

## OVERVIEW

The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change requires local authorities in England to provide an update report every two years setting out the energy conservation measures that the authority considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in the area. This document provides a summary of the full [Home Energy Conservation Act \(HECA\) Report](#).

The work outlined in this report contributes to Solihull Council's [Green Prospectus](#) and is informed by a number of current and emerging strategies emanating from the West Midlands Combined Authority and Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) - all of which provide the strategic direction for sustainability across the region.



Since HECA was first introduced Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council has submitted annual reports to the Secretary of State outlining progress made towards the assumed target of a 25% improvement in energy efficiency in domestic property in our borough. We are now in our fourth reporting stage for the revitalised HECA and this report details both projects and work we have delivered since the last report in 2017 and our plans for the next two years to address home energy related issues across our borough.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Our strategy can only be delivered through effective partnership working and therefore the Council will continue to develop effective partnerships with a range of organisations in order to support residents and to develop initiatives.

Our partners include:

- Solihull Community Housing
- Solihull Community Advice Hub
- Act on Energy
- Winter Warmth Project Group
- Age UK Solihull
- Warm Homes Fund Project Group
- Seasonal Excess Deaths Steering Group
- Local Authority Financial Inclusion Group
- Association of Local Energy Officers
- Sustainable Housing Action Partnership
- NEA
- Dodds Group
- CAB
- Disability Resource Centre.

## STRATEGIC FUEL POVERTY

The Council has a Home Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy (HEEAWS) that was published in autumn 2015.

The purpose of the strategy is to guide the Council and partner agencies in committing resources to four linked objectives:

1. To improve the energy efficiency of domestic dwellings in Solihull and promote the use of appropriate low and zero carbon.
2. To work towards a reduction in fuel poverty throughout the Borough.
3. To provide a range of support for residents and in particular vulnerable households and those on low income.
4. To support the emerging 'green economy' through investment in energy efficiency measures in new and existing housing and low and zero carbon technologies.

The HEEAWS also supports a number of Council strategies including:

- The Green Prospectus
- Housing Strategy
- Local Plan
- Solihull Community Housing - Asset Management Strategy

The Council provides quarterly briefing notes to provide partners with an update on progress and note future challenges/ opportunities. The last update was the [February 2019 Update](#).

Residents that are more likely to be in fuel poverty have been identified through a number of different approaches, through the use of:

- The Government's annual fuel poverty statistics to identify areas in the borough with the highest levels of fuel poverty.
- Energy Performance Certification (EPC) register data.
- Off gas data from Cadent to target potential homes along with data from Solihull Community Housing.
- Partnership arrangements with frontline services such as GP practices, home care providers, AgeUK, hospital discharge services, social workers and children's centre staff, who are in a position to identify clients as being fuel poor.

## FUTURE PLANS 2019—2021

### ECO 4 Pilot

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is convening a consortium of national, regional and local partners who will design, develop and pilot a new, more efficient, cost-effective and holistic approach to addressing fuel poverty in the UK while also meeting industrial strategy, social inclusion and carbon reduction policy objectives.



The Council is in early discussions and, if supported, would look to be involved in a pilot scheme to develop new approaches to insulation and heating improvements, to run during the current ECO 3 obligation period which ends in 2022.

This is an exciting and once-in-a-generation opportunity to redesign the way we approach fuel poverty in the UK. The vision is a practitioner-led project with clear accountability and scale, delivering at least £50M of improvements for some of the worst housing and most deprived communities in the country. This will create a template for delivery of a significant part of the UK's Clean Growth and Industrial Strategy for at least the next decade.

The Council will continue to work with partners to meet the objectives as detailed in the HEEAWS and thereby increase the energy efficiency of homes, reduce fuel costs and promote income maximisation.

SCH will be looking to develop further efficiency projects focusing upon the least energy efficient properties as identified in a new 'asset management strategy'. Future projects will include a range of measures including:

- External wall insulation
- Heating replacement
- Window replacement



For more details see:

[www.solihull.gov.uk/About-the-Council/Strategies-policies/housing](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/About-the-Council/Strategies-policies/housing)

## Introduction

The Council works with partners to deliver and develop a range of projects that support our residents and provide both energy and carbon reduction alongside wider outcomes such as increased incomes, improvements in health along with a improved housing stock and increasing energy efficiency.



The council works closely with its Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO) Solihull Community Housing (SCH). During this reporting period the following energy efficiency measures have been installed, are being delivered or are planned.

