

HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995

Ashfield District Council Report 2019

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 ('HECA') requires all 326 local authorities ('LA's) in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation within that LA's area. This covers measures to improve properties in the owner-occupier, private rented sector, and social rented sector. BEIS uses data submitted through LAs HECA returns to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency, and to build an ongoing picture of local and national energy efficiency policy delivery.

2019 Report

Name of Local Authority: Ashfield District Council		
Headline and Overview Questions		
1	Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic or non-domestic properties? The most recent strategy has expired; the intention is to produce an updated strategy to account for the most recent changes and developments in the industry.	No
2	If yes, please provide a link to your current strategy here:	
3	If no, are you planning to develop one?	Yes
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? (if you have not implemented any scheme, please enter 'N/A')	
<i>Free text response to question 4a - please outline in no more than 200 words</i>		
i. Warm Homes on Prescription programme (WHOP) Assists fuel poor private residents with long term, cold-sensitive health conditions, providing free central heating systems and insulation, income maximisation, fuel tariff switching. Promotion is in Wards with the highest levels of fuel poverty and excess cold.		
ii. Nottinghamshire Healthy Housing programme		

Delivered by charity Nottingham Energy Partnership. The scheme offers energy efficiency advice and improvements to people over 60 and families with young children at risk from cold-related illnesses.

iii. Winter warmth campaign

Run by the Council in 2018/19 included social media/website information and a town centre information event, focused on staying warm and well, saving money, using less energy, pledging to help a friend/family member or neighbour stay warm and well.

iv. Council's Capital programme for its domestic assets

Includes energy saving measures as a matter of course. Since 2017, the Capital programme has included the following:

- 1) Window Replacement – all windows on the stock are double glazed;
- 2) Central heating Replacement – since 2002 all properties have had the opportunity to receive combination/condensing combination boilers. The council also operates communal biomass installations to two of its largest flat blocks. Renewable technology is considered when replacing heating systems, particularly communal heating installations.
- 3) Loft insulation/cavity wall insulation; all properties have had the opportunity to receive loft insulation and cavity wall insulation.
- 4) External wall Insulation; since 2017, the Council has completed wall insulation projects to four types of non-traditionally built housing stock.
- 5) Gas infrastructure to the Council's Off Gas area enabling the installation of efficient gas central heating. Private owners on the estate benefitted.
- 6) Over the last five years, the Council has installed SPV to seven of its largest flat blocks.

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 two years? (if you are not planning to implement any scheme, please enter 'N/A').

Free text response to question 4b - please outline in no more than 200 words

The Council is researching how we can influence energy related behaviours to ensure residents are using the available resources most effectively. The aim is likely to be residents improve their energy related behaviours rather than reducing fuel poverty (as we wouldn't be improving their incomes or efficiency of their property, though may reduce their energy costs)

Further to point 4a, the Capital Programme includes for ongoing schemes of window replacement, central heating installations, 'mop-up schemes of loft and cavity wall insulation (as and when access can be gained), EWI (where viable) to its c. 100 properties with solid walls, communal heating installation to replace electric storage heating to its last 4 large flat blocks, and renewable technologies where considered economically viable.

The Council will also review and update its energy strategy and consider opportunities to reduce energy usage (and hence carbon emissions) in its domestic and non-domestic assets, including fleet, again linked to new opportunities provided by developments in renewable technology and potential grant funding.

5 What has been, or will be, the cost(s) of running and administering the scheme(s), including the value of grants and other support, plus any other costs incurred? Please provide figures and a brief narrative account if desired.

Free text response to question 5 - please outline in no more than 100 words

See qu20 for more details about funding and output.

i. Warm Homes on Prescription – 2017/18 and 2018/19

Staff costs: 0.5 FTE funded via Ashfield DC.

Cost of works: circa £95k per annum Better Care Funding

Delivered circa 24 heating improvements per year – mainly boiler replacements or new heating systems.

ii. Nottinghamshire Healthy Housing

Revenue funding from Nottinghamshire County Council Public Health funds this scheme.

iii. Winter Warmth Campaign

Staffing costs not calculated, fell within the remit of existing officer.

iv. Capital programme

The Council has spent over £3.5m during 2017/18 and 2018/19 on heating, window, insulation and EWI works.

