

Cut Fuel Bills, Cut Carbon Emissions, Kick Start the Green Economy

Notice of Motion

Motion received in terms of Standing Order No 20 on 22 November 2022, proposed by Councillor Kirstin Robb, seconded by Councillor Ross Clark, as follows:-

“Motion Pre-amble:-

Fuel bills impact on council budgets, poverty and business profitability – The council’s budget strategy identified an exceptional additional budget pressure of £7.450 million due to projected increases in utilities costs (Full Council, June 2022) and the risk to budgets of future energy price inflation has been repeatedly flagged by officers. Equally, our residents and businesses are seeing their bills rising dramatically too, plunging more householders into fuel poverty (in 2019, 22% of South Lanarkshire households lived in fuel poverty) and undermining business profitability.

Climate change – The largest source of the council’s emissions is from our council buildings and South Lanarkshire wide, the domestic sector makes up the largest source of South Lanarkshire’s emissions (SLC State of the Environment report 2021). The costs of not acting on climate change, far outweigh the costs of acting boldly now.

Policy drivers – National building standards are changing on 1st Feb 2023 with further increased energy standards and mandatory testing of all new builds. All new builds will need to be heated by a non-fossil fuel source by 2024. All public sector buildings should be zero-carbon heated by 2038 and fuel poverty should be eradicated by 2040. National Planning Framework 4 Policies 1, 2 and 19 seeks to ‘minimise emissions from development’, ‘build more efficient net zero homes with decarbonised heating and cooling systems’ and ‘support development proposals for buildings that will be occupied by people to promote sustainable temperature management, for example by prioritizing natural or passive solutions such as siting, orientation, and materials’.

In South Lanarkshire, both the Community Plan and the Council plan seek to deliver on People, Planet and Progress. And the South Lanarkshire administration’s ‘New Hope’ agreement aims to ‘maximise the energy efficiency of homes’ and wishes to ‘Develop a Green New Deal for South Lanarkshire’. This motion will contribute to that.

Examples – ‘Fabric First’ - Buildings designed and constructed using a fabric first approach aim to minimise the need for energy consumption – the cheapest form of energy is that which you don’t use, so it makes sense to maximise insulation whilst also maintaining a healthy environment. There are various voluntary quality standards which would help ensure a vast improvement in energy efficiency. One is the Net Zero Public Sector Building Standard <https://www.scottishfuturetrust.org.uk/page/net-zero-public-sector-buildings-standard>, now being encouraged to access funding for new schools and also takes into account the carbon embodied in the construction materials used and how the building operates. Another is the Passivhaus standard (<https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk>, <http://www.architype.co.uk/blog/what-how-and-why-passivhaus-the-pupils-of-wilkinson-primary-school-explain/>), which aims to reduce energy demand as much as possible but also improves health and comfort too through ventilation without heat loss. Heat demand in

a Passivhaus non-domestic building is less than a fifth of that in a typical non-domestic building with architects reporting a £30,000-£50,000 saving in fuel bills in primary schools and a third of costs in domestic properties (more now with energy price increases). Edinburgh council has adopted Passivhaus for its future school builds and Glasgow council has Passivhaus offered as a route to achieve Gold Level compliance for all new residential developments. Overall, a study showed that the Passivhaus standard in the UK can be achieved now for a modest extra-over cost and this is likely to reduce to nominal levels if adopted at scale: https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/guidance_detail.php?gld=41. Any additional upfront costs will save money further down the line on energy bills.

Motion: This council agrees to take the following additional action on energy efficiency to achieve multiple benefits: save money for front-line services, reduce South Lanarkshire's risk to future energy price shocks, cut carbon emissions, improve wellbeing, reduce fuel poverty and kick start the local green economy.

1. **Produce an energy demand reduction plan for council buildings** considering actions such as consulting on a set point of 18 degrees **where it is safe to do so**, reducing heating times or boiler temperatures and engaging and supporting Members and staff in other immediate, no/low cost ways to reduce bills.
2. **Adopt the highest standards of energy efficiency for all South Lanarkshire Council funded building projects and in the forthcoming Residential Design Guide**, including:
 - ◆ Moratorium on fossil-fuelled heating systems in new builds
 - ◆ Formally adopt the 'Fabric First' approach by using Passivhaus, Net Zero Public Building Standard or equivalent highest energy efficiency standards for all future council funded new builds. Doing this work at scale will reduce build costs but also fuel bills for the council and tenants.
 - ◆ Investigate retrofitting council buildings to Passivhaus /Gold standards for properties where it could bring substantial savings for council and /or tenants.
 - ◆ Use learning from council funded high energy efficiency building projects to engage with volume house builders to share learning and develop a future mandatory 'South Lanarkshire Standard' to reach the highest efficiency levels possible
 - ◆ In the meantime, when submitting plans for planning permission, ask developers in their energy statement to demonstrate how the development will adhere to the principles of 'Fabric First', and how high standards of operational energy efficiency will be achieved
 - ◆ To close the building performance gap, develop a local system to check compliance against a suitable indicator which gives a good measure of build quality and energy efficiency such as air tightness. Professionally prepared reports on energy efficiency deficiencies in new builds can be reviewed by officers and random spot checks carried out. The council can then provide a remediation and instruction for correction, as currently exists for safety matters.
3. **Kick start the local green economy** through the council's own long term new build / retrofit programme so giving local businesses the confidence to develop new products and skills to serve the council's investment programme and the growing wider market
 - ◆ Working with local colleges, Hamilton based <https://www.be-st.build/about/> , Skills Development Scotland and businesses to review the local supply chain for low carbon construction materials, construction / retrofit qualifications and skills to identify current supply, gaps and opportunities for local workers and the economy.
 - ◆ Using and encouraging others to use / gain the government TrustMark (or equivalent) which details registered qualified professionals who build / install to the standards required to meet high energy efficiency standards
 - ◆ Exploring setting up / expanding a green-economy skills academy and apprenticeship programme with local colleges, social landlords and businesses to skill-up and embed the high standards required and provide local work force opportunities.