

REPORT TO: Housing Committee – 20 August 2001

REPORT ON: Dundee Community Energy Partnership

REPORT BY: Director of Housing

REPORT NO: 534-2001

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Committee of the proposal to set up the Dundee Community Energy Partnership and to seek approval for the secondment of a member of staff from the Housing Department to Transco to manage the project for an initial period of 12 months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Dundee City Council join together with Transco and Scottish and Southern Energy Plc. (trading locally as Scottish Hydro) as the key partners in the Dundee Community Energy Partnership.
- 2.2. That a member of staff from the Housing Department is seconded to Transco Heat for the purpose of managing the Dundee Community Energy Project for an initial period of 12 months.
- 2.3. That the Housing Department purchases 4,000 NHER surveys and energy advice visits from the Claverhouse Group at a cost of £32,000, which can be met from the Housing Capital budget and the Scottish Executive Allocation for the Central Heating Initiative.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

£32,000 for the purposes of having NHER surveys and energy advice visits carried out to be met from the Housing Capital Budget and the Scottish Executive Allocation for the Central Heating Initiative.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the Dundee Community Energy Project is to identify energy efficiency measures specific to individual occupiers and properties with a view to identifying appropriate funding to have these measures carried out. This will result in savings in energy and reduction in CO² emissions into the atmospheres.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

By helping occupiers to save energy, they will also save money or achieve higher comfort levels for the same outlay. Therefore, this scheme will assist in the alleviation of fuel poverty and, thus, increase social inclusion.

6. BACKGROUND

Energy efficiency and fuel poverty are subjects which have risen up the political agenda over recent years. The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995, which came into effect in Scotland in December 1996, requires local authorities including Dundee to prepare and publish plans outlining how they intend to reduce energy use and CO² emissions from all domestic properties in their area. Biannual progress reports are also required.

The Department of Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR) issued a UK wide consultation document "The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy" earlier this year. The publication of this consultation document is the first explicit recognition by government of the existence of fuel poverty. However, the report has also been criticised for giving only a description of the current range of measures, grants and advice without bringing forward suggestions for improvement. One of the biggest criticisms is that there is a plethora of such measures and grants available, but no mechanism for ensuring a comprehensive area-based approach to tackling fuel poverty. One means of delivering comprehensive coverage is currently being piloted in England in the five so called "Warm Zones". Each of these Warm Zones is based on a close collaboration between Energy Companies, Local Authorities, Warm Zone Scheme Managers, Health Authorities, Local Businesses and Community and Voluntary Organisations. In each zone, a Core Management Team will create a comprehensive understanding of the fuel poverty agenda and provide the skills to identify the fuel-poor households and apply appropriate measures.

There is currently no equivalent Warm Zone structure in Scotland, but in recent discussions between the City Council, Transco and Scottish Hydro, the idea of a similar type of scheme in Dundee has been mooted and it is from this that the Dundee Community Energy Partnership has emerged. What is proposed is that the current partners form a small Management Group with a larger Steering Group made up of these three partners plus Energy Action Scotland, Lauder College, Claverhouse Group, EAGA Partnership and other interested parties, which will meet as and when required. The roles of each of these parties are as follows:

Transco & Scottish Hydro

Funders.

Dundee City Council

- Responsible for HECA and delivering and facilitating the installation of fuel poverty measures.

Claverhouse Group

- Will take on trainees under the Warm Deal who they will train, in partnership with Transco Heat, to carry out energy surveys.
- Also possible training for new recruits to the gas heating installation business to provide additional manpower resource to assist in delivering the Scottish Executive's Central Heating Scheme.

Lauder College, Dunfermline

- Work closely with Claverhouse in developing fast-track training courses for gas heating installers.

Energy Action Scotland

- Advisory capacity/provision of training courses.

E.A.G.A.

- Administration of Warm Deal in Scotland.

It will be necessary to appoint a Manager for this Scheme and Transco have agreed to fund this, but they have specifically requested the secondment of the Council's HECA Officer to this post. Under the Manager's overall guidance, Claverhouse trainees will carry out energy surveys of all properties across the area. These will be analysed and the best package of measures for each individual and property will be put together by utilising all existing funding resources.

One of the key components of any package will be the provision of good quality energy advice tailored to an individual's needs and circumstances. Indeed, this has been recognised by the Scottish Executive which has laid down that the provision of energy advice is a mandatory component of the package of measures to go along with the installation of heating under their Central Heating Initiative.

In purchasing this advice from the Claverhouse Group, Dundee City Council will be discharging its duties under the Central Heating Scheme and assisting tenants in getting the best out of their heating systems.

Health Board/Health Care Trusts have not hitherto been significant partners in the battle against fuel poverty, but it is hoped that links can be made with the Health Authorities in Dundee to further strengthen the Community Energy Partnership.

7. **CONSULTATION**

This report has been prepared after consultation with all Chief Officers and DFTA as well as Transco, Scottish Hydro, Claverhouse Group, EAGA and Energy Action Scotland.

ELAINE ZWIRLEIN
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

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Date _____