

NOTICE OF MOTION**GREEN GROUP****FUEL POVERTY**

“This Council notes with concern the impacts of the energy bill crisis faced by this country, with millions of people struggling to adequately heat their homes.

1 in 4 households in the UK are now in fuel poverty, meaning they need to spend more than 10% of their income on keeping their homes warm. The problem is likely to get worse with 1 in 3 households nationally projected to be in fuel poverty by 2016.

In Brighton and Hove nearly 16,000 households were calculated by DECC to be in fuel poverty in 2010. On the basis of the proportion of households in fuel poverty, our city is in the worst-performing 10% of Local Authorities in the South East including London.

Cold homes are damaging the health of vulnerable members of society, including children, older people and people with disabilities. Diseases such as asthma are made worse, and people are more likely to have strokes and heart attacks. Illnesses caused by cold homes cost the NHS nearly one billion pounds each year. Over the past five years, there have been on average 26,000 ‘Excess Winter Deaths’ in the UK; a far higher proportion of our population than in countries with a colder climate such as Norway and Sweden.

The main reasons for fuel poverty are that gas, oil and coal prices are high and rising, and that the UK’s homes are some of the most energy inefficient in Europe. Bringing the homes of the fuel poor up to the energy efficiency standards of homes built today would reduce their fuel bills by an average of 52%, taking the majority out of fuel poverty.

This Council welcomes the forthcoming Green Deal and ECO initiatives but considers them inadequate responses in the face of the urgency and scale of the fuel poverty crisis.

Further to the above, this Council:

- Asks Policy & Resources Committee to consider signing the Local Authority Fuel Poverty Commitment promoted by the End Fuel Poverty Coalition; (1)
- Calls on Secretary of State Ed Davey to recommit to the target that no household should be living in fuel poverty by November 2016;

- Calls on HM Treasury to use the funds raised from carbon taxes (the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and the Carbon Floor Price) to invest in a national programme to improve the heating and insulation standards of low income and fuel-poor households.

Proposed by: Cllr Ollie Sykes

Seconded by: Cllr Lizzie Deane

Supported by: Cllrs Bowden, Buckley, Davey, Duncan, Follett, Hawtree, Jarrett, Jones, Kennedy, A Kitcat, J Kitcat, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Phillips, Powell, Rufus, Shanks, Wakefield, West.

(1) Text available here: <http://bit.ly/QFeVZG>