



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Executive Board

Date: 19th December 2007

Subject: Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) (1995) - 11th Progress Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 11th HECA Report identifies that steady progress is being made in improving the overall energy efficiency of the Leeds housing stock. Performance last year improved by 4.17%, contributing to an eleven year cumulative total of 21.49%. There has been some solid investment over the period but it will be necessary to ensure that accelerated and progressive energy efficiency growth and investment continues to take place, to maintain the improvement in performance so as to meet the 2011 30% target set by government.

Overall, perceptual fuel poverty in 2007 is reported at 30%, decreasing from 36.7% in the last reporting period. Vulnerable fuel poverty, (those households containing pensioners, long term ill, disabled or children) has decreased from 27.5% to 22%, these dramatic fluctuations are in the main caused by marked fuel cost variations in late 2005 and early 2006.

Continued action will be necessary to increase awareness to landlords of the benefits of improving the thermal comfort standards particularly in housing association older stock and in turn private rented sector dwellings, which, once again, in this reporting period show excessively high levels of fuel poverty against the City average and low reported investment on energy efficiency.

Carbon dioxide emission reductions are monitored at 88,502 tonnes for the reporting period, with the average Leeds home emitting 6.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum, a 4.7% improvement since the last period.

The former cross-sectoral 'Public and Private Sector Energy Working Group', chaired by the Chief Environmental Health Officer, was renamed and re-launched in May 2007 as the 'Fuelsavers Board' Chaired by Councillor Barry Anderson and who will continue to facilitate action in seeking to take forward the City's HECA and Affordable Warmth Strategy objectives.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) came into force on 1 April 1996. The Leeds Energy Efficiency Strategy, entitled 'Warm Homes Cool Planet' sets out in 93 action points how the Authority seeks to stimulate a 30% energy efficiency improvement across the Leeds public and private sector housing stock over the HECA term of 15 years which runs up to 31st March 2011. This Strategy was updated in September 2007.
- 1.2 It is a requirement of the Act that authorities report annually as part of and parallel to their housing investment submission on the progress made in managing and implementing measures identified in their energy efficiency plan submitted under Section 2 of HECA (1995).

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The 11th HECA Progress Report covers the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007 including the Department's Affordable Warmth Strategy for the period 2007 to 2016 and the progress made in seeking to address the incidence of fuel poverty in the Leeds housing stock over the reporting year.
- 2.2 The Authority was contacted by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in August 2007, setting out the 2007 reporting time scales and procedures with a reporting deadline of 30th November 2007 sought of the Authority.
- 2.3 Information to provide the 11th HECA Report involved gathering, processing, collating and extracting data from 100,000 direct mail contacts to Leeds households of which more than 21,000 responded.
- 2.4 The procedures also require evidence is submitted that a 'top down' approach to HECA is fostered in the Authority with support and commitment from senior officers and elected members, it is therefore a requirement that the Chief Executive of the Authority to formally 'sign off' the progress Report.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The 11th Report continues to highlight 'year on year' progress across the City, with an overall City wide improvement of 4.17% against the 2005/06 10th reporting year performance of 4.06%. The new overall City running total now stands at 21.49% against the 2011 target of 30% and a notional target for 2006/07 of 22%.
- 3.2 Investment in public sector housing, whilst £27.9 million lower than the 10th reporting year period, has seen an increase in the rate of energy efficiency improvement from 6.34% in 2005/6 to 8.25% in this reporting cycle. Further to this, the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) performance, measured as part of Key Performance Indicator 63, met and exceeded the City's 2006/07 target of SAP 64.2, achieving 65.1 (SAP is a domestic energy performance grade of 1 to 100+ with a score of 1 as low and 100 high). This target was also supported by contractors employed by the Arms Length Management Organisations finding dwellings already insulated under earlier programmes which had not previously been reported upon.
- 3.3 Energy efficiency improvement in the owner occupied housing stock has shown a slowing from 4.08% to 3.98%, mainly due to fuel company grant provision failures. This growth was predicted to flatten out or drop off in 2006/07 as Fuel Company grants were halted.

