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date : 30 August 2005

Dear Mr Barnes

CONSULTATION 155/05a: SOCIAL ACTION STRATEGY CONSULTATION 155/05b: REVIEW OF SUPPLIERS' CORPORATE SOCIAL INITIATIVES

The Comhairle welcomed the opportunity to comment on OfGEM's Social Action Strategy.

In the Western Isles we have the highest prevalence of fuel poverty in Scotland and therefore probably in Britain. This is due to a combination of:

- High levels of Below Tolerable Standard housing - over 10% against the Scotland average of 1%.
- Poor energy efficiency of housing stock – average NHER figures well below 4.
- Cool, wet and windy climate year round.
- Estimated fuel range availability – no natural gas, high cost of oil and few electricity companies have appropriate tariffs or financial products.

From the 2002 Scottish House Condition Survey it is estimated that 34% of houses in the Western Isles were in fuel poverty.

Ways to reduce fuel poverty locally are a combination of:

- Increasing income of minimum pension guarantee, larger winter fuel allowance, getting more people into paid work.
- Reducing fuel costs by changing suppliers.
- Improving energy efficiency of the home – new boiler, increased insulation, etc.

Since 2002 works to houses to improve efficiency of the heating systems have resulted in more than 650 houses a year being improved with a consequent reduction in fuel poverty levels.

It is estimated that we are on track to reduce fuel poverty in line with the Scottish Executive target of 30% from the 2002 figure by 2006 (i.e. from 34% to 24%). However, the recent and ongoing increases in fuel costs may mean that the target will not be reached.

I note, with interest, the Review of Suppliers' Corporate Social Initiatives. With respect to ways that electricity suppliers could help in all areas such as most of the Highlands and Islands where there is no mains natural gas supply, I would suggest that they target their EEC funding to reduce fuel poverty. This should be done by working in conjunction with existing agents such as the EAGA partnership. A benefit to the electricity suppliers should be of no increase in quantity of electricity consumed.

I attach, for your information, a copy of the recently adopted Western Isles Fuel Poverty Strategy, which looks at the issues involved in more detail and sets out a way ahead. I would hope that you would find this document useful and could take steps through your own Social Action Strategy to assist those in fuel poverty in the Western Isles.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

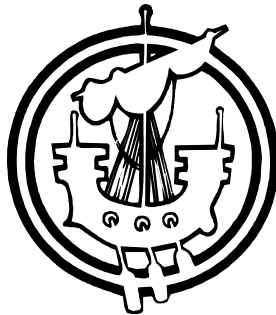
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Enc

Western Isles Fuel Poverty Strategy

Final Draft

30 June 2005



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Further Information

This Fuel Poverty Strategy and supporting appendices are available on the Comhairle's web site at www.cne-siar.gov.uk. The Comhairle can also make copies available in Braille, in tape format or in another language if required.

The future development of this Strategy relies on the contributions of residents and partners and we welcome your comments. All responses will be reviewed as part of our process for producing the revised Western Isles Local Housing Strategy in 2006.

For further information contact Matt Bruce with your views at: mbruce@cne-siar.gov.uk

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Western Isles Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is to provide a strategic framework for the future development of the whole housing system, so that needs and demands can be effectively prioritised and met. The LHS plans activity across all tenures, and is summarised in five themes and fourteen Objectives, one of which relates directly to Fuel Poverty. That is to “Reduce Fuel Poverty by 50% by 2009.” This Fuel Poverty Strategy builds on this Objective and identifies practical measures to achieve it.

Housing improvement has long been a central feature of our housing investment priorities across all tenures. The need for sustained action to improve housing conditions and reduce Fuel Poverty has been reiterated and reinforced through our:

- Corporate Strategy which has as one its priorities “ Enabling people to live in a warm, well maintained home and promoting high quality design and specification of houses and their components”.
- Community Planning Partnership, through its Well Being Forum which has the stated aim of “Providing warm, dry and energy efficient housing to 'barrier free' standards and address the Below Tolerable Standard housing stock”.

Creating warm homes is a major issue throughout the Western Isles where poorer climatic conditions relative to elsewhere in the UK, a high proportion of Below Tolerable Standard (BTS) housing and the high use of solid fuel fires contribute to the high cost of heating homes. As a result of the Home Energy Conservation 1995 Act we already have an initial strategy for improving domestic energy efficiency across all tenures.

Historically the condition of housing in the Western Isles has been a lot worse than the Scottish average. While good progress has been achieved over the last thirty years and the proportion of housing in the BTS category has been more than halved, there remains a lot more work to be done.

Securing the necessary investment to bring the Comhairle’s housing stock up to modern standards as quickly as possible has been the major factor underpinning our decision to seek the transfer of our own stock into Community Ownership.

A Local House Condition Survey of Private Sector stock was carried out early in 2004 to better inform the Comhairle of the current conditions which exist in the Western Isles. This Survey contained specific Fuel Poverty questions which are at present being analysed and therefore a comparison with the National Survey results should be available in the near future.

The results of the Scottish House Condition Survey 2002 released in April 2004 state that the Western Isles has the highest level of Fuel Poverty across all of Scotland, with 34% of households spending more than 10% of their household income on fuel costs.

The Scottish Executive has clearly stated its objective of eradication of Fuel Poverty as far as reasonably practical by 2016. Subject to review there is also a milestone measure of 30% eradication by 2006 from the figures shown in the SHCS 2002.

As the recorded levels of Fuel Poverty across Scotland average 13%, clearly there is much work to be done to ensure that "as far as reasonably practicable, that no household in the Western Isles is living in Fuel Poverty by 2016.

The Western Isles has a cooler, wetter and windier climate than most other areas of Scotland. The heating season lasts virtually year round. This represents a real challenge in the fight against fuel poverty as residents face higher fuel bills to achieve an acceptable degree of comfort.

Fuel Poverty is related to the age of the stock, with 30% of all dwellings built pre 1940 and also to the physical condition of the dwelling. As a result, the energy efficiency of properties in the Western Isles is very poor.

High domestic fuel costs also contribute to the high levels of fuel poverty in the Western Isles. The lack of natural gas to the Western Isles restricts the consumer to oil, electricity, solid fuel, or LPG. Finding alternative and sustainable sources of energy such as Hydrogen to reduce fuel costs will be a major challenge in tackling Fuel Poverty in the Western Isles over the longer term.

The use of better insulation and more efficient heating systems make the most of energy available, but the high cost of that energy in the Western Isles is still a problem leading to Fuel Poverty for many. The ongoing provision of information and advice on energy efficiency and income maximisation is therefore very important.

FUEL POVERTY OBJECTIVES

In recognition of the high levels of Fuel Poverty present in the Western Isles, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar has agreed that a separate strategy be produced to clearly set out the plan to achieve the eradication of Fuel Poverty. There are basically three ways to approach this problem;

- a) Improve the energy efficiency of our houses
- b) Increase the income of the poorer households
- c) Reduce the cost of fuel

This document explores the causes of Fuel Poverty locally and sets out five objectives to achieve the Scottish Executive target to eradicate Fuel Poverty as far as reasonably practicable by 2016. These objectives are:

Fuel Poverty Objective 1 – To carry out a 3-year assessment and monitoring project to establish which households or groups of households are likely to be in or fluctuate in and out of Fuel Poverty.

Fuel Poverty Objective 2: To further develop front line referral systems to ensure that help, advice and energy awareness training is offered to those households in or at risk of Fuel Poverty.

