DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY POLICY FOR BIRMINGHAM

A Feasibility Study Commissioned by the Social Services Committee of the City of Birmingham

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by

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Produced by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies
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FOREWORD

This Council is firmly committed to the constant improvement of its services to the people of Birmingham. This feasibility study was commissioned in order to identify how the local authority could improve its services in one area of great importance : that of energy and the ability of people to have warmth at an affordable price.

However, the local authority has to work within the constraints set by Central Government, and the policies of Central Government at present are likely to make the situation worse. Inadequate investment in housing, the proposed reduction in welfare benefits and a trend in rising fuel prices all amount to a future of increased hardship, discomfort, ill-health and even death. This in turn will mean an increased burden on the local authority.

To alleviate this, the local authority has to call on Central Government to increase investment in housing and to provide adequate support to those in need. The City Council has already initiated this by its support to the national 'Charter for Energy Efficiency', which it hosted in November 1985. This support must continue.

As well as seeking action from Central Government, the local authority must improve its own services. This feasibility study addresses the question of how best this can be achieved.

Councillor Mrs Theresa Stewart
Chair of the Social Services Committee

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Thanks are also due to the representatives of interested departments of the City Council who joined a small project group to advise the study team on its work; and special thanks to William Baker, Research Associate at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, who offered a significant contribution to the report, and to other members of the Centre who advised on the text.

Notwithstanding the help received from others, the study team alone is responsible for the views expressed in this report and the conclusions drawn.

PREFACE

In October 1985, the Social Services Committee of the City of Birmingham commissioned a feasibility study on the development of a comprehensive energy policy for Birmingham.

The study has been undertaken jointly by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham; Community Energy Research; and Dr. Hugh Byrd, Architect and Energy Consultant. Work began in November 1985, advised by a small project group including officers from the local authority.

An Interim Report was presented in January 1986. It dealt mainly with measures that could be taken in the short term to improve the approach to energy and warmth in Birmingham. A summary of the recommendations contained in the Interim Report is attached at Appendix 1.

The final report is concerned specifically with the question of developing a comprehensive energy policy for Birmingham. The report takes account of and is complementary to current (July 1986) proposals to establish an Energy Management Unit, to be located in the City Engineer's Department.

The report is in four parts. Part A considers the case for a comprehensive policy and recommends how such a policy might be devised and implemented. Part B provides a more detailed examination and review of existing activities in departments of the City Council, with some recommendations on action to be taken at departmental level. The work of voluntary bodies is examined in Part C and suggestions are made as to how the local authority might further enhance the work of the voluntary sector in energy conservation and advice. Finally, the role of the fuel boards is examined in Part D.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHP	Combined Heat and Power
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Security
DOE	Department of the Environment
EEO	Energy Efficiency Office
ICPP	Inner City Partnership Programme
MEU	Management Effectiveness Unit
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NPI	Normalised Performance Indicators
WMCC	West Midlands County Council

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of the main recommendations put forward in this document. The list is intended for reference only and the recommendations should not be interpreted out of the context of the main text in which they appear.

Developing a Comprehensive Energy Policy

A Central Energy Unit should be established within the Chief Executive's Department, reporting to the Council through a new energy sub-committee. An officer from each department would be responsible for liaison with the Central Energy Unit.

The Unit should consist of eight to ten officers, with the appropriate support and have its own budget.

The proposed Energy Management Unit in the City Engineer's Department will complement the work of the Central Energy Unit.

Housing Department

A previous energy audit of the housing stock should be reviewed to provide the Department with objective criteria of the thermal performance of the housing stock. This will help identify dwellings that could be designated for Heating Additions and will help the Department prioritise their repairs and maintenance programmes.

Energy should become an issue of greater significance in the Housing Investment Programme Strategy Statements in order to provide further evidence for increased bids.

In the improvement of the thermal performance of the housing stock, priority should be given to altering or replacing heating systems that are expensive to run. Officers should undertake a review of initiatives carried out elsewhere, in particular the possibility of leasing heating systems and the reintroduction of paying for heat with rent. Monitored

pilot projects should be carried out into upgrading thermal performance and reducing condensation in different dwelling types. The Energy Efficiency Office should be approached for funding these projects. Initiatives of the fuel boards should be reviewed in particular the "Budget Warmth" scheme operated by the electricity boards. The Housing Department should ensure that all appropriate Local Authority houses have adequate loft insulation.

Environmental Health Department

The promotion of loft insulation should be increased. The Energy Efficiency Office should be approached for financial help with this and Neighbourhood Offices should be used in a creative way to increase the general awareness of the grant. The Department should develop a closer liaison with voluntary sector bodies involved in loft insulation.

The specification for house improvement and 'enveloping' should be reviewed with the aim of upgrading insulation standards. Energy advice should be given to residents whose houses are improved.

The City Engineer's Department

Energy targets for all Local Authority buildings should be established, to help identify high energy consumers, and surveys should be carried out to identify appropriate energy conservation measures which should be implemented and monitored.

The Department should liaise with other departments and advise them on issues of energy use, including the training of caretakers.

Feedback on progress and initiatives should be disseminated to all relevant departments and an annual report should be produced. The Department should consider acting as an energy consultant to other authorities and thereby reap the benefit of grants that are available from the Energy Efficiency Office.

Social Services Department

The Department's commitment to energy and welfare rights needs to be clearly communicated to its own staff and the necessary training carried out to ensure that energy issues are an integral part of its activities. Advice and information on energy issues in welfare benefits that is available to the public, the Department's own staff and other departments should be reviewed. To achieve this, the work of the Department should be supported by an additional post in the Welfare Rights Team and an additional energy officer.

The Development Department

The Economic Development Unit should commission a study to look into the potential of job creation in energy conservation.

A document should be compiled of local energy services, manufacturers and installers concerned with energy saving products to enable the authority and consumers to support local industry.

Neighbourhood Central Unit

Neighbourhood Office staff should be trained to understand the issues concerning energy and they should be aware of voluntary sector initiatives to which their clients may be referred. The Neighbourhood Central Unit should have direct liaison with the proposed Central Energy Unit.

The City Architect's Department

The Department should continue to work closely with other departments in order to establish appropriate ways in which to increase insulation standards in public housing and in the rehabilitation of private housing. The Department should become more active in giving advice to tenants and residents on issues concerning energy. It should also provide technical advice to practical energy projects in the voluntary sector.

The Voluntary Sector

Practical Energy Projects

The Local Authority should provide help to Energy Projects by creating a post within the proposed Central Energy Unit to foster the development of these projects. Energy projects should also be given easy access to all major departments via liaison officers.

The Authority should fund the production of a 'Local Energy Advice Guide' and should help identify suitable sponsors and funding bodies for innovative energy projects.

The Authority should also provide practical help with the problems of transport encountered by the Energy Projects and should look at the long-term potential of creating 'community businesses'.

Advice Agencies

The Authority should actively encourage and support voluntary advice centres, in particular those that give advice on energy and fuel debt. It should also ensure that no advice service is lost or depleted by the abolition of the W.M.C.C.

Information, training and advice provided by the Authority should be made freely available to voluntary agencies through the proposed Central Energy Unit.

Welfare Agencies

The Authority should support the Social Services/Voluntary Sector heating forum in particular through its needs for training and information. The Social Services Department should review voluntary sector initiatives and provide funding or personnel to replicate successful projects throughout the City.

Community Development Groups

One post in the proposed Central Energy Unit should assist in the training and development of Community Development Groups. The 'Local Energy Advice Guide' should have a section on Development Groups which should be compiled by the Social Services Voluntary Sector Liaison Section. This document should be used for identifying successful projects and replicating them over the City.

INTRODUCTION

Energy affects our health, wealth and warmth. Disadvantaged groups, such as the frail elderly, the young, the infirm or those on low incomes, may be denied the benefits of energy, resulting in debt, personal suffering and poor health. For the Local Authority, these problems can increase the burden on its already limited resources.

To begin reducing this burden the Authority will need to provide further resources and commitment. And, since energy presents issues that are an integral part of the day to day responsibilities of all departments, each individual department must seek to improve its existing services and introduce new ones.

Problems must be tackled in a coordinated manner which recognises the relationship of technical and social issues. There is at present no single department which provides coordination and this leads us to propose the establishment of a Central Energy Unit to undertake this task.

The commitment of resources to this development should result in both short and longer term benefits to the people of Birmingham, including:

- a reduction in the number of unnecessary deaths and the level of personal suffering,
- a reduction in peoples' fuel bills and in requests for help with fuel debt,
- greater consumer satisfaction with the services of the Council,
- a reduction in maintenance costs as a consequence of warmer homes,
- the creation of jobs in the carrying out of energy conservation work,
- reduced fuel bills for the Authority.

It is with these benefits in mind that the proposals in this study are made. Their aim is to maximise the influence of the Authority on issues concerning energy. The study does not deal with issues outside the Authority's control, such as fuel prices, investment in housing and insulation, and the level of welfare benefits, all of which are matters of central government policy.

PART A

A COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY POLICY

1.0. DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY POLICY

1.1. The Responsibility of the Local Authority

Of the services that a Local Authority provides many are concerned with energy. Authorities are themselves large consumers of energy, they maintain municipal housing and have an important role in private home improvement and urban renewal. They also provide a social welfare service to groups such as the elderly, the handicapped, those on low incomes and the unemployed.

Local authorities know that energy conservation can reduce their own fuel bills. However, some local authorities have recognised that their influence can go beyond this and have adopted a more active approach to energy issues, in particular, by taking new initiatives and extending existing services in order to help domestic consumers save energy, improve people's comfort and create jobs.

In view of Birmingham City Council's commitment to improving service provision, it is important that the Council is at the forefront of developing policies designed to maximise its influence on energy issues. To achieve this the Council must have a coordinated approach that tackles the problems comprehensively.

1.2. The Need for a 'Comprehensive' Policy

Unless an energy policy is comprehensive there will always be the risk that effort will be duplicated, responsibilities will be undefined or that important issues will not be adequately addressed.

To overcome this, the Council should develop and plan all its energy initiatives within the context of an overall strategy aimed at increasing both the extent and the standards of the energy related services they provide.

A comprehensive energy policy is required which coordinates and integrates all the work concerned with energy, that is undertaken by local authority departments. The variety of work currently undertaken is indicated in Table 1.

A comprehensive policy must also contain a commitment to liaison with voluntary organisations and residents' groups in order to foster their complementary activities and integrate them into the framework of the policy. There must be liaison and cooperation with Government departments, such as the Energy Efficiency Office (EEO) and the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS), and fuel boards. Table 2 illustrates the existing relationship between local authority departments and these agencies and provides further evidence for the need to coordinate all issues relating to energy.

1.3. The Case for a Central Energy Unit

Energy, like equal opportunities, is an issue that cuts across the responsibilities of many departments. If a comprehensive energy policy is to be achieved, the responsibilities and activities of the different departments must be coordinated and integrated. This function cannot be undertaken by one single service department since it is a role that requires:

i) an overview of all departments,

ii) an assessment of the performance of departments in relation to a set energy policy,

iii) the ability to channel resources in an order of priority,

iv) the provision of impartial guidance and training.

Table 1 : Departmental involvement in energy issues

Department \ Department	Neighbourhood Offices	City Architect's	City Engineer's	Social Services	Environmental Health
Housing	All Housing Dept. Services	New housing and major repairs and improvement	Large heating systems	Welfare advice	Loft insulation Section 99s
Environmental Health	All Env. Health Dept. Services			Section 99s	
Social Services	All Social Services Dept. services	Social Services new buildings	Heating Systems in Social Services Buildings		
City Engineer's		Heating systems in new buildings	(Energy conservation in all L.A. buildings)		
City Architect's		(Energy conservation in the design of new buildings)			

NB. This table does not indicate the extent to which departments interact.

Table 2 : Energy issues involving local authority departments and other agencies

Department \ Agency	Energy Efficiency Office	DHSS	Fuel Boards	Voluntary Sector
Housing		Heating Additions		Complaints: Heating & damp
Environmental Health	General information			Loft insulation Complaints Damp
Social Services		Consultation Policy decisions Casework	Fuel debt casework	Voluntary services liaison
City Engineer's	General information energy conservation		Tariffs	
City Architect's				
Neigbourhood Offices	General information Leaflets	Heating additions Fuel debt	Fuel debt referals	Loft insulation referals

Therefore, we recommend that a Central Energy Unit is established within the Chief Executive's Department and that it reports to the City Council through a new energy sub-committee of either the Finance and Management Committee or the Performance Review Committee.

The task of the Unit would be to give guidance to the City Council on all aspects of a comprehensive energy policy for Birmingham and to act as a focal point for existing and proposed energy initiatives in the City, including the proposed Energy Management Unit in the City Engineer's Department.

Responsibility for the implementation of such initiatives would remain with the relevant departments and committees. One of the tasks of the Central Energy Unit would be to ensure effective liaison with and between departments in the implementation of a comprehensive energy policy. This would be helped by the designation of a senior officer, from each department, to be responsible for liaison with the Central Energy Unit. We recommend that these officers are linked through a permanent inter-departmental energy officers group, chaired by the head of the Central Energy Unit.

1.4. A Framework for the Energy Unit

At this stage it is not appropriate to propose a detailed programme of work for the Unit, but we would suggest some initial steps.

As a first step towards implementing a comprehensive energy policy we would expect the Central Energy Unit to draw up, for the Council, a programme to guide all the departments in their approach. The recommendations listed (in Part B) for each individual department will provide an initial framework for the Unit. This will help establish the Council's energy objectives and priorities with a commitment to an appropriate level of expenditure.

The next step for the Unit should be to advise the Council on the development of an energy strategy that would link the coordinated work of the Authority with the energy services within Birmingham's voluntary

sector. Close cooperation with the voluntary sector is an essential part of the Unit's work and to aid this we recommend that the Unit takes responsibility for the organisation of an Energy Forum. The purpose of this Forum would be to draw together Council officers, representatives of the voluntary sector, the DHSS and other government departments as well as the fuel boards and their consumer councils.

At the same time, a structure should be established within which the work of the Unit could develop. This will require carrying out the following functions that are essential to a comprehensive policy. These functions relate directly to the tasks that officers within the Unit should perform.

i) Research and intelligence : this includes the identification of research requirements either to be carried out by the Unit itself or by other departments or outside consultants. It will also include the dissemination of information within the Authority.

ii) Advice on policy formulation and planning : this will focus on technical, financial and social welfare issues relating to energy and will require the determination of priorities and the development of new initiatives.

iii) Monitoring and evaluation : this will involve the Unit in assessing the performance of itself as well as that of the departments. It will also involve the monitoring of the initiatives implemented by the departments.

iv) Public liaison and promotion : this includes developing the awareness of the public on issues of energy, promoting the Council's energy policies and responding to the views of the public.

v) Education and training : these are needed to develop the awareness and skills of local authority staff and will include the running of courses to ensure that energy advice becomes an

integral part of service delivery. The Unit should also develop an educational service which could be integrated into the curriculum of Birmingham's schools.

1.5. Staffing and Funding the Energy Unit

The staffing of the Unit should be commensurate with the tasks outlined above. These suggest a team of about eight to ten officers, with appropriate support. The head of the Unit should be at an appropriate level to ensure effective liaison with departments and committees.

The Unit should have its own budget for both day to day activities and special initiatives. The existing commitments of service departments, in energy related activities, should continue to be funded from the departments' own budgets.

We have not attempted to estimate the cost of establishing an Energy Unit for Birmingham, though it should be noted that the incurred costs could be more than offset by the savings made from a more effective and efficient use of energy, both on technical and social welfare grounds.

PART B

A REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS

Introduction:

This part of the report reviews some of the activities concerned with energy, which are carried out by the departments of the City Council. An outline of their existing activities is presented and recommendations made on action that can be taken to improve the services provided by each individual department.

There are recurring themes in the recommendations to all departments, of which the most important are:

i) liaison with the proposed Central Energy Unit (section 1.3),

ii) monitoring the effectiveness of all the initiatives that are carried out.

Many of the recommendations that are listed could be implemented by each department independently and, in view of the time that it may take to set up the Energy Unit, each department should begin to carry out the recommendations at the earliest opportunity. Where recommendations involve more than one department, appropriate liaison should be established between the respective departments at an early stage. A senior officer from each department should be given the responsibility for this liaison.

2.0 THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT

2.1 The Existing Situation:

Birmingham has a serious problem with local authority housing that is difficult to heat. Over two thirds of its housing stock has been built since 1945 of which half are flats or maisonettes of non-traditional construction. These types of buildings have a particularly poor thermal performance and often contain heating systems that are expensive to run. Consequently there is a large variation in the thermal performance of the housing stock as a whole with the ten per cent least thermally efficient dwellings costing five times as much to heat as the ten per cent most thermally efficient for the same temperature conditions (Appendix 3).

The problem of the poor thermal performance of the housing stock is made worse because the income of most tenants is low. In 1985, 78 per cent of Birmingham's Local Authority tenants received some form of Housing Benefit (1). Typically, the amount of money that most tenants spend on heating would be adequate to provide comfort temperatures in only about one third of the housing stock (see Appendix 3).

The prospects for tenants look bleak: the trend in fuel prices is upwards; it is proposed that Heating Additions will be ended (Appendix 6); there is insufficient finance to adequately improve the insulation standards of the housing stock. The Housing Department has estimated (2) that 38 per cent of the authority's stock suffers from condensation and mould growth. It is likely this will increase with implications both for the health of tenants and the maintenance costs to the Department.

The Housing Department's activities in issues concerning energy have covered a wide area, but to varying depths. Existing housing has not been thermally upgraded except where comprehensive improvement has taken place or where major structural repairs are undertaken. Loft insulation (where appropriate) has largely been accomplished although there remain some properties still to be tackled. Improved heating systems are being installed in special cases, for example, where inefficient district heating systems are being replaced. However, there remain many homes with heating systems that are expensive to run and where few improvements have

been carried out. Remedial work is also carried out on properties suffering from condensation and mould growth but the problem is escalating and many of the remedial measures tackle the symptoms rather than the causes.

