



Warwick District Council
Home Energy Conservation Act Report 2017



Introduction

Warwick District Council covers an area of 120 square miles within central Warwickshire. The district comprises the towns of Warwick, Royal Leamington Spa, Kenilworth and Whitnash, and also includes as significant proportion of surrounding rural areas. Resident and tourists are drawn to a wide range of cultural and historic attractions both in the towns and countryside beyond, making Warwick District an attractive location to live and visit.

Conversely, it is also these attributes that also create issues for our residents and those communities beyond. For example, rising house prices has led to an increasing level of rented accommodation where there are challenges relating to thermal improvements. This also applies to the large number of historic and older housing stock found in the district, which still includes a proportion of off-gas grid rural dwellings.

This report sets out the following:

- The background for this report
- The Current Situation - Where are we now?
- Achievement since last reporting period 2015 – 2017
- List our future plans for 2017 – 2019 and beyond

Background Information for this HECA Report

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 report builds on previous reports setting out how Warwick District Council intends to help householders take advantage of financial incentives such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), Feed in Tariff (FIT) and any other schemes that became available.

Summary

Since HECA was first introduced Warwick District Council has submitted annual reports to the Secretary of State from 1997 until 2011 defining any progress made towards the assumed target of a 30% improvement in energy efficiency in domestic property in our district. With the introduction of additional specific targets under Local Area Agreements we delivered programs and works for energy efficiency, fuel poverty and carbon reduction.

We are now in our third reporting stage for the revitalised HECA and this report will detail projects and work we have delivered since the last report in 2015 and will also detail our plans for the next two years to address home energy related issues across our district.

Warwick District Council works in partnership with Act on Energy (the forerunner of which was established by Stratford District Council) who supports us in our duties under HECA. In turn this partnership enables Act on Energy to provide on-going help to ensure that we continue to make available the appropriate improvement measures to our residents including creating a referral network to local contractors who can access ECO and other funding sources such as the Green Deal. This network will continue into the future to make the installation of appropriate improvement measures as seamless and cost effective as possible.



The council does not have the resources to employ a full time HECA Officer and the appointed officer shares this duty with other duties. The officer is supported through a service level agreement with Act on Energy to provide information advice and guidance to both our staff and residents, through a combination of telephone support, community events and home visits providing an end to end journey for residents and ensuring some of our most vulnerable households are supported throughout the process. This represents excellent value for money as it is a service shared with twelve other local authorities and specifically set up to support Local Authorities to deliver their obligations under HECA.

Internally we have developed our own strategic approach to sustainability and climate change and our home energy work is integral to our plans in this area. One of the biggest challenges in reducing domestic energy use in the District is with the existing privately-owned stock. Despite a history of grants and incentive schemes designed to encourage homeowners to install energy efficiency measures, there still remain a large number of private properties lacking cavity wall or loft insulation, leaving scope for significant improvements in this area.

The Council is also a partner within the wider 'Warm and Well in Warwickshire' Partnership which has been operating since 2010. The partnership provides a number of services such as help and advice, practical support such as boiler/heating replacement, emergency heaters, boiler servicing and additional support for loft and cavity wall insulation, benefit checks to maximise income and practical services from local agencies including home visits, snow clearing, shopping and transport. The group is co-ordinated by the County Council and Act on Energy, and utilises the services of agencies across the county. The network has also been successful in bidding for funds through Public Health England, and most recently NEA Warm and Healthy Homes Fund where we worked with the wider partnerships of Worcestershire and Solihull.

Strategic Ambitions

Our Sustainable Community Strategy (2009 - 2026) sets the strategic context for our energy conservation and fuel poverty work. Our Sustainable Strategy which has recently been reviewed provides the Vision for the Council and sets its main objectives for the next few years. It is set by the Council as community leaders working in partnership with a number of organisations.

There are five main themes and strategic aims:

- 1) Prosperity** - To improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Warwick District by pursuing a balanced and sustainable growth agenda that delivers improvements in each of these areas whilst protecting those things that make Warwick District special.
- 2) Health & well-being** - To enable and encourage the people of Warwick District to have equal access to a healthy life and sense of wellbeing, ensuring that our actions are aligned with the Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Board's Strategy.
- 3) Housing** - To address the housing needs of those who wish to live and work in Warwick District.
- 4) Safer communities** - To work in partnership to reduce violent crime, anti-social behaviour and re-offending.
- 5) Sustainability** - To minimise our use of natural resources and CO2 emissions, improve the energy and water efficiency of our buildings and operations, and source as much of our energy as possible from renewable sources. We will also act as a lead in the community on climate change and energy efficiency issues.