Fuel Poverty Objective 3: To develop housing improvement schemes to enable households in all tenures to achieve maximum energy efficiency in terms of heating, insulation and draught proofing and to encourage reductions in energy consumption.

Fuel Poverty Objective 4: To reduce the cost of fuel bills by developing schemes to exploit new and existing technologies capable of providing affordable warmth.

Fuel Poverty Objective 5: To lobby government and Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) suppliers to provide sufficient direct funding for the eradication of Fuel Poverty by 2016.

1.0 INTRODUCTION – WHAT IS FUEL POVERTY?

Fuel Poverty occurs when a household is unable to afford adequate warmth, due to the combined effects of low household income, inadequate and expensive forms of heating, poorly insulated homes with inadequate ventilation. A household is in fuel poverty when more than 10% of net income is spent on fuel.

1.1 DEFINITIONS

Section 89 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on all local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy for their area. This must address the main priorities of the Government, to improve the quality of life in Scotland by a strong commitment to social justice and reduction of poverty and deprivation.

Under Section 89 (5) (b) of the Act Local Authorities are also obliged to produce a Fuel Poverty Strategy that “ensures, so far as reasonably practicable, that persons do not live in fuel poverty.” It is specifically this section of the Act that this consultation document will address.

The Scottish Executive has adopted the following definition of fuel poverty:

“A household is in Fuel Poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (**including** housing benefit or Income Support for Mortgage interest) on all household fuel use.”

The definition of a ‘**satisfactory heating regime**’ is the level recommended by the World Health Organisation. For elderly and infirm households, this is 23°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms, to be achieved for 16 hours in every 24. For other households, this is 21°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms for a period of 9 hours in every 24 (or 16 in 24 over the weekend; with two hours being in the morning and seven hours in the evening.

As set out in the Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement (2003), ‘**Household Income**’ is defined as income before housing costs, to mirror the definition used in the UK Households below Average Income (HBAI) Statistics. See *Annex A*

Due to differing opinions on whether to include housing benefit and income support for mortgage interest the Executive has also agreed to monitor progress on the following definition of fuel poverty.

“A household is in Fuel Poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (**excluding** Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use.”

1.2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This section outlines the history of the legislative process and development of initiatives to improve energy efficiency and the growing awareness of the issues associated with Fuel Poverty.

Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) – introduced December 1996

Local authorities were set a suggested level for improving energy efficiency in residential accommodation by 30% in a period of 10-15 years from 1 April 1997.

Councils must produce progress reports every two years. The 2003-2005 report will be due for submission by 31 January 2006.

The Warm Deal – introduced 1 July 1999

Householders who are in receipt of certain income, or disability related benefits may be eligible for a grant of up to £500 for energy saving measures, under the Warm Deal scheme, such as cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing and energy advice, which could help make further savings on the household income – 25,000 will benefit annually.

Prior to Warm Deal a scheme called HEES was in operation from 1996. HEES offered similar measures although the standards which were relevant during this scheme have been superseded. As a result some properties which benefited from HEES may not meet current recommended standards and may require further efficiency measures.

Approximately 200,000 households in Scotland have benefited from Warm Deal between July 1999 and December 2004. Predicted annual fuel bill average reductions of between £30-£126 have been made for those households.

Figures for the Western Isles are running at 340 houses a year for Loft Insulation and 120 houses a year for Cavity Wall Insulation.

The Central Heating Programme – Introduced 1 April 2001

The Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement states that, by the end of March 2004, all Local Authority and by the end of 2004 all Housing Association properties will have central heating. Also under this Programme all private sector elderly households will have central heating by April 2006. Properties where Central Heating is installed under this scheme must also have the full range of insulation measures installed wherever possible.

The Central heating Programme has been extended to include over 80's who have a partial or ineffective heating system installed.

A "central heating system" is defined as a system which provides warmth to two or more rooms through a series of connected radiators or ducts linked to a central boiler, or from a series of electric storage heaters and controlled from one central point.

In 2001/02, 8,508 central heating systems were installed throughout Scotland. The resultant predicted reduction in the average annual fuel bills for these homes varies between £294 and £357.

In the Western Isles 495 central heating systems had been installed by March 2005, and a further 175 programmed during 2005/6.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Local Authorities must inform The Scottish Ministers of the measures which they and have taken, are taking and intend to take for the purpose of ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that persons do not live in fuel poverty..

The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy – published November 2001

The first priority is to ensure that by 2010 no older householder, no family with children, and no householder who is disabled or has a long-term illness need risk ill health due to a cold home. In 2000 there were 3 million such households in the UK.

In 1996 there were thought to be about 5.5 million fuel poor households in the UK. Latest estimates, on a comparative basis, suggest that this figure fell to around 3 million in 2001. Much of this progress is thought to be due to changes in incomes and energy prices.

The Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement – published August 2002

The overall objective is to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that people are not living in fuel poverty in Scotland by November 2016.

Outcome milestones:

By 2006, to have achieved a 30% reduction in total numbers of people in fuel poverty in Scotland as shown in the 2002 SHCS;

By 2010, to have achieved a further reduction in the total numbers of people in fuel poverty in Scotland between 2006 and 2010 (targets to be quantified using 2002 SHCS data).

Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) – introduced April 2002

The Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) for 2002 to 2005 is due to end in March 2005.

The Electricity and Gas (Energy Efficiency Obligations) Order 2004 (the Order), which provides the statutory basis for the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) 2005 – 2008, came into force on 23 December 2004. The Order sets an overall target of 130 TWh for the promotion of improvements in energy efficiency in relation to domestic consumers from 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2008. Under the Order suppliers will be set an energy efficiency target, determined by Ofgem, to be achieved by 31 March 2008.

This new EEC Commitment represents an increase of 110% over the EEC 2002 – 2005 commitment of 62TWh.

“Our energy future – creating a low carbon economy” Energy White Paper – A Summary – published February 2003

This underlined the UK government commitment to eradicate fuel poverty (including the provision that every home is adequately and affordably heated), improve energy efficiency (in business, the public sector and households), and develop the present EEC scheme.

The above information was compiled by Energy Action Scotland in the “Fuel Poverty Today” report published November 2003.

Maintaining Houses - Preserving Homes: Consultation on Legislative Proposals on Private Sector Housing – Consultation ended October 2004

The legislative proposals that were being consulted on largely arose from the recommendations of the Housing Improvement Task Force. The areas covered include local authority powers to deal with defects and disrepair in private sector housing; changes to the Tolerable Standard for housing; a new approach to area renewal; financing and supporting repair works; and providing better information for home buyers. There were also proposals on improving standards in the private rented sector and on mobile homes.

1.3 EFFECT ON HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The effect of fuel poverty on health has been increasingly recognised. The Government commissioned “Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health” identified poor housing as a factor in health inequality and specifically recommended improved heating and insulation standards to address this issue. These findings are also supported in a report “fuel poverty + health” written by Dr Vivienne Westwood.

Nationally there is a need for greater co-operation between the social work, education, health, housing and energy efficiency sectors. A recent report by the British Medical Association states that “multiple housing deprivation appears to pose a health risk that is of the same magnitude as smoking and, on average, greater than that posed by excessive alcohol consumption due to the complex interaction between housing and health, there is a need to develop cogent, workable and sustainable programmes. Provision of a reasonable standard of accommodation for all, will have health benefits for the most disadvantaged in society; in the long term it may even lower health care costs”.