The Housing Department has been involved in research in the field of energy. The most important research has been the Energy Improvement Kits (EIK) project (3) which comprised an 'energy audit' of a large sample of the housing stock and pilot studies of different energy conservation measures. The Department is now carrying out a pilot project at the Bloomsbury 'Priority Estates Project' (PEP) and it also intends, in association with the City Architect's Department, to investigate higher insulation standards in new housing.

The Department supplies evidence to support tenants' claims for Heating Additions and is currently working with the Social Services Department to increase designation and uptake of Heating Additions. The Department was once involved with helping tenants budget for fuel costs (HARP scheme) which, although initially popular, lost favour when costs escalated.

2.2 Scope for improvement:

The outline of the activities of the Housing Department, described above, indicates that liaison with other departments concerning issues of energy takes place. However there is scope for increasing this liaison and coordinating the expertise available. The proposed Central Energy Unit (Section 1.4) would play a major role in maximising the support available to the Department.

There is scope for greater coordination within the Housing Department in order to improve the service given to tenants. This is of particular importance in Neighbourhood Offices where a thorough training is required in order to ensure that the service offered to tenants, in issues concerning energy, is comprehensive.

Greater emphasis could be put on increasing government awareness of the energy issues that confront the Department. Steps should be taken to ensure that central government is made more aware of the problems. There is also scope for the Department to take more active steps to inform

tenants of, and involve them with, its energy strategies and to provide them with advice, in particular on meeting high fuel bills, energy conservation and reducing condensation.

Even though funds remain scarce, further pilot projects to improve energy standards should be undertaken and evaluated with a view to their future replication throughout the housing stock.

2.3 Recommendations:

Some of the recommendations that follow will require joint action by several departments.

Analysis of the existing housing stock:

i) The Energy Improvement Kits project should be reviewed and the statistics used to index the thermal performance of the housing stock. This index could have several purposes:-

a) to identify those dwellings that could be designated for Heating Additions (since these Additions are soon to be withdrawn, this should be done as soon as possible),

b) to provide objective criteria that can be used in the overall assessment of the condition of the housing stock and to develop a programme aimed at upgrading thermal standards,

c) to indicate dwellings likely to suffer from condensation and mould growth.

ii) The property records of the Housing Department should be revised in such a way that they can include an energy index which can be readily computerised. The index should be available to tenants in order to support their claims for Heating Additions.

iii) Since it is the DHSS that are the arbiters in deciding which dwellings will receive Heating Additions, the Housing Department should liaise with the DHSS, to establish the thermal performance index ((ii) above) as a criterion in allocating Heating Additions.

iv) If substantial investment is ever to be obtained for increasing the thermal performance of the local authority housing stock, a greater awareness of the problems should be established in both central and local government. Energy should become an issue of greater significance in Housing Investment Programme Strategy Statements in order to provide further evidence for increased bids.

Improving thermal performance:

v) The extent to which different local authorities are carrying out improvements to thermal performance varies considerably. Officers in Birmingham should undertake a review of initiatives elsewhere and prepare an assessment for the Housing Committee (see Appendix 7).

vi) In considering the improvement of the thermal performance of the housing stock, priority should be given to improving or replacing heating systems that are exceptionally expensive to run, in particular electric heating and solid fuel systems. Research should be carried out into the feasibility of;

a) leasing heating systems as a method of reducing capital expenditure (this has been done in Newcastle, see Appendix 7),

b) changing tariffs,

c) improving insulation standards,

d) reviewing the possibility of reintroducing the payment of 'heat with rent'.

vii) In the case of 'heat with rent', recent projects carried out in Glasgow should be visited (4). (For a general discussion of alternative energy tariffs for low income households see Appendix 4.)

viii) A pilot project should be carried out and monitored to establish consumer preference and satisfaction with new heating systems and controls (for example individual gas fires compared with central heating systems).

This project could be carried out at the Bloomsbury PEP as improvements are planned to heating systems and insulation. The Department of the Environment should be approached for help with funding.

ix) The Department of Environment (DOE) might support further pilot projects in the public sector housing stock. The DOE (through the Building Research Energy Conservation Support Unit) is able to help fund insulation projects. A grant can be given of up to 25% of the capital costs of the energy conservation measures and monitoring is provided free of charge. Consideration should be given to this for carrying out pilot insulation projects on non-traditional housing.

x) Electricity boards are carrying out research into a scheme of providing warmth for elderly people: 'Budget Warmth'. This scheme should be reviewed and, if thought appropriate, carried out as a monitored pilot project.

xi) It is already the intention of the Housing Department to review improved insulation standards and efficient heating systems in new local authority housing. The necessary research required for this could be carried out in association with local academic institutions, for example, who might draw on the financial support from other sources.

xii) The Department should carry out monitored research projects to establish the most appropriate methods of remedying problems of condensation and mould growth. Liaison should be established with other local authorities to gather experience in tackling condensation/mould and to review policies concerning Section 99 cases.

xiii) To ensure that all appropriate local authority dwellings have adequate loft insulation the Housing Department should establish a method of encouraging local authority tenants to identify if they have adequate loft insulation. The Department should provide loft insulation in cases where standards are inadequate.

xiv) The Department should review the information that it makes available to tenants. It should aim to offer advice on maximising income through the welfare benefits system, clear instructions on the use of heating systems and their controls, and general advice on energy conservation, reducing condensation and grants that are available to assist tenants to keep warm.

Notes.

1. See: City of Birmingham Housing Department. Housing Investment Programme Strategy Statement 1985. page 8, para. B4.

2. ibid page 12 para C.1.

3. Department of the Environment. Energy Improvement Kits Phase 1, 1982. Department HB7. DOE, London.

4. Flats with electric heating have had their heating systems (storage heaters) improved, the tariff altered to "economy 7", the heating system controlled by a landlord controlled weather compensator and heat is paid with rent. The improvements appear to be successful and popular with tenants.

3.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

3.1 The Existing Situation:

The Environmental Health Department is involved with the insulation standards of housing through its administration of:

i) loft insulation grants and

ii) house improvement grants.

The money available for loft insulation grants is underspent (1). This is not due to a lack of houses to be insulated but to a combination of:

i) a lack of awareness of the grant,

ii) the inability of those on low incomes to afford their contribution towards loft insulation and

iii) the lack of incentives for tenants (in both public and private sectors) to invest in loft insulation.

Although the Department cannot control all these factors, an increase in the take-up of grants could be achieved by a greater involvement of the Department in promoting loft insulation.

The Department ensures that all houses improved, whether individually or on a comprehensive basis (eg. enveloping), have loft insulation and hot water cylinder jackets installed. However, there is scope for further increasing insulation standards while houses are being improved. The Urban Renewal Section has carried out a pilot project (2) into improved insulation standards and the results are being assessed.

3.2 Scope for Improvement:

In general, there is scope for more active marketing and promotion of the loft insulation grant in particular through Neighbourhood Offices which offer a platform from which to promote loft insulation. This could

include an analysis of markets where uptake is still low and the targetting of publicity to cater for this market.

There is a need for further research and pilot projects on increasing insulation standards of houses during house improvement. The results may entail further training for officers involved in house improvement.

The Department could become more actively involved in giving advice to occupants (in particular those who are in the process of house improvement) concerning energy conservation and the control of condensation and mould growth.

3.3. Recommendations:

Loft insulation;

i) The Energy Efficiency Office should be approached for financial help in promoting loft insulation grants. The EEO are willing to consider funding projects that could result in energy conservation on a large scale. From an economic point of view it may be argued that a certain sum invested in promotion may release a substantially larger amount available for loft insulation.

ii) Neighbourhood Offices should be used in a creative way to promote loft insulation grants and officers should be trained to ensure that consumers are made aware of the grant (see also Section 7.2).

iii) The Department should actively develop a close liaison with voluntary sector groups involved in initiatives to insulate housing for the elderly and those on low incomes. Concern has been expressed by some voluntary sector groups carrying out loft insulation that the administrative procedure of approving and paying for grants is protracted. This hinders small organisations and can cause cash flow problems. The administrative procedure should be reviewed with the aim of streamlining it.

House improvement:

iv) The existing 'house improvement' and 'enveloping' specifications should be reviewed in order to identify improvements (in terms of energy efficiency) that can be made within or close to existing cost limits.

v) Officers involved in the House Improvement Service shold be trained in specifying energy conservation measures and in giving general advice to occupants. A simple 'energy audit' could be carried out while properties are being surveyed for improvements.

vi) An 'energy conservation module' should be produced which could give occupants the opportunity of improving the insulation standards of their houses.

vii) Pilot projects should be carried out and monitored to test the energy conservation module. The EED should be approached for finance towards these projects.

viii) The Energy Demonstration Project carried out in the Heathfield area should be reviewed and consideration given to its replication elsewhere in the City. Other projects carried out in Birmingham should also be reviewed.

ix) An easily understood leaflet or video should be produced giving general advice on energy conservation for occupants whose houses are being improved. Similar presentations should also be prepared giving advice on ways of reducing condensation and tackling mould growth.

Notes

1. The amount of underspend in 1985/86 was £73,478, which is just over 14 percent of the budget.

2. The project carried out in the Heathfield area of Birmingham involved: increases in loft insulation; timer controls for the domestic hot water system and a proprietry double glazing system. The project was part of an 'enveloping' scheme and was monitored by the Energy Conservation Support Unit of the Building Research Establishment.

4.0. THE CITY ENGINEER'S DEPARTMENT

4.1. The existing situation:

The annual fuel bill for the authority's stock of public buildings is about £15 million. Over the past seven years the department has been active in energy conservation in the buildings operated by the authority. It is difficult to estimate the exact savings made but it is thought that in real terms, the fuel bill has been held at 10 per cent below the level it was seven years ago. Many of the main buildings now have their heating system controlled by either a central or local energy management system. Among measures taken so far are:

i) energy conservation in the Council House has included the conversion of burners from oil to gas; the installation of a computer controller; and secondary glazing and pipe insulation. (This project won the regional Gas Energy Manager Award (GEM)),

ii) the conversion of burners from oil to gas in the Victoria Law Courts; the installation of a computer controller; and renewal of heating controls [and other measures],

iii) a new lighting scheme as one of a number of measures introduced at the Museum of Science and Industry. (This project won the Energy Management in Lighting Awards Scheme),

iv) pool covers and heat recovery systems have been installed at swimming baths,

v) energy conservation in schools has included the conversion of central heating burners to gas; the installation of stand alone microprocessor energy management systems; and improved insulation,

vi) detailed tariff analysis to ensure the most cost effective energy source.

Until 1986, when the Energy Conservation Officers in the Education Department were transferred to the City Engineer's Department, there were no specialist personnel handling energy related problems other than tariff analysis. As a result of this transfer of personnel, the department has been able to work out the 'Normalised Performance Indicators' (NPI) of the type recommended in the recent report of the Audit Commission (1). (These indicators are used to compare the energy efficiency of buildings of a similar category).

4.2. Scope for improvement:

The City has saved a lot of money in the recent past through energy conservation measures.

The potential for further savings is limited by the absence of a detailed policy statement from the Council. This policy should consider, among other things:

i) Target savings.

Target savings should be specified as precisely as possible. For example, "the intention is to reduce total energy consumption by X per cent over Y years, whilst maintaining or improving levels of comfort". This is preferable to generalised targets, such as "the intention is to reduce energy consumption" (2) which has tended to be the approach of the City Council in the past.

ii) Strategic planning.

Having set objectives or targets for energy savings, a strategy needs to be devised to ensure that they are achieved. This requires priorities to be determined for the buildings still requiring conservation measures and the analysis of NPIs will be helpful here.

iii) Monitoring.

Once energy conservation measures have been implemented, feedback is required to determine both the energy savings and improvement in comfort levels. This will allow a more accurate assessment of the cost-benefits of energy conservation measures and provide feedback for the achievements of target savings.

Apart from energy conservation in the local authority's own buildings, the Department should become more actively involved in giving advice and training to other departments and to the voluntary sector insulation projects.

4.3. Recommendations:

i) In line with the recent Audit Commission report (1), a joint report by the Chief Executive, the City Treasurer and the City Engineer has proposed the establishment of an Energy Management Unit to be located in the City Engineer's Department. We support the basis of this proposal and recommend that the Energy Management Unit should have responsibility for the following:

a) collection and analysis of energy consumption data for all buildings. This will involve 'energy audits' and surveys of different building types,

b) the setting of energy targets for individual buildings, related to their function,

c) monitoring energy consumption against targets,

d) continuing to draw attention to the large energy consuming buildings and those using more than the norm,

e) continuing to survey the authority's buildings to identify suitable energy conservation measures and any benefits from tariff analysis,

f) developing and managing an investment programme of energy conservation measures,

g) continuing to train caretakers and other building users in the current operation of plant, and on 'good housekeeping' techniques,

h) disseminating energy performance data to all departments and building users in order to encourage good practice,

i) producing an annual report outlining the improvements achieved,

j) establishing a close liaison with other departments in particular the proposed Central Energy Unit (section 1.3) so that both social and technical issues are taken into account.

ii) The Audit Commission report recommends that a Buildings Energy Conservation Unit should have approximately one person per £1 million that is spent on fuel. If this was applied to Birmingham the level of staffing for such a Unit would, therefore, be 15 people.

iii) The City Engineer's Department could act as an energy consultant to other local authorities. In this way it could provide an income to the City while taking advantage of the grant (50% of fees) available from the Energy Efficiency Office.

iv) The City Engineer's Department are presently discussing the possibility of utilising Combined Heat and Power (CHP). There are no CHP schemes that provide heat to housing in Birmingham. However, waste heat is now available, following the scaling down of activities at Fort Dunlop, and the opportunity of using this for CHP should be investigated.

v) The Department should liaise with and train both the voluntary sector insulation projects (see section 9.3 vi) and departments that are likely to give advice to householders, on the efficient use of heating systems and their controls (for example the Environmental Health Department; section 3.3 v).

vi) The Department should participate in the preparation of a handbook for tenants and residents on saving energy in the home (see also section 2.3 xiv and 3.3 ix).

vii) The Department should review, in association with the Housing Department, the feasibility of replacing heating systems, in local authority housing, that are expensive to run (for example, underfloor electric systems) (see section 2.3 v).

Notes

1. Audit Commission, 'Saving Energy in Local Government Buildings'. HMSO, 1985.

2. ibid p.23.

5.0 THE SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Social Services Department plays a major role in safeguarding the welfare of some of the city's most vulnerable residents. In the field of energy the Department is concerned with the short term alleviation of the symptoms of fuel poverty which arise from the application of policies outside the department's control. Longer term solutions that tackle the causes need to be addressed by other departments within the city and by central government.

5.1 The Existing Situation:

From the wide range of activities undertaken by the Department, five main areas of involvement with the issue of fuel poverty have been identified;

i) fieldwork
ii) welfare rights
iii) liaison with the DHSS
iv) voluntary services liaison
v) energy initiatives

i) Fieldwork.

Casework is a major part of the Department's fieldwork task, and often involves dealing with the problem of fuel poverty. Assistance is generally limited to advice on benefits; negotiations with the fuel boards and the DHSS; and occasionally applications to charitable bodies for payments to clear a debt. In some cases payments will be made under legislative provision to prevent children being received into the care of the authority, although the demand for payments always exceeds the funds available. In addition to the casework of child care and elderly teams, over half the enquiries to general services teams are about welfare benefits and many involve some aspect of the problem of paying for adequate heat.

With much greater emphasis on care in the community, the domiciliary services too have an increasingly important role to play in providing advice and information. In their attempts to sustain elderly clients

in the community, fieldwork staff are likely to become increasingly concerned with longer term strategies for ensuring that their clients have adequate warmth.

In general, fuel poverty is not an issue considered by most staff until it becomes a problem, which they are usually unable to resolve satisfactorily. While some parts of the department recognise the value of training in welfare rights and hypothermia awareness, this is not yet available for all staff nor is advice on such matters recognised as an integral part of service provision.

ii) Welfare Rights.

In addition to the information and advice on benefits provided by fieldwork staff, the Department is extensively involved in this field through the work of the Welfare Rights Team and in its liaison with the DHSS.

The authority itself also plays a major part in the income maintenance scheme through the payment of Housing Benefit.

Since its inception, the Welfare Rights Team has undertaken a number of special initiatives designed to promote benefit take-up, besides becoming involved with the administration of the Housing Benefit scheme. It has also begun to examine various aspects of service provision within the Council and to explore ways in which welfare rights can become an integral part. This work is presently limited by two factors in particular; the staffing and resource allocation of the team and the variable commitment to its work shown within the authority. Difficulties encountered in ensuring that information produced by the team reaches all relevant personnel also diminishes the value of its work.

iii) Liaison with the DHSS.

The DHSS plays a major role in providing some solutions to the problems that result from fuel poverty, including the payment of Heating Additions, single payments and the administration of the

Housing Benefit and fuel direct schemes. The approach of the DHSS to its task can have a significant impact on the lives of Social Services' clients. Consequently, the Department provides an important voice for many of their clients.

There are a number of forums in which representatives of the department and the DHSS meet to discuss policy and to negotiate changes in service delivery. These may be summarised as follows;

a) Quarterly regional liaison meetings
b) Local office managers group
c) The Welfare Rights Team
d) The departmental welfare rights group
e) Departmental line management

Perhaps as a result of this diversity of approach, contact with the DHSS is rather fragmented and the flow of information between the departments and through their individual structures is variable. Differing priorities and levels of commitment; combined with a lack of resources in DHSS local offices are all major obstacles to be overcome if these special liaison arrangements are to achieve their potential.

iv) Voluntary Services Liaison.

