

Tackling Fuel Poverty through Community Action - Commemorating Cathy McCormack – Motion as adjusted, approved.

16 Councillor McGill, seconded by Councillor Kelly, moved that:-

"Council notes that action to tackle fuel poverty has been at the heart of activism in Glasgow's communities for decades. Council recalls for example the work of the late Cathy McCormack of Greater Easterhouse, who became known globally for her work to improve damp housing conditions in schemes, helping to secure funding for a pioneering solar heating project on the Easthall housing scheme in the early 1990s, the first of its kind in the world.

Council notes that in March 2024 Glasgow Community Energy launched the Cathy McCormack Community Activism Fund, named in her honour and providing grants generated from the proceeds of selling renewable energy and believes that the aims and ambitions of the Fund to connect and empower local people through community-ownership and democratic involvement align with the goals of the Council's Climate Plan and Glasgow's Community Renewable Energy Framework (CREF), which makes over 5.5 hectares of land available to community organisations for the development of renewable energy initiatives that will generate long lasting, benefits for the communities they serve. Council further notes that the Scottish Government is investing £9 million in community-owned renewable energy, helping local groups build local clean energy projects, benefit from lower energy costs and take control of their power.

Council understands that as well as access to affordable clean energy, action to improve the energy efficiency of buildings is vital to tackle fuel poverty and acknowledges that the Scottish Government has invested over £45m in the past decade in the Heat in Buildings - Area Based Scheme, designed and delivered by councils with local delivery partners to target fuel-poor areas. Council notes that the complexities of Glasgow's tenemental housing stock creates significant challenge when it comes to delivering this programme in the areas of greatest deprivation; believes that the Scheme could do more good in the areas of highest need if the Council were able to enforce work and where appropriate defer payment, benefitting in particular those living in the privately rented sector; and calls on the Scottish Government to engage constructively with Glasgow City Council on these proposals.

Council is deeply concerned that action to tackle fuel poverty is undermined by failure at Westminster level to stem continuing increases in energy prices, and notes that earlier this month another 2% hike in energy prices took place, meaning that a household using a typical amount of energy will pay £1,755 a year. Council understands that this is making fuel poverty worse and believes that leaving families to deal with unaffordable bills is an unacceptable political choice by the UK Government, who have failed on their election pledge to reduce bills by £300.

Council further notes that despite renewable energy now being the cheapest to produce, the current energy pricing system prevents most households from accessing those savings, creating space for climate deniers to falsely attack investment in renewables.

Council:

1. Believes that access to affordable, clean energy should be recognised as a basic right.
2. Calls for a statutory social tariff for energy, a significant cut in standing charges for all and removal of standing charges for anyone with a prepayment meter.
3. Believes the transition to renewable energy must be rapid, public-sector led, and ensure justice for workers, communities, and those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis.
4. Believes that communities have a central role to play in shaping a just transition that protects both people and planet.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Ed Miliband and the Minister of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Michael Shanks, drawing attention to the work of activists like Cathy McCormack, noting this motion and calling for urgent reform of the energy pricing system, an end to energy poverty, and just access to clean energy, with opportunities created for public and community ownership where this is possible."

Councillor Docherty, seconded by Councillor Greer, moved as an amendment that

- (1) after the third paragraph, insert the following 2 new paragraphs:

"Council notes that while energy pricing remains a reserved matter, the Scottish Government has held devolved responsibility for tackling poverty since 2007. Council further notes that the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets statutory targets to reduce child poverty by 2030, including reducing relative poverty to below 10%, absolute poverty to below 5%, and persistent poverty to below 5%. However, the latest statistics for 2023/24 show that relative poverty stands at 26%. Council recognises that these figures are significantly above the targets and believes that urgent action is required to close these gaps and meet the legal obligations by 2030.