On average 40,000 more people die in a British winter than over the rest of the year and it is likely that several thousand of these are associated with cold conditions in homes. Heart attacks, strokes, respiratory illnesses and accidents can be exacerbated by living in poorly heated damp and badly ventilated homes or by not being able to run affordable heating.

Energy Action Scotland, Fuel Poverty Today November 2003

Research undertaken by the fuel poverty charity, Energy Action Scotland and the University of Strathclyde was published in January 2004, shows that poverty is the main contributory cause of premature death among the elderly in Scotland.

Findings show that the rise in the death rate of the over 65 age group during the winter months is directly linked to levels of poverty, measured by region. During the period 1997 to 2002, Scotland registered 16,660 excess winter deaths (EWD). EWD is taken as the additional deaths recorded during December to March than those which occurred in the preceding and subsequent four month periods) in the population over 65. In 2003 the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) attempted to measure five key parameters by region: income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training and geographical access to services.

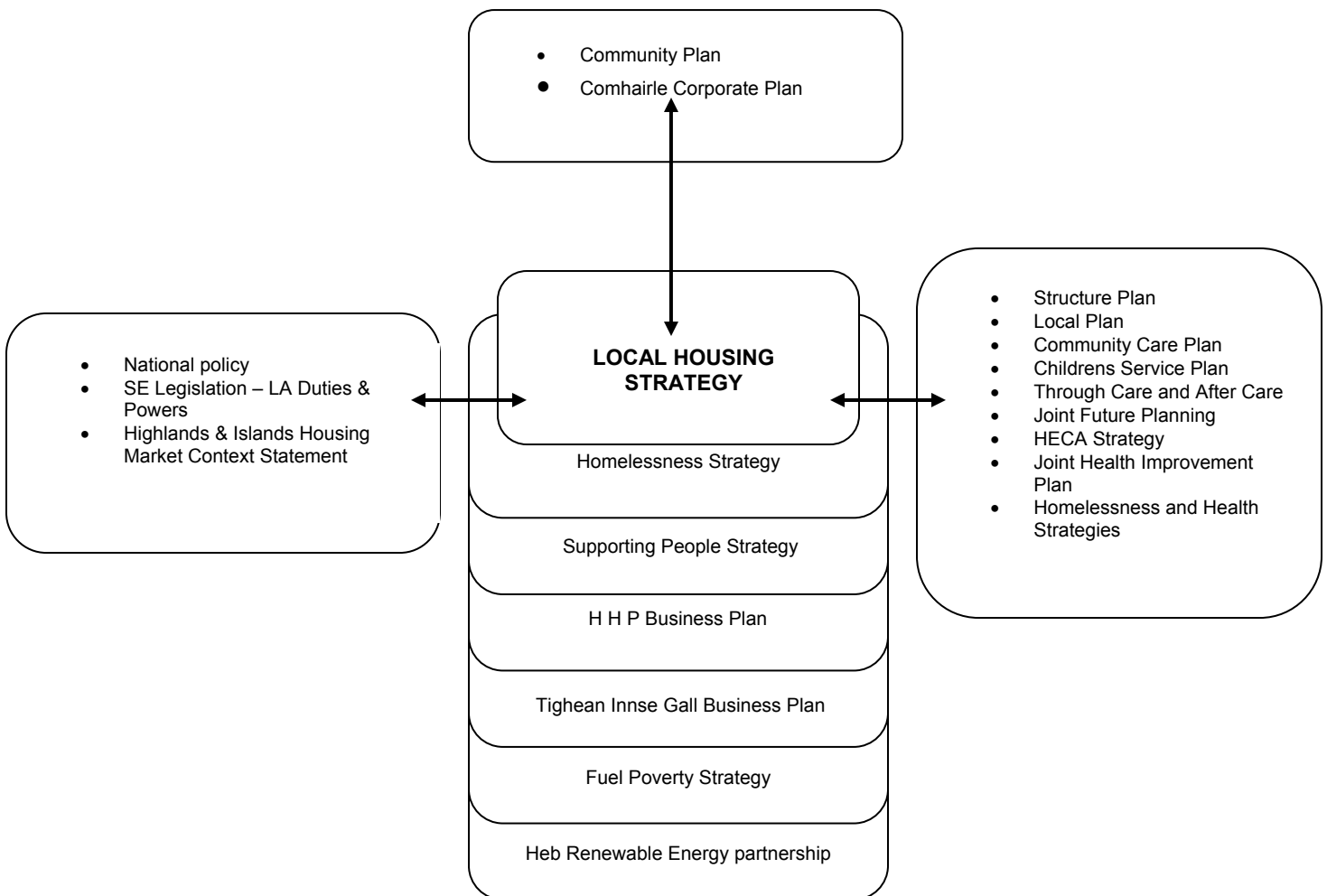
The summary to these research findings conclude that “Although some of the additional winter deaths have been ascribed to outdoor cold exposure – exacerbated by inappropriate clothing levels or culturally determined behaviour – the majority of these deaths are premature and essentially preventable, if the elderly can be kept warm in their homes during the winter months”.

Cold stress caused by poorly insulated homes and lack of an adequate heating regime will increase the likelihood of excess winter deaths registered under heart, stroke and respiratory diseases.

Having regard to the above methods of monitoring and data collection the statistics suggest that there is an increased risk of cold related illnesses for the elderly, associated with the winter season. Further information on the variation in climatic conditions across Britain is available from the Carbon Trust (www.thecarbontrust.co.uk)

1.4 LINKS TO OTHER LOCAL AND NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The main body of the Fuel Poverty Strategy document is published as an appendix to Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar’s Local Housing Strategy Update 2005. The Key Aims and Objectives of the Fuel Poverty Strategy are as outlined in the Local Housing Strategy; this in turn links through to the main strategies as shown below:



1.5 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CnES ACTIONS UNDER THE HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995

Specific Proposals the Comhairle approved as actions to support within the first five years of the Home Energy Conservation Act were:

1. Promotion of Condensing Gas Boilers.
2. Including Cavity Wall insulation as a method of increasing energy efficiency to properties where it is suitable.
3. Promotion of Roof insulation work to bring older houses up to present roof insulation standards. This will include investigating ways to provide grant assistance to make it a more attractive proposition to private householders.
4. Promotion of pipe and tank lagging work to control heat losses in central heating and domestic hot water systems.
5. Promotion of Draught stripping work to houses.
6. Ensuring that all Council houses have two CFL lamps, and encouraging all households to install a minimum of two similar lamps.
7. Assistance through arms length organisations to support energy saving schemes promoted by Hydro Electric plc. and any other Energy Supplier working in the islands.
8. Promotion of "Fridge Savers" scheme, and extension of it to include Freezers if possible.
9. Continuing with Repair Grants being available for window replacement, and including for low E glass or K glass to be specified.
10. Training for teaching staff to allow them to include energy efficiency in the Scottish Education Departments "5 to 14" Curriculum.

1.6 PROFILE OF FUEL POVERTY LOCALLY

To assess the extent of fuel poverty locally reference is made to the results of the Local Authority data from the Scottish House Condition Survey (402), the local Private Sector House Condition Survey (586) and the biennial Home Energy Conservation Act Progress Reports. The recent House Condition Surveys have jointly surveyed 988 houses which represents a potential total of 7.37 % of the total housing stock in 2003 of 13400. The robust data collated from these three sources will combine to achieve a reasonable overview of the profile of fuel poverty in the Western Isles.

The figure of 13,400 is the total housing stock recorded in 2003, both occupied and unoccupied in the Western Isles, while the number of households at that time was 11,670.

