

SUBJECT:	<i>Buckinghamshire Affordable Warmth Strategy 2017-2022</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Portfolio for Health and Housing – Cllr Paul Kelly</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Martin Holt, Head of Healthy Communities</i>
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WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All</i>

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to:-

- Advise Members of the draft updated Buckinghamshire Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Seek Members comments on the draft updated Strategy
- Seek delegated authority for the Head of Health Communities to adopt the final Buckinghamshire Affordable Warmth Strategy, following the consultation period.

The PAG is asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on the following recommendation(s):

RECOMMENDATIONS to Cabinet that

- 1. Members note the draft strategy and comment, as appropriate.**
- 2. authority be delegated to the Head of Healthy Communities to adopt the final updated Buckinghamshire Affordable Warmth Strategy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.**

Cabinet to consider the advice of the Portfolio Holder and any comments arising from the PAG.

2. Reasons for Recommendations

The current Affordable Warmth Strategy is now out of date. The updated version will provide a clear direction and focus to the Council and its partners in targeting actions towards those residents who are most at risk of fuel poverty. The delegation of authority to the Head of Healthy Communities will allow for amendments to be made to the strategy following consultation and following consideration by the other Buckinghamshire authorities.

3. Content of Report

South Bucks District Council is a member of the Bucks-wide Affordable Warmth Network, a partnership of the four district councils, the county council and the National Energy Foundation, which aims to ensure that all residents of Buckinghamshire can heat their homes adequately and affordably.

In 2009, in response to a government requirement to report on 'National Indicators', the partnership produced a county-wide Affordable Warmth Strategy, which identified the geographical areas and communities most at risk of fuel poverty, the range of help or

assistance available to residents and set out an action plan to target the key causes of fuel poverty.

The Strategy has been implemented chiefly via the Affordable Warmth Network's delivery partner, the National Energy Foundation, which

- operates a free helpline providing advice to residents on grants and financial assistance for insulation and heating measures, dealing with fuel debt, supplier switching, energy efficiency advice etc
- provides free local training in affordable warmth and energy awareness to health, care and other professionals and community groups in Buckinghamshire who support people who are vulnerable to fuel poverty
- attends local events to give face-to-face information and advice
- seeks funding to operate schemes to install measures in homes, such as the recent British Gas Energy Trust funded 'Better Housing Better Health' project which installed heating and insulation improvements in the homes of residents with respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

Since the strategy was first prepared, the definition of fuel poverty has been revised by government and many of the schemes and organisations providing financial or other support for residents have changed.

The strategy has therefore been revised and updated by the National Energy Foundation to reflect the current position both locally and nationally. The draft updated Buckinghamshire Affordable Warmth Strategy is contained as an Appendix.

The updated strategy seeks to identify those residents who are most vulnerable to fuel poverty, and to target actions at these groups to address the key causes of fuel poverty.

Once approved, the strategy will be implemented and monitored by the Affordable Warmth Network, which meets quarterly to review progress made by the National Energy Foundation in undertaking the above-mentioned activities.

The Council's role in implementing the strategy will be principally to promote the Affordable Warmth Helpline, and any schemes, events or services which support the aims of reducing fuel poverty.

4. Consultation

The National Energy Foundation is undertaking a six week consultation with key stakeholders, seeking comments on the strategy and the action plan. Stakeholders include the Citizens Advice Bureau, AgeUK, Children's Centres, Community Practice Workers, Clinical Commissioning Groups, voluntary and community groups such as Carers Bucks and Older People's Action Groups, and social landlords including Paradigm Housing and London and Quadrant.

5. Options

The options are:

1. Members agree to give delegated authority to the Head of Healthy Communities to adopt the final strategy following the consultation period.
2. The final strategy is reported back to Members for agreement following the consultation with third parties and the other Bucks Councils.

Option 1 is recommended as this will allow for amendments to be made to the strategy following consultation and following consideration by the other Buckinghamshire authorities.

6. Corporate Implications

Financial	There are no financial implications. The actions under the Strategy will be met within existing budgets and resources.
Legal	The current Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy and the Home Energy Conservation Act progress report commits the Council to updating the Buckinghamshire Affordable Warmth Strategy.
Sustainability	The proposed actions set out in the report will help to reduce carbon emissions by improving home energy efficiency.

7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

The strategy contributes to the 'Working towards safe and healthier local communities' and 'Striving to conserve the environment and promote sustainability' aims of the Joint Business Plan 2014-19.

8. Next Step

Once the final strategy is adopted, the Council will seek to promote the services available to residents to address fuel poverty and will support and monitor the work of the National Energy Foundation in implementing the action plan.

Background Papers:	None
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