

APPENDIX

REPORT TO CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM – 29TH JANUARY 2004

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR HEATING TEMPERATURES IN COUNCIL BUILDINGS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek Corporate Management Team's approval to corporate guidelines for heating temperatures in council buildings.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Corporate Energy Policy adopted by Council on the 9th October 2003 states that the Council will "Manage the facilities in all of its buildings to maximise energy and water efficiency, while providing a comfortable working environment for all occupants and visitors". One of the short term actions identified in the document is to establish and publish guidelines on efficient use of energy including temperature ranges to be adhered to.

2.2 Only one Order has been made under the Energy Act - the Fuel and Electricity (Heating) (Control) Order 1974 (SI 1974 No. 2160) as amended by SI 1980 No. 1013, and this 'prohibits the use of electricity or fuel for the purpose of heating premises so as to cause the temperature of those premises to exceed 19°C, subject to certain exceptions'. The application of this Order has been the subject of debate amongst local authority energy officers. It is logistically unenforceable but there is no reason why the temperature range given should not be considered.

2.3 Before the advent of central heating in most houses, office temperatures to this level were tolerated. Staff dressed appropriately by wearing a pullover, cardigan, etc. With the increase in domestic central heating and the relatively low cost of heating compared with that in preceding decades, temperatures of 22° to 25°C are not uncommon in homes today and staff come to work expecting this level of heating in the workplace and to be unimpeded by heavy clothing.

2.4 It is apparent from inspections that many of the Council's buildings are being heated to temperatures well in excess of those recommended by professional and technical bodies. In particular, in offices across the Council the norm seems to be between 21° and 25°C. The cost to the council of exceeding a temperature of say 20°C is approximately 8% per °C rise, with a corresponding increase in Carbon Dioxide emissions. By enforcing a strict temperature control regime for offices it may be possible to reduce Carbon Dioxide emissions and costs for heating from these premises by, on average, around 20%. However, to enforce a low temperature limit would be contentious.

2.5 Under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Council's obligation as an employer is to provide " a working environment which is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for welfare at work". The Approved Code of

Practice, which supplements the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 requires the temperature in workplaces inside buildings to be “reasonable” to provide comfort without the need for special clothing. The Code recommends that the temperature should be at least 16°C where the work does not involve severe physical effort. The legislation does not define a method of measurement and air temperature alone is not always the best method of defining comfort. “Comfort temperature” as defined by the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) is a combination of:

- air temperature
- mean radiant temperature, and
- air movement

2.6 These factors combine together to give an index of comfort called the “dry resultant temperature”. Where members of staff are usually seated and reasonably static an air temperature of 18° - 19°C is required, together with some perception of radiant heat, and very little air movement. If any of the factors above vary this will have an effect on individual perceptions to warmth. Consequently in parts of rooms remote from radiators, close to windows or sources of draughts such as frequently used doors, etc., such air temperatures will be inadequate for comfort.

2.7 Published standards are available. For instance, National Health Service guidelines adopt 22°C during the day, 20°C at night, and 19°C for administration areas. The DfEE, makes the following recommendation for schools:

- 18°C for parts of the school where there is a normal level of activity
- 21°C for areas where the occupants are inactive or sick
- 15°C for other teaching accommodation, washrooms, sleeping accommodation and circulation areas.

2.8 There would be real cost savings and environmental benefits in setting a maximum temperature for Council buildings. However, having regard to the expectations and factors contributing to comfort, it is difficult to be prescriptive. Whilst an air temperature of 19°C might be the optimum with all other factors being satisfactory, managers need to be able to exercise discretion to ensure satisfactory working conditions in accommodation that does not provide a controlled and ideal thermal environment.

2.9 Whilst accepting published standards as a guide to the temperatures managers should aim to adhere to, it would be prudent to provide some latitude to allow for the diverse range of activities, building performance, and localised environmental conditions. A maximum temperature of 22°C is therefore proposed.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 Directors and all Heads of Service have been consulted in the preparation of this report. There is general support in principle. However, a number rightly make reference to the fact that the age, condition and idiosyncrasies of the heating systems and the buildings would make it difficult to limit temperatures in some areas to 22°C if comfort conditions are to be maintained for the majority of staff. Due discretion will need to be used in the application of guidelines such that they apply to temperatures prevailing *in general* within each building.

3.2 A number of localised problems have been notified to Property Division and are being investigated, and in some buildings there is concern at an adverse reaction

from staff, many of whom complain about being cold under the present regime. There are also issues regarding summer cooling which are the subject of separate reports to CMT.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That where published standards are available, these be adopted as the recommended workplace temperatures.
- 4.2 Where no published recommendations exist, it is recommended that the optimum heating temperature for Council establishments should be 19°C.
- 4.3 Notwithstanding the above recommendations, managers shall have discretion to provide heating to higher temperatures to achieve satisfactory local working conditions subject to a maximum general temperature of 22°C.
- 4.4 That before implementation of the guidance staff unions be consulted.

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Consultation: Directors
All Heads of Service
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