During the compilation of this Strategy, a breakdown of Fuel Poverty at council ward level was issued, which indicates a variation in levels of Fuel Poverty across the Western Isles. Of the 31 council wards there are 5 wards identified as being most at risk of Fuel Poverty – Port of Ness, Coulregrein and Bayhead in Stornoway, Harris East and Daliburgh and Eriskay.

1.7 LOCAL AFFORDABLE WARMTH COMMITMENT

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar's Local Housing Strategy recognises that access to good quality and affordable housing is fundamental to social inclusion and the well being of people in the Western Isles. This is reinforced by the: -

- Corporate Strategy which has as one its priorities “ Enabling people to live in a warm, well maintained home and promoting high quality design and specification of houses and their components”.
- Community Planning Partnership, through its Well Being Forum which has the stated aim of “Providing warm, dry and energy efficient housing to 'barrier free' standards and address the below tolerable standard housing stock”.

The purpose of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar's Fuel Poverty Strategy is to work within the framework of the Local Housing Strategy in achieving joint aims and objectives. In particular, to determine how we are to ensure that no household in the Western Isles should have to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to keep comfortably warm.

1.8 KEY GROUPS AND PARTNERS

The Comhairle Departments involved in preparing this Strategy have been Housing and Sustainable Communities. The Western Isles NHS Board and Western Isles Enterprise have also been informed via the Well-being Forum of the Community Planning Partnership. The Strategy document was prepared by the HECA officer for the Comhairle together with the Fuel Poverty Forum and Tighean Innse Gall, the housing development agency that delivers a lot of the energy efficiency and insulation work on behalf of the Comhairle.

2.0 CAUSES OF FUEL POVERTY

The widely recognised causes of Fuel Poverty and hence the issues to be tackled to achieve this objective are:

- Energy Efficiency of the housing stock
- Household income
- Domestic fuel costs
- Provision of advice and information on domestic heating systems
- The use of renewable technology in housing in the Western Isles

Additional reasons for high levels of Fuel Poverty in the Western Isles are the poor quality of a high proportion of the housing stock (as reflected in the high level of Below Tolerable Standard housing), under occupation of private sector stock and the long heating season due to the harsh climate and northerly latitude.

2.1 ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF LOCAL HOUSING STOCK

As an Energy Conservation Authority and Energy Innovation Zone the objectives of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar's Energy Efficiency Strategy, as stated in the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995) Report to the Secretary of State for Scotland dated December 1997, were to achieve an overall 29.5% improvement in energy efficiency over the following ten years.

Progress is reported on a biennial basis to the Scottish Executive with the third HECA Progress Report submitted to Communities Scotland in 2004. Locally collated data outputs over the period 1997 to the last reported figures for March 2003 are shown below in Annex B.

The target of achieving a 30% improvement in energy efficiency by the year 2006 will reduce the baseline data set in 1997 (total number of dwellings of 13400), from nominal energy use of 1,520,787 (GJ) to 1,064,661 (GJ) by the year 2007.

The HECA Act and Strategy concentrates on reducing energy use in the domestic housing of the Western Isles. Methods used to monitor the HECA targets will contribute to monitoring progress towards meeting the target of eradication of Fuel Poverty in the Western Isles as far as reasonably practical by 2016.

The cumulative totals reported in the HECA Third Progress Report for the total percentage change from 1997-2003 shows that the Western Isles has achieved a 9.94% reduction in energy consumption over the period.

Energy efficiency measures installed and recorded for HECA are due to CnES supported and EAGA sub-contractor organisation Taigh Blath (gaelic for “warm house”) that delivers the “Central Heating Programme” and the Warm Deal package and also The Energy Advisory Service (TEAS/ gaelic for “heat”) to households in the Western Isles. The Comhairle also financially supports Taigh Blath to undertake energy efficiency works to houses. These projects work together with Scottish and Southern Energy plc and other energy companies to assist as many houses as possible through Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) funding.

2.2 DOMESTIC FUEL COSTS

Electricity costs are market led and are outwith the control of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar. As an island chain the choice of domestic fuel is limited to Electricity, Oil, Coal, Peat and LPG (mains, bulk, bottled).

On the mainland natural gas is widely regarded as the least expensive form of fuel and the preferred choice for helping to reduce fuel poverty. Recent price increases and concerns on security of supply have weakened this case, but natural gas is used by over 50% of all homes in Scotland. The Western Isles has no access to this fuel. An extension of the mains natural gas network to the Western Isles is not feasible due to the lack of critical mass and the high costs associated with the installation of a supply network off the Scottish mainland.

In Stornoway there are 1200 properties connected to the town gas supply (propane). There are also 3 small rural housing schemes with communal LPG tanks supplying a total of 25 properties. The unit costs of all these gas supplies is more expensive than natural gas.

Average prices for gas and electricity had fallen by 11 per cent and 21 per cent respectively in real terms in the five years to the middle of 2002. Prices in real terms for coal and smokeless fuels, and heating oils rose by 1 per cent and 8 per cent respectively in this period. Since 2003 the cost of all fuels has risen by more than inflation, and price rises at above inflation figures are now predicted to continue.

This indicator shows changes in fuel prices paid by domestic customers throughout the UK in real and cash terms. VAT was introduced on domestic fuel at 8 per cent in April 1994 and was reduced to its current rate of 5 per cent in September 1997. Tight price controls throughout the 1990s on gas and electricity prices and the introduction of competition in the past few years have contributed significantly to the lower gas and electricity bills customers have enjoyed. The impact of competition and the introduction of the British Electrical Transmission and Trading Arrangements (BETTA) may continue to exert downward pressure on prices, although other factors also affect the cost of fuel to customers.

In particular, rises in the price of crude oil during 2000 – 2004 have been the biggest contributor to the rise in the price of heating oils. Wholesale gas prices have risen sharply and this has also affected the price of gas paid by domestic customers which has risen by 3 per cent in real terms between Quarter 2, 2001 and Quarter 2, 2002.

The cost of domestic fuel supplied to the Western Isles is recognised as outwith the control of the local authority. The Comhairle is committed however to exploring any alternative and renewable energy sources that offer the prospect of reducing the cost of fuel or heating bills.

2.3 INFLUENCES AFFECTING DOMESTIC FUEL COSTS

The Regional Electricity Companies' tariffs provide some room for flexibility and the opportunity exists for individual households to shop around for the best deals to suit their requirements. Unfortunately the best deals are not always available to the less affluent members of society and it is this marginalisation which CnES would like to see reduced therefore enabling the most vulnerable households to take advantage.

2.4 THE USE OF RENEWABLE TECHNOLOGY IN HOUSING IN THE WESTERN ISLES

The Western Isles community based Housing Associations are active in piloting renewables in their new build social housing developments by implementing their sustainability policy with specific measures for sustainability and renewables in the design. The schemes will be evaluated during the next few years to measure progress towards providing low energy costs through the use of renewable energy resources.

Embracing small scale domestic renewables can also be used in Fuel Poverty mitigation. Embracing renewable technology can help reduce the overall household energy costs associated with living in the Western Isles, where fuel costs are traditionally higher. Capital grant aid funding for renewables has been provided by the HIE Community Energy Company for Housing Association projects but the capital cost of renewable energy installations for private householders is still a major issue.

Historically the Comhairle had invested in solar energy assisted housing in 3 schemes. These projects have been useful pilots in developing experience in low fuel use housing.