Council welcomes early steps taken by the UK Labour Government to address fuel poverty and child poverty, including the reintroduction of the Warm Home Discount, the establishment of GB Energy headquartered in Scotland, and the forthcoming Child Poverty Strategy. Council believes that Glasgow, as the city with the highest child poverty rate in Scotland, must be prioritised in national efforts to reduce poverty and improve energy affordability.";

- (2) at the fourth paragraph delete "Council is deeply concerned that action to tackle fuel poverty is undermined by failure at Westminster level to stem continuing increases in energy prices, and notes that earlier this month another 2% hike in energy prices took place, meaning that a household using a typical amount of energy will pay £1,755 a year. Council understands that this is making fuel poverty worse and believes that leaving families to deal with unaffordable bills is an unacceptable political choice by the UK

Government, who have failed on their election pledge to reduce bills by £300.”; and

- (3) at the sixth paragraph, at 2., delete “Calls for a statutory social tariff for energy, a significant cut in standing charges for all and removal of standing charges for anyone with a prepayment metre”.

Councillor Reid-McConnell, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, moved as an amendment that:-

- (1) after the second paragraph ending “...control of their power.”, add the following:

“Council commends the efforts of officers developing a model for Climate investment and development that prioritises social benefits and the needs of citizens over short term profit. Without robust protections against rising prices, strong efforts to minimise heat and energy usage in homes and buildings through retrofitting and improved insulation, and an effort to eventually move heat networks and sustainable generation into public hands, the transition to sustainable energy systems will become another cause of fuel poverty. This must remain the priority through the Climate investment work as it assesses options for ownership and funding of new energy systems.

Council commits to setting a target for the next decade on the amount of community owned energy supply and / or infrastructure in Glasgow and asks officers to bring a paper to the Net Zero committee within 3 cycles outlining potential targets and how they could be achieved. Council commits to continuing and expanding its efforts within the Community Renewable Energy Framework - acknowledging the potential and need to focus on improvements to identifying sites and buildings, as well as technical and financial support for communities. Council acknowledges the major first step in the 4 sites identified but that more could be done to engage with communities at an earlier stage to ensure site viability.”;

- (2) after the third paragraph ending “...on these proposals.”, add the following:

“Council recalls its recent agreement to engage with Scottish Government officials with the view to updating the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 in relation to building disrepair, and asks officers to expand this engagement to more broadly consider the issues facing tenements relating to heating, particularly overcoming the issues of mixed-tenure buildings and reaching agreements over works and the payment of works, and steps to move away from gas boilers to more innovative shared heating systems. Officers should explore the possibility of Glasgow as a pilot area for any new schemes or funding that may become available in the forthcoming Scottish budget.”; and

- (3) in the final paragraph, between “...Michael Shanks...” and “...drawing attention...”, add the following:

“and to the equivalent energy and development secretaries in Holyrood”

Councillor Massie, seconded by Bailie Hoy, moved as an amendment that the last 2 paragraphs should read as follows:

“Council:

1. Believes that access to affordable, clean energy should be recognised as a basic right.
2. Calls for a statutory social tariff for energy, and the removal of standing charges for all.
3. Believes the transition to renewable energy must be rapid, public-sector led, and ensure justice for workers, communities, and those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis.
4. Believes that communities have a central role to play in shaping a just transition that protects both people and planet.
5. Believes that energy firms must be brought back into public ownership to end reckless profiteering and to end fuel poverty.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Ed Miliband and the Minister of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Michael Shanks, drawing attention to the work of activists like Cathy McCormack, noting this motion and calling for nationalisation of energy, including public control of infrastructure investment and management, urgent reform of the energy pricing system, an end to energy poverty, and just access to clean energy, with opportunities created for public and community ownership where this is possible."

Councillor McGill, with the approval of her seconder, accepted the amendment by Councillor Reid-McConnell, resulting in the following adjusted motion:

"Council notes that action to tackle fuel poverty has been at the heart of activism in Glasgow's communities for decades. Council recalls for example the work of the late Cathy McCormack of Greater Easterhouse, who became known globally for her work to improve damp housing conditions in schemes, helping to secure funding for a pioneering solar heating project on the Easthall housing scheme in the early 1990s, the first of its kind in the world.