The department plays a major part in supporting much of the voluntary sector work in the field of energy. This is the responsibility of the Voluntary Services Liaison Section and is discussed in part C. However, in addition to its role of supporting individual projects the department could be a powerful voice in articulating the needs and concerns of voluntary projects, particularly in its contact with representatives of central government and to take the lead in co-ordinating the long term planning and development of voluntary provision within the city. At the moment these issues are largely untackled and the potential for a co-ordinating role not clearly acknowledged.

v) Co-ordination of Energy Initiatives.

In developing a response to the issues raised by fuel poverty, the Department is hampered by two major problems; its size and the lack of a focal point for exploring energy issues. As a result, there is no easy way to co-ordinate or plan activities, or to set up and evaluate new initiatives; this can lead to frustration amongst fieldwork staff and isolation for managers. In addition, with no-one to identify and fund new developments, there is a tendency towards small scale experiments based on the availability of staff and finance 'stolen' from other areas of work.

5.2 Scope for Improvement:

Fieldwork.

At the moment, fieldwork staff may not consider energy other than in the context of fuel poverty. Tackling issues of energy conservation through more technical measures such as improved insulation standards or more efficient heating systems are obviously outside the scope of their role. However, information and training on simple energy conservation measures, details of local energy projects and other sources of help, plus up to date information on benefit entitlement could all usefully extend casework skills. This requires encouraging staff to be conscious of energy and warmth as aspects of service provision and reinforcing this awareness procedurally by making it an integral part of the assessment of client needs.

Welfare Rights.

There are a number of ways in which the take-up of benefit could be improved by action on the part of the authority as demonstrated by work undertaken in other parts of the country.(1) Organising special initiatives or changing internal policies and procedures are exceedingly time consuming and need considerable staff input but require usually quite modest financial resources when compared with the financial gain to claimants (2).

Furthermore, if staff are to be encouraged to pursue the financial aspects of fuel poverty, they need accurate information both for themselves and their clients, training in approaches to fuel debt and specialist back up to support their work. This could not be achieved within present staffing levels.

To enhance the work of the Welfare Rights Team, the Departmental Welfare Rights Group and the energy officer in the Voluntary Services Liaison Section, the Committee and Senior Officers should make clear to all staff their commitment to the alleviation of fuel poverty and ensure that neither management practices nor information systems inhibit this process.

Liaison with the DHSS.

Fieldwork personnel are sometimes unsure about identifying local DHSS and departmental policy on a number of issues and finding a clear route for feeding back their own experiences and requests for action. At the same time, some staff also remain ignorant of the availability of specialist literature or claim forms. It may be that the setting up of the Welfare Rights Team has created a need to contact staff with information and requests for help which did not exist in quite the same form before. Therefore, as part of its task, the team needs to review present information systems to see if they are appropriate to their task and to explore ways in which the Department can contact DHSS to express clients views and requirements more effectively and to meet the needs of departmental personnel.

Liaison with the voluntary sector.

Difficulties in co-ordination and communication between sections of the Department are mirrored in its dealings with the voluntary sector. It is hoped that wide use of the Voluntary Services Liaison Section's newly computerised records will greatly assist this process. However, if the voluntary sector is to achieve its potential in providing complementary activities, the Department needs to be more creative in its approach. This includes assistance in

identifying suitable sponsors for initiatives in areas of needs, assistance with funding and management advice. This work would require an increase in staffing levels within the section and the creation of a forum in which planning and development could be examined.

Co-ordination of energy initiatives.

The need for a focal point for energy initiatives became very clear during the implementation of the recommendations of the interim report (Appendix 1). The size of the task presently undertaken by the newly created part-time post of energy officer will greatly increase if the recommendations of this report are implemented. A need exists for an additional energy officer to develop this work and guide the department's approach to the task.

5.3 Recommendations:

i) To support the work of the Department, an additional energy officer plus administrative support should be appointed as part of the Client Services, (Operational Support) division. The role of the energy officers would be to provide a focal point for energy within the department and to work with the Central Energy Unit to:

- make available specialist materials and advice as back up to personnel and to ensure that information systems are adequate

- identify training needs and ensure they are met

- ensure that staff are kept abreast of research findings and other relevant developments

- work closely with the Central Energy Unit and the Voluntary Services Liaison Section to identify areas for development and to set up and service a forum for joint discussions between the voluntary and statutory sectors

- co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the Department's energy initiatives

- represent the Department in relevant energy forums both within and outside the authority.

ii) In order to raise the profile of energy in the Department, energy issues should be added to the initial assessment of need in all relevant Departmental activities and all staff trained as appropriate.

iii) The take up of welfare benefits should be integrated into all council services where appropriate. An additional post should be created within the Welfare Rights Team to assist in this and in the development of training and information issues relating to energy.

iv) A review of the department's information system should take place to identify ways in which welfare rights/energy information can be made available to all staff.

v) The Department should review the public information that it produces to ensure that the energy related content is as clear and informative as possible.

vi) The Department's commitment to energy and welfare rights needs to be communicated clearly to all staff. This could be achieved through a policy statement from the Social Services Committee, which other departments could also be invited to adopt.

Notes:

1. see appendix 7.

2. The bedding take up campaign cost £5,000 and it is estimated has generated over £500,000 for claimants in Birmingham.

6.0. THE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT : THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT

6.1. The existing situation:

The authority is concerned increasingly with developing employment initiatives, notably through the Economic Development Unit. Finance to support such initiatives in the energy field has come from the City's own resources and from Inner City Partnership Programme grants.

In some cases, the authority has provided financial support and encouragement to create 'key' posts that have enabled organisations to sponsor Manpower Services Commission projects concerned with energy conservation. Energy work in the city has also been funded in the past by the West Midlands County Council and the enterprise boards succeeding the county have a continued interest in the creation of job opportunities though energy work.

6.2. Scope for improvement:

Energy conservation offers potential for job creation, for example in the installation and manufacture of insulation and energy saving projects; and from associated activities such as energy advice and administration.

Possibilities for further job creation are considerable, ranging from major programmes of homes insulation to the creation of small businesses to manufacture and market energy saving devices. There are also opportunities to create further jobs through Manpower Services Commission programmes. This has been done, for example, in Glasgow (see Appendix 7) where a large scale energy efficiency programme has employed people to work on the local authority housing stock.

6.3. Recommendations:

i) The Economic Development Unit should commission a study to look into the potential of job creation in energy conservation. (see also section 8.3.v).

ii) A register should be compiled of local energy businesses, including manufacturers of insulation materials and energy saving products. This will enable the local authority and consumers to support local industry, if they wish. (see also section 8.3.ii)

7.0. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRAL UNIT

7.1. The Existing Situation:

The intention of Neighbourhood Offices is to decentralise many of the services provided by departments, so that they are more readily available to the community. The advice and guidance currently given, in particular, by the Housing, Environmental Health and to a certain extent, Social Services departments will be available in local offices throughout the City. As a result staff are becoming involved increasingly in giving advice and information on fuel poverty. Neighbourhood Offices can expect also to be at the forefront for complaints about condensation dampness, repairs and applications for redress under section 99 of the Public Health Act 1936.

7.2. Recommendations:

i) In providing advice on issues of energy, the decentralised approach offers great potential. To help achieve this, it is recommended that neighbourhood office staff should be trained in issues concerning energy. Training should focus on understanding the relationship between all the issues involved in energy and include consideration of the role of other agencies, including the voluntary sector (section 3.3ii).

ii) The Neighbourhood Central Unit should have a direct liaison with the proposed Central Energy Unit (section 1.3).

8.0. THE CITY ARCHITECT'S DEPARTMENT

8.1. The existing situation and scope for improvement:

The City Architect's Department has little direct contact with householders. The major role of the Department, in the field of energy in housing, is the provision of architectural services to the Housing Department and Environmental Health Department. These services are generally concerned with either new housing or housing rehabilitation.

The Department has expertise in the specification and implementation of higher insulation standards and, in the case of new buildings, has certain minimum standards, set by the Building Regulations, that it must comply with.

There is considerable scope to increase the standards of insulation above the minimum required for new housing. Likewise, the standards could be improved in housing rehabilitation. The technology involved in increasing levels of insulation is still at its formative stages and there is scope for further research and pilot projects in the upgrading of both traditionally and non-traditionally built houses.

8.2. Recommendations:

i) The Department should work closely with the Environmental Health Department to establish ways of increasing insulation standards in housing rehabilitation (see section 3.3 iv.),

ii) The Department should continue to work closely with the Housing Department on issues concerning higher insulation standards in new and existing local authority housing (see sections 2.3 ix and xi),

iii) The Department should help produce guides to tenants and residents in the City concerning energy conservation (see section 2.3 xiv and 3.3 ix),

iv) The Department should liaise with, offer advice and training to the voluntary sector insulation projects (section 9.3 vi) concerning the specification and implementation of loft insulation and draught-stripping.

PART C

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Introduction:

Alongside the public sector, the voluntary sector has an important contribution to make to energy related work in the City, both in terms of offering practical services and in the development of new initiatives. Existing voluntary sector work falls into four main areas (which are discussed in detail in the following sections):

i) practical draughtproofing and loft insulation projects,

ii) advice agencies, including law centres,

iii) welfare agencies,

iv) community groups.

Although the work of the voluntary sector can never replace the statutory services of the local authority, it can provide a useful complementary service. It has the advantage of being independent with no vested interest which means that the advice it gives may be more acceptable to members of the public. It also has less bureaucracy which makes it more flexible and innovative. However, many voluntary sector organisations suffer from the lack of long-term funding and a lack of co-ordination which has weakened their potential.

9.0. PRACTICAL ENERGY PROJECTS

9.1. The existing situation:

There are five projects in Birmingham engaged in draughtproofing and loft insulation for low income households, with particular emphasis on the elderly, the disabled and one parent families. Some projects also offer energy advice, although this tends to be very limited.

The Birmingham projects complete about 3,000 loft insulation or draughtproofing jobs each year. In this way, they play a significant part in encouraging the take-up of home insulation grant (administered by the Environmental Health Department) and single payments for draughtproofing from the DHSS. In 1986/87 it is likely that claims to the DHSS in Birmingham for draughtproofing, initiated by the practical energy projects, will total over £100,000.

Together, the projects employ 11 full time and 49 part time workers. Four of the projects are funded by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and the fifth through the Inner City Partnership Programme (ICPP).

9.2. Scope for Improvement:

There is scope for expanding existing projects and setting up new ones. The impact of voluntary sector projects has been limited by their capacity to respond to need. In Birmingham, there are 80,000 households headed by a person of pensionable age and, assuming that many could benefit from loft insultation or draughtproofing, the 3,000 jobs carried out each year by the projects are probably only scratching the surface of the problem.

Similarly the experience of the joint Social Services/Gas Board initiative referred to in the interim report (Appendix 1), shows a need for the expansion of practical projects.

To improve the performance of the energy projects, the methods of funding them should be reviewed.

Projects receive core funding from either the ICPP or MSC. However, there are disadvantages to MSC funding and energy projects would benefit from a greater use of ICPP funding. The major disadvantages of MSC funding are that:

i) it does not recognise the requirement for the higher transport running costs of insulation projects,

ii) wages are too low,

iii) the grant for purchasing vehicles is inadequate which severely restricts the number of people in the installation teams and, consequently, the number of jobs they can carry out,

iv) valuable expertise is lost as people are forced to leave the projects after one year's employment.

The work of the energy projects could be made easier if they had a direct and formal contact with the departments of the authority. This would improve the line of communication and provide the departments with regular feedback.

9.3. Recommendations:

The practical energy projects provide a valuable service and should continue to be supported and the local authority should consider the following help;

i) The creation of a post within the proposed Central Energy Unit to support the development of energy advice work within the energy projects. This would include the setting up of energy advice training programme for energy projects and other relevant voluntary sector workers,

ii) the provision of funding for the production and updating of a local energy advice guide. This might be compiled by the person in the post created in the proposed Central Energy Unit (9.3.i),

iii) funding of innovative energy projects through the Inner City Partnership Programme or mainstream funding, and help with the identification of suitable project sponsors,

iv) an examination of the ways in which the local authority could offer practical help to projects which may wish to expand, but are unable to do so because of acute transport difficulties.

v) the local authority should look at the long term potential of creating 'community businesses' and co-operatives, building on the skills developed by workers on MSC projects,

vi) A review of communication between departments and projects should be instigated since energy projects need direct and easy access to all departments. At least one person in each department should be designated an 'Energy Projects Liaison Officer' and regular meetings should be held with projects to discuss issues of joint concern.

10.0. ADVICE AGENCIES

10.1. The existing situation:

For people on low incomes, affording adequate warmth can be extremely difficult and is likely to get harder if the Social Security Bill presently before Parliament is enacted [See Appendix 6]. Rising fuel costs, inadequate benefits, low wages and poor housing conditions result in a need for information, advice and, at times, advocacy on issues concerned with energy. The local authority is involved, both through its own staff in service departments and by its support for and sponsorship of voluntary sector projects in the provision of this advice. Most voluntary agencies now rely heavily for their funding on the City Council. They may also rely on the authority for help with administration and management, through the Voluntary Services Liaison Section of the Social Services Department.

In relation to energy, there are four main areas where advice and information need to be available

(a) welfare benefits

(b) fuel debt

(c) energy advice

(d) condensation dampness and mould growth

Voluntary advice agencies work in parallel with the local authority in the provision of advice and assistance. They can often play a valuable role as advocates for their clients with, for example, the fuel boards, the DHSS and the local authority itself. Many who seek advice from a voluntary agency do so because they see the agency as 'independent' and supportive.

In two recent surveys of sources of advice (1), the Birmingham Tribunal Unit and the Appeals for Claimants team identified about eighty voluntary and statutory agencies (excluding Neighbourhood Offices) within the City

offering advice. However, there are many hundreds of informal advice givers in groups and clubs such as those set up to help sufferers of a particular disease or disability. Even so the geographical spread of agencies is very varied, with some areas of the city having access to virtually no advice services except those centrally located. Furthermore while the help available with income related problems, particularly debt counselling, is insufficient, agencies able to offer energy advice and technical expertise are scarce.

From the surveys, some common problems were identified:

(i) agencies reported a shrinking of resources to fund their work and many were offering less help now than in earlier periods. This was particularly difficult in the face of an overwhelming increase in their workloads,

(ii) grave concern was expressed about the future of a number of organisations following the abolition of the County Council and withdrawal of funding for law centres,

(iii) delays in notifying agencies of continued funding or levels of funding or failure to pay grants in good time were all highlighted as damaging to service provision. Such anxieties also adversely affect staff morale, put undue pressure on voluntary management committees and thwart attempts at sensible forward planning.

10.2. Scope for improvement:

All agencies reported an increased demand for their services which in many cases exceeded resources available. In some instances specialist help, like tribunal representation, could no longer be provided as an advice worker away at a tribunal hearing could lead to the closure of an advice session.

Advice work is becoming increasingly complex and emotionally draining. Help with the problems of fuel poverty is time consuming to provide and, if done effectively, requires expertise in a number of areas which many agencies felt unable to provide.

Virtually all agencies point to the need for good generic advice agencies with back-up from specialist units. However, in the face of increasing demands, these back-up agencies have tended to devote an increasing proportion of their efforts to resource functions i.e. training, provision of information or casework consultancy. This puts the burden of casework back on to generic agencies which need more resources to meet the demand.

10.3. Recommendations:

(i) The authority should actively encourage the setting up of voluntary advice centres in areas of the city not covered presently and support, in particular, the extension of debt counselling and energy advice services. This task should be undertaken by the Energy Officer in Voluntary Services Liaison in conjunction with the proposed Central Energy Unit.

(ii) The authority should do everything within its power to ensure that no advice service is lost or depleted following the abolition of the WMCC.

(iii) The system of payments to voluntary agencies should be reviewed having regard to their needs as well as those of the authority.

(iv) Information, training and technical advice should be made available free to voluntary agencies through the proposed Energy Unit.

Notes.

1. Unpublished Research, Birmingham Tribunal Unit.

11.0. WELFARE AGENCIES

11.1. The existing situation:

There are numerous organisations in the city set up to promote the interests and welfare of specific client groups. Through their work they have developed a deep understanding of the needs and problems facing their target group and considerable expertise in finding solutions. Increasingly they are being confronted with the problem of fuel poverty and some agencies are now active in a range of energy related issues and services. However for a large number of agencies, particularly those heavily dependent on volunteers, resolving the problems posed by fuel poverty and the welfare benefit scheme is outside their area of expertise. Where support is offered to an individual it may overlap with help provided by the statutory services, while other individuals in need remain totally unsupported.

11.2. Scope for improvement:

Liaison and consultation between welfare agenices and local authority departments is generally weak, particularly in relation to the provision of services for the elderly during the winter. Careful consideration needs to be given to ways of improving liaison and of replicating, on a city wide basis, initiatives that are currently working well in some areas. Experience suggests that there are many people in the city who would be prepared to offer voluntary assistance, possible through a good neighbour scheme, to support the elderly at risk. If this most valuable resource is to be mobilised, it will require considerable commitment from the local authority to working with the voluntary sector and in the funding of support workers.

11.3. Recommendations:

(i) The authority should do everything possible to support the newly formed social services/voluntary sector heating forum. In particular it should consider its contribution to the group's training and information needs. This work should be co-ordinated by the Energy Officer (Social Services).

(ii) To ensure a more even spread of services, procedures should be set up to exchange information about clients and their needs.

(iii) The Social Services department should consider how successful voluntary sector initiatives (eg. Kingstanding Good Neighbour Scheme) could be replicated in other areas of the city either by their own personnel or through additional funding to the voluntary sector.

12.0. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

12.1. The existing situation:

Community development groups represent a large part of the voluntary sector involvement in energy issues, although it is generally the least co-ordinated and least structured part. Community development groups include tenants and residents groups, ad hoc groups set up to lobby for specific community services (eg community laundry) and organisations with paid staff whose role is to encourage community participation.

