

**Warrington Borough Council**  
**Home Energy Conservation Act 1995**  
**Further Report 2013**

**1. Introduction**

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) recognises the ability of local authorities to use their position within the community to significantly improve the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their areas - this includes owner-occupied, privately rented and social housing.

In July 2012 the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) published a requirement under HECA for all local authorities in England to report on the measures they propose to take to achieve this aim. This reflects the legal requirements embodied within the Climate Change Act 2008 requiring significant improvements in the energy efficiency of residential dwellings across the country by 2050. The Government has subsequently set challenging targets for reductions in carbon emissions, which are set out in its Carbon Plan, which was published in 2011.

DECC has set a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 for local authorities to publish the first of these HECA reports, known as a “further report”. Subsequent reports, known as progress reports must be published at two-yearly intervals following this date.

This document sets out the current position as regards stock condition, the Council’s objectives in improving energy efficiency of homes within the borough and the actions the Council will take to help achieve its objectives.

## 2. Current Position

The Council has a dedicated officer dealing with energy efficiency matters in residential property within Warrington, who is based within the Private Sector Housing Team at the Gateway. It also provides a contact point located within Warrington Market, offering energy efficiency advice to residents. This Eco Hut is manned on a part time basis during office hours. The Home Energy Conservation Officer is currently involved in an education programme, delivering energy efficiency and climate change messages to local school children and undertakes a significant number of talks and roadshows throughout the Borough to assist residents locally.

### 2.1 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey

The most recent Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey was undertaken on behalf of Warrington Borough Council in December 2008 using the Health and Safety Hazard Rating System (HHSRS). This covered all tenures, except the Council's own stock (which was subsequently transferred to Golden Gates Housing Trust in 2010). This survey showed that of all the dwellings with a category 1 hazard, some 45.1% were identified to be *excess cold*. For category 2 hazards, this proportion rose to 91.4%.

The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to take action where category 1 hazards are found in residential property and gives them the discretion to take action over category 2 hazards. The survey also identified that the owner-occupied stock had the lowest average SAP rating at 54, followed by privately rented dwellings at 55, with housing association dwellings having the highest mean SAP at 62. The Standard Assessment Procedure or SAP is the energy rating for a dwelling based on the calculated annual energy cost for space and water heating, expressed on a scale of 0-100. The higher the number the better the energy rating for the dwelling.

The headline information from the 2011 census indicates that the level of owner-occupation in Warrington is 72.3% (including shared ownership dwellings), with 15.6% in social housing and 11.2% in the private rented sector.

<http://www.doriconline.org.uk/DrillDownProfile.aspx?pid=15&rt=8&rid=134#null>

Cold, damp housing is a health risk, linked to a number of health effects including mild hypothermia, increased blood pressure (lowering of the ambient temperature indoors is associated with a small rise in blood pressure and a rise in blood pressure during

the cold increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes), respiratory illness (the cold lowers resistance to respiratory infections) and mobility (resulting in increased falls and non-intentional injuries).

## **2.2 Fuel Poverty**

Fuel Poverty has damaging effects on health and quality of life. Research identifies that certain groups are particularly vulnerable with regards to fuel poverty and the adverse effects of cold housing. These include older people, particularly those living on their own, lone parents, young children, disabled people and families where adult members are either unemployed or working on a low income (The Eurowinter Group, 1997; Wilkinson et al, 2004; Kinsella, 2009)

Recent figures produced by the Warrington PCT, based on data collected in 2010, suggest that of the 85,785 households within the borough, some 14,310 have been identified as being in fuel poverty (around 16.7%). This is slightly lower than the north west figure of 20.3%, although is still of significant concern.

*A household is said to be fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime (usually 21 degrees for the main living area and 18 degrees in other occupied rooms). This definition may alter if the Government accepts proposals from the Final Report of the Hills Fuel Poverty Review (March 2012)*

<http://www.doriconline.org.uk/Viewdata.aspx?P=Meta&referer=%2fViewpage.aspx%3fC%3dbasket%26BasketID%3d111>

## **2.3 Excess Winter Mortality (EWM)**

The most significant potential consequence of fuel poverty is excess winter mortality (EWM) which is defined as: the average number of deaths that occur between December and March minus the average number of deaths that occurred in the previous August to November and the following April to July (i.e. the number of “excess” deaths in winter compared to the rest of the year). EWM in Warrington has been analysed by age-band, gender, cause of death and deprivation level and of the 5,350 deaths in the borough between August 2007 and July 2010, some 285 were classed as “excess winter deaths”.

Excess winter mortality is also linked with exposure to outdoor cold, which contributes to deaths from heart disease, as well as fuel poverty and cold, damp housing which contributes to deaths from respiratory problems in winter. In Warrington, the largest disease specific cause of excess winter death is respiratory disease, a pattern also observed at national levels.