6	What businesses, charities, third sector organisations or other stakeholders do you work with to deliver the scheme(s)?
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Free text response to question 6 - please outline in no more than 100 words

Warm Homes on Prescription - : Age UK, Efficiency East Midlands, Countywide WHOP Steering Group, local heating contractors, energy suppliers

Nottinghamshire Healthy Housing - Nottingham Energy Partnership (NEP)

Winter Warmth Campaign – Citizens Advice Bureau, Uswitch, Fantastic Home Service.

Capital programme – Multitude of contractors

7	What has been the outcome of the scheme(s) (e.g. energy savings, carbon savings, economic impacts such as job creation, societal impacts such as alleviation of fuel poverty and/or improved health outcomes etc.)?
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This does not have to be measured against national data or benchmarks, but rather focuses on the local authority's own monitoring and evaluation.

Free text response to question 7 - please outline in no more than 200 words

Main priorities and outcomes for each scheme:

i. Warm Homes on Prescription

Improved health outcomes, alleviation or reduction in severity of fuel poverty, enabling hospital discharge.

Improvements in domestic energy efficiency resulting from this programme is contributing to the achievement of the government's Fuel Poverty Strategy in moving as many homes of fuel poor residents towards Band C as possible:

ii. Nottinghamshire Healthy Housing

Energy savings, alleviation or reduction in severity of fuel poverty

iii. Winter warmth campaign

Outcomes of the raising awareness activity not measured.

iv. Capital Programme

Improved the energy efficiency of its housing stock resulting in reduced energy demand, reduce carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty.

Capital projects to non-domestic assets will similarly reduce energy demand and carbon emissions.

8 | What lessons have you learned from delivering this scheme(s)?

Free text response to question 8 - please outline in no more than 100 words

Every property and household circumstance is different and this determines whether referrals can be converted into installations, and the speed and cost of the intervention.

Households in fuel poverty tend to under-heat their homes. Following the installation of an efficient central heating system/ insulation these householders will tend to either buy the same amount of energy as before to achieve more comfort for the same spend (health benefit but no energy and carbon saving) or buy less energy than before to achieve the same levels of comfort for less spend (energy and carbon saving but no health benefit).

Many residents aren't aware of how to switch or are reluctant to do it for a variety of reasons.

Residents' behaviours towards their energy usage is affected by many factors and making the case in terms of saving money may not always be successful, other things to consider include impact on environment for younger people, energy efficiency as a secondary benefit, e.g. primary benefit of double glazing may be security, aesthetics, tackling condensation, etc.

In recent years, we have found that renewable biomass has not delivered to its potential and hype, and the cost of energy per kwh has been greater than the industry promised.

Local Communications Strategy

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

10 | If yes to question 10, please briefly outline how this is undertaken (or enter 'N/A' if appropriate)

Free text response to question 10 - please outline in no more than 100 words

Energy saving discussed as part of the Warm Homes on Prescription home visit. Also delivered direct to customer as part of the Nottinghamshire Healthy Housing service.

The Council employs an Energy Performance Officer whose main role is to produce Energy Performance Certificates for Council stock. This officer does to answer questions and offer information relating to energy usage and energy saving measures.

11 | How do you communicate or encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers? (if you do not, please enter 'N/A' and move on to the next section 'Local Green Supply Chains')

Free text response to question 11 - please outline in no more than 100 words

The council is a member of the Local Authorities' Energy Partnership (LAEP) which commissions an ongoing publicity campaign to raise awareness and encourage action on domestic energy efficiency. Charity MEA deliver the service which includes a 'Fantastic Home' energy efficiency display vehicle, an engaging way to inform residents about how and why to reduce their home energy consumption and reduce their fuel bills. The display tours events with high footfall, demonstrating domestic energy usage and energy saving through innovate gadgets, hands-on samples, one-to-one conversations and information leaflets.

Residents who contact the council for energy efficiency advice are generally referred to the government-supported Simple Energy Advice website.