In general, the emphasis of community development groups is on developing local initiatives that are capable of wider application. For example, identifying house types on an estate, in order to put together a case for the award of Heating Additions from the DHSS which could then be claimed by other tenants.

12.2. Scope for improvement:

The spread of community development groups across the city tends to be very uneven, and serious consideration needs to be given as to how their work can be developed. If such groups are to maximise their potential, it will be necessary for local authority departments and elected members to acknowledge the contribution that these groups can make. It is inevitable that at times groups will be in conflict with the authority, but since they attempt to articulate the concerns of people within a community, their role should be heard. There is also need for greater liaison between the local authority and community development groups in order that energy issues are more clearly understood by all involved. The local authority should also consider offering training opportunities on energy issues, since expertise is not generally widespread and those individuals, who have been active in the field, constantly find themselves overwhelmed by requests for help from other groups.

12.3. Recommendations:

(i) One post in the proposed Central Energy Unit should actively assist in the training and development of community development groups, taking a city wide, cross departmental interest. Care should be taken to capitalise on the skills of those already active in the energy field.

(ii) The 'Energy Officer' (Social Services) should compile, as part of the directory of energy projects (see Section 8.3.ii) a section on community development groups that are active in the field. This document should be used to examine the potential for replicating good practice in other areas of the city and informing other voluntary and statutory personnel of the existence and role of this valuable voluntary sector resource.

PART D

THE FUEL BOARDS

13.0. DEBT AND DISCONNECTIONS

13.1. The existing situation:

There is little liaison between the local authority and the fuel boards, and where it does occur, it tends to be on an ad hoc basis for specific projects. For example, it is understood that negotiations are in progress between the Engineer's Department and the Midlands Electricity Board with regard to the supply of waste heat for a district heating scheme.

There are issues that should be of concern to the local authority, particularly those that have a direct affect on their tenants. Many thousands of people are forced into fuel debt every year and 7,882 households were disconnected by the Midlands Electricity Board in 1985. This represents an increase of 2.7% over the previous year and gives the MEB the 8th highest disconnection rate, for its number of consumers, in the country. Added to this should be the number of voluntary disconnections that take place each year as people do not use their fuel appliances for fear of getting high fuel bills. It should also be noted that the last quarter of 1985 saw a 19.5% increase in the number of disconnections over the same period in 1984.

13.2. The Scope for Improvement:

The fuel boards have a role to play in considering the problems of fuel poverty and the local authority, although it has no direct control over the fuel boards, can use its influence to push for changes in policy.

This can be done on issues such as disconnections, the code of practice and pricing, and there is a need to further develop the relationship between the authority and the fuel boards. This is a role here for the proposed Central Energy Unit in coordinating this approach to the fuel boards.

13.3. Recommendations:

(i) It is recommended that the proposed Central Energy Unit examines, with the fuel boards, the issue of fuel debt and ensure that when debt occurs, reasonable repayment levels are set.

(ii) The local authority, through the proposed Central Energy Unit, should ensure that the fuel boards' Codes of Practice are adhered to. These relate to supply and disconnection and exist to protect the consumer. If these Codes of Practice were fully adhered to, and the fuel boards took a more conciliatary attitude towards their customers, it is likely that there would be a sharp reduction in the number of disconnections. For example, before a warrant is granted to gain access to a property in order to disconnect the supply, the procedures outlined in the codes of practice should have been carried out. This is frequently not the case, so if the Local Authority notifies the local Clerks of the Magistrates Court of the correct procedures, the probability is that there will be a sharp decrease in the number of disconnections.

(iii) The local authority should raise with central government the case for alternative tariff structures for fuel, since this could be advantageous to low income groups. (Some of these arguments are discussed in Appendix 4.)

(iv) Local authority departments should make greater use of advice available from the fuel boards. For example, when considering the installation of new heating systems, the fuel boards should be used by the Local Authority for both advice and manuals to the consumer and advice to the authority on the design of the heating system.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

The Interim Report (January 1986)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The use and availability of hypothermia kits and thermometers should be systematically evaluated

2. There should be a city-wide survey to identify the elderly and their needs

3. The Council's services need to be more widely publicised, not just among the elderly but also to the general public, inviting them to help identify elderly people at risk or in need of services

4. Domiciliary staff would benefit from in-house training on hypothermia awareness and welfare benefits

5. Consideration should be given to an expansion of the neighbourhood warden scheme

6. Recipients of certificated Housing Benefit and Housing Benefit Supplement should be encouraged to apply for grants for bedding and hot water bottles

7. The Welfare Rights Team leaflet on 'Help with Heating Costs' should be distributed more widely, and the cooperation of the Post Office should be sought. At the same time, information could be given on loft insulation grants

8. A working party should be established to examine the question of, and to promote 'estate rate' heating additions

9. The working party should also consider the issue of 'difficult to heat' accommodation

10. The continuation should be encouraged of the energy conservation scheme launched jointly in October 1985 by the local energy projects, the Home Help Service and the West Midlands Gas Board

11. The local authority should continue to explore the scope for reimbursing the tenant's share of the costs of grant-aided loft insulation in local authority dwellings

12. Consideration could be given to the creation of a mobile information and exhibition centre to promote action on energy and warmth. A public conference could also highlight energy conservation and the provision of warmth as important policy issues

13. Consideration should be given to setting up a pilot project to examine and tackle, on an area basis, the problems of low income housing and energy use in Birmingham. This could develop into a longer term rolling programme of insulation, welfare and energy advice that could be replicated in other areas across the city

APPENDIX 2

The National Charter for Energy Efficiency

The Charter for Energy Efficiency was launched in Birmingham in November 1985, by a consortium of over 20 local authorities, voluntary organisations and trade unions. The Charter outlines what needs to be done if the Department of Energys' 'Energy Efficiency Year' is to have any major impact on energy problems.

The Charter sets out a broad five point national programme to improve the energy efficiency of the nation's homes.

The Charter calls for:

1. A national commitment to boosting investment in the nation's housing stock - with priority for homes known to be hard to heat and prone to dampness.

   The following package of measures is required:

   * Direct investment in better home insulation.

   * The installation of newer, more energy efficient heating systems.

   * A back-up programme of energy advice to ensure that consumers are able to achieve the effective use of their heating systems and hence maximise energy and cost savings.

2. Positive action to secure the rapid development of energy efficient technologies such as Combined Heat and Power.

   Such action should include:

   * National recognition that Combined Heat and Power is a central part of energy policy, not an "add on" to energy efficiency.

   * New institutional arrangements which harness the efforts of local authorities, the private sector and consumers in the task of bringing forward the development of CHP with district heating.

   * Provision of resources to upgrade and improve existing district heating systems.

   * Direct investment in all major CHP schemes judged to be viable against the same economic and operational criteria applied to other forms of energy technology, such as conventional electricity generation.

3. A vigorous partnership with local government to spearhead the nation's drive for energy efficient homes.

   With the resources to do the job, local government would be ideally placed to formulate and implement local energy efficiency programmes which worked in partnership with voluntary agencies, the private sector, and public utilities to implement effectively a national programme of energy efficiency.

APPENDIX 3

"The Cost of Heating Birmingham's Local Authority Housing Stock"

Dr. R.H. Byrd

Summary:

In 1985, 78% of Birmingham's Local Authority tenants were receiving some form of housing benefit. The vast majority were, therefore, in the lowest 20% income bracket. These tenants live in dwellings where the 10% least thermally efficient are 5 times harder to heat than the 10% most thermally efficient.

For those on Supplementary Benefit, Heating Additions are intended to take this into account and compensate those who live in hard to heat houses. However, because there is no definition of "difficult to heat" or objective criteria to assess it, many who live in hard to heat houses do not receive Heating Additions.

A method is described below that could allow for a fairer assessment and which identifies dwellings types that are harder to heat. It is based on the same criteria that the Department of Energy use but which is not recognized by the Department of Health and Social Security.

Official statistics indicate that the amount that low income families can afford to pay would only be sufficient to keep about 35% of the L.A. housing stock at comfort temperatures. The evidence also suggests that, even if Heating Additions could be awarded equitably, the existing rates would be inadequate for about 18% of the housing stock.

However, a fairer method of assessment will only be of use in the short term as it is the intention of the Social Security Review to end Heating Additions. The effect of this will not only be colder houses for those presently receiving heating additions but also an increase in the occurrence of mould growth with its consequent health problems for tenants and maintenance problems for the Local Authority.

Although the analysis described below has been carried out for Birmingham's L.A. housing stock, the results are likely to be consistent for other L.A.s.

Towards a definition of "difficult to heat"

"Difficult to heat" is presently described by the D.H.S.S. (Ref. 3) as "rooms which are draughty or damp or exceptionally large. The construction of a property may also be a factor ..." Since there are no objective criteria in this description the judgement to award a heating addition must be made on an entirely subjective basis.

If Heating Additions are to be awarded equitably then a definition must be agreed upon. Firstly, the word "difficult" is a relative term which requires a reference point to define the threshold between normal and difficult. The word "heat" implies the provision of warmth to an agreed standard under typical weather conditions. And since Heating Additions are paid in money (not in units of energy) the logical definition of

"difficult to heat" is a dwelling for which a certain sum of money is inadequate to provide comfort temperatures under typical weather conditions (Ref. 4).

Given a certain sum of money, its ability to provide comfort conditions depends not only on how rapidly heat is lost from the dwelling but also on how effectively that money is converted into energy supplied to the dwelling. In other words the criteria that measure the degree of difficulty in heating a dwelling depend on a) the heat lost through the building fabric, b) the rate of air leakage, c) the efficiency of the heating system and d) the unit cost of the fuel. These criteria for assessing the heating requirements of houses are the same as those used by the Department of Energy (Ref. 5) but not by the D.H.S.S. in the assessment of "difficult to heat".

Matching means to needs

1) Needs:

An energy audit of some 5,000 typical Local Authority dwellings has been carried out in Birmingham (Ref. 6). This represents about 4% of the L.A. housing stock and the statistics from this sample can be extrapolated, with confidence, to describe the whole of the L.A. housing stock. Figure 1 is based on these results and illustrates the variation in heat lost from all dwellings. The variation between the best 10% and worst 10% is a factor of 2½. However, this is only half of the description of difficult to heat. The type of heating system, its efficiency and fuel costs should also be taken into account and are listed in Table 1.

Combining the costs of useful energy (Table 1) with the rate at which heat is lost from a dwelling (Figure 1) the cost of providing warmth to the L.A. housing stock can be calculated. Figure 2 illustrates the average cost per week, throughout the year, required to keep the L.A. housing stock at comfort temperatures. It can be seen that the variation between the best and worst 10% dwellings has doubled in comparison with Figure 1 so that there is now a factor of 5 between the best and worst. Since Figure 2 takes into account all the criteria of heat loss and energy supply, described above, it offers a framework with which to objectively define "difficult to heat".

Heating Systems types	% distribution in L.A. housing stock (see Ref. 6)	Efficiency %	Fuel Cost per Kwh (delivered)
Gas central heating	53	65	1.26
Gas fires	19	55	1.26
Electricity (on-peak)	14.3	100	5.52
Electricity (off-peak)	7.4	90	2.50*
Solid fuel	4	55	1.65

Table 1: Type and efficiency of heating systems

* Averaged to allow for different tariffs

In arriving at the figures certain assumptions have been made but it must be emphasized that these are the most conservative assumptions. It is assumed that the average internal temperature is 18°C (Ref. 7) for 13 hours per day (Ref. 14), that the air leakage rate is one air change per hour and that the efficiencies of the heating systems are taken as their optimum.

2) Means:

Since 78% of tenants in Birmingham's L.A. housing are either receiving or claiming housing benefit (Ref. 1), the vast majority will be in the lowest 20% income bracket. Official statistics (Ref. 2) indicate that these households are likely to spend on average 12%, but up to 13.9%, of their income on fuel. Assuming that space heating constitutes about 2/3 of the overall fuel bill (Ref. 8) and, allowing for standing charges, the average amount that is likely to be spent on space heating alone per week, throughout the year, will be of the order of £4.17 (Ref. 9). From Figure 2 this will provide comfort temperatures for 35% of the L.A. housing stock.

Within Supplementary Benefit there is a notional amount of money ('notional' fuel element) allocated for fuel. The purpose of this is not to establish how much should be spent on fuel but as a guide to those paying fuel with rent. The amount of money available for providing warmth is £5.00 per week throughout the year (Ref. 10). From Figure 2 it can be seen that this amount will provide comfort conditions for only 50% of the L.A. housing stock.

If it is assumed that the £5 available (useful heating component of the 'notional' fuel element) is a threshold for a Heating Addition, then dwellings whose theoretical cost of heating (based on the assumptions above) exceeds this amount should be deemed to be "difficult to heat adequately". With a "difficult to heat" addition (£2.20) the total amount that could be spent on space heating is £7.20 per week. From Figure 2, this will only provide comfort temperatures for about 68% of the housing stock. Assuming that all those households for which £7.20 is inadequate would be eligible for the "exceptionally difficult to heat" addition (total of £10.45 per week) then some 82% of the housing stock could be at comfort temperatures.

Some of the housing stock is eligible for an "Estate Rate" Heating Addition. However, it is unlikely to benefit those households that could not be benefited by the "exceptionally difficult" addition. Therefore, there remains about 18% of the L.A. housing stock that could not be adequately heated by any Heating Additions at the current rate if they were distributed in accordance with the needs of the dwelling (as described above).

Increasing take-up

Because there is no accepted objective criteria for "difficult to heat" the take-up of the Heating Additions will depend on the attitudes of local DHSS offices. Given the short time that these additions have to survive the only progress that is likely to be made will be at the local level by reasoned argument that "difficult to heat" should be assessed on both the thermal properties of the building and on the heating system as described above. If this can be achieved then house types can be identified that

should be eligible for Heating Additions, based on their heating systems (Table 1) and on their 'Design Heat Loss' (Figure 1) characteristics.

Table 2 shows, for different types of heating systems, the maximum Design Heat Loss that a household can have in order that the useful heating component of the 'notional' fuel element can achieve comfort temperatures (Ref. 11). If the Design Heat Loss, for a given dwelling and heating system, is greater than that indicated then a Heating Addition will be required in order to produce comfort temperatures.

Heating System	Maximum Design Heat Loss for no heating addition based on £5 NFE	W/°C For difficult to heat addition
Gas central heating	407	590
Gas fires	345	500
Off-peak electricity	284	410
On-peak electricity	143	210
50% gas fires, 50% on peak electric	202	290
Solid fuel	260	380

AT DEC '85 FUEL PRICES

Table 2: Maximum Design Heat Loss for given heating system.

Those households most likely to be eligible for a Heating Addition can be read off Figure 1. For example, for houses with gas fires only (345 W/°C max) about 3/4 of the detached houses, 2/3 of the semi-detached, 2/3 of the end terrace, half of mid terrace and about 10% of flats should be eligible. Almost any house or flat using on-peak electricity for space heating should be eligible for a heating addition.

Implications of the Social Security Review

In the short term those that are potentially eligible for Heating Additions must be encouraged to take them up. At present, because there is no definition of "difficult to heat", it is impossible to target 'take-up' campaigns (with the exception of the Estate Rate Heating Addition). If the DHSS can be persuaded to use the same criteria as the Department of Energy (Ref. 5) (i.e. arriving at a theoretical cost of heating a dwelling as described above) then it should be possible to identify house and heating system types that qualify for Heating Additions using Figures 1 and 2 above.

In the longer term there will be implications for both tenants and the Local Authority. Firstly, from the point of view of the L.A. tenant, there will be no system of recognising the different heating requirements of different house types. Those in the 10% worst houses will have to pay 5 times as much as those in the 10% best houses. This difference is equivalent to the relative difference in fuel consumption between a mini

and a small lorry. For a given amount of money to be spent on fuel, nobody expects a lorry to travel as far as a mini. Unfortunately the same recognition is not given to housing in particular where tenants have little choice of the house type and heating system allocated to them.

Secondly, the Local Authority must prepare itself for substantial increases in maintenance costs due to condensation and mould growth. Without heating additions it is extremely likely that less will be spent on heating and consequently temperatures within households will fall. Knowing the amount that is actually spent on heating compared with what should be spent in order to provide comfort temperatures, an average house temperature can be calculated. Using data from the Building Research Establishment (Ref. 12) on typical moisture production it is possible to calculate the average Relative Humidity within a house and if this exceeds 70% then there is a high risk of mould growth.