The CnES Technical Services Department has incorporated renewable energy sources in the recent new build community projects:-

	PV	SWH	WIND	HP	Passive Glazing	Low Grade Circuits	
Aird Ma Ruibhe Waiting Rooms	X		X				Stand alone system
Sir E Scott School	X	X			X	X	
Sporsnis Centre	X		X	X	X	X	
South Uist Care Dev			X	X	X	X	
Gearrannan Village				X		X	
Barra Waiting Rooms	X	X	X				
Claddach Kirkibost Centre	X	X		X	X	X	
Cothram Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Six Community Centre Projects	X	X	X	X	X	X	At early feasibility stage

PV= photo voltaic SWH = solar water heating WIND = windmills to generate electricity
HP = heat pumps Passive Glazing = windows oriented to the sun Low Grade Circuits = large radiators

These projects will be assessed to consider if the use of renewable energy can provide well heated buildings with fuel prices significantly lower than conventional heating.

Renewable energy is of increasing importance in the Comhairle's proposals for all new buildings.

2.5 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

One of the main factors affecting a household's vulnerability to Fuel Poverty is its income.

According to the Scottish House Condition Survey 2002 the median average income in the Western Isles is £13,200 compared to the all Scotland median average of £14,500. The Western Isles ranks 29th out of 32 local authorities down the scale of median average income with the highest in East Dunbartonshire at £19,700 and the lowest in Glasgow at £12,000.

Household type by Average Annual Income.

Average Annual Income by type of Household			
	Families	Pensioners	Other
Western Isles	£ 18,700	£ 8,400	£ 13,000
Scotland	£ 20,000	£ 10,000	£ 15,000

LA SHCS 2002

3.0 EXTENT OF LOCAL FUEL POVERTY

Local conditions which contribute to the main causes of fuel poverty are climate, location, house construction and economic constraints existing within the islands. Pensioners occupy 32% of all Western Isles households of which 84% are banded NHER 1-5. The situation is similar for families who occupy 40% of households of which 80% are NHER 1-5. The climatic conditions alone, prevalent in the Western Isles, contribute directly to a 25% longer heating season.

3.1 THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DATA FROM THE SCOTTISH LOCAL HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY (2002)

The Local Authority data for the Scottish Local House Condition Survey (SHCS) released in November 2003 has identified 34% of households in the CnES area as living in fuel poverty. The Western Isles has the highest percentage figure for households living in fuel poverty in the whole of Scotland against the Scottish average of 13%.

The SHCS 2002 Local Authority Report data for the Western Isles is based on a sample size of properties. This local information has been supplemented by a further Private Sector House Condition Survey (PSHCS) based on an additional 586 properties commissioned by CnES. These figures combined give a total sample size of 7.37% of the actual stock receiving a full survey in 2002 – 2004.

The Local Authority Data for the SHCS also reported that 8% of properties have no central heating system, with almost all of those in the NHER band of poor to moderate (rated 1-5).

The National Home Energy Rating (NHER) assesses energy efficiency of a dwelling on a scale of 0 (poor) to 10 (excellent). The rating produced reflects the total fuel costs per square metre of the floor area of the dwelling required to achieve an adequate overall temperature. It also includes a locality factor.

A high NHER score denotes a dwelling which needs less energy to achieve a given temperature standard, the rating is assessed on the performance of the dwelling alone and is therefore not dependant on the heating patterns selected by the occupants. The NHER is the preferred methodology in Scotland for assessing energy efficiency.

	THE WESTERN ISLES		ALL SCOTLAND	
Median Income	£ 14,600		£ 14,500	
NHER	1-5	6-10	1-5	6-10
Tenure Private	68 %	14 %	37 %	33 %
Tenure Public	12 %	6 %	12 %	18 %
	THE WESTERN ISLES		ALL SCOTLAND	
Age of Dwelling				
NHER	1-5	6-10	1-5	6-10
Pre War	28 %	2 %	22%	13%
Post War	54 %	16 %	27%	39%
	THE WESTERN ISLES		ALL SCOTLAND	
Difficulty in Heating Home	43 %		31 %	
Fuel Poor	34 %		13 %	
	THE WESTERN ISLES		ALL SCOTLAND	
Central Heating				
Full Central Heating	76%		87 %	
Partial Central Heating	15 %		8 %	
Room Heaters/Other	9 %		5 %	
NHER	THE WESTERN ISLES		ALL SCOTLAND	
	1-5	6-10	1-5	6-10
Full/Partial Central Heating	74 %	18 %	44 %	51 %
No Central Heating	5 %	0 %	5 %	0 %

Source: Communities Scotland - Scottish House Condition Survey 2002

Key Data from the Local Authority Data for the Scottish House Condition Survey (LA) SHCS indicates that not only does the Western Isles have the highest percentage of households in Fuel Poverty, we also have the third highest percentage of properties with a poor to moderate NHER banding of 1- 5 at 82%, with Orkney at 89% and Shetland at 90%.

The Western Isles has the second highest proportion of private sector housing (68%) in the whole of Scotland assessed as in the NHER band of 1-5 (poor to moderate) rating for energy efficiency, compared with the all Scotland figure of 37%.

The Western Isles lies in third place with only 76% of properties having full central heating compared to the all Scotland figure of 87%.

These statistics confirm that in the Western Isles there is a major issue with hard to heat homes due to the traditional mixed form of construction of properties and factors associated with the age of dwelling and lack of a full central heating system.

Of all the properties in the Western Isles 24% have an NHER of 0-2, 68% received an NHER rating of 3-6, with only 7% found to have an NHER in bands 7-10.

NHER Score (banded)						
	0-2		3-6		7-10	
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
The Western Isles	3	24	8	68	1	7
All Scotland	176	8	1309	60	679	31

A total of 76% of households in the Western Isles have a full central heating system, 15% have partial central heating and 9% have no central heating. The Western Isles has the highest rate of dissatisfaction with their heating systems at 16% compared to the Scottish average of 10%.

In addition to this 43% of households say that they have difficulty in heating their home. Clearly there is a long way to go to improve the energy efficiency of homes in the Western Isles, both in terms of insulation and installation of high efficiency heating systems. Oil fired boilers tend not to be as efficient as modern gas condensing boilers, so insulation levels will have to take this into account.

Satisfaction with Heating			
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral/Don't Know
The Western Isles	79 %	16 %	5 %
All Scotland	87 %	10 %	4 %

SHCS 2002

3.2 LOCAL PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY RESULTS

The local Private Sector House Condition Survey (PSHCS) 2004 was carried out by CnES. In conjunction with the PSHCS a socio-economic survey was also carried out which included a number of points of relevance to the Fuel Poverty Strategy; house condition, likely fuel costs and household income. This data is still to be validated, but will be used as a basis for further investigation as part of a fuel poverty mapping exercise in the Western Isles.

The following results correlate overall with the Local Authority data from the Scottish House Condition Survey with some slight variations but nevertheless highlighting the key areas where improvements can be made to the energy efficiency of the dwelling.

The general trend over the last three surveys has shown a gradual improvement in the housing stock in the Western Isles. The level of houses falling Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS) has decreased from 21% in 1997 to an estimated figure of just over 10% according to the PSHCS (2004). The Scottish average in 2003 was 1%, so the level of BTS properties in the Western Isles is still at least 10 times higher than the national average.