It is through that sustainability theme that we have developed our 'Strategic Approach to Sustainability and Climate Change'. Given the size and complexity of the challenge in addressing the risks and opportunities presented by sustainability and climate change, the Council cannot act on its own, but needs to engage and work in partnership with the wider community. Therefore, in defining this strategy, three overarching aims have been set, as follows:

- 1)** Embed sustainability at a strategic level within the organisation;
- 2)** Address our own impacts relating to sustainability and ensure our physical assets and operations remain resilient in the face of a changing climate; and
- 3)** Promote and enable sustainability and climate change resilience in the wider district.

The strategy will be reviewed annually and where any significant changes are made they will be reported to Executive.

In addition, Warwick District Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2017-20) document includes a number of actions relating to energy. The Action Plan sets out high level actions under four priorities:

- 1)** Providing suitable accommodation, information and advice for the homeless in an effort to prevent and reduce homelessness
- 2)** Meeting the need for housing across the District by addressing the need for new home provision
- 3)** Improving the management and maintenance of existing housing
- 4)** Ensuring people are supported to sustain, manage and maintain their housing

These priorities recognise the importance of warm homes and how providing and improving residential energy efficiency is particularly important in tackling fuel poverty. Eliminating fuel poverty where reasonably practicable is the overall objective of South Warwickshire's Affordable Warmth Strategy.

Data is currently being collated via two stock condition surveys (council and private) and further action development related to energy efficiency will be developed, dependent upon their outcome.

Partnerships

To ensure that we can reach the wide and varied homes across the district and are able to continue our important progress towards our goal of achieving a significant reduction in energy use in domestic homes across the district. It is important to continue and further develop our work with partners and use a number of different channels to ensure we reach out to all of our residents in a joined up and effective way. Some samples of our partnerships include:

- **South Warwickshire Affordable Warmth Group**

This partnership focuses on the south of the county with a lead taken by the two District Councils of Stratford and Warwick. The group is currently chaired by Stratford and includes community partners as well as those in the statutory sector. This helps to deliver a co-ordinated approach to addressing fuel poverty. The group has also been successful in accessing funding and two of our third sector partners; Act on energy and Citizens Advice were able to bid for funding from British Gas to deliver a GP focused project with Prime GP to ensure some of the GP's most vulnerable patients were able to access a variety of support from health checks, benefit checks through to physical energy efficiency measure and energy advice.

- **Warm and Well in Warwickshire**

This group aims to deliver reductions in fuel poverty through improved energy efficiency across the housing stock. The membership of the group consists of the five district Councils, County Council, Act on Energy, Age UK, Warwickshire Welfare Rights, CAB and Warwickshire Public Health.

- **Local Authority Consortium Groups**



We are a key member of the Act on Energy Local Authority Consortium Group and Association of Local Energy Officers which identify and share best practice in energy efficiency with other local authorities on both a regional and sub regional basis. These groups not only allow us to share experiences but enable us to feed into consultations and provide a link through to BEIS through the ALEO Executive.

Achievement since last reporting period 2015 – 2017

Over the last two years we and partners have undertaken a number of activities to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. Many of these initiatives provide information, advice and guidance through a variety of sources including attendance at flu jab clinics, advice surgeries to give bespoke advice on managing fuel bills, energy efficiency products, grants available, training for councillors, officers and partners, community presentations, connecting with rural communities in partnership with the mobile library service.

A summary of some of the more major projects is set out:

- **Funded Heating Support**

Through our 'Warm and Well in Warwickshire' partnerships we have received funding enabling us to support some of our most vulnerable residents with either first time or replacement central heating systems. For our district it has supported 14 residents with new heating systems and improved EPC SAP ratings. This has brought in over £50,000 of additional funding into our district. In addition to this we have been able to support residents with additional funding for heating through our Home Repair Assistance Fund.

- **District Heat Mapping**

The district heat mapping and energy master planning study, carried out by AECOM on the council's behalf, is now complete. The study identified three main opportunity areas for future district heating schemes: Leamington town centre, an area to the south of Myton Road, and Warwick town centre. A successful application for further funding was made to the Department for Energy and Climate Change. This resulted in a grant of £87,100 being awarded to the Council to part-fund (a minimum of 67% and up to 100% of the cost, dependent on the results of the tendering exercise) full feasibility studies for schemes in Leamington town centre and an area to the south of Myton Road. A procurement process is currently underway to appoint a suitable consultant to undertake the feasibility work.

- **Work On Our Own Stock**

We continue to undertake energy efficiency works on our own stock and have recently undertake a full stock condition survey to help ensure that we can maximise on both funding and energy efficiency opportunities. We have undertaken several exciting initiatives including:

Sayer Court: We have recently delivered 81 Code 4 for Sustainable Homes at the new Sayer Court development. In line with the council's plans to deliver energy efficient housing across the town we have installed 1 150kW biomass boiler which means that carbon emissions are 25% less than the minimum standard.

