

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY

16 JANUARY 2007

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to inform Members of progress being made by the City Council in respect of Exeter's Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For the purposes of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) the City Council is designated an Energy Conservation Authority, responsible for developing strategies and working in partnership to reduce energy use from houses in the City by 30% by 2010. The Council's HECA Strategy was produced in 1996.

- 2.2 Other than improving the energy efficiency of our own housing stock and promoting energy efficiency in the private sector through the availability of grants, the City Council is not able to directly impact upon energy use by householders in the City. The strategy to reduce energy use in housing, therefore, entails education, awareness raising and the promotion and funding of improved insulation.

- 2.3 The City Council has been involved in all of these activities by, for example

- Funding a boiler replacement and insulation scheme [PLEA grants] aimed at private sector landlords to encourage them to either provide central heating and insulation into their rented properties or to replace inefficient boilers with modern, energy efficient boilers.
- Funding an insulation scheme for vulnerable households on low income, just above benefit level [Warm up Exeter grants]
- Funding energy efficiency measures as part of all renovation and disabled facilities grants
- The promotion of the Warmfront Scheme, a government funded scheme which provides heating and insulation to vulnerable households on benefit

- 2.4 The directly funded PLEA and Warm up Exeter grants have only recently received committee approval. As a result the success of these schemes is not reflected in the energy efficiency savings so far reported, but will make an impact on the figures for 2006-2007.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 Using data collected by partnering agencies, such as the Devon Energy Efficiency Advice Centre and British Gas, together with data relating to our own housing stock the Council has been able to accurately report progress against the energy saving targets to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). This years progress report, the tenth, indicates an energy saving of 5.01% for the year; an overall saving over

the past ten years of 26.1%, this means that Exeter is on target to achieve the 30% saving by 2010 and in the top 25% nationally for performance.

- 3.2 Over a quarter of the reported savings are directly attributable to the improvements undertaken on our own housing stock through both the boiler replacement programme, which involved the installation of over 1100 energy efficient boilers, and the continuing insulation scheme which provided cavity wall and loft insulation into 478 and 216 properties respectively.
- 3.3 To put the energy savings into context it is calculated that the improvements made to our own stock reduced the amount of carbon dioxide (a so-called greenhouse gas) being released into the atmosphere by over 2900 tonnes each year. Considering the size of the Council stock this saving represents a large percentage of the overall saving from all sectors, which was reported to be 11392 tonnes

4. THE FUTURE

- 4.1 Each year it becomes more difficult to achieve improvements. Grant schemes to owner occupiers achieve steady improvements from year to year but the hardest challenge has always been to improve the energy efficiency of privately rented properties. It is hoped that the introduction of PLEA grants will start to have an impact upon this. Since they were introduced in June 2006, over 100 applications have been received.
- 4.2 Energy efficient appliance and insulation schemes will continue to be promoted but as well as this there is a need to promote and explore alternative, renewable, energy sources, for example solar and wind power, combined heat and power and heat pumps, all of which will reduce reliance on gas and electricity which are both expensive to use and polluting in their production.
- 4.3 All this activity will complement the Devon Affordable Warmth Strategy which aims to ensure that there will be no households in Devon living in fuel poverty by 2010.

5. RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that Scrutiny Committee - Community note the progress made towards implementing Exeter's Home Energy Conservation Strategy.

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Originator: Keith Williams

H:LP/ Committee/107SCC11
4 December 2006

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None