

Home Energy Efficiency

Briefing note June 2019

This area of work sits within wider Sustainability activity as detailed in the Green Prospectus under the Buildings and Efficiencies Theme. The Home Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy (HEEAWS) builds on existing policies, practices and partnerships to maximise the potential for energy efficiency, low and zero carbon energy and provision of affordable warmth to residents in Solihull

<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/Housing/EnergyandAffordableWarmthStrategy.pdf> .

The strategy has four linked objectives:

1. To improve the energy efficiency of domestic dwellings in Solihull and promote the use of appropriate low and zero carbon technologies that help to reduce carbon emissions.
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.

1. To improve the energy efficiency of domestic dwellings in Solihull and promote the use of appropriate low and zero carbon technologies that help to reduce carbon emissions.

Recent examples:

- SCH Boiler replacement scheme, a further 384 installations (April 2017 to March 2019).
- Heating solution for high rise blocks - 2 potential options identified including, gas fired district heating, Ground source heat pump & high heat retention storage heaters. Each technology currently being appraised & costed in more detail.
- Development of an Energy Plan to help in the Identification of poor energy efficiency rated social housing and a subsequent energy efficiency improvement plan.

2. To work towards a reduction in fuel poverty throughout the Borough

2.1 What is fuel poverty?

Fuel poverty is caused by a combination of 'property' factors (including expensive heating systems and poor insulation) and 'people' factors (such as age and income).

2.2 Fuel Poverty definition:

In England, the definition of fuel poverty was changed following the Hills Review (Department of Energy and Climate Change 2012). Someone is now said to be in fuel poverty using the Low Income High Cost (LIHC) definition if heating their home adequately costs more than average and paying the bill would leave them below the official poverty line.)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fuel-poverty-factsheet-2019>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-fuel-poverty-statistics-report-2019>

2.3 Fuel Poverty in Solihull

The latest fuel poverty figures published June 2019 (for March 2017) suggest that there were 8,315 (9.2%) fuel poor households in Solihull, a reduction from 8,816 (9.8%) in March 2016. The average fuel poverty figure across the West Midlands authorities is 12.6% showing a deduction from 13.7% in 2016.

- In 2017, the average fuel poverty gap (the reduction in fuel bill that the average fuel poor household needs in order to not be classed as fuel poor) in England was estimated at £321, down from £333 in 2016 and continues the steady downward trend since 2014.
- The aggregate fuel poverty gap for England also continued to decrease in 2017 (by 4.3 per cent in real terms) to £812 million.
- The proportion of households in England in fuel poverty was estimated to have decreased by 0.2 percentage points from 2016 to 10.9 per cent in 2017 (approximately 2.53 million households).

The Fuel Poverty data is collected by Government and released annually using modelled data from the English Housing Survey (EHS). The EHS is an annual national survey of people's housing circumstances, household income and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. It is commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), covers all tenures (private and social) and involves a detailed physical inspection of properties by professional surveyors.

2.4 Fuel Poverty Targets

The Government's Fuel Poverty target is; *To ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy standard (Energy Performance Certificate rating) of Band 'C' by 2030.*

Interim Targets have been set in order to assess progress and these are:

- To ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy standard of Band 'E' by 2020
- To ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy standard of Band 'D' by 2025

In 2017, further progress was made towards the interim 2020 fuel poverty target, with 92.2 per cent of all fuel poor households living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of Band E or above.

The fuel poverty indicator is a relative measure and as a result at the national level the proportion of households in fuel poverty remains, on the whole, stable over time (between 10-12 per cent).

Recent Examples:

- Solihull Switch and Save – 10,667 switchers saving £652K from energy bills and net £25k in referral fees for SMBC.
- Winter Warmth campaign management with AgeUK helping over 200 residents per year and accessing 4000 households. Financial support secured for residents in 2018/19 from switching and Warm Homes Discount applications estimated at £42k.
- Energy efficiency advice training for partners including SCH via NEA (foc) training for 80 staff
- Smart Meters and Roll out training for SCH via NEA (foc) training for 30 staff.
- Energy Angels void management system developed with SCH saving SCH £18k and new tenant's £51k.
- Act on Energy advice drop in sessions supported by Connect, Income and Awards and GP surgeries

- Free loft and cavity Wall insulation to vulnerable residents and those on low incomes utilising Eco Flex Statement of Intent (£109k).

3. To provide a range of support for residents and in particular vulnerable households and those on low income.

Recent Examples:

- Independent advice available to all residents via Act on Energy (3 year SLA in place). Advice sessions being held in Connect walk in centres and Job Centres.
- Discussions with Trading Standards and Public Protection around new Private Sector minimum energy standards and support via act on Energy for landlords.
- Successful Warm Homes Funding bid to National Grid funding August 2018. This will support the installation of first time gas central heating systems. Processes for delivery now in place and 37 installations have been completed to date.
- 100 Free Carbon Monoxide Detectors (from Cadent) being distribution to older vulnerable residents via AgeUK as part of Winter Warmth assessment visits.
- ECO funding secured for broken boilers 2018/19 and 2019/20 to support vulnerable resident referrals via Winter Warmth campaign.

4. To support the emerging 'green economy' through investment in energy efficiency measures in new and existing housing and low and zero carbon technologies

Recent Examples:

- Work with Sustainable Housing Partnership (SHAP) to develop energy efficiency standards in new housing and retrofitting existing homes.
- Minimum energy standards in Private Sector housing support available for landlords and private tenants via Act on Energy.
- Work with SHAP and the West Midlands combined Authority to address fuel poverty and provide support/ knowledge for a redesign of ECO including the development of pilot projects to inform potential design of ECO 4.

5. Funding available

- SCH Capital Programme – energy efficiency allocation annually
- Energy Company Obligation - £680m per annum until 2022. Focus is on fuel poverty and low cost measures e.g. Loft insulation, Cavity Wall insulation
- Redress funding via Energy Saving Trust – as and when available
- National Grid, Warm Homes Fund for electricity to gas heating.
- Public Health Winter Warmth support to be discussed prior to winter 2019/20.

6. Emerging Issues

- Recent submission of the Home Energy Conservation Act bi-annual report to BEIS. Summary report available here [Housing strategies](#)
- WMCA Fuel Poverty Group and potential pilot ECO funded projects.
- SCH energy efficiency/ renewables ambition for high rise blocks.
- SCH redrafting Asset Management Strategy
- Proposed SHAP new build design standards.