Boilers and Insulation: As part of our on-going programme we have installed 393 energy efficient boilers, and continue to install loft insulation and, where appropriate, cavity wall insulation, there are still a significant number of so-called 'hard to treat' properties, which are older dwellings with uninsulated solid walls. We aim to target some of those more challenging properties through a newly completed stock condition survey. This is enabling us to forecast and budget planned improvement works schemes aimed at improving thermal efficiency.

Void Properties: As part of the void property repairs process each EPC is analysed and thermal improvement works are undertaken to ensure a minimum E rating is achieved for each property.

Providing Information, Advice and Guidance

As a district we feel that advice provision for residents is essential and recent findings contained within the Bonfield Review has highlighted both the importance and value of energy advice. For us that advice is delivered locally through our energy advice partners Act on Energy, who offer a combination of quality telephone advice through to community based and even in-home support so that we can rest assured that our residents have access to the right support to allow them to make ongoing decisions about energy usage, from switching through to physical measures. They have provided advice/support to over 2,400 homes since our last report.



- **Community Action Project**

A partnership project with the County Council and Act on Energy, involving offering doorstep energy advice to approximately 650 households in the St John's area of Kenilworth, took place during late November and early December 2016.



- **Winter Pressures Event**

Networking events have been hosted by Warwick District Community Action for Volunteers, for partners across the district to ensure we are delivering a coordinated approach to tackling the pressures that face our communities during the winter months.

- **Warm Homes Discount**

A Warm Home Discount campaign was run in conjunction with the County Council and Citizens' Advice, the purpose of which is to assist eligible residents to claim a £140 discount on their fuel bills from their energy supplier. As a result of this campaign, information on the Warm Home Discount scheme was provided to 162 residents of the district, of whom 17 were helped to make a claim (total value £2,900). A further 41 residents were helped to switch energy supplier and as a result achieved total savings on their fuel bills of £12,700

- **Private Landlords**

We provide regular updates on energy policy and energy efficiency opportunities through our landlord's forums held jointly with our partners at Stratford on Avon District Council. We have recently run a session on the forthcoming PRS Energy Efficiency Regulations and our landlords are encouraged to access our local support line run through Act on Energy. In addition we are offering landlords having F and G band properties, to have an energy advice visit so that they can access advice on what measure could practically be installed to improve the energy rating of those properties This pilot project was delivered jointly by the council and Act on Energy to advise landlords that most properties failing to reach EPC band E or better could not be rented after April 2018.

An analysis of EPC data in our area indicated those private rented properties with EPCs in the F and G band. We have written to these landlords to advise them of the forthcoming requirement for private rented properties to achieve at least EPC band E.

Act on Energy followed up the responses with an offer to carry out a survey to identify improvements that would achieve band E or better. If the landlord carried out the improvements within six months, a new EPC would be provided to register the improved SAP rating.

The response was generally poor with only 3 properties (11%) agreeing to the offer. One had already made the improvements but not arranged an updated EPC. All 3 were subsequently surveyed and new EPCs produced or arranged to be carried out after the improvements had been made.

The Current Situation - Where are we now?

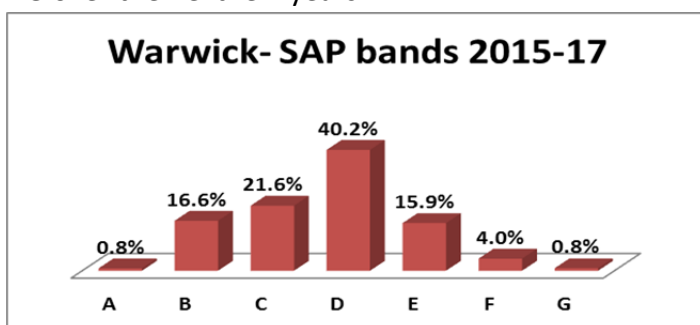
This section gives details of energy related data and how we are working to address the issues raised by these statistics.

- **Carbon emissions**

In 2014, 5.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) was emitted per person in Warwick. This is a 25% reduction compared to 2005, one of the largest reductions in the County and lower than the national average. We have seen substantial reductions across all sectors but significantly across the domestic sector. This is likely due to a combination of effects including low energy demand due to warmer winters, and improved energy efficiency.