- 3.4 The private rented sector, despite a range of support provided to landlords, including information on taxable allowances for energy improvements, cost effective dwelling up-grade guides and Warm Front Grant information and facilitation, is currently at 1.24%, with no growth in the new reporting period, suggesting this tenure group requires continuing support, development and action. The current Private Rented Sector Housing Strategy identifies the need to involve the Council in using its regulatory role to encourage responsible landlords and its enforcement role to tackle poor housing condition. The Strategy Action Plan will be refreshed in light of the above findings in early 2008 and to accelerate activity including specific annual fuel poverty reduction and energy efficiency improvement targets. Action will also be taken in identifying households below energy rating Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) 35, defined as a potential Category 1 Hazard under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, this from door-to-door and other activity. Work in 2008 will also include Leeds Private Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme dwelling compliance checks.
- 3.5 Housing Association performance at 3.39% shows increased gain from the last reporting period, however, self reporting by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenants shows energy efficiency improvements in the older stock is low. The dialogue with RSLs will continue to ensure this tenure's sector managers are aware of the need to support energy efficiency improvement of their existing, older dwellings.
- 3.6 Warm Front Two (WF2) grant take-up shows that 3,297 households received measures against the previous year of 1,734 homes, an increase of 90% in government grant delivery in the City, though still below that achieved in 2004/05 of 4162. Neighbourhoods and Housing Department have placed much emphasis in contacting all potential WF2 clients in an attempt to bring people to grant. It is believed there are still around 11,500 households in the City eligible to this grant.
- 3.7 Energy efficiency improvements have brought about a carbon dioxide (CO₂) reduction in the whole housing stock for the year of 88,502 tonnes, this is in comparison to the 76,926 tonnes 10th year saving. The average carbon dioxide emissions from a Leeds home are now 6.4 tonnes, some 4.5% lower than in 2005/06. The highest level of carbon dioxide emissions were noted in the private rented sector at 7.4 tonnes, with the lowest outputs from RSL dwellings at an average of 5.5 tonnes. This figure is skewed in comparison to fuel poverty performance due to the large number of new build dwellings in this sector.
- 3.8 The level of self reported private sector fuel poverty in the City in 2007 has dropped to 30% of all households, with 22.0% vulnerable fuel poverty noted. The attached report at Appendices C and Ward mapping of fuel poverty show the range of fuel poverty from a low, up to a high. Fuel poverty figures are not currently available in the public sector, though this is being investigated and followed up by the Fuelsavers Team through the newly established Fuelsavers and ALMO Energy Leads bi-monthly meetings. It is anticipated however that public sector fuel poverty will be in line with private sector fuel poverty, due to the current SAP analysis findings recorded under KPI 63 annual reporting procedures.
- 3.9 Environment and Neighbourhoods Department commenced a review of the Authority's Fuel Poverty Strategy in late 2006, which saw two workshops held. A Code of Practice (CoP) was developed for partner agencies to sign up to this, as part of the new Leeds Affordable Warmth Strategy launched on 23rd October 2007. It is anticipated that the actions of the Affordable Warmth Strategy and CoP supported by others and monitoring by the Fuelsavers Board will support further improvements in the next reporting period.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 There are no implications for Council Policy and Governance.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 There are no Legal and Resource Implication.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 There are no conclusions.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 That the Executive Board note the content of the 11th HECA Progress Report (Hard Copies are available upon request) or see intranet web link:
http://intranet.leeds.gov.uk/pageView.aspx?view=&style=&typeIdentifier=23-9-2004_787685760&subTypeIdentifier=12-10-2004-984556925&menuIdentifier=2-11-2004-75142332&egmsIdentifier=246a5465-9de5-4ba1-8af7-d7c739c9394f

7.2 To note that the 11th HECA Report has been released to the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber.