

MAYOR AND CABINET			
Report Title	Response to a recommendation made by the Sustainable Development Select Committee in relation to a report on the Home Energy Conservation Act		
Key Decision	No		
Ward			
Contributors	Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration		
Class	Part 1	Date:	20 September 2018

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a response to a recommendation made by the Sustainable Development Select Committee in relation to a report on the Home Energy Conservation Act.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet notes the approach set out in section 5 below and agrees this as the response to the recommendation made by the Sustainable Development Select Committee.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 The Home Energy Conservation Act (amended 2012) sets a statutory obligation on local authorities to publish plans to improve energy efficiency in housing in their area. Authorities are required to produce reports every two years. Lewisham Council published HECA reports in 2013 and 2015 and 2017.
- 3.2 In 2016, the UK Government ratified the Paris Agreement, part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Agreement commits countries to take action to prevent the global average temperature increasing 2°C above pre-industrial levels. In 2017 the Government published its Clean Growth Strategy setting out its approach to delivering on its greenhouse gas emission targets.
- 3.3 The Government's Fuel Poverty Strategy published in 2015 sets targets for minimum energy standards for fuel poor households with milestones identified for 2020, 2025 and 2030.
- 3.4 In 2015 the National Institute for Health and Care (NICE) published guidance on the health risks associated with cold homes with recommendations aimed at primary health and home care practitioners encouraging them to work with their local authority to identify and support people living in cold homes.
- 3.5 In 2018, the Mayor of London published its Fuel Poverty Action Plan. The Action Plan is part of the Mayor's wider Environment Strategy which includes £10m for energy efficiency over the next 4 years.
- 3.6 Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy includes the strategic priority 'Clean, green and liveable': where people live in affordable, high quality and adaptable housing, have access to green spaces and take responsibility for their impact on the

environment. This report is also relevant to the following Council's Corporate Priorities: 'Clean, green and liveable – improving environmental management, the cleanliness and care for roads and pavements and promoting a sustainable environment'; 'Decent homes for all – investment in social and affordable housing to achieve the decent homes standard, tackle homelessness and supply key worker housing'; and 'Caring for adults and older people - working with health services to support older people and adults in need of care'.

- 3.7 'Lewisham for the Many' the Mayor's 2018 manifesto includes commitments to 'maximise opportunities for energy efficiency in all new developments' and 'explore working with publicly owned not for profit energy suppliers that do not penalise poorer residents using pre-pay meters'.

4. Recommendation by the Sustainable Development Select Committee

- 4.1 On Thursday 22 March 2018 the Sustainable Development Select Committee considered an officer report on home energy conservation, setting out the Council's plans on domestic energy and fuel poverty.

- 4.2 Following consideration of this report the Committee resolved to advise Mayor and Cabinet of the following:

- The Committee recognises the potential to offset health and social care costs through a focus on fuel poverty. The Committee recommends that the Council corporately seeks funding (either from health budgets, or elsewhere) for a designated fuel poverty officer.

5. Proposed approach to resourcing Lewisham Council's fuel poverty work

- 5.1 Recent national statistics indicate that 1 in 10 households in Lewisham would be classified as living in fuel poverty according to the Government's definition. The impact of living in a cold home, particularly for older residents, the very young or anyone with a long-term health problem, are well documented. The cost of this in terms of health and mortality is a significant factor in relation to financial pressures on health services and adult social care.

- 5.2 Lewisham's Warm Homes Healthy People has been running since 2011/12 and has assisted over 2,000 homes in that time. The project delivers practical support to households at risk of fuel poverty through home visits offering:

- practical advice on how to stay warm in the home;
- access to the £140 warm homes discount;
- assistance with debt on energy bills;
- advice on switching tariff;
- draught-proofing and other energy saving measures;
- a free winter warming pack (blanket, gloves, mug, thermometer card);
- referrals on to other sources of help.

- 5.3 Since 2015 there has been no dedicated officer or funding for this work, but it has been maintained through successful bids for one-off funding from a variety of sources. The Sustainable Development Select Committee is right to identify the lack of a dedicated officer as an ongoing risk to this valuable work. However local public health budgets are also very stretched and there is limited scope at present to fund fuel poverty work through this route.

- 5.4 Despite the uncertainty of local funding in recent years, Lewisham's work continues to receive very positive feedback and, while other boroughs have also struggled to resource this area of work, Lewisham is considered one of the most proactive boroughs in London on fuel poverty. There is recognition at regional and national level of the value of fuel poverty interventions in terms of preventative health and this offers some opportunity to seek further funding. Officers are seeking to extend the geographical scope of existing fuel poverty work as a way to attract funding. Officers are working with counterparts in south London boroughs to develop a model at a greater scale that it is hoped will attract funding to provide capacity for this work. An ongoing innovative partnership between the borough and South East London Community Energy to generate fees from lead generation work for energy supplier-funded heating and insulation has proven to be highly successful, and it is hoped will be part of the approach going forward.
- 5.5 It is proposed that officers report back to the Sustainable Development Select Committee on this as part of the Committee's 18/19 work programme.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications resulting from this report. Any changes to staffing resulting from the work outlined above that may have financial implications will be subject to the Council's existing decision-making processes.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The Council's Constitution sets out the procedures relating to reports referred to the Mayor from a scrutiny committee. The Constitution sets a timescale of two months (not including recess) for a formal reply from receipt of such reports.

8. Crime and disorder implications

- 8.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications resulting from this report.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 There are no specific equalities implications resulting from this report.

10. Environmental implications

- 10.1 There are no specific environmental implications resulting from this report.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet notes the approach set out in section 5 above and agrees this as the response to the recommendation made by the Sustainable Development Select Committee.

If there are any queries on this report please contact **Martin O'Brien, Climate Resilience Manager**, 020 8314 6605.

Background Documents

- Lewisham's Home Energy Conservation Report (2017)
<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/getinvolved/environment/energyefficiency/taking-the-lead/Documents/LewishamHECARReport2017.pdf>