As part of the Winter Warmth Campaign the Council ran a social media campaign to remind residents to stay warm over winter and check on elderly neighbours and relatives. This has included advice on how to use less and waste less energy. The council website has also been updated to reflect this information.

Front line officers can refer tenants to the Energy Performance Officer who will review the thermal efficiency of the tenant's property and offer advice.

Local Green Supply Chains

12	Does your Local Authority promote the use of energy efficient products amongst consumers (and businesses)? (if you answer no please move onto the next section 'Private Rented Sector')	N
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13	If yes to question 12, please briefly detail how this promotion work is undertaken.
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Free text response to question 12 - please outline in no more than 100 words

14	What engagement (formal or informal) does your local authority have with local businesses/supply chains involved in promoting energy efficiency products or carbon reduction?
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Free text response to question 14 - please outline in no more than 100 words

Local authorities across the county are using local heating and insulation contractors from a locally procured contractor framework. These contractors install fully funded measures to fuel poor residents through the Warm Homes on Prescription programme (WHOP) operating across Nottinghamshire, as outlined below.

Major Capital works include for minimum environmental standards and quality scoring against tenderers approaches to minimising impact upon the environment.

Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

The Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations (the Regulations) apply to all privately rented properties in England and Wales. As of April 2018, all such properties are legally required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of at least an E before they can be let on a new tenancy. This requirement will then extend to all such properties by 1 April 2020, even if there has been no change in tenant or tenancy (please see BEIS's published guidance documents for the full details on the standard).

The PRS Regulations give enforcement powers to local authorities, and authorities are responsible for ensuring landlord compliance within their area.

15	Is your authority aware of the PRS Minimum Efficiency Standards which came into force in April 2018? (if you answered no, please move on to the next section 'Financial Support for Energy Efficiency')	Y
16	Which team within your authority is responsible for, or will be responsible for, leading on enforcement of the PRS minimum standard?	
<i>Private Sector Enforcement (formerly Environmental Health)</i>		
17	Please provide the contact details of the person leading this team.	
<p><i>Ms Jacqui Harvey</i> <i>tel - 01623 457261</i> <i>email – j.harvey@ashfield.gov.uk</i></p>		
18	What method or methods does your authority use to communicate with landlords and tenants about the standards and other related issues?	
<p><i>Free text response to question 18 - please outline in no more than 100 words</i></p> <p>Via Ashfield/Mansfield/Newark & Sherwood Landlord forum, the Council's 'Ashfield Matters' publication and via the Council's website.</p> <p>The matter is discussed on daily property inspections and 1 to 1 interactions with landlords.</p> <p>The Council has identified the stock of F and G rates PRS properties in the district and we are currently considering our approach to raising awareness of the regulations.</p>		
19	Do you directly target landlords of EPC F and G rated properties? If yes, how? If no, please explain.	Y
<p><i>Free text response to question 19 - please outline in no more than 100 words</i></p> <p>It is not a specific task but it forms part of the day to day work of the officers within the PSE Team. Officers are focused on inspecting properties in disrepair, conducting HMO and selective licensing visits and as part of this work consideration is given to the energy performance of the property and if it is accordance with the regulations. Appropriate advice and action is taken as necessary where the property falls below the required standard.</p>		
Financial Support for Energy Efficiency		
20	What financial programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency or energy saving? If applicable, please outline the sums, where such funding is sourced, and where it is targeted. (If you do not have any financial assistance programmes, please enter 'N/A' and move onto the next section 'Fuel Poverty')	
<i>Free text response to question 20 - please outline in no more than 200 words</i>		

Warm Homes on Prescription programme (WHOP)

The countywide Warm Homes on Prescription programme (WHOP) established in 2016-17 is delivered by Ashfield District Council to its residents. WHOP targets fuel poor owner-occupiers and private-rented householders with long term, cold-sensitive health conditions. To qualify householders need to be in receipt of qualifying benefits or be on an income of below £16k.

Funding for WHOP enables all installations to be fully funded and free to eligible households. Since 2017-18 capital funding for this programme has been ring-fenced from the council's Better Care Fund.

