

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Head of Corporate Organisation	Report Number: JSC/10/14
To: Joint Scrutiny Committee	Date of meeting: 28 May 2014

SCOPING OF A JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW ON FUEL POVERTY

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To enable Members to establish the scope of a Joint Scrutiny Review on fuel poverty in Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Joint Committee agrees the proposed scope of the review and undertakes the review.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications identified from this report.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 The nature of this report is such, that a risk management assessment is not needed

5. Consultations

N/A

6. Equality Analysis

- 6.1 This scoping document has no direct equality and diversity issues but the review should include consideration of whether there are any equality issues in relation to planning enforcement.

7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

The scoping document has no specific partnership implications although consideration of partnership working should form part of the review.

8. Key Information

- 8.1 To examine the understanding and impact of planning enforcement within the two Districts and the role of Members in planning enforcement. A proposed scoping document is attached as Appendix A to form the basis for discussion at the meeting.

9. Appendices

	Title	Location
A	Joint Scrutiny Committee – Fuel Poverty Review Scoping Document	Attached

10. Background Documents

See Appendix A

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Joint Scrutiny Committee – Fuel Poverty Review Scoping Document

Review Topic	Fuel Poverty
Lead members	Either Rachel Eburne / Peter Burgoyne; or nominated Members
Officer Support	To be confirmed
Rationale Key issues and reason for the review	<p>Fuel poverty affects nearly 8,000 households within the two Council districts.*</p> <p>The key factors that can contribute to fuel poverty are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The energy efficiency of the property (and therefore, the energy required to heat and power the home) 2. The cost of energy 3. Household income. <p>Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) and Babergh District Council (BDC) are able to impact on these three:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. through promoting energy efficiency measures 2. by lobbying government / Community energy companies 3. through increasing higher quality employment opportunities <p>although the Councils have the most direct impact on 1 and 3.</p> <p>Both of these fit within the Councils' strategic priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High standard of housing that is energy efficient... (Housing) - Vibrant, healthy... communities (Strong and Healthy Communities) - Investment... employment... more high value jobs (Economy and Environment)
Purpose of the review/Objective	<p>To examine the issues of fuel poverty within the two districts.</p> <p>To understand what the two district councils are doing and can do to reduce fuel poverty within the two districts.</p>
Success measures	Meet the objectives
Background information	<p>Definition of fuel poverty*</p> <p>Areas of fuel poverty within Mid Suffolk & Babergh districts (Census information)</p> <p>Previous MSDC and BDC Fuel Poverty strategies (MSDC's one was 2008 to 2010) – unless there are current ones</p> <p>Previous MSDC and BDC committee discussions (meetings held 21/2/12 Community Policy Panel and 24/2/12 Housing Panel respectively):</p> <p>http://apps.csduk.com/CMISWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=10953</p>

	<p>Details of existing work being done within the districts to address fuel poverty (energy efficiency programmes for example) and their success</p> <p>Details of various schemes – with outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm homes, healthy people - Green Deal - Other <p>Details of any other work being done.</p>
Methodology/ Approach	<p>Evidence to show extent of fuel poverty – mainly statistical.</p> <p>Evidence of current initiatives to improve this.</p> <p>What is currently being addressed and who / which area is addressing it?</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what further can MSDC / BDC do? - Should there be a fuel poverty target? - Where can MSDC / BDC go for further help? - How can member influence?
Resource requirements	To be agreed
Project parameters	Within scope of MSDC/BDC powers.
Specify Witnesses/ Experts/ Stakeholders	<p>Communities team – responsibility?</p> <p>SCC – similar</p> <p>Private sector housing</p> <p>Strategic housing</p> <p>Insulation company (MSDC / BDC partner)</p> <p>Housing Association</p> <p>Most relevant voluntary sector organisation?</p>
Specify Evidence Sources for	<p>For statistics: Suffolk Observatory / ONS / Defra / DECC</p> <p>For other: MSDC / BDC / SCC</p> <p>State of Suffolk and Suffolk Public Health reports</p>
Specify Site Visits	N/A

Note: Government definition of fuel poverty has recently changed (July 2013) and previously figures for BDC and MSDC were higher under the 10% rule (10% or more of net household income is required to be spent on heating the home to an acceptable level). Figures then, on average were BDC 15.4% and MSDC 17.5%. These still stand however fuel poverty is now measured differently.

Current Fuel Poverty definition:

“This new indicator finds a household to be fuel poor if:

- Their income is below the poverty line (taking into account energy costs); and
- Their energy costs are higher than is typical for their household type.”

- source: Fuel Poverty: A Framework for Future Action (DECC July 2013)

This report also states:

“Local authorities have a role to play in addressing fuel poverty and the Government has been working closely with the local government sector to help to improve the energy efficiency of fuel poor households.”

In 2010 around 18% of households in rural areas were in fuel poverty.

- source: Statistical Digest of Rural England 2014 (LGIU March 2014)

2011 statistics Suffolk average (ie: total – not just rural) of 11.4% (higher than Norfolk, Somerset, Tyne & Wear for example). BDC average 10.7% (4,021 households) MSDC average 9.7% (3,879 households)

- source: 2011 Sub-Regional Fuel Poverty data: low income, high costs indicator (DECC August 2013)

Government recently highlighted this issue in the March 2014 Budget announcement.