## Delivery of projects

- Heating upgrade: 384 new and more efficient boilers and heating systems installed
- First time central heating (Warm Homes Fund): up to 250 homes will have gas central heating installed, replacing expensive and inefficient systems. The funding secured covers both social housing and private home and is due to run till June 2020.
- High Rise heating proposal: feasibility studies for two heating replacement options have been developed. The current preferred options are ground source heat pumps or gas district heating.
- External wall insulation: 181 solid wall and system built properties insulated.
- Window replacements: 650 homes have had new energy efficient double glazed windows installed.
- New build schemes: installation of solar PV systems to the communal areas of two major new build projects providing care and support services.
- Biomass boilers installations assessment: current installations are being reviewed to improve operational efficiency.
- E, F & G rated properties: identification and review of properties to identify measures to improve thermal performance and EPC rating.
- Energy Angels—Void Property Energy Management Scheme: 681 new tenants have been supported with their supplier and tariff information.



## Warm Homes Fund

This scheme is still being delivered but we have provided 27 installs with another 30 due to be installed in the next few months. All of the properties were using electric storage heating prior to the installation of gas wet central heating. The new central heating provides estimated bill savings of around £300 pa with an increased SAP score of around 10 points.



# ACHIEVEMENTS 2017 – 2019

## Providing Information, Advice and Guidance

The Council supports residents to access information, through the following schemes and methods:

- Specialist Energy Advice Line - a dedicated and specialist energy helpline for residents to receive independent advice and assistance. This is provided by [Act on Energy](#) a local charity operating in the area with over 20 years' experience of delivering energy advice and support to residents.
- Training for front line staff— provided (via act on Energy and NEA) for internal and external partners covering fuel poverty, energy efficiency, income maximization and Smart Meters.
- Advice on the [Council website](#) .
- Newsletters/leaflets/social media on specific issues such as heating, damp, switching.
- Delivery through local charities' networks.
- Letters to residents to promote schemes e.g. WHF.
- Promotion at Walk-in Centres /information at flu clinics.
- Articles for Patient Participation Groups linked to NHS Surgeries.
- Provision of energy advice at the local Job Centre and Libraries.



## Private Rented Sector Energy Efficiency Regulations

The Council communicates with landlords through the Council website and Landlords Forum . Support and advice for landlords and private tenants is available from Act on Energy to access any external funding and the use of trusted installers.

Trading Standards are responsible for the enforcement of Private Rented Sector minimum standards.

## Supporting Schools

The Council also supports schools to engage with the wider issues around energy via:

- Your Green Future – an event for school age young people to understand the wider sustainability agenda including energy. In 2018, 14 schools attended the event with 296 students taking part in a range of business led workshops.
- Inter-Climate Conference - In partnership with Inter-Climate Network, the Council has hosted 2 conferences inviting local secondary schools to debate solutions to climate change, including an energy efficiency workshop.



## Energy Company Obligation ECO



ECO and ECO Flex is delivered with trusted and impartial partner Act on Energy who assesses each case individually to consider the needs and eligibility of the resident. Referrals for the scheme come through promotional work and through trusted partners. During 2018/19 we have installed 75 cavity wall insulation and 16 loft installations through Flex and 5 boiler replacements. In addition, ECO Flex has enabled us to help residents access Industry Initiative Schemes and Warm Home Fund.

## Switch and Save

Solihull Council has managed numerous successful Collective Energy Switching Schemes with the aim of helping residents find a better/cheaper deal on home gas and electricity bills.



The Council has been able to recover costs related to advertising and printing via a partnering fee from iChoosr .

Date	Registrations	Average Savings	Number of Switchers	% of switchers	Total Bill Savings
Oct 2015	749	£ 295.87	272	36%	£ 80,477
May 2016	1,120	£ 358.78	442	39%	£158,579
Oct 2016	814	£ 130.63	156	19%	£20,378
May 2017	2,429	£ 284.18	583	24%	£165,107
Oct 2017	1,161	£245.20	228	20%	£55,660
May 2018	3,199	£239.72	580	18%	£139,039
Oct 2018	1,195	£143.22	233	19%	£33,228
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10,667</b>	<b>£ 257.47</b>	<b>2,494</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>£652,470</b>

## Winter Warmth Campaign

This scheme has been operating since 2008 to protect vulnerable residents from the effects of cold providing support to all vulnerable residents and directly contacts over 4000 residents on an annual basis. Targeted groups include the elderly, people with disabilities and families with young children in receipt of income related benefits.



Action - 2017 to 2019	Number of contacts
Cold Homes and Energy Surveys	363
Energy Efficiency Measure	87
Heating Breakdown	102
Information and Advice	3448
Insulation	64
Warm Home Discount	441 = £65,020
Proactive Letters	7000