LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

FUEL POVERTY (TARGET, DEFINITION AND STRATEGY) (SCOTLAND) BILL CALL FOR VIEWS

SUBMISSION FROM DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL

Dumfries and Galloway Council has previously responded to the Fuel Poverty Strategy Consultation. Therefore, we are submitting responses to questions 3 and 5 of this Call for Evidence as questions 1, 2 and 4 cover the same, or similar, areas.

3. **Do you agree with provisions in the Bill requiring the Scottish Government to publish a fuel poverty strategy? Do you also agree with the consultation requirements set out in relation to the strategy?**

The Draft Bill seeks to set targets in relation to the reduction and eradication of fuel poverty. By creating a well-formulated and executed strategy, the Scottish Government will be able to monitor and measure the progress that is being made. This will provide a clearer understanding of the requirements to succeed and ensure that the focus is on the most appropriate areas. Clearly, achieving these targets will require the involvement of a number of different organisations, hence the need for a defined vision and direction setting out the different roles. It is important that the strategy also takes account of the external environment as fuel poverty has four main drivers, including income and fuel costs.

We are encouraged by the Scottish Government’s ambitions to consult with people who have a lived experience of fuel poverty. Dumfries and Galloway Council has recently submitted its Local Housing Strategy to the Scottish Government. During the development process, we consulted with the local Tackling Poverty Reference Group made up of people who have lived experience of poverty. This form of involvement is essential in the achievement of meaningful and workable objectives and actions to support their delivery. It is also important to ensure that Local Authorities continue to be involved throughout the process to ensure that local needs are considered and appropriately reflected.

5. **Do you have any views on the Scottish Government’s reporting requirements to the Scottish Parliament, as set out in the Bill?**

Dumfries and Galloway Council are satisfied with the reporting requirements set out in the Bill in relation to Fuel Poverty. The periodic reports should monitor the delivery against both the 2030 and 2040 targets to ensure that sufficient progress is being made and all the relevant actions in the strategy. Regular reporting will allow for a review of associated projects to ensure that resources are being targeted efficiently and any recommendations that arise can be put into action. While the Bill makes it clear that there will be reporting in relation to fuel poverty targets, there would be added
benefit to the inclusion of wider targets that further highlight the cross portfolio commitments, such as health and climate change.