



[No.]

Agenda item:

Cabinet

On 13 October

Report Title: Affordable Warmth Strategy 2009-19

Report of **Director of Urban Environment**

Signed :

WPBdy 1st October 2009

Contact Officer : Paul Dowling, Principal Housing Strategy Officer

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Key Decision**

1. Purpose of the report (That is, the decision required)

1.1. To submit the Affordable Warmth Strategy 2009-19 for approval and adoption as the Council's approach to combating fuel poverty in the borough

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member

We all want to have a warm home that we can afford to heat. For many households in the Borough this is difficult to achieve. There are many reasons for this including the lack of insulation and efficient heating systems to people not claiming the benefits that they are entitled to and rising energy costs.

This strategy aims to address these issues. Haringey Council and its partners have undertaken considerable work in this area and alleviated fuel poverty for many people. However much remains to be done. By working together through this strategy we intend to deliver affordable warmth services in a more consistent manner that are effective and offer value to improve living conditions for all residents in Haringey.

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:

3.1. The Affordable Warmth Strategy will contribute to the achievement of Community Strategy vision, for the borough "a place for diverse communities that people are proud to belong to". The strategy will particularly contribute to our priorities for:

- An environmentally sustainable future

- Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all
- Healthier people with a better quality of life
- People and customer focused

3.2. The strategy will have a key role to play in achieving the council's priorities to:

- Make Haringey one of London's greenest boroughs.
- Creating a Better Haringey: cleaner, greener and safer
- Encouraging lifetime well-being at home, work, play and learning
- Promoting independent living while supporting adults and children when needed
- Delivering excellent, customer focused, cost effective services

3.3. As a sub-strategy the Affordable Warmth Strategy will contribute to the key aims of the Housing Strategy 2009-19. It will also effectively contribute to the aspirations of the Greenest Borough Strategy.

4. Recommendations

4.1. That Cabinet adopt the Affordable Warmth Strategy 2009-19 as the Council's approach to combating fuel poverty in the borough subject to minor alterations as approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing.

5. Reason for recommendation(s)

5.1. The development of an Affordable Warmth Strategy was identified in the Housing Strategy 2009-19. The strategy sets out the Council's strategic direction that the council and its partners will take over the next ten years to combat fuel poverty in the borough. It identifies four key priorities, and sets out how actions to address our objectives will be taken forward. The delivery of this strategy will be supported by an implementation group that will further develop the detail of the action plan.

6. Other options considered

6.1. Not applicable.

7. Summary

The Integrated Housing Board have led on the delivery of this multi-agency strategy and approved this final version of the strategy on 21 September 2009 to be submitted to Cabinet for final approval and adoption.

The four key priorities identified in the strategy are:

- Engage with people to improve awareness and understanding of fuel poverty

- Increase the energy efficiency of housing across Haringey
- Maximise resources and opportunities for tackling fuel poverty
- Make the links to other related strategies such as the Greenest Borough Strategy

The action plan has been developed by the strategy working group. Currently there are some gaps in timescales, responsibilities and outcomes. This group have agreed that these need further consideration and discussion and therefore the plan will be completed at the first meeting of the implementation group meeting in October.

8. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 8.1 This report sets out the Affordable Warmth Strategy which indicates how the Council and its partners will work together to combat fuel poverty. A detailed action plan will set out detailed proposals to achieve the objectives and aims of the strategy.
- 8.2 It is estimated that most of the planned initiatives and improvements can be delivered within existing approved revenue and capital budgets. However, where detailed assessment and costing of proposals indicate that extra investment is needed, funding should be sought from external sources such as Communities and Local Government Department or its Agencies as appropriate and, if required, it will also need to be considered as part of the Council's financial planning process. The proposed improvements and initiatives which require additional resources must not be undertaken until funding has been clearly identified and approved by Members.

9. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 9.1. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and advises that there are no specific legal implications arising out of recommendations.

10. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments

- 10.1. Fuel poverty impacts on a wide range of outcomes and is associated with a number of equalities issues. For example there are relationships between the level of fuel poverty and age and level of vulnerability; fuel poverty being most prevalent among elderly residents. There is also prevalence of fuel poverty among people single people under 60 and households with children.
- 10.2. A full Equality Impact Assessment is underway to fully investigate these relationships and to identify issues that need to be explored further.
- 10.3. It is anticipated that by working to reduce fuel poverty in the borough and meet residents' aspirations for warm homes and lower fuel bills the strategy will help to reduce disadvantage and inequality in the borough.

11. Consultation

11.1. The draft strategy was subject to a period of consultation from 15 June to 4 September. The main outcomes from the consultation were:

- The need for clear information via a 'one-stop-shop' approach as there is so much information available and it is quite often confusing
- To develop the multi-agency approach to deliver the action plan as the issue of fuel poverty is not just the responsibility of one organisation alone
- To form clear links with other strategies; for example the Council's Environmental Resources team identified that this strategy had the potential to meet their objectives for promoting energy efficiency.

11.2. The draft strategy has been amended to incorporate agreed comments that came out of the consultation process.

12. Service Financial Comments

12.1. The strategy's objectives will be mainly delivered within existing approved budgets. Where additional resources are required these will be sought from the CLG and/or through the Council's financial planning process. It is hoped that through a more coordinated and focused approach the strategy will increase the effectiveness of the council's activity in this area, and the value-added of partner contribution to our work and improve value for money.

13. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

13.1. A: Affordable Warmth Strategy

13.2. B. Action Plan

14. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable