. Home energy efficiency also helps to improve local air quality by reducing NOx as well as carbon emissions.

Money - Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment – N/A

4.2.2. **Internal impacts of the proposal(s)**

People - Effective Staff – The Action Plan of the Strategy outlines training opportunities to raise awareness and knowledge of fuel poverty within the authority to maximise the support that can be provided to our communities.

Services - Maintain or Improve Services – N/A

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term – N/A

4.3. **Supporting Strategies**

4.3.1. Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies and the relevant ones for this proposal are the Climate Emergency Action Programme Sustainability Approach.

4.4. **Changes to Existing Policies**

4.4.1. This report proposes the adoption of a new Strategy.

4.5. **Impact Assessments**

4.5.1. N/A

5. Budgetary Framework

5.1 There are no budget implications associated with the public consultation.

5.3 If a Climate Action Fund is established as part of the 2021/22 budget, it is possible that this (at least in part) could be used to support reduction of carbon emissions from the domestic energy section, particularly if it can help to lever in other sources of funding. The potential for this will be considered within the CEAP Review to be developed in the spring of 2021.

6. Risks

6.1 The Home Energy Conservation Act, 1995 requires local authorities to report on action that is being taken on keeping homes warmer and tackling causes and effects of fuel poverty.

6.2 By not tackling the causes of fuel poverty, the well-being of local residents will not be improved which will have adverse effects on the health of local residents. In addition, domestic emissions will remain the same, if not increase, contributing to global warming, and poor local air quality.

6.3 Where particular projects require investment, financial risks will be identified and approval sought through the appropriate channels.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1. Paragraph 3.1 outlines the legal requirement under the HECA 1995 for the Council to reduce levels of fuel poverty in the District and this report presents a Strategy and an Action Plan to achieve this.