Between April 2002 and January 2005 more than 600 over 60s Central Heating Programme (CHP) clients have received new installations. The over 60s Central Heating Programme provides for grant assisted heating and insulation at no cost to the client with no form of means test applied. Research has been commissioned by the Scottish Executive to establish if the scheme is helping to lift households out of Fuel Poverty. The results of this research will give robust data which will assist with identifying those households most likely to be lifted out of fuel poverty by the installation of energy efficiency measures and the benefits health check element of the scheme.

However there is no measure provided for within the Central Heating Programme for tackling those properties classed as "hard to heat", such as solid wall houses with no capacity for cavity wall insulation. Discussions are currently underway to consider whether to broaden out the scheme criteria to include those clients that have partial heating and also to those with disabilities in the next phase of the programme after the year 2006/07.

3.3 PEOPLE IDENTIFIED AS MOST AT RISK

- Older people and those with disabilities need to spend more on fuel to maintain a “satisfactory heating regime” and are more likely to be on a fixed income and less likely to be able to carry out energy efficiency improvements to their homes:
- Single parents and single occupants are more likely to have a lower income per household, especially those households with young children where more needs to be spent on fuel to maintain a “satisfactory heating regime”. In the Western Isles over 40% of households are single occupants and this percentage is predicted to increase.
- Under-occupation occurs when household numbers are smaller than the property size dictates, thus leading to higher fuel costs per occupant. This is particularly prevalent in the Western Isles where many people either inherit a property which is too large for them but because of family links do not wish to move or because the children have grown up and left home for educational or employment reasons.

4.0 OPTIONS IDENTIFIED TO TACKLE FUEL POVERTY

There are three principle methods recognised for alleviating fuel poverty:

- a) Improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock.
- b) Increase the income of the poorest households.
- c) Reduce the cost of fuel.

4.1 IMPROVE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF HOUSING

Measures related to the condition of housing are:

- To ensure take up of the over 60s Central Heating Programme is maximised, this programme provides the installation of free heating and insulation funded by the Scottish Executive. There is no element of means-testing, the only requirements are that an applicant is over 60 and has no working central heating system. The scheme was broadened out in the year 2004/05 to allow a different option for the Over 80s.
- To ensure the Warm Deal Grant take up is maximised. Grant and interest free loan assistance to encourage investment by owner occupiers for heating and insulation. Grant and interest free loan assistance to encourage investment by private landlords for heating and insulation.
- To research and implement methods of treating hard to heat homes where cavity insulation is not possible.
- Private Sector Housing Grant to fund improvement, repair and adaptations to properties.
- To ensure that full advantage is taken of funding initiatives such as the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), which provides grants for insulation based on type of house and choice of fuel for the standard insulation measures of loft insulation and cavity wall infill.
- To ensure householders receive impartial and quality advice on energy suppliers and fuel switching schemes.
- To consider forthcoming changes in legislation in the provision of Energy Efficiency Certification of Domestic properties.
- To work towards achieving the Scottish Housing Quality Standard particularly the energy efficiency requirements.

4.2 REDUCE FUEL COSTS

The reduction of fuel costs is important to the fuel strategy. Unfortunately it is not possible to directly influence fuel costs but the following options will be researched to evaluate those that may be viable in the Western Isles.

- To change transportation methods or costs for fuel
- To change the fuel used.
- To investigate community fuel purchase schemes
- To investigate options for local energy generation at a lower cost
- To investigate community Renewable Energy schemes.
- To investigate local, alternative tariffs.
- To investigate domestic renewables.

4.3 INCREASE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Increasing the level of household income is largely out with the scope of the Local Authority however assistance can be given to ensure that income is maximised as far as possible.

The following issues have been identified as areas where improvements can be made.

- Take up of benefit health checks, these have been proven to be effective in some cases. Results collated by Eaga Partnership Ltd, managing agents for the Warm Deal and over 60s Central Heating Programme have shown that of those who completed their benefits check, 42% reported that they had acted on the advice given and were better off as a result.
- Project to assess the impact of the Warm Deal and Central Heating Programme in the Western Isles administered by Taigh Blath.
- Awareness of existing services such as the Local Citizens Advice Bureaux to help with debt prevention and management.
- Maximise take up for the winter fuel allowance, in particular for those between the ages of 60 and 65.
- Maximise take up wherever possible in national energy efficient appliance replacement programs as funded by the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) or otherwise.
- Raise awareness of pension credit.

5.0 ACTION PLAN/ LOCAL TARGETS/ AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Local Housing Strategy has identified five themes with fourteen strategic objectives. These objectives have been developed to address the main housing issues in the Western Isles. The Warm Homes theme specifically addresses the issues surrounding Fuel Poverty.

Warm Homes

1. Ensure that at least 70% of the social rented stock achieves the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2009
2. Improve stock condition in the private sector by 2009
3. Reduce Fuel Poverty by 50% by 2009

To work towards the targets as set by the Scottish Executive “to eradicate fuel poverty as far as reasonably practical by 2016” and the interim target of “30% eradication by 2006”, we need to set clear targets and objectives. A key objective is to establish firm links with existing strategies and to demonstrate corporate commitment by Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar. To achieve this CnES has established a Fuel Poverty Assessment and Monitoring Project to investigate the issues surrounding Fuel Poverty in the Western Isles. The project aims to provide as accurate a picture as possible of the prevalence of fuel poverty in the Western Isles and has an ongoing commitment to monitoring and addressing Fuel Poverty through the medium of referrals to relevant agencies and organisations. The Fuel Poverty Forum will develop the Strategy and oversee the implementation of the aims and objectives of the Strategy within the prescribed timetable.

Reporting primarily to the Local Housing Strategy Review Group over the initial review period up to 2005, the Fuel Poverty Forum will develop its role and appropriate constitutional form to achieve the aim of eradication of Fuel Poverty in the Western Isles by 2016.

Following consultation with the local Community Planning Partnership and the Fuel Poverty Assessment and Monitoring Project the following five complementary Fuel Poverty Objectives have been developed:

Fuel Poverty Objective 1 – To carry out a 3-year assessment and monitoring project to establish which households or groups of households are likely to be in or fluctuate in and out of Fuel Poverty.

Fuel Poverty Objective 2: To further develop front line referral systems to ensure that help, advice and energy awareness training is offered to those households in or at risk of Fuel Poverty.

Fuel Poverty Objective 3: To develop housing improvement schemes to enable households in all tenures to achieve maximum energy efficiency in terms of heating, insulation and draft proofing and to encourage reductions in energy consumption.

Fuel Poverty Objective 4: To reduce the cost of fuel bills by developing schemes to exploit new and existing technologies capable of providing affordable warmth.

Fuel Poverty Objective 5: To lobby government and Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) suppliers to provide sufficient direct funding for the eradication of Fuel Poverty by 2016.

The proposed methods to achieve these five objectives are listed on the following pages:

5.1 OBJECTIVE 1 – To carry out a 3-year assessment and monitoring project to establish which households or groups of households are likely to be in or fluctuate in and out of Fuel Poverty.

ACTIONS:

- Utilise existing HECA data
- Carry out a local Fuel Poverty Assessment and Monitoring Project including a fuel poverty mapping exercise (desk study), to establish which Wards have households most at risk of living in Fuel Poverty
- Establish the priority groups of households, and strategies needed, to validate progress on a 30% reduction in Fuel Poverty by 2006.
- Establish the cost of maintaining a satisfactory heating regime in the Western Isles context using a recognised methodology for different house types.
- Establish a methodology that will be used to measure the improvement in energy efficiency and progress in meeting the targets set by the Scottish Executive.
- Assess private and public housing stock using approved methodology
- Set the baseline from which we will measure progress and commence verification.

