

ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
17 NOVEMBER 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Debbie McQuade - Assistant Director Adults and Safeguarding	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Wayne Fitzgerald - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Public Health Councillor Steve Allen - Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation	
Contact Officer(s):	Belinda Child – Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing Sharon Malia – Housing Programmes Manager	07920 160731 07920 160632

DRAFT AFFORDABLE WARMTH STRATEGY 2021 – 2025 AND THE HOUSING RENEWALS POLICY 2021 – 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Debbie McQuade, Assistant Director of Adults & Safeguarding	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scrutinise the draft Affordable Warmth Strategy and refreshed Housing Renewals Policy which include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the schemes, initiatives and assistance the Council will pursue in order to tackle fuel poverty and to ensure that vulnerable, low income residents can afford to heat their home b. the proposed assistance that will be available to vulnerable householders whose housing conditions are such that they may be detrimental to their health, safety, wellbeing or their ability to access their home due to disability. 2. Provide challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support further activity 3. Endorse the Affordable Warmth Strategy 2021-25 and Housing Renewals Policy 2021 - 2024 for approval by the Executive. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 The report is presented at the request of the Adults & Communities Scrutiny Committee

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with the opportunity to scrutinise the council's draft Affordable Warmth Strategy and the refreshed Housing Renewals Policy.

2.2 This report is for the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

2. Safeguarding Adults
3. Housing need (including homelessness, housing options and selective licensing)

4. Neighbourhood and Community support (including cohesion and community safety)

- 2.4 Both the Affordable Warmth Strategy and the Housing Renewals Policy support the Council's priority of better jobs, good homes and better opportunities for all by keeping people living independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible, therefore reducing or delaying their need for long term care

Furthermore, they support the corporate priority of first rate futures for our children, young people and quality support for our adults and elderly. Both the Affordable Warmth Strategy and the Housing Renewals Policy significantly contribute to keeping vulnerable people safe and improving educational attainment through improvement to the home environment. The use of new technologies that increase the chances of people living fulfilled, independent lives in their own homes is also significant as is working with partners to get people out of hospital and home quickly.

In addition, any work that is undertaken to improve energy efficiency will have a direct and positive impact on carbon emissions, therefore supporting the work undertaken by the council following its declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 A fuel-poor household cannot afford to keep the home adequately warm at a reasonable cost. This is defined by the government using the low income high cost (LIHC) indicator. This means that a household is fuel poor if their fuel costs are above average to be able to heat their home to an adequate standard and if they were to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the poverty line.
- 4.2 The Government is required by law to tackle fuel poverty by making the coldest, leakiest homes in England more energy efficient. The new legally binding target came into force in December 2014 and requires a minimum standard of energy efficiency (Band C) for as many fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable by 2030.
- 4.3 This concentration of poor housing in the private sector is of key importance when planning preventative housing measures to reduce health risks, prevent falls and support safe, timely hospital discharge, all of which impact on NHS costs. The estimated costs of poor housing to the NHS is £1.4 billion pa. The cost to the NHS, in first year treatment costs, of the poorest housing among older households (55yrs+) is c. £624 million. Housing, its availability, standard and suitability, has a critical role to play in plans for a more integrated approach to provision of health services and social care.
- 4.4 Housing disrepair impacts on mental as well as physical health, affects carers' ability to care, and can fundamentally undermine older people's ability to live independently, safely and as part of the wider community. Housing impacts on economic activity, childhood and educational attainment and health across the life course. There are significant potential economic and social gains from addressing private sector housing disrepair, including employment opportunities, economic stimulus through enabling best use of assets, as well as health gains. As well as addressing housing supply, existing housing stock disrepair needs once again to be 'on the radar' of policy makers across housing, health and social care.
- 4.5 Two of the key priorities of Peterborough's overarching Housing Strategy are:
- How we will increase the supply of homes which people can afford
 - How we will improve housing conditions in Peterborough to support health and wellbeing

The draft Affordable Warmth Strategy provides a five year framework over which we will aim to reduce fuel poverty and help residents of Peterborough to live in a warm, healthy and energy efficient home. The Strategy has three main objectives:

Increasing Energy Efficiency

- By providing schemes to increase the energy efficiency of domestic housing
- By providing energy efficiency advice to residents across Peterborough

Reducing Fuel Poverty

- By targeting fuel poor households with assistance
- By maximising the income of households in fuel poverty
- By reducing household fuel bills

Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth

- By improving household heating without increasing carbon emissions where possible
- Through crisis intervention for vulnerable people in cold homes, including heating installation and repairs
- With help to prevent people falling into fuel poverty

The Affordable Warmth Strategy is being brought to Scrutiny alongside the Housing Renewals Policy which includes details of the type of assistance the Council may make available to help achieve the objectives of the Strategy and which complement externally funded projects and initiatives to tackle fuel poverty and poor housing condition.