Funding totals spent on the WHOP programme in Ashfield District are:

2017-18

£92K to install 24 boilers and central heating systems

2018-19

£95K to install 22 boilers and central heating systems

The Council continues to benefit from income relating Feed in Tariffs, Renewable Heat Incentive and 'one-off' funding projects as and when funding arises e.g. fuel poverty obligation, IMD.

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 also provide a link to your strategy if published.	N
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Free text response to question 21 - please outline in no more than 300 words

Latest government statistics show that 6,202 households, equivalent to 11.8% of the population, were in fuel poverty in Ashfield in 2016, an increase from 4,835 in 2014 and slightly higher than the average of 11:3% in Nottinghamshire as a whole.

The Council does not have a Fuel Poverty Strategy as such but both the Housing Strategy and the Private Sector Renewal Strategy contain actions relating to addressing the issue of fuel poverty.

Support available

Ashfield District Council collaborates with all other councils across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire as the Local Authorities' Energy Partnership (LAEP), to tackle fuel poverty. All LAEP councils have an intention to tackle the 'worst first' both in terms of the most energy inefficient housing and the most fuel poor and vulnerable households.

This has resulted in the development and delivery of highly effective warm and healthy home programmes across the area, and specifically in Nottinghamshire, the Warm Homes on Prescription (WHOP) outlined in previous questions. WHOP targets the most vulnerable fuel poor householders who also suffer from long term health conditions made worse by the cold. Over the last two years hundreds of individuals have been assisted with a combination of fully funded new heating systems, gas connections and insulation, and assistance to maximise income and reduce energy costs across the county.

Costs, funding and impacts of this scheme are outlined in questions 5 and 20.

Whilst less funding and resources are available to assist the broader fuel poor population, councils' strategies aim to guide and help all fuel poor residents to access whatever help is available. Nottinghamshire County Council Public Health commissions local charity Nottingham

Energy Partnership (NEP) to provide a Healthy Housing programme which support this broader group of residents to access available local and national grants to help subsidise the repair or replacement of heating systems, install insulation and undertake energy cost saving actions.

In addition, council websites and call centres direct requests to the latest advice available from the government's new online Simple Energy Advice service, where both of the above programmes are listed; housing officers deal directly with requests in some cases.

22 | What steps have you taken to identify residents/properties in fuel poverty? (enter 'N/A' if appropriate)

Free text response to question 22 - please outline in no more than 200 words

The WHOP programme identifies, targets and assists the most vulnerable fuel poor residents through the well-established Warm Homes on Prescription programme, as outlined above. Clients are referred into the programme by a network of trusted partner organisations which deliver frontline services such as housing officers, environmental health officers, community safety officers and GP surgeries.

The wider fuel poor population are assisted through the Healthy Housing programme, also outlined above, which is promoted through a range of community activities such as flu clinics and stalls at public events.

The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey conducted by the BRE and used to inform various Council strategies identifies wards with the highest levels of fuel poverty and problems of excess old. Recently, targeting of the WHOP funding has focused on these priority areas.

23 | How does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall carbon reduction strategy? (enter 'N/A' if appropriate)

Free text response to question 23 - please outline in no more than 200 words

An improvement in a home's energy efficiency is likely to result in an overall reduction in carbon emissions even if the household was under-heating the home due to fuel poverty; given the tight constraint on finances in these circumstances, a household is likely to aim to spend at least a little less on its heating than prior to improvements as long as the home was also warmer – a balancing act that can be achieved if a significant improvement in energy efficiency can be achieved.

24 | a. What measures or initiatives have you taken to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)

Free text response to question 24a - please outline in no more than 200 words

In 2017-18 the LAEP engaged with fuel tariff switch provider iChoosr to investigate the merits in a whole county approach to encouraging residents, particularly those in fuel poverty, to seek a cheaper fuel tariff. A pilot auction was held in Nottinghamshire which demonstrated the potential impact of the initiative which works by aggregating the 'buying power' of large numbers of residents and seeking the best tariff on the day of the auction. The Council promoted the offer on the website.

The Healthy Home programme and WHOP both offer fuel tariff switching advice and support on a bespoke basis to households in fuel poverty.

As part of the winter warmth campaign promotional events were held, attended by CAB and uswitch amongst others, there to help with fuel switching and fuel cost reduction.