5.2 OBJECTIVE 2 - To Develop Front Line Referral Systems to ensure that help and advice is offered to those households in Fuel Poverty or at risk of Fuel Poverty.

ACTIONS:

- Promote partnership working with relevant service providers and identify all other ongoing complementary strategies.
- Organise a series of conferences focusing on Fuel Poverty during 2005-6 in the Western Isles inviting all stakeholders and decision makers, timed to coincide with the launch of the Fuel Poverty Strategy.
- Promote links between local authority departments, local enterprise company, health professionals, health visitors, discharge nurse services, social services, local voluntary services and the citizens' advice bureaux.
- Further support energy awareness and "Recognising Fuel Poverty" training for frontline staff and key workers.
- Co-ordinate with external organisations working in the field of Fuel Poverty to promote and publicise national initiatives locally.

5.3 OBJECTIVE 3 - To Develop Housing Improvement Schemes to enable households in all tenures to achieve maximum energy efficiency in terms of heating and insulation.

ACTIONS:

- Promote Central Heating and energy efficiency Schemes for the Over 60s.
- Promote the Warm Deal and similar scheme to all eligible households.
- Promote Private Sector Housing Grant to include energy efficiency measures by providing grant assistance to encourage investment in heating and insulation by owner occupiers and private landlords.
- Investigate affordable renewable, Combined Heat and Power and District Heating technology schemes to assess their feasibility within the Western Isles housing context.
- Utilise Energy Efficiency Commitment funding to assist households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
- Promote innovative methods to improve the energy efficiency of “hard to heat”

5.4 OBJECTIVE 4 - To reduce the cost of fuel bills by developing schemes to exploit new and existing technologies capable of providing affordable warmth.

ACTIONS:

- Support the provision of impartial advice on the benefits of changing fuel supplier.
- Explore the use of incentives to encourage householders to change to more efficient fuels.
- Investigate preferred supplier schemes with social housing providers, possibly starting with transfer of void properties and homeless accommodation to prevent vulnerable households being placed in fuel poverty unnecessarily.
- Investigate the feasibility of using Community fuel purchasing schemes, community heating or renewable energy investment to reduce fuel costs for target groups.
- Work with The Energy Advisory Service (TEAS), Social Housing Providers and Community Groups to promote renewable energy schemes which directly benefit the community members through reduced fuel costs.
- Investigate how Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and Communities Scotland can best fund schemes to reduce the cost of fuel for groups or areas within the Western Isles.

5.5 OBJECTIVE 5 – To lobby government to provide sufficient direct funding for the eradication of Fuel Poverty by 2016.

ACTIONS:

- Lobby government to earmark funding to facilitate the implementation of Fuel Poverty Strategies and Fuel Poverty alleviation schemes.
- Raise political awareness of the difficulties faced locally in terms of higher fuel costs, to achieve a reduction in the cost of fuel in the Western Isles.
- Respond to calls for consultation by the Scottish Parliament and Westminster to seek to influence strategic planning at a national level.
- Work in partnership with national and local agencies and those with EEC responsibilities to develop Fuel Poverty alleviation schemes and operational methods suitable to the Western Isles context.

6.0 REPORTING AND MONITORING

The establishment by CnES of the Fuel Poverty Assessment and Monitoring Project run by The Energy Advisory Service (TEAS) forms the principal way of reporting and monitoring progress in the elimination of Fuel Poverty. The creation of baseline information on Fuel Poverty through correlation of multiple data sources and onsite assessment of household properties will be followed by a monitoring phase where TEAS will be able to assess the impact of upgrade and efficiency measures.

TEAS will report to the officer group called the Fuel Poverty Forum.

This Fuel Poverty Forum will report to the Community Planning Partnership, to the Comhairle and to the wider community.

6.1 TARGETS AS SET BY THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

To Eradicate Fuel Poverty as far as reasonably practicable by 2016 is the stated Scottish Executive target. The Western Isles has 4500 properties identified by the Local Authority Scottish House Conditions Survey in 2002 as being in Fuel Poverty, 34 % of our overall 13,400 domestic properties, the highest percentage in Scotland.

- The Scottish Executive also states that a 30 % reduction in the number of households living in Fuel Poverty must be achieved by 2006 as a milestone measure, in the Western Isles' case this amounts to 840 properties.
- Years 2004 to 2006 - 420 properties each year
- Years 2006 to 2016 - 200 properties each year

6.2 MONITORING PROCEDURES

The methods by which progress will be measured are outlined below:

- Establish base line data for the energy efficiency of the housing stock.
- Record building improvements carried out under improvement grants and energy conservation schemes and establish their impact.
- Monitor the take-up rate of grants in response to advice campaigns.
- Validate the effect of Fuel Poverty reduction works.
- Monitor Fuel Costs.
- Continue to complete the HECA returns to monitor energy consumption and CO² emissions.

Annex A

The definition of Households Below Average Income is set out below:

It includes total income from all members of the household, including dependents, and includes the following components:

- Usual net earnings from employment
- Profit or loss from self employment;
- All Social Security benefits (including Housing Benefit, Social Fund, maternity, funeral and community care grants, but excluding Social Fund loans) and Tax Credits;
- Income from occupational and private pensions;
- Investment income;
- Maintenance payments, if a person receives them directly;
- Income from education grants and scholarships (including, for students, top –up loans and parental contributions);
- The cash value of certain forms of income in kind (free school meals, free welfare milk, and free school milk)

Under this definition, income is net of the following items:

- Income tax payments;
- National Insurance contributions;
- Council Tax;
- Contributions to occupational pension schemes (including additional voluntary contributions) and any contributions to personal pensions;
- All maintenance and child support payments, which are deducted from the income of the person making the payment;
- Parental contributions to students living away from home.

Annex B - HECA PROGRESS 1997 - 2003

HECA Progress Spreadsheet
Comparison: April 1997 to April 2003

	April 1997 Base Data		31 March 2001 Results		31 March 2003 Results	
Total number of dwellings	13350		13350		13350	
Summary of Current State	Potential	% of potential to which measure applied	Potential	% of potential to which measure applied	Potential	% of potential to which measure applied
Hot water tank insulation	8512	75%	8517	84%	8517	88%
Draught stripping (>39%)	13350	45%	13350	63%	13350	70%
Cavity wall insulation	5784	3%	5383	5%	5427	13%
Loft insulation (100mm or more)	7174	35%	7179	53%	7179	67%
Double glazing	13350		13350		13350	
Full House		45%		62%		65%
Half House		10%		20%		20%
Heating systems (total number)	13350		13350		13350	
Condensing Boilers		0%		0%		0%
Central heating (<=12 years old)		35%		55%		72%
Central heating (>12 years old)		55%		30%		21%
Room Heaters		10%		15%		7%
Improvement Summary:	Nominal energy use (GJ)	Nominal CO₂ emissions (tonnes)	Nominal energy use (GJ)	Nominal CO₂ emissions (tonnes)	Nominal energy use (GJ)	Nominal CO₂ emissions (tonnes)
Tenure						
Owner Occupied	1,376,076	92,447	1,306,975	88,333	1,244,241	83,828
Local Authority	169,027	12,681	154,889	11,658	146,835	10,970
Private rented	56,064	4,357	52,325	4,128	50,703	3,971
Other (inc. Housing Associations)	14,151	1,111	13,160	1,036	12,897	1,014
Total	1,615,318	110,596	1,527,349	105,155	1,454,676	99,783
					Change in Nominal energy use (GJ)	Change in Nominal CO₂ emissions (tonnes)
Total Change (1997 - 2003)					-160,642	-10,813
Total Percentage Change (1997 - 2003)					-9.94%	-9.78%

Annex C

Using the National Home Energy Rating (NHER) methodology and based on the UK average in 2002, the table below shows the annual income which would be required for each NHER rated property (showing a range of sizes by floor areas sq m) to keep that household out of fuel poverty.