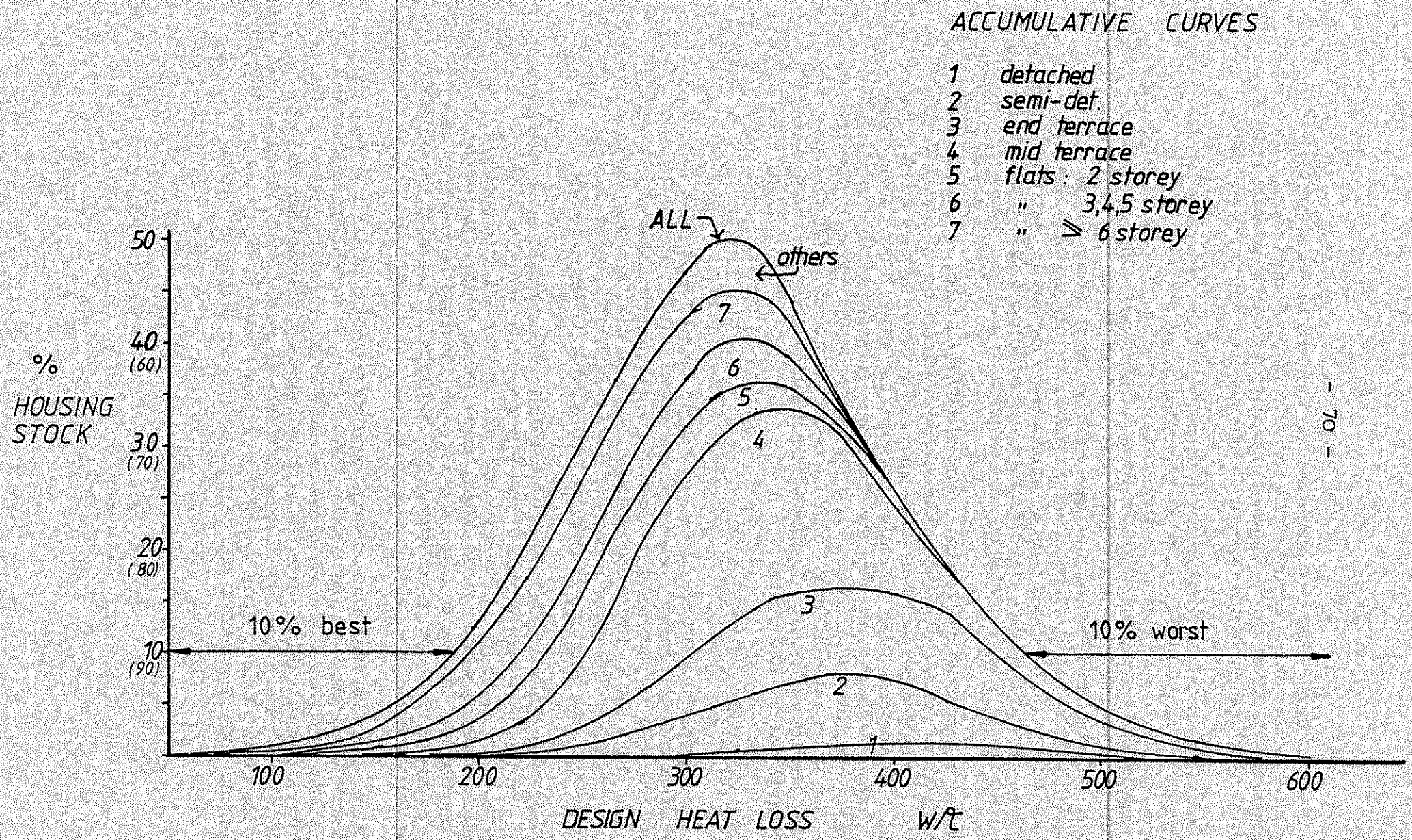
Figure 4 illustrates the proportion of the housing stock at risk from mould growth for a given average weekly expenditure on heating. For the typical weekly expenditure of £4.17 about 1/3 of the housing stock is at risk. This agrees with estimates of the B.R.E. (Ref. 13). Furthermore, the figure shows that any decrease in income relative to fuel costs will rapidly increase the amount of dwellings affected by mould. Therefore, by not recognising the different heating requirements of different house types, the Social Security Review will burden the Local Authority with increased maintenance costs.

Heating Additions: the future

The consequence of increasing fuel prices is to exaggerate the cost of heating dwellings of poor thermal performance. A 10% increase in fuel costs to those in the best 10% houses will mean an increase of only 25p. But for those in the 10% worst houses this would mean an increase of over £1.17. A fairer system of providing heating additions based on need (rather than the existing subjective criteria) will be required.

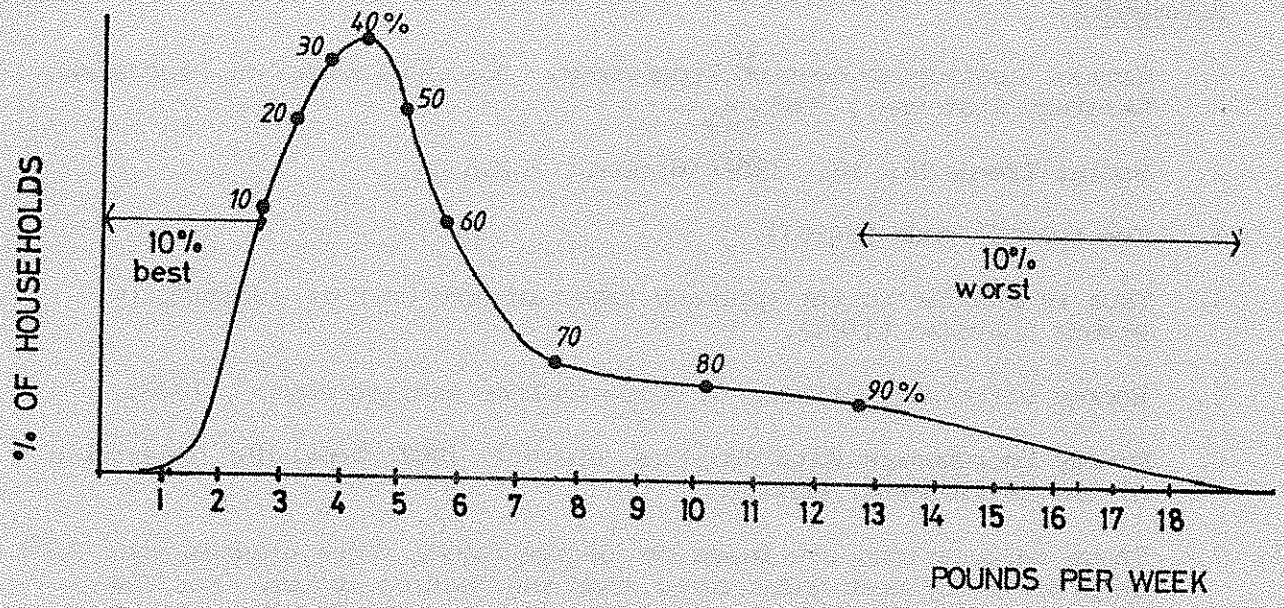
However, heating additions are only a method of compensation for dwellings that are thermally inefficient. The only long term solution that is equitable is to substantially increase the thermal efficiency of the existing housing stock. In financial terms alone, this will reduce expenditure on heating additions, reduce the financial burden that ill-health has on the country and reduce the maintenance costs of the existing housing stock.

Finally, although this analysis has been carried out for the L.A. housing stock in Birmingham the results are likely to be reasonably consistent for other LAs. Although Birmingham has an untypically high proportion of non-traditional housing, with consequent thermally inefficient building fabric, the form of housing is generally more compact thereby compensating for the poor fabric. About 35% of Birmingham's housing stock are detached, semi-detached or terraced compared with about 55% nationally.



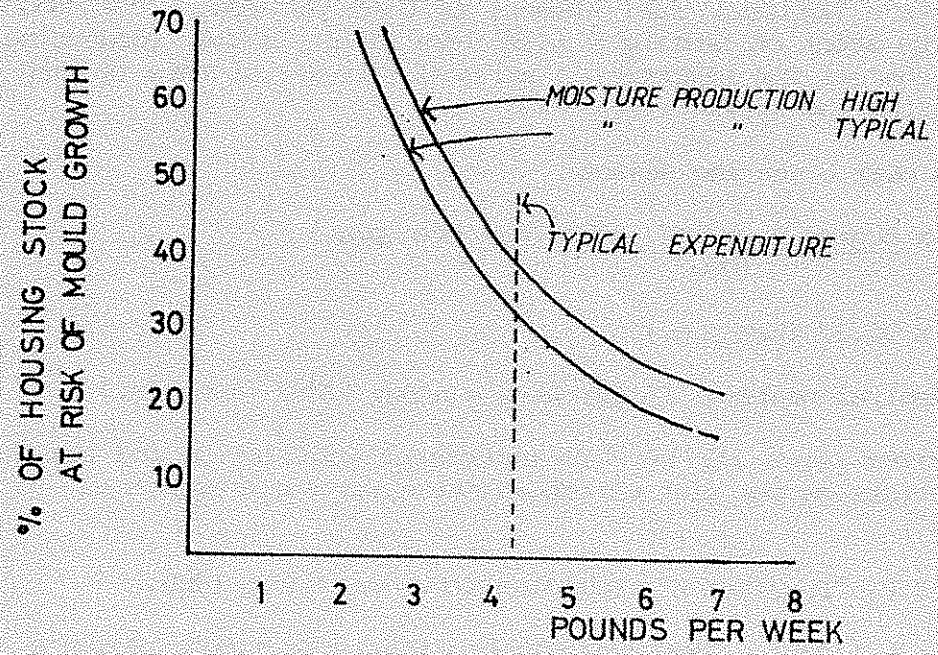
THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE THERMAL CHARCTERISTICS OF THE L.A. HOUSING STOCK

FIGURE 1



REQUIRED AVERAGE WEEKLY EXPENDITURE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO PROVIDE COMFORT CONDITIONS DURING THE HEATING SEASON

FIGURE 2



ACTUAL AVERAGE WEEKLY EXPENDITURE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

FIGURE 3

References:

1. City of Birmingham Housing Department. Housing Investment Programme, Strategy Statement, 1985.

2. Social Trends No. 16. 1986 Edition. H.M.S.O.

3. See the 'S' code (S4163).

4. This is similar to the approach taken in "The Cost of Warmth", by Brenda Boardman (1984).

5. Energy Efficiency Office: "A guide to home heating costs", 1983.

6. Energy Improvement Kits Projects. Phase 1. 1982. Dept. HB7 Department of the Environment, London.

7. These calculations are based on 'degree-days'. This assumes that 2.8°C is provided by heat gains other than the heating system. For low income households this will be an over assumption since there will be few 'incidental' heat gains from equipment.

8. Building Research Establishment, current paper 56/75. "Energy Conservation: a study of energy consumption in buildings and possible means of saving energy in housing".

9. For households in this income bracket that do not already receive a Heating Addition, because they are pensioners or have children, the average weekly expenditure on fuel in 1984 (Ref. 2) was £7.13 (13.9% of income). Assuming 2/3 of this is used for space heating. Increasing this by 5% (inflation) and deducting £1.11 for standing charges: then the average weekly expenditure throughout the year for providing warmth is £4.17.

10. Currently the 'Notional' fuel element is £8.65 per week. The amount that can be spent on heating = £8.65 less £1.11 = £7.54, (deducting standing charges for electricity and gas). If 2/3 of this is used for space heating then £7.54 x 2/3 = £5.

11. Heat loss over a heating season

$$= \text{D.H.L.} \times \frac{\text{Degree Days} \times 13 \text{ hours/day}}{1000} \text{ (kwh p.a.)}$$

= D.H.L. x 30.37 (kwh p.a.)

For gas central heating: £5 per week can buy 13402 (kwh p.a.)

12. B.R.E. current paper 31/71- "The effects of ventilation and building design factors on the risk of condensation and mould growth in dwellings".

13. Cornish, J.P. "Insulation", Building Services, March 1985.

14. Boardman, B. (1985). "Activity Levels Within the Home". Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex.

APPENDIX 4

Alternative Energy Tariffs Which Would Benefit Low Income Groups

A Local Authority has no powers to alter fuel costs or tariffs for domestic consumers. In certain circumstances (e.g. the bulk purchase of gas for district heating systems) it can negotiate fuel costs with the gas board but, in general, altering fuel tariffs requires a change in legislation. This appendix is intended as a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of altering fuel tariffs which may be of use in political lobbying.

There are many ways in which fuel tariffs can be altered to benefit low income households but they can be put into four main categories:

1) Prepayment tariffs,
2) Altering tariff structures,
3) Concessionary tariffs to particular groups,
4) Free fuel.

These methods are discussed below.

1) Prepayment tariffs:

This method of payment is already available and is achieved either by monthly or weekly payments direct to the fuel boards or by prepayment meters. This does not reduce the cost of fuel but it does help consumers to budget. Prepayment meters, although helping with budgeting, increase the cost of fuel and introduce a security problem.

2) Altering tariff structures:

Various permutations of rates of fuel prices have been put forward. For example: i) a flat rate cost with no standing charge, ii) a cheap rate up to a certain level and then a higher rate after, iii) a cheap rate to one level, an ordinary rate to another level and a high rate after.

There are several problems associated with these types of tariffs.

a) The tariffs must be arbitrary and cannot respond to fuel requirements.

b) Large consumers would spread energy consumption between fuels in order to escape high rates. Tariff revenues would then be too much to finance cheaper rates.

c) The tariffs would not help large but poor consumers.

d) Those using coal or oil are not helped.

e) There will be objections by large consumers and by industry who will pass the extra cost into products.

f) Legislation would be required in order to implement these tariffs.

3) Concessionary tariffs to particular groups:

This would involve identifying particular groups and offering

i) concessionary tariffs

ii) allowances towards the cost of fuel (eg. fuel vouchers).

The main problems associated with these measures are:

(a) ensuring that the benefits are channelled to the beneficiaries who are householders registered as consumers responsible for fuel bills.

(b) It would be difficult to apply to the short-term sick or unemployed.

4) Free fuel:

Free electricity or gas could be supplied to householders in need with industry directly reimbursed by Government for the extra they would have to pay. The advantage of this is that it may not require a change in legislation. The disadvantage is that it may not help those who are not registered consumers (eg. where landlords pay for fuel). A more radical approach would be free fuel for every consumer with the cost clawed back through income tax. A major problem with this would be controlling fuel expenditure. Industry is likely to pass this extra cost on to the consumer.

APPENDIX 5

Season and Elderly Mortality: A Note on Current Research

A major research project at the Medical College of London Hospital under Professor W.P. Keatinge has found that the incidence of myocardial infarcts, coronary thrombosis and cerebral thrombosis (ie. heart attacks and strokes) directly increases as conditions get progressively colder. There is also a substantial increase in respiratory diseases during winter but the relationship to cold is not so well understood. These findings indicate that degrees of coldness can have a deleterious effect on elderly people who might otherwise have had a good life expectancy. Hypothermia, on the other hand, only occurs during periods of extreme cold and to elderly people who tend to have many other medical disorders.

Keatinge therefore argues that of the extra 40,000 deaths that occur during winter in Britain (many of which are amongst the elderly), only around 1% can probably be attributable to hypothermia. The illnesses quoted above are likely to account for a much larger proportion of these extra deaths. Keatinge also argues that it may be possible that a major cause of cold-related illnesses arises from elderly people becoming over-exposed by going outside, rather than suffering from cold at home. He believes that elderly people with their full faculties are usually fairly competent about ensuring they stay warm at home, although this is not to detract from the unsatisfactory life styles they may lead to ensure this or the problem of fuel poverty.

These findings have important implications for public policy. For example it would suggest that much of the effort spent on increasing hypothermia awareness or detection might be better employed in making elderly people aware of the risks they face by going outside for prolonged periods during cold conditions. Doing the shopping or long waits at bus stops can put many elderly people at risk; public education and policy should therefore attempt to prevent such exposure to the cold. The trial results of the research are due to be published in July 1986 although some of the findings are discussed in the articles listed below.

Keatinge, W.P. et al (1984) 'Increases in platelet and red cell counts, blood viscosity and arterial pressure during mild surface cooling: factors in mortality from coronary and cerebral thrombosis in winter', British Medical Journal, Vol. 289, 1405-1408.

Collin, K.J. et al (1986) 'Effects of age on body temperature and blood pressure in cold environments', Clinical Science, Vol. 69, 465-470.

Alderson, M.R. (1985) 'Season and mortality', Health Trends, Vol. 17, No. 4, 87-96.

Bull, G.M. & Joan Morton (1978) 'Environment, temperature and death rates', Age and Ageing, Vol. 7, 210-224.

APPENDIX 6

Implications of the Social Security Bill

Introduction

The Social Security Bill, currently before Parliament will introduce significant changes in the system of means tested benefits - Supplementary Benefit, Housing Benefit and Family Income Supplement.

These changes are designed amongst other things to effect savings on Social Security expenditure and to redistribute the remaining resources toward working families with children. Other claimant groups, particularly pensioners and those in receipt of Supplementary Benefit, will experience a reduction in their weekly income: this has obvious consequences for fuel poverty.

This note concentrates on the position of Supplementary Benefit recipients. In Birmingham 164,000 people claiming Supplementary Benefit have 110,000 dependants.

The Changes in Detail

Weekly Benefit

Basic weekly Supplementary Benefit includes a notional amount for fuel needs. Special weekly additions provide for the extra heating needs of various claimant groups. These additions are payable where extra money for fuel is needed because of age, ill health or because the persons home is expensive to heat. 60% of Supplementary Benefit recipients receive a heating addition ranging from 88% of pensioners to 31% of the unemployed. While some of these additions are triggered automatically (eg. if a family member is under 5 or over 65) experience from take-up campaigns suggests that many claimants do not receive the additions to which they are properly entitled because the DHSS fail to exercise their discretion in the claimants favour. Experience in Birmingham indicates that many officers of the DHSS do not understand the system of additions.

The proposed system of INCOME SUPPORT which replaces Supplementary Benefit makes no attempt to assess individual need for extra fuel: all weekly additions relating to special needs are abolished and replaced by 'premiums' paid to four claimant groups - families with children, pensioners, disabled people and single parents. A benefit structure based on these premiums would allow some recognition of the extra heating needs of these groups, but it clearly discards any notion that extra money for fuel costs should be paid to people in poorly insulated homes or with inefficient heating systems.

The abolition of weekly additions with INCOME SUPPORT is however only part of a package of cuts which will also mean that:

all claimants will have to pay 20% of their rates (average £1.40 pw. in Birmingham).

all claimants will have to pay water rates (average £1.30 pw. in Birmingham).

owner occupiers will lose £1.85 pw. towards maintenance and insurance.

The effect of these cuts is that the majority of claimants in Birmingham will suffer a loss in weekly benefit entitlement. (See overleaf)

These benefit losses will exacerbate the difficulties people have in paying for fuel leading to increased incidence of disconnection and a greater demand on the local authority Social Services.

The frail elderly who cannot afford to heat their homes are at risk, from hypothermia, and along with other groups in fuel poverty, have to endure the misery of living in a cold home. In addition, inadequately heated dwellings are more likely to suffer from condensation and mould which in turn can damage health.

