

COUNCIL MEETING ON 23 MARCH 2022

Amendment to Motion - Fuel Poverty

Proposed by Cllr J Cook

Delete all of the original motion and replace with the following:

Home Insulation Strategy

This Council recognises:

- As mentioned in the Cabinet's Housing Strategy paper, the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Outcome Delivery Plan 2021 to 2022 sets out Government aims for housing: Deliver more, better quality and greener homes.
- Over this Parliament, central government is investing over £3 billion to help improve energy efficiency in almost 500,000 low-income, fuel poor households, delivering average bill savings of nearly £300 every year with grants of up to £25,000.
- The existence of a strong, robust national Government scheme to tackle fuel poverty called the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). This scheme is administered by OFGEM and since its inception in 2013 has overseen the installation of insulation and efficient heating measures in 2.4 million properties across the U.K. installing more than 3.4 million measures.
- The ECO Scheme accounts for 97% of total measures installed under Government schemes. The estimated lifetime carbon savings from these schemes is approximately 59 MtCO₂. The impact on fuel poverty has been enormous with total lifetime bill savings for people who have benefitted from ECO estimated to be nearly £19bn.
- Local Authorities may participate in the ECO Scheme under the Local Authority flexible eligibility arrangements (LA Flex). This means that Local Authorities can help to identify fuel poor households within its Borough and ensure they qualify for free insulation and heating measures under the ECO Scheme. This gives the Local Authority an opportunity to engage with energy suppliers and other local companies to ensure that homes within the Borough get insulated. Calderdale Council has so far not taken sufficient advantage of these LA Flex arrangements under ECO to have a large enough impact locally.
- That under the statutory guidance "Conservation of fuel and power: Approved Document L" for Building Regulations has meant that since 2014, it has been illegal to build new homes in this country without adequate insulation. New homes are therefore no longer being built without adequate insulation.
- The Government has taken significant steps to decarbonise the energy network in this country and focus on renewable generation.
- Calderdale has benefited from the Green Homes Grant for Local Authority Delivery Schemes. Following Phase 1A and 2, 286 homes have benefited from this funding. Further funding has been secured for Phase 3; installation will commence in March 2022 up until March 2023.

This Council further recognises central government's package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate to help households with rising energy bills, worth £9.1 billion in 2022-23. This includes:

- A £200 discount on their energy bill this autumn for domestic electricity customers in Great Britain. This will be paid back automatically over the next 5 years.

- A £150 non-repayable rebate for households in England in council tax bands A to D, known as the Council Tax Rebate.
- £144 million of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate, known as the Discretionary Fund.

Finally, this Council acknowledges the Chancellor's announcement at the Spring Review. The current VAT relief for families installing energy saving materials like solar panels, heat pumps or insulation used to be more generous. But the European Court of Justice in 2019 forced us to add complex red tape which limited eligibility, removed certain items from qualifying, and restricts VAT relief to 5 per cent. Now we have left the EU, the government are using our Brexit freedoms to remove this 5 per cent VAT charge over the next five years, reverse the EU's decision to take wind and water turbines out of scope, and remove all the complex EU-imposed red tape. This adds up to a £250 million tax cut for energy efficiency. A typical family installing roof top solar panels will save £1,000 on installation, and then £300 annually on their energy bills.

This Council resolves to:

- Set up a large Calderdale Council-led scheme that utilises the existing Local Authority flexibility arrangements under the current Government ECO scheme to insulate 1000's of homes across the Borough in the next 12 months and have a real impact on fuel poverty.
- Work with energy suppliers and local businesses to set defined targets for the number of properties to be insulated across the Borough under the ECO Scheme.

Seconded by Cllr S Leigh MBE