



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Fuel Stamps Scheme</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23 September 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services, Ext 3260
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<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Following the successful pilot of the Fuel Stamps Scheme in early 2009, the Committee agreed the roll out of the scheme across the Belfast City Council area at its meeting on 8 May 2009.
1.2	It is estimated that 38% of households in Belfast are currently in fuel poverty. To help people, particularly older people, budget for expensive winter oil bills, the scheme enables residents to purchase £5 savings stamps from local shops, garages, credit unions and some local Council facilities.
1.3	To date almost 69,000 stamps totalling over £334,000 have been sold to the public through the scheme.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The annual cost of the scheme is £45,000 which includes the administration, printing and promotion costs. The cost of the scheme is funded through the Council's thematic budget allocation and, given the nature of the expenditure, it requires the Committee to grant authority under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to incur the expenditure.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	The annual cost of the Fuel Stamps Scheme is £45,000 which is funded through the thematic budget allocation.

<b>4</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
4.1	That the Committee grants authority under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to incur the expenditure of £45,000 during 2011/12 on the fuel stamps scheme, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would be of direct benefit to, the District and the inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefit so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made.