The failure to adequately heat a dwelling can also lead to a deterioration in the building fabric and will add to the cost of keeping homes in a reasonable state of repair.(1)

One-off Payments

Supplementary Benefit recipients can currently claim one-off grants called Single Payments for a range of needs.(2) Many relate to warmth and fuel costs.

Single payments can be made for:

- Repairs to heating appliances
- Draughtproofing materials
- Lagging jackets for hot water tanks
- Hot water bottles for frail/elderly
- Bedding
- Spare heaters
- Curtains
- Floor covering
- Part of a fuel bill following exceptionally cold weather
- Part of fuel bill where claimant is unfamiliar with heating system
- Fuel reconnection charges
- Installation of slot meters

Each of these single payments have their own rules of entitlement and the level of take-up is low and uneven. However, the number of payments made under these headings have increased in recent years due to activity in the welfare rights field and local energy projects. For example the number of single payments for draught proofing increased nationally from 3,000 to 40,000 between December 1982 and December 1984.

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(1) See Appendix 3 "The Cost of Heating Birmingham's Local Authority Housing Stock".

(2) The rules of entitlement to bedding and household items will change from 1st July 1986 thus greatly restricting the number of people eligible to claim. In particular unemployed people including those with children will find it very hard to claim for bedding, spare heaters or repairs to an existing heating appliance.

Under the INCOME SUPPORT proposals single payments will be abolished. Instead a 'Social Fund' will provide loans towards part of these expenses at the discretion of DHSS officers. There will be no appeal against refusal of a loan or the amount of the loan. Loans will be repaid through deduction from weekly benefit.

The White Paper refers with approval to the current arrangements for securing fuel supplies of those in debt (the Fuel Direct Scheme) and suggests that the Social Fund will be used in the same way to cushion claimants from one-off financial crises.

TABLE Examples of losses in disposable income under Income Support proposals by claimant group and taking account of weekly heating additions currently payable.(1)

CLAIMANT	HEATING ADDITION PAYABLE (£)			
	No Heating Addition	Lower Heating Addition £2.20	Higher Heating Addition £5.45	Lower Estate Rate Heating Addition £4.40
Single Person Under 25	- 8.20	- 10.40	- 13.65	- 12.60
Couple no children	- 2.55	- 4.75	- 8.00	- 6.95
Couple - child under 5	See note 3a	+ 1.00	- 2.25	- 1.20
Couple -children over 5	+ 3.20	+ 1.00	- 2.25	- 1.20
Single parent short-term child under 5	See note 3a	+ 5.40	+ 2.15	+ 3.20
Single parent long-term	- 0.40	- 2.60	- 5.85	- 4.80
Pensioner couple aged 60 (2)	+ 0.55	- 0.65	- 3.90	- 2.85
Pensioner couple aged 65 (2)	See note 3b	- 0.65	- 3.90	- 2.85
Single pensioner age 80 (2)	See note 3b	+ 1.20	- 2.05	- 1.00
Single pensioner age 85 (2)	See note 3c		- 2.05	

Notes on the table

1. This table does not take account of any weekly additions other than heating. It assumes a 20% contribution towards general rates of £1.40 p.w plus £1.30 p.w. for water rates. Owner occupiers will lose a further £1.85 p.w. presently payable towards repairs and insurance.

2. In calculating losses for pensioners account has been taken of the pensioner premium to be paid as part of INCOME SUPPORT.

3. Under current rules the following heating additions are automatically payable;

   (a) a lower rate addition for a child under 5
   (b) a lower rate addition for someone over 65
   (c) a higher rate addition for someone over 85

APPENDIX 7

A Directory of Local Authority and Voluntary Sector Initiatives

BIRMINGHAM

The following is a list of some of the organisations who are active in energy issues in Birmingham.

Umbrella Organisations:

West Midlands Heating Group

Formed in 1982 to bring together people concerned with fuel poverty. Initiated Community Energy Research. Produced tape slide/video on heating additions. Available for hire.

Contact: Hester Blewitt (Secretary)
021-328-2307

Birmingham Welfare Rights Group

Consists mainly of representatives of voluntary sector welfare rights agencies. The group meets regularly to identify issues of common concern and seek solutions with the relevant authorities.

Contact: Tony Pickering (Secretary)
021-233-2690

Midlands Energy Action Forum

Forum for practical draughtproofing and loft insulation projects in the Midlands. Part of the national Neighbourhood Energy Action network.

Contact: Glenn Lewar
021-565-3847

Community Forum

Concerned with the development of residents groups in the city, Community Forum acts as a federation of residents groups.

Contact: Joyce Farley
021-236-8264

Birmingham Tenants Federation

Federation of tenants groups in the city.

Contact: Hugh Lynch
021-236-8264

Other Organisations

Community Energy Research

Set up by the West Midlands Heating group to assist in finding practical solutions to the problems of fuel poverty. Offers technical consultancy, carrying out of research studies and practical advice. Does not operate an individual casework service. Full library and equipment available as a community resource. Produces 'Energy Bulletin'.

Contact: Joanna Curnow
021-359-2910

South Birmingham Family Service Unit (FSU)

Acting on heating related ssues on the Pool Farm estate in South Birmingham. Expertise on problems of non-traditional structures and community based take-up campaigns.

Contact: Julian Cleaver
021-459-4232

Money Advice Centre (Birmingham Settlement)

Debt counselling service, with expertise on fuel related difficulties.

Contact: Pat Conaty
021-359-2113

Saltley Action Centre

Have produced numerous leaflets on heating benefits and take-up campaigns.

Contact: Hester Blewitt
021-328-2307

Birmingham Tribunal Unit

Offer a comprehensive fuel debts course.

Contact: Mike McCaul
021-233-2690

Birmingham Council Estates Project

Offers a service to tenants concerned with housing problems including legal advice.

Contact: Phil Shiner
021-454-6440

Practical Loft Insulation and Draughtproofing Projects

Friends of the Earth (Birmingham)

Contact: Val Benny
021-454-6440

Hall Green Energy Action

Contact: Jon Buckle
021-772-2759

NACRO (North Birmingham)

Contact: Derek Roberts
021-327-2211

Selly Oak Insulation Project

Contact: Sheila Ellis
021-471-4103

Stedfast Community Programme

Contact: Ray Dews
021-327-3467

BRADFORD

National Right to Fuel Campaign

Pressure group, open to all individuals and groups who share the Campaign's aim of securing the universal right to an adequate fuel supply at equitable prices. Produces a 3 monthly newspaper 'Fuel News'.

Contact: National Right to Fuel Campaign,
207 Cutler Heights Lane, Bradford, BD4 9JB

CARDIFF

Cardiff Energy Action City

Joint initiative between Energy Efficiency Officer for Wales, South Glamorgan County Council and Cardiff City Council. The project aims, over a one year period to achieve a more efficient use of energy through taking an integrated approach to energy conservation in all sectors - industrial, commercial, public and domestic. A steering committee with representatives from the councils, the fuel industries, industrial, commercial and other organisations and the Welsh Energy Efficiency Officer has been established to oversee the project.

The campaign has placed a big emphasis on publicity/information programmes and aims to recoup a large proportion of costs through private sector sponsorship. The campaign has also set up Cardiff Neighbourhood Energy Project using MSC funded employees, to carry out insulation and draughtproofing work for the elderly, handicapped, chronically sick and those at risk from hypothermia and fuel poverty.

Contact: John Maxwell
0222-388621

CATERHAM, SURREY

Combined Heat and Power Association

Aims to promote community heating systems through the use of combined heat and power i.e. the extraction of low grade, wasted heat from power stations to heat water for district heating systems (i.e. 'heat on tap'). Argues that such schemes save energy, are cheap and cost little to set up. It also allows a much increased efficiency of energy use for any given impact on fuel and has considerable job-creation potentials.

Contact: Combined Heat and Power Association,
Bedford House, Stafford Rd., Caterham, Surrey CR3 6JA
Tel. 0883 42323

DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS

Dudley Energy Efficiency Programme

This is a five year programme, initiated by Dudley Borough Council's Engineers Department, that aims to combat energy wastage and encourage energy efficiency in a small area of Dudley - defined as an energy action area. The scheme had been funded by the DOE through the Urban Programme and now includes an energy information centre. This aims to give independant and impartial advice on energy conservation and its benefits to both domestic and industrial consumers. A follow-up survey of visitors to the information centre (conducted 1 year after original survey) found that 38% had adopted some energy conservation measure subsequent to visiting the centre.

The programme has two components: i) research into consumer requirements; ii) the promotion of energy efficiency techniques. The research element aims to monitor the surveys of the programme by measuring the savings in energy use obtained throughout the 5 year programme. The programme also hopes that by encouraging energy efficiency extra disposable income will be released into the local economy due to the savings in domestic fuel bills and the greater potential for increased profits for local companies arising from reduced fuel consumption.

Contact: Mr. B. Fisher, Dudley Borough Council, Lister Road, Dudley
Tel. 38-55433 ext 4559

GLASGOW

Heatwise Glasgow

Jointly established in 1983 by Glasgow District Council and Scottish Neighbourhood Energy Action to combat Glasgow's problems of severe fuel poverty and extensive condensation and damp. As well as providing a draughtproofing and loft insulation service, the project gives advice on energy matters and helps with welfare benefit claims.

Heatwise receives joint funding from the MSC, Glasgow District Council, the European Social Fund, and the Department of Energy.

Twelve local projects, each with its own coordinator, have been established over the past couple of years, running for one year at a time. On average there are 35 employees per project and the scheme is expected to expand soon to 400 employees. The projects are set up in areas of particular need but there are also specific projects for elderly people not living in these areas.

Heatwise has an energy advice unit attached to it that employs 20 workers to give welfare rights advice. It has also recently launched a new initiative, 'Workforce', that is directed towards local firms and aims to find placements for its MSC trainees.

Contact: Mike Stephenson, Heatwise Glasgow,
8 Elliot Place, Glasgow G3 8EP
Tel. 041-248-3993

2. Glasgow District Council

a. District heating

A number of district heating schemes are currently being set up in multi-storey flats, as part of the Council's programme of action against damp and condensation. A meter in each dwelling shows how much heat has been used. If the tenant has overpaid, a refund is given, while underpayments are recouped by calibrating charges accordingly. The systems are being monitored through tenant satisfaction surveys.

b. Energy Conservation Unit

This consists of the dampness coordinator and the technical adviser in Architects, as well as Social Service welfare officers in district offices to cater for the frail elderly.

Contact: Peter McGlone
041-227-5308

c. Dampness 'ex gratia' settlement scheme

This permits the Council to offer settlement on claims arising out of condensation dampness where there is normally no legal liability on the part of the Council. No other public sector housing authority has operated a comparable scheme, although Edinburgh is considering it. The scheme also permits the Housing Department to settle claims arising out of penetrating dampness and rising damp. The scheme was introduced in 1980 and to date 13,000 claims have been made. £187,000 has been paid out, on top of a repairs budget of £6m.

Settlements can be made for property damage, loss for inconvenience arising from part of the house being unusable due to dampness and for rehousing.

d. Darnley pilot 'heat with rent' project

A joint project with the South of Scotland Electricity Board that provides 'heat with rent' in 100 houses in Darnley in an attempt to overcome the condensation and heating problems in those properties.

e. Capital insulation works

Capital insulation works, worth around £25m, have also been carried out in much of Glasgow's housing stock.

HACKNEY

1. Hackney Borough Council

a. Energy Conservation Department

Situated in the Technical and Contract Services Department and reporting to the Policy and Resources Committee. The department has 4 staff, all at PO1 grade, and is responsible for energy conservation in both public and private housing (although little is done in the latter) and public buildings. The department was set up in 1979/80 and is self-financing. It has saved about £1m in 5 years - 25% of which goes to the department and the rest to the LA.

Cross-departmental liaison is achieved through the Hackney Steering Group which includes representatives from the Housing, Architects, and Technical Services Departments, the Gas and Electricity Boards and selected representatives from the voluntary sector. The Group has no executive responsibilities but reports to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Most of the public housing conservation work has been concerned with heating systems e.g. district or group heating rather than with insulation work. In all district heating schemes fuel is paid with rent and the Council is able to pay fuel bills for housing and other public buildings, in one lump sum. This in itself gives a saving of 7%, due to 'bulk buying'.

Contact: George Turnball
01-986-3222

b. Hackney Pensioners Link: Hackney Cold Line

A 24 hour telephone service for people, particularly the elderly, disabled or families with young children, in cold homes. Out of hours calls are answered by the 'Hackney Mobile Patrol', which deals with out of hours calls for all Council services. The project provides benefit advice but little energy related information. Good liaison with the housing department helps to speed up repairs but not improvements to heating systems.

2. Hackney Heating Advice Project

A joint initiative between Hackney Council's Energy Conservation Department and the London Energy and Employment Network, (LEEN) (a technology network supported by the Greater London Enterprise Board)

The project employs 2 people and runs for one year. There are two components to the project: a borough wide/publicity campaign and a more detailed welfare rights campaign with tenants in the Shoreditch area.

After examination of council estates heating systems with the Directorate of Technical Services, the project was able to persuade the DHSS to designate 14 estates as hard-to heat.

A welfare rights benefit campaign elicited 1500 replies out of 7500 originally contacted (which compares very favourably with the average 4% response rate in similar campaigns). The Project processed the application forms for DHSS benefits.

The Project has also placed a major emphasis on training tenants and voluntary groups in welfare rights advice and submitting 'hard to heat' applications. An estimated £100,000 extra benefits have been brought into the Borough as a result of the Project's work.

Contact: Kate Robertson/Hilary Prentice
01-250-0157

3. Tenants Heating and Insulation Service (THIS)

Established as a pilot project in 1984 by Hackney Council, the London Energy Employment Network, Earth Resources Research and CIPFA Services Ltd.

THIS aims to provide a service whereby tenants whose homes are not programmed for thermal improvements in the near future can have energy efficiency measures installed to improve their comfort standards and reduce their fuel bills. The scheme has been developed as a means of attracting additional private finance into heating and energy conservation in public sector housing and thereby circumvent capital expenditure restriction on Councils that prevent such investment. However it is intended to be an addition to and not a substitute for the Council's HIP spending.

The scheme is self-financing. Improvements are paid for by the tenant by means of low-interest ten year leasing arrangements, involving a small rent increase. This will generally be more than covered by the resultant fuel bill savings and for claimants, the rent increase can be recouped under Housing Benefit.

Councils may choose to subsidise the scheme to any degree that they wish. Any extra work that cannot be covered by the self-financing scheme may need to be provided or paid for by the Council. Thus it is essential that THIS and the Council's technical departments work closely together.

Contact: Patricia Bradbury, 99 Midland Road, London NW1 2AH
01-387-8906

HULL

1. Ergonomics Research Group, Hull University

Generally researches people's understanding of their heating systems. Although not specifically directed at the elderly, a substantial proportion of the research subjects have been elderly. This has arisen from study of storage systems, commonly found in Hull council housing for pensioners. Useful Ph.D thesis from former member of Group, Angela Crawshaw (1984) Consumer behaviour and energy use. This included research on all elderly groups.

Contact: Dr. Martin Crawshaw, Ergonomics Research Group,
University of Hull, 26 Newland Park, Hull, HU5 2DW
0482-497932

LONDON

The following initiatives tend to offer a London-wide service. More localised initiatives are listed under their respective boroughs.

1. Greater London Council

Although the GLC was abolished on 31st March 1986, the legacy of much of its work still plays a major role in London's energy work. The GLC played a major role in funding locally based heating campaigns and energy audits (see Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Lewisham Energy Centre). Grants were typically given to such groups through either the Popular Planning Unit (part of the Industry and Employment Branch IEB) or, indirectly, through GLEB's energy network (see LEEN). However the GLC also took up energy issues itself, both as part of the IEB's London Industrial Strategy and through its submission of evidence to the Sizewell B Inquiry. Many of these different areas of activity were interconnected. For example the energy component of the London Industry Strategy aimed to develop an alternative energy strategy for London as a whole by drawing on local energy plans developed by such groups as the Lewisham Energy Centre and the Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, as well as drawing on the work of LEEN. Similarly, as part of its evidence to the Sizewell B Inquiry, the GLC used evidence from the initiatives it funded to show the effect that the diversion of resources spent on Sizewell would have on the London economy and the effect Sizewell B would have on the GLC's energy policy and related employment programme. The GLC, in brief, argued that 1/3 of the money spent on the Sizewell B power station could fund an energy conservation programme throughout London that would save the same amount of energy that would be generated by Sizewell, would provide 150,000 jobs (considerable more than Sizewell), would be far less hazardous and would have a major impact on reducing fuel poverty and improving housing conditions in London.

2. London Energy and Employment Network (LEEN)

One of five technology networks supported by the Greater London Enterprise Board, which in turn is funded by the GLC. Membership of the network is open to any London organisation with an interest in

energy efficiency. This may include local authorities, trade union branches, community groups, tenants associations and advice agencies. A regular bulletin is put out to provide information on energy issues of concern to Londoners. LEEN has also produced a resource pack 'Turning on the Heat' that aims to strengthen the campaigns of local authorities, tenants and pensioner organisations, voluntary and consumer groups, for decent housing with decent heating and puts the arguments for alternative national and local energy policies. LEEN has recently collaborated on the production of the 'London Energy Plan'.

LEEN has developed a number of services and products that aim to overcome the problems of high heating costs and conditions at home and work:

a) Housing investment. LEEN has helped develop the Tenants Heating and Insulation Service (see Hackney); the Heat Planner computer modelling programme for LAs and housing associations and computer energy audits for the design stage of rehabilitation or new buildings.

b) Training and advice. LEEN has helped established the Tenants Energy Advice Service, a Draughtproofing Training Centre, local heating advice projects and seminars and workshops; all aimed at tenants groups, local authorities, housing associations and energy enterprises.

c) Research and development. LEEN has a practical R & D programme and a workshop to help develop new energy saving product ideas, working prototypes and small-batch production. It produces an 'Energy in the 80s' series for disseminating information on the latest ideas and best practice.

d) Business services. LEEN provides an energy survey service for small and medium-sized workplaces in London that identifies areas of potential savings and estimates the costs and benefits of improvement.

