

HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995 PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2013 – 2015

Submitted by: Housing Manager, Mike O'Connor

Portfolio: Environment and Recycling

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To seek Cabinet approval for submission of any energy report return to Government in accordance with the requirements of the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995.

Recommendations

To approve the overall HECA Progress Report and to authorise officers in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder to make any minor amendments prior to submitting the report to the Secretary of State by the 31st March 2013.

Reasons

The HECA was enacted in 1995 and placed a responsibility on local authorities, who were deemed as Energy Authorities, to publish a report setting out actions to improve energy efficiency within residential properties. It is appropriate to consider the draft report and associated resource requirements.

1. Background

- 1.1 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council published a series of HECA reports, the most recent being in 2008. Thereafter, for a period from 2008 to 2012, no reports were produced, as Central Government gave local authorities an exemption from the requirement of producing and publishing annual reports.
- 1.2 In 2012, the Government requested that the annual report be produced and be submitted to the Secretary of State by the 31st March 2013 and every two years subsequently. The reinstatement of the requirement to produce annual reports was driven by the recent policy of Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation.
- 1.3 A guidance document has been produced by Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) with recommendation as to what should be included within the HECA Report. This guidance document recommends that authorities should consider how they will use Government initiatives including Green Deal, the Energy Company Obligation and Renewable Heat Incentives to improve energy efficiency of residential properties.

2. Issues

- 2.1 DECC have provided a template for the report and this has been used to produce the council's HECA report.
- 2.2 The HECA Progress Report 2013-2015 details the following projects and activities that the Borough Council will undertake and facilitate in the forthcoming years:

Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation [ECO]

There are 3 options available to local authority as to how they should approach Green Deal Promoter, Partnership or Provider. Each of these options has advantages and disadvantages. Officers recommend that the council ought to adopt the partnership approach. It is expected that this will ensure that the funding will remain within the area and local businesses will be involved in delivering the installations.

In particular officers are looking to take a partnership approach to Green Deal and ECO, working with Stoke on Trent City Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council to establish an agency, which will secure ECO funding and manage Green Deal across the North Staffordshire region and into parts of Cheshire.

We will undertake preparatory work in an attempt to mitigate potential barriers to Green Deal, such as addressing any potential planning issues, which may impede the installation of external Green Deal and ECO measures.

Feed in Tariffs scheme and Renewable Heat Premium Payment

The Borough Council does not hold residential housing stock. Nevertheless we have installed solar PV arrays to some of our buildings, which will act as an exemplar to the community.

There are approximately 9,500 social rented properties within the Borough. We will work with the Registered Social Landlords and facilitate the installation of energy measures within the Borough. Aspire Housing, the largest RSL within the Borough have recently installed solar PV arrays to 400 properties saving an estimated £100 per year in electricity costs for each household.

Advice to Developers on Energy Efficiency on reducing carbon emissions

Newcastle under Lyme is part of a Staffordshire wide consortium, which will formulate guidance on Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy.

Minimum standards in the private rental sector

We will continue to enforce Housing and Health Rating System contained within the Housing Act 1984 to reduce the effects of excess cold on occupants. We will also encourage high standards through the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme which promotes high energy efficiency standards in private rented housing stock.

Reduction of Energy Costs

Newcastle under Lyme recognise the potential benefits of the collective switching scheme for the residents of Newcastle under Lyme and will be working with "People's Power", who were successful in their bid to DECC to deliver the scheme within the Borough. Although, the scheme is open to all residents, there will be a specific focus in engaging vulnerable residents and tenants, who are otherwise, disengaged from seeking the best price for energy. It is anticipated that this will have a positive impact on alleviating fuel poverty within the Borough.

3. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

- 3.1 The energy efficiency agenda and activity contained within the HECA Progress Report will contribute specifically to the corporate priority of creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough.

3.2 Furthermore, the energy efficiency agenda and activity will support local objectives / delivery plans including the priorities set out Newcastle under Lyme Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Strategy 2010-2015, the Corporate Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy, the Housing Strategy 2011-15 and Private Sector Renewal programmes.

4. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

4.1 The HECA was enacted in 1995 and placed a responsibility on local authorities, who were deemed as Energy Authorities to publish a report setting out actions to improve energy efficiency within residential properties which has to be submitted to the Secretary of State by the 31st March 2013 and every two years subsequently.

5. **Equality Impact Assessment**

5.1 The HECA is not intended to be a new policy document rather it aims to record and detail the energy efficiency related activities that have taken place or will take place. The activities referenced in the HECA have been primarily been formulated by departments of Central Government.

6. **Financial and Resource Implications**

6.1 The production of the HECA Progress Report for 2013 has been completed within existing resources. However, it must be borne in mind that the actions contained within the HECA Progress Report, particularly those that are linked to the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation will have resource implications. The Housing Capital Programme allocated £60,000 to this area of work.

7. **Major Risks**

7.1 If the Council fails to submit the HECA Progress Report the Council won't meet its statutory duty as set out in the Home Energy Conservation Act. By considering the main aspects of the draft report at Cabinet and authorising officer to submit the report in consultation with the Portfolio Holder there will be an opportunity to incorporate amendments discussed at Cabinet by the submission deadline.

8. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

8.1 The HECA Progress Report will have a positive impact on sustainability and Climate Change.

9. **Key Decision Information**

9.1 This report covers all wards.

10. **List of Appendices**

10.1 Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 Progress Report March 2013 – 2015