<http://www.doriconline.org.uk/ViewPage1.aspx?C=Resource&ResourceID=985>

### **3. Our aims and ambitions**

Improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock will improve living conditions and reduce fuel poverty with fewer winter deaths and emergency hospital admissions and better physical and mental health for residents. The requirement to improve the energy efficiency of dwellings is underpinned by the legal requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Government's 2011 Carbon Plan for reductions in carbon dioxide emissions.

These require carbon reduction targets of 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, using 1990 figures as a baseline. In addition, all cavity walls and lofts in homes, where practicable, are expected to be insulated by 2020 and , by 2050, all buildings will need to have an emissions footprint close to zero.

Local Authorities are expected to use their unique position in the community to actively support Government to achieve these very challenging targets.

The Warrington Strategy for Wellbeing 2012–15 highlights some areas of housing to be of particular concern, including fuel poverty and non-decency in the private rented sector (31%). It is also particularly keen to target the “Closing the Gap” areas of deprivation, which are mainly located around the town centre and in the older stock throughout the Borough. Improving the thermal efficiency of dwellings in these areas will have a positive effect on personal finances (by reducing the amounts residents pay on fuel) and on their health and hence quality of life and life expectancy.

#### 4. Proposals to achieve our ambitions and targets

The information given above suggests the scale of the challenge of retrofitting energy efficiency measures to improve the thermal efficiency of the Borough's existing housing stock. The action plan set out below details how the Council will begin to address this challenge by improving data collection, accessing any available forms of funding and working with partners to facilitate delivery of energy efficiency projects.

Objective	Actions	Target date
<b>i) Local Energy Efficiency Ambitions and Priorities</b>		
Collective Switching initiative	The Council is keen to assist residents to save money on their household bills and has partnered with iChoosr and a number of other local authorities as part of a "Big Community Switch" to use the combined buying power of significant numbers of residents to negotiate cheaper prices with energy companies.	April / May 2013
Work closely with partners in the public and voluntary sectors to actively seek funding opportunities, particularly those supporting health priorities identified in the Warrington Wellbeing Strategy 2012/15 & JSNA (including housing and fuel poverty issues)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Look into the potential of the Council becoming a Green Deal provider and also working with local RPs who have the experience to deliver significant energy efficiency improvements to the older housing stock in Warrington, particularly those in the most deprived LSOAs and the adjoining areas.</li> <li>2. Use resources from the Public Health team to map areas of deprivation and link these with specific conditions (e.g. chronic respiratory conditions) and the current work being carried out by the Council and RPs to improve housing conditions in these areas.</li> </ol>	Ongoing
<b>ii) Measures we are taking to result in significant Energy Efficiency Improvements of our Residential Accommodation</b>		
Green Deal and ECO	Research into application of these Government initiatives in the Warrington LSOAs which are in the 20% most deprived areas in England – starting with Bewsey and Dallam.	Ongoing
Feed in Tariffs Scheme	The Council has already worked with a partner RP (Golden Gates Housing Trust – GGHT) to install solar pv in 32 new build bungalows and to retro-fit 623 dwellings. Feasibility studies will be undertaken to determine the potential for further retro-fits for solar pv on social housing.	Ongoing

Renewable Heat Premium Payment	The potential for this will be investigated when further information is available from the Government on the FIT, particularly for social housing providers.	Ongoing
Flat development built to Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes	Working in partnership with a local Registered Provider (Your Housing Group) to provide 8 flats built to Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, (with a biomass boiler info required on the RHI from the Government).	December 2013
EPCs / UNO 2010	UNO is a specialist database that can be used to monitor energy efficiency ratings in individual and groups of properties and is therefore useful for both area based projects and individual energy efficiency advice for householders. Of the 91,139 addresses held on the system, we hold sufficient information on 17,044 of them to produce robust energy efficiency calculations. We will continue to find ways of obtaining good quality data to update the database to improve understanding of the energy efficiency profile of the housing stock to aid the development of energy efficiency schemes and targeting of assistance.	Ongoing
Minimum standards in the private rented sector	Encourage landlord accreditation through the Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme, jointly operated through Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West Councils – subject to Council capital funding, some grants may be available to bring empty dwellings back into rental use, which also requires energy efficiency improvements to the property.  Promote LESA (Landlord's Energy Savings Allowance) – tax relief on certain energy efficiency improvements funded by the landlord – at the Landlord Forum and through the Council's website.	Ongoing  Ongoing until April 2015
Evaluation project on Level 4 Code for Sustainable Homes bungalows	Two year project to evaluate the running costs for residents on 32 bungalows built to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Quarterly visits to each property to monitor energy use (including gas, electricity and water) and to provide advice and assistance to support behavioural change and maximize the energy efficiency benefits of the development.	December 2013
Information, advice, education and promotion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council has continued to maintain a domestic energy advice centre in Warrington Market and have a significant programme of roadshows and talks throughout the year to promote energy efficiency matters, often in conjunction with other professionals (benefits and waste minimalisation staff).</li> <li>2. The Council also has an active schools programme, delivered by Private Sector Housing, which covers KS2, 3 and 4 and which raises awareness about such topics as global warming and global dimming, with the aim of delivering the programmes to all 69 Primary and 13 High Schools within</li> </ol>	Ongoing throughout the year