Contact: LEEN, 99 Midland Road, London NW1 2AH
01-387-4393

LEEN WORKSHOP, 6 Avonmouth St., London SE1 6NX
01-407-4478

3. Earth Resources Research Ltd.

An environmental charity that undertakes research work in the field of energy policy for government and non-government groups. Recent work has included an energy plan for the South London Consortium Energy Group (set up by Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham Borough Councils), help in establishing THIS (see Hackney) and help in running an Energy conservation springboard conference in Hackney. The company has also devised a Heat Planner computer model (see LEEN) that is designed to assist with planning energy management in housing stocks. Using information from housing surveys and other sources, the model estimates energy conservation in all the main types of dwelling, and can calculate capital and running costs of heating and other energy

use. Thus the model can be used to investigate the costs and benefits of a range of measures, as insulation changes in heating systems, which affect energy use.

The model has been used for the GLC's proof of evidence to the Sizewell Inquiry and is currently being used by Hackney Council's Energy Conservation Department (see Hackney) and on a CHP scheme for Southwark.

Contact: Earth Resources Research Ltd.
268 Pentonville Road, London, L1 9JY
01-278-3833

4. Local authority energy advice service

Based at the Centre for Energy Studies at the Polytechnic of the South Bank, the service covers advice on techniques and materials for improving the use of energy in buildings, advice on the testing and maintenance of systems and appliances for the generation and recovery of heat, lighting systems, energy auditing, analysis of energy costs and benefits, tariff optimisation and information on benefits. Thus the service aims to both save money on local authority energy bills and save money on the cost of achieving those savings.

Members of the service receive a 'Quick advice without formality' service, a 25% reduction on courses run by the Centre, in-house education and training schemes run in the authority's own buildings, access to a project advice service tailored for an authority's individual needs, and use of the Centre's expertise to undertake feasibility studies on such projects as combined heat and power.

The service is currently setting up a Shared Savings Option (ie. Third Party Financing) that would allow authorities to economise on capital expenditure by asking the Centre to undertake projects, including the capital costs, and repay the Centre over a period of time (normally 2 to 4 years).

Contact: Colin Sweet, Centre for Energy Studies,
Polytechnic of the South Bank, London SE1
01-928-8989 x2596

LEWISHAM

1. Prevention of accidental hypothermia campaign

A campaign run by Lewisham and North Southwark Health Education Service over the winter of 1982/83, as a response to the Health Education Council's national initiative to prevent hypothermia deaths. The Lewisham campaign consisted of two strategies; (i) the education of and support for, professionals whose work brings them into contact with the elderly at risk; (ii) the education of the general public and of the elderly themselves. To this end a number of seminars were organised for professionals, a mass media campaign was launched, an exhibition was held in a shopping centre, 50,000 leaflets were distributed to pensioners when they collected their pensions at post

offices, and a short questionnaire with a sample size of approximately 1000 devised to assess the awareness of the campaign within the District.

Contact: Russell Caplan, Health Education Officer,
South Wing, Nurses Home, Lewisham Hospital,
Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6LH
01-690-4311 x6298

2. Lewisham Energy Centre Ltd.

The LEC is a 12-person workers co-operative that carries out draughtproofing for the London Borough of Lewisham. LEC successfully made the transition from MSC funding to self-financing status in 1983 due to the provision of a loan and grant from GLEB and the winning of a substantial draughtproofing contract (£100,000) from Lewisham Council for work on a GLC housing estate. Other work has come from local housing associations and referrals from Pensioners' Link (the Centre's original sponsoring organisation). Individual private lofts are also insulated. The project stresses a speedy call-back-on-complaint service and good communications with tenants and the local authority.

In 1983 2 full-time workers, funded by the GLC, were employed at the Centre to formulate a community energy plan for Lewisham's housing stock (around 45,000 dwellings). The one year programme looked at the area's heating needs and problems, identified 'hard to heat' estates, drew up insulation programmes, looked at the impact of the existing HIP, estimated local employment prospects and researched the implications of product development and equipment supply. Working papers on these issues have been produced. As well as council officers, much work has been done with local tenants associations on energy education, resulting in the production of a Tenants Heating Charter. Training sessions on heating problems have been organised for council officers and tenants.

The Energy Plan team has also analysed, by computer, different types of buildings to determine the best heating and conservation option for different building types.

Contact: Ann Scully (Lewisham Energy Centre) or Gerry Mathews/Pam Kovachich
(Lewisham Energy Plan), Lewisham Energy Centre, Unit 2B,
8 Hatcham Park Road, New Cross, London, SE14 5QA
01-639-8110

MANCHESTER

Manchester City Council

a. Architects Department

In 1978 a thermally efficient new-build house was developed at Halliwell Lane as a model for new council housing stock. An energy saving of 50% has been achieved and the development's general performance and energy consumption has been monitored and written up by the BRE.

Other Department projects include a study on the effects of improved condensing boilers, the development of low-cost central heating systems in well-insulated houses, (currently being monitored by the Department of Energy), and the improvement of heating systems in 'No-Fines' houses with partial electrical underfloor heating.

Contact: Mr. Tyler
061-234-5000

b. Housing Department

Since 1983 the Council has developed an ambitious rolling heating and insulation programme, designed to be of 30 years duration. The HIP allocations have been massively increased to fund the programme (£600,000 in 1983/84 to £3.5 million in 1985/86). The retrofit programme aims to improve the energy efficiency of Manchester's housing stock (around 100,000) to a targeted fuel saving of 35-40% per house.

A major emphasis has been placed on involving tenants associations etc., in the choice of new heating systems and on installing systems that meet tenants needs.

The Housing department, alongside Architects and the NEA, is currently considering setting up a consumer advice centre to educate consumer behaviour and act as a training and resource centre for voluntary groups concerned with energy. The Council is also considering the establishment of a cross-departmental energy efficiency unit.

Contact: Irene Bebbington
061-234-5000 ext 4715

c. Welfare Rights Unit

Situated in the Social Services Department, the Unit has been able recently to launch a highly effective (both in terms of targetting and cost) campaign to increase take-up of DHSS payments for bedding. A piggy back method was devised whereby a simple 'claim it' leaflet was included in a mailshot by the Council's Housing Benefit Office to all certificated Housing Benefit claimants in the City. Because the leaflet only went to the 62,000 claimants in receipt of Supplementary Benefit the message on the front of the leaflet could be very simple: 'Short of bedding? You get supplementary benefit, so you might get a grant'. Approximately 9,000 claims were made to the 8 local DHSS offices, with a reported success rate of between 60 and 90%. The average grant payout was between £40 and £50 amounting, in total, to about £300,000.

Contact: Kevin Cutts, Welfare Rights Officer,
Social Services Dept., Town Hall Extension,
Manchester M60 2AF

LEEDS

1. 'Your right to be warm' project

A three year project, funded by the Health Education Council and administered by the Health Authority, that aims to develop a new approach to the prevention of hypothermia and the common misery of cold homes amongst elderly people. The project aims to avoid the 'alarmist' nature of previous mass media campaigns that have failed to reach those most at risk. Therefore emphasis is placed on the fact that many elderly people entitled to benefits do not claim them. The focus of the project is on a locally-based interpersonal and training approach. An important aspect of the training is the promotion of liaison between those involved in the care of elderly and disabled people. The sessions have also attempted to be multi-disciplinary and involve group discussion.

Two pilot areas were selected for the winter of 1984/85; one a small self-contained town, the other a declining inner city area. Monitoring of the training sessions is being carried out and a resource pack will be available for use by the winter of 1986/87.

Contact: Mike Sproggan
032-790121 ext 277

2. Leeds City Council

a. Hypothermia campaign

The Social Services Department has run a hypothermia campaign over the past five years, although last year's was the more extensive. 18,000 hypothermia thermometers were distributed through the home help and neighbourhood warden system to all the frail elderly and handicapped they were in touch with. A further 12,000 were distributed to advertisement respondents.

Contact: Mr. Cartwright
0532-463000

b. Community Programme Division

From December 1984 to June 1985 a community programme scheme was run that offered a free limited draughtproofing service and help with the movement of furniture (to enable at least one adequately warm room in the house) to all those over 65 and the permanently disabled (MSC criteria). 120 people were employed on the scheme (mostly transfers from other Council CP schemes) and 7,000+ people were helped. A more limited service was run in 1985/86 (20 employees) due to the establishment of Leeds Energy Saver (see below).

c. Neighbourhood Wardens

4-500 neighbourhood wardens have been appointed within the home help service to check on the welfare of the frail elderly, those at risk and a few handicapped. The scheme does not cover the whole city or the mobile elderly. Each warden is responsible for

24 clients and visits each client once a day, 3 days a week to ensure their safety. About 10 minutes per client per week is allowed which translates into 20 hours/week/warden.

ISLINGTON

Thornhill Neighbourhood Project (TNP)

For 10 years the TNP has provided a research and organisational service to tenants groups in Islington. In 1982 the GLC approved funding for an energy worker attached to TNP, as part of its 'Jobs from Warmth' campaign in Islington. This project worker has examined the needs of Islington tenants with respect to inefficient energy/heating provision, has stimulated tenant/worker participation in plans to raise energy/heating standards within the Borough and in doing so create new employment opportunities. Apart from carrying out a co-ordinating role around heating issues in Islington, the worker has linked up with similar activity in other London boroughs for the purpose of examining common experiences that can benefit and assist proposals for a heating strategy for London as a whole. Such work formed part of the GLC's London Industrial Strategy policy on energy.

An important initiative of the project worker was the establishment of a sub-committee of the Federation of Islington Tenants Associations - the FITA Heating Action Group. This has liaised with voluntary sector workers, councillors, council officers, and the local MP to put pressure on the council to improve energy/heating standards in their housing stock.

Contact: Thornhill Neighbourhood Project
Orkney House, 199 Caledonian Road, London N1
01-278-9500

NEWCASTLE

1. Newcastle upon Tyne City Council

   a. Energy advice unit/Energy information centre

   In 1979 the LA set-up an Energy advice unit (EAU) as part of the Housing department. This was a resource agency that trained local authority staff in energy issues and worked with tenants groups etc. The EAU was later transferred to the Policy Services Unit, controlled by the Chief Executive, and its functions changed. Renamed the energy information centre it now has a 'high street' showroom and acts as a general advice centre for the industrial and domestic sector. An energy advice service for those on low incomes is provided by two of Keeping Newcastle Warm's (see later) heating advisers. The Centre is funded entirely from the Newcastle Gateshead ICPP.

   The Council also created the post of Energy Adviser to the City Council in 1984, thereby further extending its channels for communication between the Council and the community on energy and fuel hardship issues. The various low-income fuel initiatives

developed by the Council do not stem from a commitment solely to energy issues, but rather from more general commitments to alleviate fuel hardship, to local economic development, to housing renewal and to aid to tenants.

David Green, Energy Advisor to the City, has suggested that much of the success of the City's energy work reflects the constant pressure on the Council by tenants and resident groups. Major coordinating organisations in the energy field include the advice and information working group (with LA and non-LA representation), the fuel liaison group and the energy managers task force (a scheme aimed at encouraging the secondment of local industrial energy managers to work with small industries).

Contact: D. Green, Energy Advisor, Newcastle City Council
Energy Information Centre, 43 Grainger St.,
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE1 5JE
0632-616776

b. Housing Department

The Department has a policy of ensuring all modernisation work carried out on Council housing stock meets current Building Regulations standards (normally only applicable to new housing). The work is carried out under 2 separate budgets - the modernisation programme and the housing and insulation programme. The former concentrates on pre-war housing and the latter mainly on post 1945 properties. Each has a ranking system for prioritising various properties/estates.

There is a £5m annual budget for new heating systems, allowing 3000 new installations, £4m of this is done through leasing arrangements. The programme aims to install all necessary heating systems within 10 years. £1.20 a week is added to the rent subsequent to such work. The Housing Action Team organises public meetings and sends letters to tenants describing work being undertaken as a means of involving tenants in decisions taken. All tenants are visited by a Tenants Liaison Officer before work is carried out.

Contact: Chris Mills
0632-328520

c. Architects Department

The Energy Management Unit (EMU), which is responsible for energy savings in the Local Authority's central plant, is located in the City's Architects Department. The EMU is responsible to the Performance Review and Efficiency Sub-Committee. Since 1981, the EMU has been allocated a budget of £250,000, taken from the capital budgets of the various departments, according to the amount of investment that is to go into the plant of each department. The amount of money that each department must pay is agreed by the Performance Review and Efficiency Sub-Committee and departments are obliged to make this money available. Although the EMU has been active in energy efficiency for over five years, they are still finding measures that can be undertaken with a

payback of less than two years. Their key areas of work are tariff analysis, the monitoring of energy management systems and the priorisation of work to be undertaken.

Contact: Gordon Preston
091-328520

2. Keeping Newcastle Warm (KNW) and Conserv Action

KNW was started in 1980 as a joint initiative between local voluntary sector organisations and the City Council. The project undertakes loft insulation, draughtproofing and energy advice for those on low incomes. KNW is a non-profit company, limited by guarantee, run by a Management Committee consisting of representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors (including Housing and Social Services Departments). Funding is received from ICPP (4 key staff), the MSC (35 staff) and from a series of individual grants from the City Council; via the Priority Area Teams Project for insulation work for predominantly private sector households in Newcastle's 14 Priority Areas (£18,000 in 1984/85) and via the Area Housing Offices for insulation work in mainly public sector low-income households (£32,000 in 1984/85). By 1984 KNW had completed work in over 10,000 low-income homes.

KNW works closely with a number of organisations:-

- the secondment of an advice worker to the Energy Information Centre

- close contact with the Electricity Board's fuel debt team. KNW helps consumers monitor fuel consumption to ensure they do not get further into debt

- KNW survey assistants are given supplementary benefit training by the DHSS and occasionally work in the DHSS for 2/3 day stretches.

The first 1000 consumers helped by KNW were monitored by York University's Social Policy Research Unit (See York).

In 1980 Conserv Action was set up as the materials buying wing of KNW, using MSC funding. This is being developed as a bulk buying agency for Newcastle's expanding community energy projects to enable insulation and draughtproofing materials to be purchased at discount prices. Conserv Action has been established as a non-profit company, limited by guarantee, with members drawn from the insulation projects it supplies. Funding has also been received from ICPP and a loan obtained from the Council's Economic Development Committee. Conserv Action is also researching, developing and co-sponsoring a county-wide recycling project, Tyne Wear Waste Saver, employing 12 people through the MSC and ICPP.

Contact: Deidre King, Manager, Keeping Newcastle Warm,
1 Charlotte Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4XF
0632-615555

3. Community Buildings Insulation Project (CBIP)

Established as a joint venture by KNW and Conserv Action, with funding from ICPP and MSC to carry out insulation work on the premises of community and voluntary groups in Newcastle and Gateshead. By the end of 1984, 117 buildings had been completed by CBIP and the project is hoping to expand into other areas of Tyne and Wear.

4. Neighbourhood Energy Action (NEA)

NEA was set up in 1981 by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations to promote and support local energy projects which offer practical help to low-income households suffering from the effects of fuel poverty. NEA is now an independant national charity, with a head office in Newcastle, working with over 400 registered groups. The 12 staff at the national office provide specialist support and guidance on funding, setting up and managing projects and provision of staff training. A number of regional committees have also been established to help coordinate insulation work etc. in the different regions.

NEA is supported by the Department of Energy, the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust and a Business Supporters Group. In addition the DOE has funded NEA to develop partnerships between local authorities and voluntary organisations in the energy conservation field. A series of introductory seminars, backed up by half-day briefings on request, were organised to this end by NEA throughout the country during 1984/85. NEA has recently produced a local authority guide to tackling low income heating problem in partnership with community energy projects entitled 'Keeping Out the Cold'.

The NEA programme aims to co-ordinate local initiatives in home insulation and energy advice from such sources as voluntary groups, local authorities, trades unions and businesses and to develop a range of practical measures that include:

- local energy projects that provide an energy efficiency service to low income households

- energy advice services that encourage the more efficient use of energy and help prevent fuel debt problems

- energy enterprises to create permanent jobs in energy conservation groups, public bodies, trades unions, employers and others.

NEA provides a comprehensive information service that includes: Energy Action Bulletin (bi-monthly), a home insulation project pack, an energy advice pack, briefing notes, training notes, a NEA slide set and a NEA training video. Apart from the latter two, all NEA publications are available free to projects registered with NEA.

Contact: Gill Owen, NEA,
2/4 Bigg Market, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1UW
0632-615677

NOTTINGHAM

Nottingham Heating Project

An MSC 'Voluntary Projects Programme' funded project that works with individuals and groups on heating problems. Have built up packages of evidence appropriate to different house types for use by tenants' groups. The project employs 3 full time workers and, on average, 40 volunteers a week.

The Project is currently campaigning for hard-to-heat designations on some of Nottingham's estates (none are designated to date) and has undertaken a health survey to back up its arguments. The project has carried out 5 temperature surveys and has produced a number of publications, for use by tenants groups, on how to conduct temperature surveys, on the heating problems of several estates, a fuel rights pack and the evidence for 'hard to heat' designation.

Contact: Anne Barker, Nottingham Heating Project,
205A Mansfield Road, Nottingham NG1 3FS
0602-412563

SHEFFIELD

Hillsborough Neighbourhood Revitalisation Service (NRS)

One of the first four schemes (alongside Oldham, Gloucester and Bedford NRS) to be set up in Britain. Jointly initiated by the National Home Improvement Council (NHIC) and the NHIC Educational Trust. Aims to establish partnerships between local authorities and all other parties interested in improving an area of dwellings. Aims to encourage private investment and action from a variety of sources and apply it on a house by house, street by street basis. The home improvement grant aid system is the main source of funds, although NRS aims to maximise private sector input as well. Generally NRS tackles housing renewal problems in large areas of up to 4000 dwellings in which the housing is old but basically sound and where the level of ownership is at least 50%. Centrally NRS is managed by a national coordinator with a small team based in London and with a roving commission. Locally NRS is managed by a committee of representatives from the various agencies involved in the improvement programme (LAs, financial institutions, housing associations, building federations, community representatives and the fuel boards).