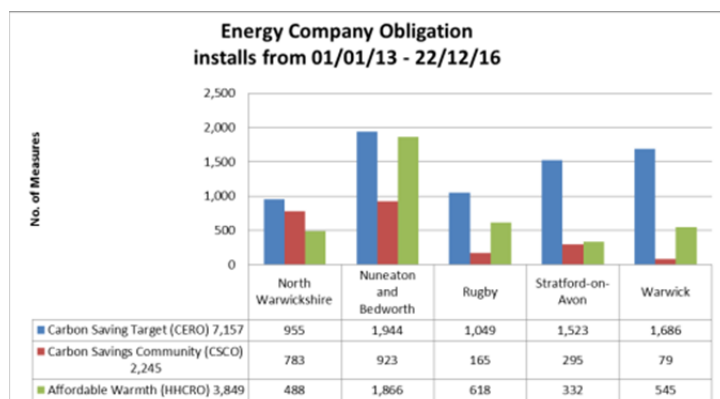
- **Energy Performance Certificates**

Unfortunately we are unable to undertake a full EPC analysis as we are waiting for this information to become available from DCLG. We have looked at banding data currently available which illustrates that majority of EPC's in the district are in band D. We have an ever expanding number of properties in a B rating this is predominantly due to new buildings. We aim to focus on those properties in band E-G over the next few years.



- **Energy Company Obligation**

We have worked with partners to help deliver ECO across our district we have promoted the importance of energy saving measures to residents with a specific focus on the fuel poor. Although we have had a reasonable take up of HHCRO measures we want to ensure that we work with partners on the new ECO obligations to ensure we can support those living in rural and potentially off gas areas. This links to our aspirations under the ECO: Help to Heat Flexible Eligibility as detailed further in this report.



- **Fuel poverty**

In 2014, 6,429 households (10.8%) in Warwick were fuel poor; this has decreased from 11.1% in 2013. Our figures are broadly in line with Warwickshire (10.7%) and national (10.6%) averages.

LA Name	2013			2014		
	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of Fuel Poor Households	Proportion of Fuel Poor Households (%)	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of Fuel Poor Households	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
North Warwickshire	25,922	2,786	10.7	26075	2696	10.3
Nuneaton and Bedworth	52,927	5,900	11.1	53229	5203	9.8
Rugby	42,036	4,574	10.9	42291	4393	10.4
Stratford-on-Avon	52,143	5,497	10.5	52467	6356	12.1
Warwick	58,918	6,514	11.1	59254	6429	10.8

Fuel poverty at local level uses lower super output areas (LSOAs) which are small areas covering around 1500 residents. Even though we are reducing levels of fuel poverty will still have 36 of our LSOA that have levels over the English average which equates to 3744 households and of those 630 households are in 4 LSOAs where the fuel poverty levels are over 20%.

Our Future plan for 2017 – 2019 and beyond

To contribute towards our long term strategic ambitions, we are planning a number of actions and initiatives going forward, to improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and improve health, housing and lifestyle choices.

The majority of our initiatives are highlighted in our affordable warmth action plan or housing strategy but a selection of actions is detailed below.

- **Delivering the Energy Company Obligation**

We are aiming to deliver energy efficiency measures through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and are looking to develop a partnership approach to deliver the 'flexible' element to allow us to support fuel poor households who are not in receipt of benefits and low income households whose health could be adversely affected from living in a cold home. We intend to make a formal declaration of our statement of intent.

- **Private Rented Sector Energy Efficiency Regulations**

We will continue to work with partners through a combination of our Landlord's Forums events and press. This highlights the changes in regulations and details how we as a council will legislate for this alongside other district and county partners.

- **Information, Advice and Guidance**

This is a critical aspect of the energy journey for many households and without it, residents may find making the appropriate energy decisions more of a challenge especially as some of our most vulnerable residents maybe digitally excluded or socially isolated. We will continue to offer the following support services through our energy advice partners Act on Energy:

- Freephone energy advice line
- Community based support ensuring we reach our most rural communities
- Energy clinics offering switching advice

- Smart metering – offer advice and support on the roll out of smart meters through dedicated community events
 - Warm Homes Discount – promotion of the scheme with a specific focus on our Park Homes
 - Home visits for the most vulnerable in our community
 - Working with partners to ensure we provide a one stop advice provision and onward referrals. This will build on our already excellent relationships with the Fire Service, GP's and third sector.
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- **White Label Energy Suppliers**

We are a partner within Warwickshire County Council's project to provide a white label offer for residents across the county. A local white label can engage customers through offering distinct tariffs, provide higher levels of customer service, and have different sales channels. Councils and Housing Associations can build upon their trusted brand with residents and tenants to develop their customer base and are associated more with meeting social objectives.

One of the key advantages of the white label company that is proposed for the area, is that it will provide an income stream for further reinvestment in social energy projects in the area.

External Wall insulation

We will work with individuals and organisations to try and further assist those in solid wall properties as they have not benefited as much from grant assistance as those in properties with cavity wall insulation.

Conclusion

This report gives us an important opportunity to review our on-going work undertaken through the council and its partners – and provides us with an opportunity to recommit ourselves to further actions that will benefit residents of Warwick District and the area and beyond.