	<p>the Borough – the programmes will be delivered to 18 schools in this academic year.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. GGHT will target 1,000 residents for energy advice and assist them to make relevant behaviour changes relating to energy use.</li> <li>4. GGHT has set up an “energy social fund” to assist client caught in an energy trap i.e. clients who wish to change their energy supplier for economic reasons but are unable to do so as they have debts exceeding £500. The assistance is given in the form of a re-payable loan.</li> <li>5. WHA has appointed a dedicated money advice officer.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>iii) Measures we propose to cost effectively deliver Energy Efficiency Improvements in Residential Accommodation by using area based / street by street roll out</b></p>		
Targeting the Bewsey / Dallam LSOA area	Pilot project with energy company and local suppliers to invest in external wall insulation and other insulation measures in older properties with solid walls, in conjunction with Green Deal, ECO and an energy supplier.	Autumn 2013
Registered Provider (RP) Partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with RP partners to build new affordable homes to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, or higher where possible.</li> <li>2. Work with GGHT to include Council owned property at Winwick Road to be included in the GGHT Alder Lane district heating system feasibility study.</li> <li>3. Increase loft insulation to 300mm in 7,261 GGHT properties by March 2014.</li> <li>4. Complete the cavity wall insulation programme in all suitable GGHT properties.</li> <li>5. Install 130 solar thermal installations in GGHT stock by March 2014.</li> <li>6. GGHT will target 42 properties with a SAP rating of less than 54 (previously elderly residents have refused central heating installations).</li> <li>7. GGHT is running a pilot project to improve the thermal efficiency of a number of hard to treat properties including Parkinson frame houses (5 no), properties with “flying ginnels” in the Whitecross Estate (6 no) and 2 multi-storey blocks of flats.</li> <li>8. GGHT and WHA (Warrington Housing Association) have tested various types of air sources heat pumps and are monitoring the results before determining whether to incorporate their use on a wider scale.</li> <li>9. WHA has an area based programme (2013-15) to deliver external insulation to outriggers and loft insulation “top ups” and to provide new electrical heating systems in relevant properties and some gas fired heating system upgrades.</li> <li>10. Helena Partnerships will complete 92 affordable new homes in Latchford, which have been built to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.</li> <li>11. Helena Partnerships has also secured HCA funding to deliver a lease and repair scheme in</li> </ol>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>During 2013</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2013-15</p> <p>2013</p> <p>2013-15</p>

	Warrington that will target long term empty dwellings and provide 4 affordable homes for rent. As part of this initiative, the RP will work with the Council to pilot specific energy efficiency measures funded through Green Deal / ECO.	
<b>iv) National and Local Partners</b>		
Warrington Health & Wellbeing Board	The Council works with local partners to deliver the Warrington Strategy for Wellbeing 2012-15. This identifies Housing as one of its priorities, particularly fuel poverty and non-decency in the private rented sector (31%). Much of this work will be targeted towards dwellings in the “Closing the Gap” areas (20 local areas that fall within the 20% most deprived areas in England).	Ongoing
NW Carbon Action Network	The Council links into the NW Carbon Action Network to share knowledge on reducing the carbon footprint of residential properties and tackling fuel poverty across the north-west region.	Ongoing
DECC Green Deal Pioneer Places Project – Energy Projects Plus (EPP), GGHT, WBC and Low Carbon Lymm (LCL)	Project which aims to overcome barriers to Green Deal uptake in Warrington by testing a community led targeted street-by-street marketing initiative based on a previous community project in Lymm (Leaf). This includes funding for 100 Green Deal assessments, retrofitting 5 homes owned by a local social landlord as “show homes” to illustrate potential Green Deal measures – which will be photographed and filmed and available on the internet as a virtual “Green Trail” to raise awareness and understanding of the process, need for and benefits of retrofitting energy efficiency improvements to existing properties (both domestic and businesses).	Spring 2013
Warrington Warm Homes Partners–Warrington Home Improvement Agency (WHiA), Warrington CAB, British Red Cross, NHS Warrington, Warrington Disability Partnership, Warrington Older Persons Engagement Group (OPEG)	Warrington Warm Homes Project will contribute to the effective delivery of the Borough’s Cold Weather Plan and assist with reducing hospital admissions for respiratory disease and excess winter mortality, amongst other outcomes. Approximately £67k has been allocated for emergency repairs, central heating installations and energy efficiency equipment and products, delivered through WHiA, the local home improvement agency.	Ongoing throughout 2013

**Review date:** 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014  
**Submission of next progress report:** 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

**Signed:**



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**Date:** 31st March 2013

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