NHER	Annual Fuel Bill House 60 sqm £	Fuel Poverty Minimum Annual Income £	Annual Fuel Bill House 100 sq m £	Fuel Poverty Minimum Annual Income £	Annual Fuel bill House 150 sq m £	Fuel Poverty Minimum Annual Income £	Annual Fuel Bill House 220 sq m £	Fuel Poverty Minimum Annual Income £
0	1,425	14,250	2,300	23,000	3,400	34,000	4,900	49,000
1	1,050	10,500	1,600	16,000	2,400	24,000	3,400	34,000
2	825	8,250	1,275	12,750	1,800	18,000	2,600	26,000
3	690	6,900	1,050	10,500	1,500	15,000	2,100	21,000
4	590	5,900	875	8,750	1,250	12,500	1,800	18,000
5	520	5,200	775	7,750	1,075	10,750	1,500	15,000
6	460	4,600	630	6,300	925	9,250	1,300	13,000
7	410	4,100	590	5,900	825	8,250	1,125	11,250
8	370	3,700	520	5,200	700	7,000	975	9,750
9	330	3,300	450	4,500	600	6,000	825	8,250
10	290	2,900	380	3,800	500	5,000	665	6,650

<i>Fuel Poverty Objective 1: To carry out a 3-year assessment and monitoring project to establish which households or groups of households are likely to be in or fluctuate in and out of Fuel Poverty.</i>			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resource</i>
Utilise Existing HECA Data	Ongoing to 2008	NWI EEAC Taigh Blath CnES & TEAS	PSHG
Carry out Fuel Poverty Mapping Exercise, (Desk Study), to establish which Wards have households most at risk of living in Fuel Poverty.	April 2005	NWI EEAC TEAS	Energy Saving Trust
Establish the priority groups of households, and strategies needed, to validate progress on a 30% reduction in Fuel Poverty by 2006.	October 2005	CnES & TEAS	PSHG
Establish the cost of maintaining a satisfactory heating regime in the Western Isles context using a recognised methodology for different house types.	December 2005	CnES & TEAS	PSHG
Establish a methodology that will be used to measure the improvement in energy efficiency and progress in meeting the targets set by the Scottish Executive.	February 2006	CnES & TEAS Taigh Blath	PSHG
Assess private and public housing stock using approved methodology	May 2006	CnES & TEAS	CnES PSHG
Set the baseline from which we will measure progress and commence verification.	June 2006	CnES & TEAS	PSHG

<i>Fuel Poverty Objective 2: To further develop front line referral systems to ensure that help, advice and energy awareness training is offered to those households in or at risk of Fuel Poverty.</i>			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resource</i>
Promote partnership working with relevant service providers and identify all other ongoing complementary strategies.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS Taigh Blath CnES CPPartnership	PSHG Taigh Blath CnES CPPartnership
Organise a series of conferences focusing on Fuel Poverty during 2005-6 in the Western Isles inviting all stakeholders and decision makers, timed to coincide with the launch of the Fuel Poverty Strategy.	July – December 2006	Taigh Blath CnES TEAS Hebrep	PSHG CnES
Promote links between local authority departments, local enterprise company, health professionals, health visitors, discharge nurse services, social services, local voluntary services and the citizens' advice bureaux.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES WI NHS Board HIE CEC	CnES
Further support energy awareness and "Recognising Fuel Poverty" training for frontline staff and key workers.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES	PSHG CnES
Co-ordinate with external organisations working in the field of Fuel Poverty to promote and publicise national initiatives locally.	Ongoing to 2008	Taigh Blath CnES FP Forum CPPartnership Hebrep	PSHG

<i>Fuel Poverty Objective 3: To develop housing improvement schemes to enable households in all tenures to achieve maximum energy efficiency in terms of heating, insulation and draught proofing and to encourage reductions in energy consumption.</i>			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resource</i>
Promote Central Heating and Energy Efficiency schemes for the Over 60s.	Ongoing to 2006	NWI EEAC TEAS Taigh Blath CnES	Scottish Exec
Promote the Warm Deal and similar schemes to all eligible households.	Ongoing to 2006	NWI EEAC Taigh Blath TEAS	Scottish Exec
Promote Private Sector Housing Grant to include energy efficiency measures by providing grant assistance to encourage investment in heating and insulation by owner occupiers and private landlords.	Ongoing to 2008	CnES Care & Repair	PSHG
Investigate affordable renewable, Combined Heat and Power and District Heating technology schemes to assess their feasibility within the Western Isles housing context.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES Hebrep	Com Scot HIE CEC
Utilise Energy Efficiency Commitment funding to assist households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.	Ongoing to 2008	Taigh Blath TEAS NWI EEAC	EEC sources
Promote innovative methods to improve the energy efficiency of "hard to heat" homes.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS	HIE CEC

<i>Fuel Poverty Objective 4: To reduce the cost of fuel bills by developing schemes to exploit new and existing technologies capable of providing affordable warmth.</i>			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resource</i>
Support the provision of impartial advice on the benefits of changing fuel supplier.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES Energywatch	EST Energywatch
Explore the use of incentives to encourage householders to change to more efficient fuels.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES	PSHG EST Energywatch
Investigate preferred supplier schemes with social housing providers, possibly starting with transfer of void properties and homeless accommodation to prevent vulnerable households being placed in fuel poverty unnecessarily.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES HAs	Com Scot
Investigate the feasibility of using Community fuel purchasing schemes, community heating or renewable energy investment to reduce fuel costs for target groups.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES	PSHG CnES Com Scot
Work with The Energy Advisory Service (TEAS), Social Housing Providers and Community Groups to promote renewable energy schemes which directly benefit the community members through reduced fuel costs.	Ongoing to 2008	HAs HIE CEC Hebrep CPPartnership	CnES Com Scot
Investigate how Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and Communities Scotland can best fund schemes to reduce the cost of fuel for groups or areas within the Western Isles.	Ongoing to 2008	CnES TIG Comm. Scot	CnES Com Scot

<i>Fuel Poverty Objective 5: To lobby government and Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) suppliers to provide sufficient direct funding for the eradication of Fuel Poverty by 2016.</i>			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resource</i>
Lobby government to earmark funding to facilitate the implementation of Fuel Poverty Strategies and Fuel Poverty alleviation schemes.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES CPPartnership	CnES
Raise political awareness of the difficulties faced locally in terms of higher fuel costs, to achieve a reduction in the cost of fuel in the Western Isles.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES NWI EEAC	CnES
Respond to calls for consultation by the Scottish Parliament and Westminster to seek to influence strategic planning at a national level.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES CPPartnership	CnES
Work in partnership with national and local agencies and those with EEC responsibilities to develop Fuel Poverty alleviation schemes and operational methods suitable to the Western Isles context.	Ongoing to 2008	TEAS CnES Energy Action Scotland NWI EEAC	CnES

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