

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 fifth reporting stage for the revitalised HECA and this report details both projects and work we have delivered since the last report in 2019 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

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 2021—2023

Green Homes Local Authority Scheme

The council has successfully submitted a proposal to Midlands Energy Hub participate in the Green Homes Local Authority (LAD) scheme which aims to improve the energy efficiency of low income and low EPC households. Over 100 households in Solihull will benefit from a range of energy efficiency measures including Wall / loft Insulation, Solar Panels and double/Triple Glazing. The scheme will be offered across all tenures and will be delivered between June and December 2021.

The council continues to work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to 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. 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.



Net Zero Action Plan [The Action Plan for Net Zero in Solihull](#) | [Net Zero Solihull](#)

In February 2021 Solihull produced a Net Zero Green Paper which is part of our wider response to climate change. A Net Zero Action Plan is now being developed which will include a series of measures and strategies designed to improve the energy efficiency of domestic properties in Solihull. Baseline mapping for the Net Zero Green Paper highlighted that 27% of emissions across the borough come from domestic properties.

SCH are developing further projects focusing upon the least energy efficient properties as identified in a new 'Capital investment Strategy 2020-23' - this strategy outlines a range of energy saving measures including:

- External wall insulation
- Heating replacement
- Window replacement

All future new build developments will be low/zero carbon

Lakeside - A proposal has been developed for 28 new apartments/properties in Solihull which will be designated for young people in their transition to independent living. All properties will be built to zero carbon standards.



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 2019-21

- Insulation : 109 homes upgraded with wall or loft insulation
- Window replacements: 364 homes have had new energy efficient double glazed windows installed
- 171 households have had new energy efficient boilers installed
- In Early 2021 Solihull Community Housing completed 7 Carbon Zero mobility bungalows . This exciting development demonstrates our commitment to providing 'leading edge' new homes which will support both local and national efforts to achieve net zero carbon. The bungalows feature: a super insulated' timber frame-build system designed to reduce heat loss; Air source heat pump renewable heating systems; Solar panels to generate clean electricity from the sun; Very energy efficient glazing; Mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems
- Energy Angels—Void Property Energy Management Scheme: over 550 new tenants have been supported with their supplier and tariff information.
- 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.



Warm Homes Fund

This scheme completed in June 2020. A total of 71 new energy efficient boilers were installed resulting in an annual cost saving to residents of over £21k and an energy saving of 257,517KWH. All of the properties were using electric storage heating prior to the installation of gas wet central heating.



ACHIEVEMENTS 2019 – 2021

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 energy saving schemes
- Promotion at Walk-in Centres /information at flu clinics.



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:

- Inter-Climate Conference - In partnership with Inter-Climate Network, the Council has hosted several conferences inviting local secondary schools to debate solutions to climate change, including energy efficiency workshops.



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 2019-21 we have installed 14 cavity wall insulation and 16 loft installations through Flex and 7 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 iChoor. Since October 2019 energy has been 100% renewable.

Date	Registrations	Average Savings	Number of Switchers	% of switchers	Total Bill Savings
May 2019	3708	£ 309	1223	33%	£ 378,938
Oct 2019	1,732	£ 334	304	18%	£74,177
Feb 2020	1640	£ 289	445	27%	£128,908
May 2020	6504	£340	1749	29%	484,543
Oct 2020	1911	£ 194	385	29%	£68135
Feb 2021	2414	£128	475	20%	£60987
Totals	17,909	£ 265	4581	26%	£1,195,688

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 - 2019 to 2021	Number of contacts
Cold Homes and Energy Surveys	259
Energy Efficiency Measure	62
Heating Breakdown	116
Information and Advice	1720
Insulation	25
Warm Home Discount	248
Proactive Letters	540