

**Motion to:** Council

15 March 2022

**Subject:** Retrofit taskforce to tackle cost of living crisis

**Proposer:** Councillor Osborn

**Seconded:** Councillor Haynes

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An amendment from **Councillor Hampton** has been received

**Councillor Hampton** is amending the motion as follows:-

Inserting the words “**Continue to**” at the start of resolution 1).

Replacing resolution 2) with the following “**Lead the development of a retrofit strategy for Norwich across all tenures, with a paper to be presented to cabinet within 12 months, which includes the role of the retrofit taskforce and the role for Government to provide assistance.**”

Adding the following words “**while ensuring Government is reminded and held accountable for the need to provide strategic, long-term resource, which could start with the effective and sustainable funding of local government to at least pre-2010 levels**” after “**international business**” in resolution 3).

Replacing the word “**increased**” with the word “**sufficient**” in resolution 5)

So that the revised motion becomes:-

Energy prices are set to rise by 50% in April 2022, on top of a 12.2% rise in October 2021. This will plunge many people into fuel poverty and exacerbate the cost of living crisis.

The poor energy efficiency of housing is contributing to this crisis. Due to decades of under-funding and lack of coordination for the domestic retrofit sector, the energy efficiency and renewable energy provision in UK housing lags behind much of Europe.

Norwich will be hit hard by the cost of living rises due to high levels of deprivation and significant fuel poverty. Norwich has a strong tradition of working to improve the energy efficiency of homes through the retrofitting of council and social housing and schemes such as Cosy City. However, there is much more work to be done.

The Climate Change Committee recommends that virtually every house will need to be upgraded to meet carbon reduction targets, as well as the need to insulate

households against fuel poverty. This equates to upgrading two houses every minute for the next thirty years nationwide, including in Norwich.

Retrofit industry experts have called for local leadership in the retrofit sector. The successive failures of the Government's Green Deal, Green Homes Grant, and Heat and Buildings Strategy have left a vacuum in coordination for the retrofit policy that local authorities must fill.

Despite the scale of the challenge, there has hitherto been no coordinating role between the various agencies that are required to work together to deliver retrofitting. Some local councils such as Lewes District Council are piloting a "Retrofit Taskforce" approach, establishing a local authority-led partnership between the construction and renewable energy industries, further, higher and vocational education institutions, architects, social housing providers, and other stakeholders. Lewes' approach is a three-pronged strategy; a detailed assessment of local housing stock starting with social housing, looking beyond inadequate EPC ratings; a 'community wealth building' approach to developing the local supply chain, and an 'economies of scale' approach by bringing together a partnership of all social housing providers and councils across a wider area. The retrofit taskforce will be dedicated to developing a local supply chain to retrofit 44,000 social homes in the wider Sussex area and boosting the provision of retrofitting for other tenures.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Continue to work with partners to establish a retrofit taskforce for Norwich, dedicated to developing and promoting a local retrofit supply chain and the targeting of resources to help those in most need of protection from fuel price rises.
- 2) Lead the development of a retrofit strategy for Norwich across all tenures, with a paper to be presented to Cabinet within 12 months, which includes the role of the retrofit taskforce and the role for Government to provide assistance.
- 3) Through the retrofit taskforce, seek to mobilise alternative sources of finance beyond insufficient and sporadic government grants, including working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and local and international businesses, while ensuring Government is reminded and held accountable for the need to provide strategic, long-term resource, which could start with the effective and sustainable funding of local government to at least pre-2010 levels.
- 4) Through the council's membership of UK100, share the aims and expertise of the retrofit taskforce with other local authorities, thereby establishing Norwich as a leading authority.
- 5) Through UK100 and other channels including the LGA, submit to Government a business case for sufficient funding to scale up local authority-led retrofit taskforces and call for the Net Zero Forum to produce a plan for long term funding for locally led retrofit strategies.