



REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	1 OCTOBER 2015
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES
TITLE OF REPORT:	FUEL POVERTY AND AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCRUTINY REVIEW
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the draft report of the scrutiny review of fuel poverty and affordable warmth.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members agree the final version of the report which is attached at annex A, with recommendation 6, 7 removed
- 2.2 That members agree the remaining recommendations arising from the review.
- 2.3 That members identify three possible topics for the next scrutiny review, with a scope for each being prepared for consideration at the next meeting of the committee.

3.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 3.1 There are no risks associated with the review.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has commissioned a review of fuel poverty in Ryedale. The members of the committee have met regularly as a task group and have prepared the report attached. When the report was presented to the committee an number of questions were raised and responses have been provided in this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The review has considered the views of partner organisations and research undertaken previously on this topic.

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 The detail of the work undertaken, the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made are all to be found in the report attached at Annex A. The report has been amended following the questions raised by the Audit Committee when the report was considered by them in July 2015.
- 6.2 The questions raised by the Audit Committee were as follows with a response provided for each:

Q1 What is the Council's responsibility for fuel poverty?

A1 The Council does not currently have a statutory responsibility to improve fuel poverty. It does however have a number of other obligations which are affected by fuel poverty including:

- The Housing Act 1985 Section 8 requires local authorities to periodically review the housing needs of its area in relation to housing conditions and the needs of the district. Further legislation requires that when authorities carry out a review under s. 8, that they have regard to the special needs of chronically sick or disabled persons and carry out reviews of accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers residing in or resorting to their district
- The Housing Act 2004 section 5 Places a duty on Local Authorities to take action where condition of a property can cause a risk to health of occupant, and cold is identified as such a hazard
- Home Energy Conservation Act - Using powers under section 5(1)(b) the Act the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change requires all English authorities to prepare reports setting out the energy conservation measures that the authority considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area and to report every two years on progress being made.
- The Council has agreed a priority to meet housing need in the Ryedale District Council area and to achieve this by changing and adding to the housing stock and by supporting people to access a suitable home or remain in their existing home.

Q2 Recommendation 6 – There was a view that we do this anyway and this is telling the planning committee something they already know.

A2 The recommendation can be removed from the report if members believe it is not required. If this is the case then members may want to also remove recommendation 7.

Q3 Recommendation 11 – “reduce social Isolation” – does this make sense and if so how?

A3 Social isolation is a major issue in North Yorkshire and contributes to a deterioration in the health and wellbeing of older people. Social isolation among older people is exacerbated by living in a cold home. Costly fuel bills prevent them from going out, they fear returning, already feeling cold, to a cold home, or they are reluctant to invite friends into a cold house. Older people who are unable to keep their homes warm, who have a health condition exacerbated by the cold or have sustained injuries due to the cold, may be at risk of requiring increased care or losing their independence.

Q4 Page 16 – living in larger homes.....terraced aren't the largest?

A4 The information referred to from the national fuel poverty diagram was included in the report to highlight that the factors which contribute to fuel poverty in Ryedale are not the same as those identified nationally. In Ryedale the housing stock type is as follows compared to the national average:

	GB%	Ryedale%	National Fuel Poverty Profile
Flat	24.3	7.8	12%
Terraced	24.5	19.8	37%
Semi-detached	30.7	31.7	31%
Detached	20.5	40.7	21%

A national study of fuel poverty is therefore likely to identify a very different profile of household from that in Ryedale. However the finding is consistent that those living in newer purpose built accommodation such as flats will be less likely to be living in a cold home as their home is newer and more thermally efficient. In Ryedale the mapping of the fuel poverty indicators supports the view that it is people living in the more remote areas in larger homes that are more likely to be living in a cold home.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Following agreement of the recommendations by the Committee, these will be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration by that Committee.
- 7.2 If the recommendations are agreed then a discussion is required to propose some topics for the next scrutiny review. Ideally two or three preferred topics would be agreed and a scope for each would be presented to the next meeting of the committee, with a view to agreeing a single topic.

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Background Papers: