

Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Report 2019

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Name of Local Authority:

Lichfield District Council

Type of Local Authority:

District Council

Name and contact details of official submitting the report:

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Job title of official submitting the report:

Housing and Health Strategy Officer

Names of teams working on policy areas covered by this reporting tool:

Housing Strategy Team

Environmental Protection

Economic Development

Headline and overview

1. Does your local authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic or non-domestic properties?

As a small local authority with limited estate we do not have a current dedicated carbon reduction strategy; a previous strategy expired in 2013.

Our Housing Strategy 2013-2017¹ identifies the need in particular for energy efficiency in a domestic context as part of its Priority 3, while the associated delivery plan details ongoing activities to address these issues through Aims 7 and 8.

2. If yes, provide link.

Housing Strategy 2013-2017: <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/downloads/file/143/lichfield-district-housing-strategy-2013-2017>

3. If no, are you planning to develop one?

Not at present, although as mentioned in the answer to Question 1, these issues are included within our Housing Strategy.

We are also in the process of developing the council's new Strategic Plan for 2020-2024, which may contain further commentary on these issues.

4.

a. What scheme(s) has your local authority implemented in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation (such as owner-occupied, privately rented and social housing) or non-domestic properties, since 2017?

We have retendered our Warmer Homes Greener District (WHGD); since April 2019 this has been managed by a new provider.

We are participating with a county-wide fuel poverty and energy efficiency scheme, Staffordshire Warm Homes (SWH), funded by the Warm Homes Fund and E.ON. This is led by Staffordshire County Council and delivered by E.ON with assistance from the county's districts and boroughs. This is available to domestic properties only.

We do not have a specific scheme for non-domestic purposes. Nevertheless, we promote opportunities for energy saving/efficiency where the support is provided through the Growth Hubs providers covering the district (mainly universities in our catchment area/LEPs), and also help businesses become more energy efficient if the advice is asked or it follows their growth/expansion plans.

¹ This strategy has been rolled on pending the outcomes of evidence-gathering studies which are in progress (e.g. HEDNA) and to ensure better alignment with other council policies and strategies, including the Strategic Plan 2020-24. We are currently in the process of writing our new, combined Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

- b. **What scheme(s) is your local authority planning to implement in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation (such as owner-occupied, privately rented and social housing) or non-domestic properties in the next 2 years?**

The SWH project formally launches in Lichfield District in May 2019 and will be the primary new scheme for domestic properties in the district.

5. **What has been, or will be, the cost(s) of running and administering the scheme(s), such as the value of grants and other support made available, plus any other costs incurred such as administration as desired? Please provide figures and narrative account if desired.**

There is and should be no direct or additional cost to the council as a result of the SWH project; it will build on existing work and provide an additional route for householders to access a council capital grant to support domestic energy efficiency installations.

The new contract to continue providing householders with advice, support and referrals through WHGD as well as enabling inward investment has the associated budget allocation:

- i. Revenue funding of £10,000 annually to provide an advice, referral and enablement service – WHGD
- ii. Capital funding of £10,000 annually to provide grant support to ECO Flex qualifying households (plus any underspend from previous years, where this applies)

6. **What businesses, charities, third sector organisations or other stakeholders do you work with to deliver the scheme(s)?**

Through WHGD LDC is working directly or indirectly with the following organisations to deliver the SWH project:

- a. Staffordshire County Council (bid writer, lead partner)
- b. Beat the Cold (charity, lead partner)
- c. E.ON (Project manager and match funder)
- d. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council
- e. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- f. East Staffordshire Borough Council
- g. South Staffordshire District Council
- h. Tamworth Borough Council
- i. Cannock Chase District Council
- j. Stafford Borough Council
- k. National Grid/Cadent

7. **What has been the outcome of the scheme(s) (e.g. energy savings, carbon savings, economic impacts such as job creation and/or increased business competitiveness, societal impacts such as alleviation of fuel poverty and/or improved health outcomes etc.)?**

This does not have to be measured against national data or benchmarks, but rather focuses on the local authority's own monitoring and evaluation.

At the time of submitting this HECA, the first referrals from the waiting list for SWH have not yet come through. Therefore there is no data to report.

WHGD performance since 2017 includes:

- a. 75 referrals for energy efficiency installations
- b. £21,485 spent from the council's capital grant budget
- c. £87,359 external match brought in
- d. £131,951 lifetime savings for customers (estimated)
- e. 1,500 tonnes lifetime CO2 saving (estimated)
- f. Approximately 40% of customers reported an improved sense of wellbeing as a result

Freedom Leisure have been awarded a contract to operate the district's leisure facilities since February 2018. As part of this contract £250,000 is being invested at Burntwood Leisure Centre and Friary Grange Leisure Centre, which is expected to result in an annual CO2 saving of around 392 tonnes.

8. What lessons have you learned from delivering the scheme(s)?

For WHGD we have learned that concise and timely promotion is important to maintaining acceptable levels of engagement.

For the SWH project this will be developed throughout the course of the scheme as it is too early to reflect on any activities so far.

Local Communications Strategy

9. Does your local authority provide any advisory service to consumers (and businesses) on how to save energy?

Yes.

10. If yes to question 9, please briefly outline how this is undertaken

WHGD provides energy and energy saving advice and support to domestic customers through:

- a. Freephone access to unscripted advice
- b. Home visits
- c. Presenting at community and landlord events/forums
- d. Referring to other schemes/support where necessary
- e. Regular updates and/or press releases throughout the heating season
- f. Occasional social media content

For businesses energy and energy saving advice and support is provided primarily through Growth Hubs providers covering the district. These include:

- the Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP): <https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/>
- and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP): <https://gbslep.co.uk/>

11. How do you communicate or encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers and/or local businesses?

As listed in the response to question 10, WHGD communicates and encourages energy saving amongst domestic customers primarily through the Freephone telephone service, home visits and public events.

For businesses, our Economic Development Team support local companies to understand the opportunities out there for them, grant support or advice, and approaches to being successful in receiving support. This is achieved primarily through Growth Hubs providers covering the district.

12. Does your local authority promote the use of energy efficient products amongst consumers (and businesses)?

Yes.

13. If yes to question 12, please briefly detail how this promotion work is undertaken.

For domestic customers, WHGD communicates and encourages energy saving amongst domestic customers on both:

- a. a general basis (e.g. turning your thermostat down by one degree Celsius will save 10% on your heating bill), and also
- b. an individual basis, using wherever possible household specific billing information, occupant characteristics, property and energy services characteristics.

Wherever possible the service aims to be as specific as possible.

Our Economic Development service support the promotion of energy efficiency products or carbon reduction through working with providers who are involved with the two Growth Hubs covering Lichfield District, whether business grant support towards green products/processes or advice. It is promoted once business enquiries are received.

14. What engagement (formal or informal) does your local authority have with local business/supply chains involved in promoting energy efficiency products or carbon reduction?

For domestic customers the main engagement occurs through WHGD, for example installer frameworks for ECO referrals, and attending networking and industry/sector events. Our current WHGD provider is in very regular contact with all parties involved

The Economic Development service support the promotion of energy efficiency products or carbon reduction through working with providers who are involved with the two Growth Hubs covering Lichfield District, whether grant support towards green products/processes or advice.

Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

15. **Is your authority aware of the PRS Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards which came into force in April 2018?**

Yes.

16. **Which team within your authority is responsible for, or will be responsible for, leading on enforcement of the PRS minimum standards?**

Environmental Protection.

17. **Please provide contact details for the person leading this team.**

Jack Twomey, Environmental Protection Manager, 01543 308734,
jack.twomey@lichfielddc.gov.uk

18. **What methods does your authority use to communicate with landlords and tenants about the standards and other related issues?**

Presenting to private landlords at our regular landlord's forums
Mailshot/newsletter to landlords, sent several times per year
Enforcement action and formal/informal advisory notices
Social media updates (2018)
Telephone and face-to-face advice

19. **Do you directly target landlords of EPC F and G properties? If yes, how?**

Yes, primarily through liaison and newsletters as part of the council's Landlord's Forum, but also in response to complaints from tenants and HMO licensing.

Financial Support for Energy Efficiency

20. **What financial programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic and non-domestic energy efficiency or energy saving? If applicable please outline the sums, where such funding is sourced, and where it is targeted?**

For domestic customers there is no specific promotion budget for energy efficiency, however we have the following available with which we can promote energy efficiency:

- a. Revenue funding of £10,000 annually to provide an advice, referral and enablement service – WHGD
- b. Capital funding of £10,000 annually to provide grant support to ECO Flex qualifying households

Fuel Poverty

21. **Does your local authority have a fuel poverty strategy?**

If yes, please describe the scope of the strategy and the support that is available for low income and vulnerable households to help tackle fuel poverty in your local area. Please provide a link to your strategy if published.

No.