The council aims to make sure that its own housing stock meets at least a D thermal efficiency rating, to minimise the chances of any council tenants being in fuel poverty.

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? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)

Free text response to question 24b - please outline in no more than 200 words

N/A

The Energy Company Obligation

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by installing energy saving measures. Following the Spring 2018 consultation, the Government set out in its response that ECO3 will fully focus on Affordable Warmth – low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households.

The recently introduced ECO “flexible eligibility” (ECO Flex) programme allows LAs to make declarations determining that certain households in fuel poverty or with occupants on low incomes and vulnerable to the effects of cold homes, are referred to ECO obligated suppliers for support under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO. LAs involved are required to issue a Statement of Intent that they are going to identify households as eligible, and the criteria they are going to use; and a declaration that the LA has been consulted on the installation of measures in a home.

25	<p>Has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility?</p> <p>If yes, please include a link to your Sol below.</p>	N
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Link to SOL :

26	<p>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.</p>
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Free text response to question 26 - please outline in no more than 200 words

Each district council in Nottinghamshire has published its own LA Flex statement; all are similar and written to enable access to the warm and healthy home programmes mentioned above. Residents who are not WHOP clients can also apply to the council directly or via a contractor for a Flex Declaration if they fulfil the SOI eligibility.

The SOI has only recently been approved and published and as yet no households have been helped.

The Council has historically benefitted from previous ECO funding schemes relating to Council owned housing to maximise their respective benefits.

Smart Metering

27	<p>Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to:</p> <p>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, Smart Energy GB under their Partnership Programme and energy suppliers.</p>
<p><i>Free text response to question 27 – please outline in no more than 150 words.</i></p> <p>In 2016 LAEP councils participated in Smart Energy GB training delivered by National Energy Action.</p> <p>In 2017 district and borough authorities across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire took the collective decision not to promote smart metering to residents until second generation meters are widely available. This was due to negative feedback from residents and widely publicised reporting of the inability of first generation smart meters to retain their smart functionality following any change in the fuel tariff provider.</p> <p>Local councils think that while smart meters may result in reduced energy use due to a change in energy using behaviour, any consequent cost savings are likely to be less than savings resulting from switching to a cheaper energy provider.</p>	
28	<p>Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to:</p> <p>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 <u>Smart Meter Energy Efficiency Materials Project</u> or other sources of independent information.</p>
<p><i>Free text response to question 28 – please outline in no more than 150 words.</i></p> <p>As reported in the council's last HECA report in 2017, LAEP councils intend to promote the installation of second generation meters once they become widely available.</p> <p>Where appropriate for the householder these will be offered as part of the council's energy efficiency interventions, including clients assisted through the Warm Homes on Prescription programme and other wider fuel poor programmes offered to residents.</p>	
29	<p>Please detail any:</p> <p>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).</p>
<p><i>Free text response to question 29 – please outline in no more than 150 words.</i></p> <p>The Council has successfully helped a significant number low income households secure replacement appliances through both local and national charitable organisations.</p>	
30	<p>Please detail any:</p>

	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).
<p><i>Free text response to question 30 – please outline in no more than 150 words.</i></p> <p>Arrangements are made to change the utility supplier for all void Council properties. As part of this process smart meters are fitted wherever possible.</p>	
<p>Future Schemes or Wider Initiatives</p>	
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').
<p><i>Free text response to question 31 - please outline in no more than 500 words</i></p> <p>LAEP councils, comprising county, city and districts, are working together to access funding for the installation of first time central heating and gas connections in fuel poor off-gas homes. They are considering whether to work with an energy utility company to bid for funding from the Warm Homes Fund, matched with the utility's ECO funding.</p> <p>In Ashfield this could result in the installation of over 100 first time central heating systems in over three years, at no cost to residents or the council. The scheme would be worth a total of around £500,000 to the district, all of which would have come from external sources. The utility company partner would undertake targeting, promotion and installation of heating systems with input and guidance from the district council.</p> <p>If successful this approach could be operational by the end of 2019.</p> <p>Further research into energy related behaviours and how to tailor advice for different household types to encourage them to use less, waste less, spend less</p>	