Council notes that in March 2024 Glasgow Community Energy launched the Cathy McCormack Community Activism Fund, named in her honour and providing grants generated from the proceeds of selling renewable energy and believes that the aims and ambitions of the Fund to connect and empower local people through community-ownership and democratic involvement align with the goals of the Council's Climate Plan and Glasgow's Community Renewable Energy Framework (CREF), which makes over 5.5 hectares of land available to community organisations for the development of renewable energy initiatives that will generate long lasting, benefits for the communities they serve. Council further notes that the Scottish Government is investing £9 million in community-owned renewable energy, helping local groups build local clean energy projects, benefit from lower energy costs and take control of their power.

Council commends the efforts of officers developing a model for Climate investment and development that prioritises social benefits and the needs of citizens over short term profit. Without robust protections against rising prices, strong efforts to minimise heat and energy usage in homes and buildings through retrofitting and improved insulation, and an effort to eventually move heat networks and sustainable generation into public hands, the transition to sustainable energy systems will become another cause of fuel poverty. This must remain the priority through the Climate investment work as it assesses options for ownership and funding of new energy systems.

Council commits to continuing and expanding its efforts within the Community Renewable Energy Framework - acknowledging the potential and need to focus on improvements to identifying sites and buildings, as well as technical and financial support for communities. Council acknowledges the major first step in the 4 sites identified but that more could be done to engage with communities at an earlier stage to ensure site viability. Council notes that there has been regular reporting to the Net Zero committee on this community energy, most recently 23rd September 2025, and there is a commitment to do so on next steps of the CREF including consideration for Phase 2 that will be developed in 2026 taking learning from this initial pilot phase of the CREF and will include a review of the process followed for site selection and could also include, though not limited to: identification of additional sites, exploration of how sites could be proposed to the CREF team by community groups or residents, provide feedback on the process and supporting materials, and community access to technical support, and that this will inform future target setting based on this learning and sound evidence.

Council understands that as well as access to affordable clean energy, action to improve the energy efficiency of buildings is vital to tackle fuel poverty and acknowledges that the Scottish Government has invested over £45m in the past decade in the Heat in Buildings - Area Based Scheme, designed and delivered by councils with local delivery partners to target fuel-poor areas. Council notes that the complexities of Glasgow's tenemental housing stock creates significant challenge when it comes to delivering this programme in the areas of greatest deprivation; believes that the Scheme could do more good in the areas of highest need if the Council were able to enforce work and where appropriate defer payment, benefitting in particular those living in the privately rented sector; and calls on the Scottish Government to engage constructively with Glasgow City Council on these proposals.

Council recalls its recent agreement to engage with Scottish Government officials with the view to updating the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 in relation to building disrepair, and asks officers to expand this engagement to more broadly consider the issues facing tenements relating to heating, particularly overcoming the issues of mixed-tenure buildings and reaching agreements over works and the payment of works, and steps to move away from gas boilers to more innovative shared heating systems. Officers should explore the possibility of Glasgow as a pilot area for any new schemes or funding that may become available in the forthcoming Scottish budget.

Council further notes that despite renewable energy now being the cheapest to produce, the current energy pricing system prevents most households from accessing those savings, creating space for climate deniers to falsely attack investment in renewables.

Council:

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4. Believes that communities have a central role to play in shaping a just transition that protects both people and planet.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Ed Miliband and the Minister of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Michael Shanks, and to the equivalent energy and development secretaries in Holyrood drawing attention to the work of activists like Cathy McCormack, noting this motion and calling for urgent reform of the energy pricing system, an end to energy poverty, and just access to clean energy, with opportunities created for public and community ownership where this is possible."

On a vote being taken electronically and by calling the roll, 23 voted for the amendment by Councillor Docherty, 3 for the amendment by Councillor Massie and 44 for the motion as adjusted which was accordingly declared to be carried.

Adjournment.

17 In terms of Standing Order No 5 (12), the time being after 1630 hours, the Council agreed to adjourn the meeting, the remaining items of business being 9(e), 9(f), 9(g), 9(h) and 9(i).