The Hillsborough NRS covers about 2000 houses and has a Council budget input of £300,000 (1985/86); intended to act as pump-priming finance. A local committee oversees a full-time project manager and a local office in the area and a residents steering group actively helps develop the programme. The 3 year project is being extensively monitored through research on 2 areas of a similar character to Hillsborough and a third area where there is local authority intervention (probably an HAA) to assess the success of NRS renewal activity.

Contact: Paul Weston, Hillsborough Neighbourhood Revitalisation Service,
109 Dykes Hall Road, Hillsborough, Sheffield
0742-322251

STRATHCLYDE

Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department

The Social Work Department has campaigned for a number of years to increase awareness of the dangers of hypothermia. Much of this consists of publicity and information, with a major emphasis placed on 'good neighbour' schemes. In addition the Department has made a video film on hypothermia for use by community groups and councillors. Hypothermia thermometers have been distributed through the home help service and community groups to all vulnerable elderly people and families identified as being at risk. In 1985/86 143,000 thermometers were distributed.

A joint initiative between the Department and the Salvation Army to combat hypothermia was also launched in 1985. This was a one-off 6 month project, funded by the MSC (£3m) and employing 175. The initiative involved visiting all elderly people and vulnerable people in Strathclyde to advise them on how to keep warm during severe weather conditions. It encouraged neighbours and relatives to pay particular attention to elderly people. The initiative also involved the distribution of an information pack on the prevention of hypothermia to each household in Strathclyde. This provides information on fuel consumption, insulation, fuel safety, diet, exercise and dress for warmth, identification and treatment of hypothermia and use of a hypothermia thermometer.

A 2 week training course is given to the coordinators of the project, although the Social Work Department felt a longer course was needed.

Contact: Mrs McInnes
041-227-6160

WATFORD

Building Research Establishment (BRE)

The BRE has for a number of years investigated many aspects of the common housing problem of condensation and mould growth. A variety of remedies to overcome such problems has been tested for occupied housing of varying construction and design. These remedies have been tried out either on their own or in combination, and include insulation of roofs and external walls, new partial or full central heating systems, extractor fans manually controlled in kitchens and bathrooms and the use of dehumidifiers. Shorter term measures such as fungicidal washes and anti-condensation paints have also been tested.

The tests have been written up in a number of research reports and information papers and a tape/slide package has been produced. Also a series of regional seminars were organised by the Department of the Environment and presented by BRE in 1985/86. These aimed to share the experience gained from the BRE trials with all those experiencing and working to eliminate condensation and mould growth in the housing field. The seminars were aimed in particular at local authority officers, development corporations, housing associations, tenants and resident

groups, housing and health-related voluntary groups, construction industry representatives, building societies, academics and private practitioners (e.g. architects, quantity surveyors, energy consultants).

Contact: Mr. P. Lennon, Asst. Seminar Organiser, DOE,
West Midlands Regional Office, Five Ways Tower, Frederick Road,
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1SJ
021-643-8198 ext 2489/2532

WREKIN, SALOP

Wrekin District Council

Have produced a tape/slide show for tenants about the problems of condensation. This is available for hire on request.

Contact: Mr. W. Haley, Property Manager
0952-505051

YORK

Social Policy Research Unit

Have produced a large volume of research papers on social security and recommendations for change. Much of their research is based on analysis of the Family Expenditure Survey 1982 and the Family Finances Survey 1978/79, and is directed towards the problems of fuel poverty and the influence of DHSS benefits, particularly heating additions. Research has also been conducted on the success of energy conservation schemes (NEA) and on the Keeping Newcastle Warm Project. Much of the research has been carried out for the DHSS.

Contact: Sandra Hutton, Social Policy Research Unit, Dept. of Social Administration, University of York, Heslington, York Y01 500
0904-59861 ext 5759

APPENDIX 8

A brief note on some relevant literature and research.

Fuel Poverty and Debt

Berthoud, R. (1981), Fuel Debts and Hardship. A Review of the Electricity and Gas Industries Code of Practice, Policy Studies Institute, No. 601.

This report reviews the operation of the fuel industries Code of Practice on the payment of domestic fuel bills and makes recommendations about the operation of the code. It also makes a number of recommendations about dealing with customers unable to meet their bills and argues that no-one should have their fuel supply disconnected unless "it proves quite impossible to instal a prepayment meter."

This report led to the last revision of the Code in 1982.

Electricity Consumers' Council (1985) Debt Collection, Disconnections and Electricity Consumers Report on the Operation of the Code of Practice, Discussion Paper 14.

As the title indicates this report also sets out to review the operation of the Code of Practice. It makes a number of recommendations of the following:

(a) payment arrangements
(b) prepayment meters and metering devices
(c) contracts with consumers
(d) fuel direct scheme
(e) liaison with local agencies

The report also argues for an independent survey to investigate the circumstances of customers whose supplies have been disconnected to see why the alternatives have failed.

Joint Local Authority Associations Working Party (1982), Fuel Hardship: Towards a Social Policy, London Boroughs Association.

A report prepared by the local authority associations with the assistance of the National Fuel Consumers' Councils and the DHSS. The working parties looked at three areas:

(a) the Code of Practice, fuel disconnections and fuel direct

(b) heating additions and the impact of alternative fuel pricing policies as a means of alleviating fuel poverty

(c) energy conservation with particular reference to the needs of the domestic sector.

Lewis, P. (1982) 'Debt and Disconnection' from Cold Homes. The Crisis - Report of the National Conference, May 1982, County Hall, London, National Consumer Council, pp. 4-8.

This report argues that the large regional variation in disconnection rates together with the fact that most of those disconnected were in hardship, as defined by the Code of Practice, as clear evidence that the Code of Practice does not work. The report concludes by arguing that even at the highest estimated cost of £200m p.a., a 'no-disconnections' policy would be both socially just and comparable to government subsidies to the fuel industries.

National Council for One Parent Families (1985) Fuel Poverty: Case-studies from One Parent Families, NCOPF

This report provides a series of case studies of contraventions of the Code of Practice by the fuel industries and points to the high relative expenditure on fuel by one-parent families. The report argues that much of the hardship and injustice associated with fuel debts could be prevented if fuel debts were collected through the Courts like other debts.

National Association of Citizens Advice Bureau (1983) Poverty and Paying for Fuel: the CAB Experience, Evidence paper E/2/83.

This report looks at the experience of CABs, using a case study approach, with respect to:

(a) the Code of Practice
(b) the general problem of paying for fuel
(c) recommendations for change

The report argues that even if the Code of Practice and fuel debt scheme were operated efficiently, this would still be insufficient for alleviating the effects of fuel poverty. This is because of the inadequate protection provided by the Code for those in hardship, the many cases of hardship resulting from maladministration (in terms of current consumption/and the failure of central government to use fuel industry profits for subsidising low-income consumers. The report concludes by deciding that the power to disconnect fuel supplies should be removed from the fuel industries and a statutory code or other judicial control of disconnection introduced.

University of York, Social Policy Research Unit, Fuel Use and Expenditure on Low Income Families in the Family Finances Survey, DHSS 144, 6/83.

This report investigates the fuel use of low-income families by analysing the Family Finances Survey. It compares the fuel use of:

(a) families with or without a working head
(b) single parent and 2 parent families
(c) those dependant or not of SB.

The research found that the impact of fuel expenditure on the budget is greatest for the long term unemployed and single parents on SB. It argues that there is little justification for the SB central heating allowance (since terminated) and that better easy payment schemes for very poor families should be found.

Energy Conservation and Low Income

Coyne, P. (1982) 'Energy conservation and fuel poverty' from Cold Homes The Crisis, The Report of the National Conference, May 1982, County Hall London, National Consumer Council, pp. 11-13.

The report argues that national energy strategies have been no more than fuel policies in which increasing fuel supply is seen as the main problem. How that energy is used - by whom and for what purposes - is almost totally ignored. The report then puts forward the case for investment in conservation and argues that such investment is much cheaper than the costs involved in increasing supply. Present Government investment in conservation is considered to have unreasonable high discount rates, is unco-ordinated across the 4 main departments concerned and is heavily reliant on voluntary sector schemes (which can only offer a piecemeal and partial solution). The report concludes that only a nationally sponsored programme of energy conservation, concentrating first on low income households and the worst of public housing, is sufficient for achieving an energy efficient housing stock.

Hutton, S., G. Gaskell, R. Pike, J. Bradshaw, A. Corden (1985), Energy Efficiency in Low Income Households: An Evaluation of Local Insulation Projects, Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency Office, Energy Efficiency Series No. 4, HMSO.

This report presents the results of an evaluation of local energy conservation projects known to NEA in Sept. 1982.

The research found that the projects targeted low-income (particularly elderly) households well and that the main benefits of insulation work were increased comfort levels rather than reduced fuel use. The report argues that the MSC's Community Programme is inadequate for an efficient conservation project, that 90% Home Insulation grants should be extended to all households receiving housing benefit, that energy efficiency grants should be introduced and that NEA alone is inadequate for improving the thermal efficiency of all low-income households.

University of York, Social Policy Research Unit:

(i) Keeping Newcastle Warm: An Analysis of the First 1000 Cases. Report of Main Findings, DHSS 114, 9/82.

The report analyses the information collected by Keeping Newcastle Warm on the first 1000 cases helped by the project. It was found that the mean amount of grant for insulation work was £20, a large amount of households helped included people aged 60+ and over half the clients helped were concentrated in 3 of the 21 areas covered by KNW.

(ii) Richard R. Barnett, Local Energy Conservation Schemes: An Economic Appraisal, DHSS 188, 5/84.

This report presents an economic appraisal of the work carried out by 5 local energy conservation schemes from the perspectives of the schemes' clients. It presents an economists argument for introducing special measures for the elderly and low income and points out that economic efficient measures include increased comfort levels as much as reduced fuel expenditure.

Beneficiaries of the projects include employees of labour, suppliers of materials, potential savings of health and social services costs, and the gains to society resulting from an improved housing stock (to the extent that conservation benefits are not capitalised into house prices).

Williams, F. (1983) 'Insulation and energy conservation' from Energy and Social Policy, eds. J. Bradshaw & T. Harris, Routledge & Keegan Paul.

This paper first reviews the extent of home insulation in Britain and concludes Britain rates very badly in comparison with other European countries. It then examines the main areas of Government intervention into conservation:

(a) fuel pricing policy
(b) provision of information and advice
(c) financial incentives
(d) measures for specific groups, e.g. the elderly, through the MSC and voluntary sector

The report criticises the lack of Government intervention into heating systems and concludes by arguing for a national comprehensive insulation programme, perhaps similar to the North Sea Gas conversion programme.

The Elderly

Housing Development Directorate (1978), An Exploratory Project on Heating for the Elderly. Department of the Environment.

This report describes a DOE project to explore the technical implications of carrying out insulation work on houses for the elderly. Most of the work was minor (average cost = £250/dwelling) and of a different nature to that undertaken in house renovation programmes. Draughtstripping was almost universal but other work varied considerably, according to varied preferences, health needs and unconventional solutions. Most of the work undertaken could not have been financed under existing grant arrangements.

Leat, D. (1983), Getting to Know the Neighbours. A Pilot Study of the Elderly and Neighbourly Helping, Research Paper 83-2, Policy Studies Institute.

This study aimed to establish the methods by which those who provide neighbourly help to the elderly may be identified and the amount and form of good neighbouring discovered. The research found that neighbourly relationships and levels of care and support varied by locality and was affected by the availability and accessibility of family help, perceptions

of professional help, the accessibility of help from both the statutory and commercial sectors, housing policy and the freedom to choose one's place of residence.

The report recommends a more flexible approach to housing allocation by LAs, giving greater freedom of choice to potential residents, fewer flats and/or greater attention to the social effects of physical design. All may encourage informal neighbourly helping.

Wicks, M. (1978), Old and Cold, Heinemann.

This book reports the results of a national survey of the old that set out to find the distribution of inner body temperatures among the elderly, the proportion of the elderly who have temperatures below the hypothermia level and how many lived in cold conditions.

The survey found that many of the elderly live in cold conditions and an estimated 700,000 in the UK are 'at risk' from developing hypothermia. The survey also found that receipt of SB, body weight and use of electric blankets were related to low core body temperatures. The very aged were the most vulnerable, probably due to declining physiology combined with the most deprived social conditions. Many of the 'at risk' reported that they did not often feel cold indoors nor that they would prefer to be warmer. Most of the elderly found heating expensive and cost was the major reason why those wanting more heat in the house did not have it.

Heating Additions

McCutcheons Court: a Campaign for Extra Money for Heating (1984), McCutcheons Court Tenants' Action Group, Newcastle Tenants' Federation, City of Newcastle upon Tyne Welfare Rights Service.

This report provides a good case study of how tenants and professional workers can organise together to campaign for the welfare benefits many tenants are entitled to but do not receive. Technical advice was provided by the City Council's Welfare Rights Service and the City Architect's Department and resulted eventually in 80 claims from 200 flats.

The campaign illustrates the potential for collective action to achieve gains otherwise not possible and the need for more general action to combat the problem of old, ineffective and expensive heating.

University of York, Social Policy Unit

(i) Targeting Additional Requirements for Fuel. A Memorandum to the Supplementary Benefit Review, DHSS 199, 7/84

This memorandum looks at the present arrangements for targeting heating additions paid on top of the supplementary benefit scale rates and considers the arguments for consolidating these additions within the scale rates. It examines the problems with the present heating addition arrangements and concludes that, despite these problems, it would be extremely rough justice to abandon the capacity of benefits to vary with requirements for fuel. The paper suggests that there is a case though for

abolishing central heating additions. (This was enacted in August 1985 for new claimants) and for using the savings for general improvements in the scale rates.

(ii) Fuel Expenditure and Housing Benefit: Supplement to Expenditure on Fuels 1982, DHSS 219, 11/84

This paper examines the impact of the Housing Benefit Scheme on claimants' ability to budget flexibly for large bills such as those for the winter quarter's fuel. The research concluded that although tenants would not be worse off as a result of the introduction of the scheme, it is possible that the likelihood of fuel debt will be increased.

(iii) Fuel Expenditure and Payment of Fuel Allowances, DHSS 253, 5/85

This report identifies an income range where fuel expenditure is not constrained by a lack of financial resources and can therefore be used to assess the cost of maintaining a warm home. Variations in fuel expenditure for this income band also gives an indication of which circumstances give rise to higher expenditure. These circumstances were then compared with the categories of household presently receiving additional requirements.

The research findings identify which groups are most likely to experience fuel poverty and the extent to which they are compensated appropriately by heating additions.

(iv) Sandra Sutton, A Warm House for All - An Objective of Social Security Paper for SAA Conference - July 1985, DHSS 270, 10/85.

The above paper considers whether an income maintenance system can or should solve the problems many households have in keeping warm at home. Alternative means of help are reviewed and the proposals within the Green Paper on Social Security are discussed.

The paper concludes that, whatever the outcome of the Social Security Review, fuel poverty is likely to remain. There are increasing numbers of people dependent on low incomes, energy prices are still high and cut backs on housing expenditure and local authority funding mean that difficult to heat homes are likely to be in use for some time. The near future will not see a complete thermally efficient housing stock which would reduce the problem of fuel poverty to one of income alone.

Energy

Audit Commission (1986), Managing the Crisis in Council Housing, HMSO.

A survey and study that reveals the seriousness and depth of the crisis facing many local authorities. Short section on how local authorities can help tenants minimise their fuel bills.

Eighth Report from the Energy Committee - The Energy Efficiency Office - 1985, HMSO.

Full report on two years work of the Energy Efficiency Office (Department of Energy). Includes submissions to the committee from external organisations.

An Energy Policy for Housing, Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) (1985).

This document outlines a range of issues concerning energy efficiency measures in housing and makes some clear recommendations as to how local authorities should go about developing an energy policy for their housing stock.

Energy and Employment

Hillman, M. & A. Bollard (1985), Less fuel more jobs, Policy Studies Institute No. 644.

This report sets out the arguments for a much expanded national investment programme on energy conservation, pointing out the considerable job creation potentials:

(a) jobs created in conservation would be 8 times as labour intensive as those created in manufacturing supply industries

(b) the net cost of such a programme would be less than 2/3 of the total cost to the Government due to decreased DHSS expenditure

The report also outlines some of the present barriers to energy conservation. These include lack of public funding of research, unreasonably high discount rates, the failure to consider the reduced costs resulting from a comprehensive programme, the limited time horizons of owner occupiers and the removal of the energy conservation component from HIP.

Department of Energy (1984), Combined Heat and Power, District Heating Feasibility Programme Stage 1, Energy Paper 53, HMSO.

This report summarises the findings of the first phase of a feasibility study on CHP/DH schemes which aimed to consider the most appropriate locations for the schemes. Nine cities were chosen from which a second more detailed study will be carried out: Belfast, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Sheffield and Tyneside.

The studies concluded that all the 9 schemes are feasible and have a prospect of commercial viability. They could provide heat at 10% below the cheapest alternative whilst showing rates of return around 5% p.a. The studies showed that CHP/DH schemes have a prospect of meeting the Government's required rate of return on investment if started now and that the earlier the start the better, if they are to significantly help save

energy. Further studies showed that CHP/DH schemes would be socially acceptable, that social and general improvements in inner city areas should be considered and that the conditions of CHP heat in meeting national energy demand should be further explored.

Further information about any of the reports mentioned in this appendix can be obtained from Community Energy Research.

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