4.6 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has issued guidance on preventing Excess Winter Deaths and the actions contained in the Affordable Warmth Strategy will ensure that this guidance is followed by the Council and its partners to assist vulnerable households and relieve pressure on health and social services.

4.7 The Home Service Delivery Team within Adult Social Care provides the single point-of-contact health and housing referral service as recommended by NICE and the team is continually developing closer working relationships with colleagues in both adult social care and the health sector to keep people living independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible, therefore reducing or delaying their need for long term care. This work also prevents, as far as possible, admission into hospital, due to falls or medical conditions exacerbated by living in a cold, damp and unhealthy environment and if residents do need to go into hospital, they are discharged without delay into a warm, healthy, safe and accessible home

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 The Affordable Warmth Strategy and the Housing Renewals Policy will be uploaded onto the Consultation pages of the Council's website for a period of 5 weeks.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 It is anticipated that this report will provide the Committee with an overview of some of the work that is being undertaken to tackle fuel poverty and to achieve affordable warmth for all residents of the city and surrounding rural areas. It also summarises the financial assistance that is available through its Housing Renewals Policy. The report provides an opportunity for the Committee to ask questions and scrutinise the work being undertaken.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) (Order 2002) gives local authorities the power to provide assistance to any person for the purpose of improving living conditions in the local authority area. In order to do so, they must have adopted a policy for the provision of assistance and given publicity to the policy and act in accordance with it.

- 7.2 There is a statutory duty on all local authorities to provide Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants to provide adaptations where a specific need has been identified.
- 7.3 The Housing Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local authorities to remedy Category 1 (the most serious) hazards in property, identified through the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS), to an acceptable level. This can be through financial assistance or through enforcement action
- 7.4 The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2019 introduced a minimum energy efficiency standard for the private rented sector. Since 01 April 2018, landlords of relevant domestic private rented properties must not grant a tenancy to new or existing tenants if their property has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of F or G. Since April 2020, landlords must not continue letting a relevant domestic property which is already let if that property has an EPC rating F or G (as shown on a valid EPC for the property). Landlords were encouraged to take action to ensure that their properties reached EPC E by the deadline of 01 April 2020. Where a property is sub-standard, landlords must normally make energy efficiency improvements which raise the EPC rate to minimum E before they let the property. Landlords may claim an exemption in certain circumstances.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Not applicable

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants are funded through the named Disabled Facility Grant Allocation within the Better Care Fund. All other grant assistance is discretionary and provided through the Council's capital programme and are subject to funding availability.

Funding is provided as an individual grant to the owner with the exception of Mandatory Disabled Facility Grant which is cross tenure. Registered social housing providers are asked to make a contribution towards the cost of adaptations within their stock but this is subject to funding availability within their organisations.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 [Continuation of arrangements established under](#) The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) (Order 2002), The Housing Act 2004 and The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2019.

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 It is anticipated that the adoption of the Affordable Warmth Strategy and the Housing Renewals Policy will impact on all age groups if they are on low incomes and live in poor housing conditions, but it will positively affect those who are 65 and older and those with young children (under 5) disproportionately as assistance is directly targeted at these vulnerable groups.
- 9.4 The disability group will also be disproportionately positively affected as this group tend to have low, fixed incomes and therefore live in poor housing conditions and have limited ability to leave their homes due to deteriorating health and/or mobility and therefore spend longer periods of time within the poor home environment.

Rural Implications

- 9.5 The reach of the Affordable Warmth Strategy and the Renewals Policy is for the whole of the

City, including rural areas as well as urban. Fuel Poverty is traditionally high in rural areas due to the characteristics of the housing stock and properties that are off the gas network.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.6 Overall a neutral impact because the adoption of the Affordable Warmth Strategy and the Housing Renewals Policy will allow the Council to provide advice and assistance to residents within their own homes.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 The NICE Guidelines [NG6] Published date: 05 March 2015 - Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes Published date: 05 March 2015 - Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Affordable Warmth Strategy 2021 – 2025
11.2 Appendix 2 - Housing Renewals Policy 2021 - 2024

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