As a small local authority with no housing stock, we do not have a dedicated fuel poverty strategy. However, the council does have

- a. a Housing Assistance Policy which includes a statement on domestic energy efficiency, fuel poverty reduction, our advice initiative and discretionary grants. Please see section 4.5 of the policy at: <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/Residents/Housing/Housing-strategy/Downloads/Housing-assistance-policy-2019.pdf>
- b. a Housing Strategy 2013-2017 which identifies the issues of fuel poverty and need for energy efficiency in a domestic context as part of its Priority 3, while the associated delivery plan details ongoing activities to address these issues through Aims 7 and 8: <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/downloads/file/143/lichfield-district-housing-strategy-2013-2017>

22. What steps have you taken to identify residents/properties in fuel poverty?

We have taken a number of steps in order to attempt to identify fuel poor properties, including:

- a. Commissioning BRE to undertake a Stock Condition Study for the district
- b. Working with the county council and E.ON to access additional data (e.g. utility data), as part of the Staffordshire Warm Homes bid
- c. Through direct contact with residents, for example during housing options or benefits enquiries, as part of making every contact count
- d. As part of environmental health activities, especially in regard to the Private Sector Housing role

23. How does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall carbon reduction strategy?

N/A

24.

a. What measures or initiatives have you taken to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty?

We provide the WHGD initiative, offering robust and reliable advice on domestic fuel cost and energy reduction

b. If you have taken measures or initiatives to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty, what partnership with business or energy providers have you undertaken?

Our primary partnership is the WHGD Service Level Agreement with the charity delivering this service. The charity, by extension, has a network of partnerships and agreements to assist the delivery of all of their contracts and commissions.

The Energy Company Obligation

25. Has your local authority published a statement of intent (SOI) for ECO flexible eligibility? If so please provide a link.

Yes.

<https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/downloads/file/123/statement-of-intent-for-eco-flexible-eligibility>

- 26. Please use the following space to provide any further information you feel might be of benefit to BEIS, in helping us to understand ECO Flex delivery in more detail. For example, the number of declarations signed versus the number of households helped.**

Since Feb 2018 we have approved 25 flex declarations meaning:

- 30 homes granted access to ECO funding who would not previously have been available
- 9 of these were fuel poor
- 21 were low income households where one or more occupants had a health condition making them vulnerable to cold homes

Smart Metering

- 27. Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to : Engage and support your residents (including those in vulnerable circumstances or with pre-payment metering) to promote take up of smart meters and achieve associated benefits (e.g. ability to control energy use, identify best value tariffs)? Please detail any work undertaken or planned with local/community groups, housing associations, micro businesses, Smart Energy GB under their Partnership Programme and energy suppliers.**

We provide:

- a. responsive advice through WHGD too users of the Freephone service
- b. active advice during home visits
- c. active advice and support is being planned through the Staffordshire Warm Homes project.

- 28. Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to: Integrate your approaches to delivering energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation with the opportunities presented by the installation of smart meters, drawing upon materials from the Smart Meter Energy Efficiency Materials Project or other sources of independent information.**

At present this is likely to occur of the SWH project. Over the coming year we will consider a more formal smart meter campaign for the district, led by WHGD.

- 29. Please detail any:**

Resources/ support (e.g. services, funding) available to residents who have had an appliance(s) condemned for safety reasons and cannot afford to replace it (e.g. during visual safety checks conducted during their smart meter installation or otherwise).

Under certain circumstances residents could be eligible for grant support through our Housing Assistance Policy emergency home repair grant to replace appliances presenting a HHSRS Category 1 hazard.

Where a household has been found to be eligible for support a maximum of £5,000 will be available as a grant, subject to the availability of funding.

30. Please detail any:

Existing relationships with energy suppliers to help ensure that the opportunities presented by vacant properties under your control are effectively utilised (i.e. gaining access to install a smart meter).

N/A

Future Schemes or Wider Initiatives

31. Please outline any future schemes or wider initiatives not covered above that your local authority has carried out or is planning to undertake to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation or businesses in your area, for example, within your Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Energy Strategy (if you do not plan any future schemes currently, please enter 'N/A').

N/A

We have provided significant input into the LEP's proposed Energy Strategy and recently hosted the West Midlands Energy Strategy Consultation. The outcomes of this are yet to be released, however we intend to participate fully with the recommendations and actions/commitments for our area once these are published.

Engie, the land owner of the former Rugeley Power Station site is conducting research into whether this location could become the West Midlands Region fourth Energy Innovation Zone.