



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**16 MARCH 2004**

Report of the Community Regeneration Commission

## **Derby's Affordable Warmth Strategy – First Annual Progress Report**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. To recommend that Council Cabinet a) welcome the Progress Report and good work described therein b) to not cut the budget for this valuable service and c) ensure the delivery of training for social workers and other key professionals to enable them to identify fuel poverty.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Affordable Warmth Strategy, AWS, was launched in September 2002 with the aim of eradicating fuel poverty, where a household spends 10% or more of its income on keeping warm, by 2016 or 2020. It requires multi-agency action for all tenures plus public awareness raising. In the base year 2001 it was estimated that about 27,500 Derby households (28.03%) suffered from fuel poverty. It is estimated that 4,082 households have been taken out of fuel poverty in the period to March 2003 which exceeds the target of 3,500 by March 2004. That achievement is worth celebrating.
- 2.2 The City Council's own Home Energy Advice Service, DHEAS, has two staff. Several of the AWS targets were not achieved last year due to a four-month gap when only one member of staff was in post. The (former) Environment and Sustainability Commission's topic review had warned that the "service is vulnerable in respect of staffing". Being mindful of the Council's tight financial situation, the Community Regeneration Commission therefore wish to log the importance of protecting the budget of DHEAS.
- 2.3 One of the targets was "make sure that front line workers have the resources to identify fuel poor households" which was not achieved "due to key DHEAS member of staff leaving in May 2003". With DHEAS comprising a team of only two when fully staffed, to spread the word on home energy investing time in awareness raising for a range of professionals should be a priority because of the potential multiplier effect. That also accords with a key conclusion in the (former) Environment and Sustainability Commission's topic review report (at page 31): "There needs to be much fuller use of agencies' dealings with householders to promote home energy efficiency".

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Commission decided to consider this first annual report because tackling fuel poverty is a key strand in promoting social inclusion. Improving heating in homes is a quality of life gain for the occupants *whilst* reducing outgoings on fuel leaves more disposable income so enabling more engagement in social activities.
- 3.2 Richard Murrell attended the Commission meeting and made a presentation on the key points in the report. He gave a balanced view of both the successes and the aspects that had not been achieved.
- 3.3 Regarding Reason 2.2, above, here is the full Environment and Sustainability Commission recommendation:

“2. Council Cabinet note that the service is vulnerable in respect of staffing; if no one was in post, as happened in 1999-2000, it would mean an impasse in the Council’s ability to promote energy efficiency and its ability to make HECA reports to Government. Later recommendations in this report on reporting by councils to government and for the Best Value targets to be set would, if accepted nationally, reinforce the need for continuity of staffing.”

Note: Council Cabinet have yet to respond to the topic review report.

- 3.4 Regarding Reason 2.3, above, here is the full entry from the AWS:

Objective	Key tasks	Partners	Target/ outputs	Timescale	Progress to date	Reason for not achieving
Make sure that frontline workers have the resources to identify fuel poor households	Run workshops on identifying fuel poor households and providing training in energy efficiency if appropriate. Provide literature on energy efficiency and assistance available.	Council workers, NEA	All frontline workers to have the necessary resources, and know how to identify and refer fuel poor households	Ongoing	Yet to happen	Due to key DHEAS member of staff leaving in May 2003

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**Background papers:** Derby’s Affordable Warmth Strategy 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Progress Report; Home Energy Conservation: How’s Derby Doing  
**List of appendices:** Appendix 1 – Implications

## IMPLICATIONS

### Financial

1. Maintaining the present level of funding means no change.

### Legal

- 2 The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 places a duty on local authorities like Derby to develop strategies to improve the energy efficiency of the domestic sector by 30% over 10 to 15 years and to report annually on progress. Unlike waste minimisation, recovery and recycling which carry Best Value targets, there are presently no sanctions on local authorities that fail to achieve progress. However, the (former) Environment and Sustainability Commission's report recommends that Derby City Council campaigns to have Best Value targets and sanctions introduced to the field of home energy efficiency.

### Personnel

3. The importance of staff continuity is explained above.

### Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change

4. The Affordable Warmth Strategy promotes three *Corporate Objectives*: • protecting and supporting people • a healthy environment • integrated, cost effective services and this *Priority for change* 8. Enhance the community leadership role of the Council both at strategic and neighbourhood level, through partnership working and listening to, and communicating, with the public.

