

27 January 2022

Department for Corporate Core Services

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Letter sent via email to secretary.state@defra.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State,

Reference: Council Motion on Fuel Poverty

Bury Council at its Full Council meeting on 19 January 2022 debated a notice of motion in relation to fuel poverty.

The Council noted that:

1. Research from Friends of the Earth shows that 13% of households in Bury are living in fuel poverty – and heating homes accounts for 44% of local carbon emissions.
2. Rising energy prices will make this significantly worse, and the National Energy Action charity has warned that rising household energy bills could cause at least 2 million more homes to slip into fuel poverty.
3. All housing in our borough should be insulated to a minimum of EPC C standard with good quality loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, double-glazing and draught exclusion.
4. The Government have set a target to upgrade all housing to the above standard by 2030. To meet this target a total of 5,859 homes in Bury would need insulation upgrades each year.
5. The scale of this challenge is significant but at the same time we must make a commitment to end fuel poverty and excess carbon emissions from poorly insulated homes and develop a strategy to achieve this goal.

The Council resolved to:

1. Ensure that we are doing what we can as an Authority to provide advice and support to residents struggling through fuel poverty, and specifically ask for the appropriate Cabinet Member to bring a report to meetings of the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the next two months providing an update on the support the Council and its partners are able to offer.
2. Strengthen its procedures to enforce minimum standards of energy efficiency in the private rented sector – making sure landlords without an EPC certificate for their properties are fined, and properties with an inadequate EPC rating are prevented from being rented.

3. Publish a statement of intent and set locally appropriate eligibility criteria to access Energy Company Obligation funding via Local Authority Flexibility arrangements – allowing more vulnerable and low-income households in our area to access funding to better insulate their homes.
4. Ensure new housing is built to the highest possible energy efficiency standards through reviewing Local Plan policies and introducing additional Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure the use of low-carbon materials, heat pumps rather than gas heating systems, and renewable energy as much as possible.
5. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs asking that the Government adopt the recommendations relating to retrofitting homes and buildings in the Blueprint for a Green Recovery report published in January 2021.

Accordingly, I am writing to you in relation to this matter.

I look forward to your response so that an update can be provided to Members of Bury Council.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G P Little'.

Geoff Little OBE
Chief Executive