

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C/120/2006-07.**  
**Date of meeting: 12 March 2007.**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Environmental Protection.**

**Subject: Fuel Poverty Strategy.**

**Officer contact for further information: James Nolan (01992 – 564083).**

**Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).**

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### **Recommendation:**

- (1) That the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy be recommended to the Council for adoption.**

### **Report:**

1. The Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 became law in November 2001. Its targets are to end the problem of fuel poverty and in particular to seek to end fuel poverty for “vulnerable” households in England by 2010. To achieve this target, the Government believe that no single measure would be sufficient. Instead a range of programmes and measures need to be put in place, addressing the main causes of fuel poverty:

- (a) programmes to improve the energy efficiency of households;
- (b) ensure fair treatment for the less well off and supporting the development of energy industry initiatives to combat fuel poverty; and
- (c) continuing action to tackle poverty and social exclusion recognising that these are multi-dimensional problems.

2. The legislation places a duty on the authority to prepare and publish a strategy setting out the authority's policies for ensuring that as far as reasonably practicable persons do not live in fuel poverty, including implementing measures to ensure the efficient use of energy,.

3. Following the formation of a fuel poverty steering group consisting of officers and key partners, a draft strategy was produced in 2001. However, this was not developed beyond the draft stage because the staff involved found other employment and replacements could not be recruited.

4. Following a reorganisation of duties, the post of Environmental Coordinator was relocated to Environmental Services and an appointment made. The draft strategy was revisited and rewritten, with further consultation undertaken. The new draft Epping Forest Fuel Poverty Strategy outlines actions needed to eradicate fuel poverty in the District in compliance with Government guidance.

5. Copies of the draft strategy have been distributed to all members of the Cabinet. Further copies of the draft strategy are available from either Democratic Services or the Environmental Coordinator (Lisa Ingwall – 01992 564357).

### **Statement in Support of Recommended Action:**

6. The Council has a legal duty to produce a fuel poverty strategy. The draft strategy

has been developed in association with our key partners in this field and has undergone extensive consultation over a period of three months.

**Other Options for Action:**

7. The Council has a statutory duty to adopt a strategy. However, subject to further consultation, the draft strategy could be amended.

**Consultation undertaken:**

8. The list of consultees is contained in the attached draft strategy.

<b>Who responded</b>	<b>Their comments</b>	<b>Our Response</b>
Gale Marriot Warm Front	Change of wording (page 8). Ensure the word "free" is not used, as there are occasions when a customer has to pay a contribution.	The wording has been changed
Cllr Anne Haigh EFDC	Looks very good	No response required
Peter Chisnall Braintree District Council	Think we have a sound document. Suggested to add two issues;  1. Rising fuel costs - as fuel costs continue to rise more and more households will be pulled into the fuel poverty threshold and they may not be the priority group that Warm Front and other grant schemes can help. You may want to use your own discretionary grant powers based on some criteria, e.g. SAP rating of households and household income, to provide assistance for energy conservation measures.  2. The use of renewable energy technologies - these are often capital cost intensive but then offer free energy to households and are therefore ideal for households in fuel poverty. Again you may want to use your discretionary powers to offer something.	Lacking funds for the moment to include any of the suggested issues but thought it were good points and perhaps they can be included in the future.
Waltham Abbey Town Council	Members agreed on the content of the draft but felt that some of the targets were too distant i.e. those referring to April 2008	The point was taken into consideration but in order to achieve our targets within existing resources the initial dates have to remain the same.

**Resource implications:**

**Budget provision:** Existing environmental co-ordination budget.

**Personnel:** Nil.

**Land:** Nil.

**Community Plan/BVPP reference:** N/A.

**Relevant statutory powers:** Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000.

**Background papers:** Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy.

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** N/A.

**Key Decision reference (if required):** N/A.