

Home Energy Conservation Act Report 2023

Swindon Borough Council

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires all local authorities (LAs) in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy performance 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. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero uses data submitted to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency, and to build an ongoing picture of local and national energy efficiency policy delivery.

Headline and Overview

Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic properties?

- Yes
 No

If yes, please provide a link.

The links to our Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan are here:

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/download/1922/swindon_borough_council_carbon_reduction_strategy_2020

<https://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s128360/Appendix%201%20Updated%20Net%20Zero%20Emissions%20Action%20Plan%20March%202023.pdf>

In the last 2 years, what has been the cost (or estimated cost) of your energy efficiency and/or carbon reduction initiatives, schemes and services? Please consider the total cost of running and administering the scheme(s).

The following shows the approximate cost of some of the main initiatives over the last 2 years:

£10.1 million – Queens Drive Eco Housing Development Phase 1A.

£1.7 million – Swindon Borough Council External Wall Insulation programme for social housing.

£4 million – Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 energy efficiency scheme.

£60,000 – Warm & Safe Wiltshire Energy Advice Service.

Which, if any, of the following outcomes have been achieved through your energy efficiency and/or carbon initiatives, schemes and services? Please select all that apply.

- Energy savings

- Carbon savings
- Job creation
- Increased business competitiveness
- Alleviation of fuel poverty
- Improved health outcomes
- None of the above
- Other - please specify

Consumer Advice and Information

Do you provide or promote any advisory services to consumers on how to save energy?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please select all that apply;

- Local Authority website
- Local advisory service
- 'Find ways to save energy in your home' (formerly Simple Energy Advice) gov.uk website
- '*Find ways to save energy in your home*' gov.uk phonenumber
- Leaflets
- Social media
- Local energy hubs
- Other- please specify

Local Retrofit Supply Chain

Have you conducted any assessment or analysis to understand the existing capacity in your local supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings by 2050?

- Yes
- No

Which, if any, of the following actions are you taking to upskill and/or grow your local retrofit installer supply chain? Please select all that apply.

- Supporting training provision at local training providers
- Supporting FE colleges to improve facilities or train trainers or otherwise enable better delivery of retrofit training.
- Providing installer networking opportunities or other business support for growing companies.

- Careers advice or similar involving local businesses doing schools outreach to encourage young people into the sector.
- None of the above
- Other (please state)

Do you provide advice for your residents and small businesses about how to pick an installer business or how to avoid being mis-sold inappropriate improvements?

- Yes
- No

Has there been any Trading Standards activity against energy efficiency or home retrofit businesses in your area due to mis-selling or otherwise poorly advising consumers about retrofit measures?

- Yes – there has been action taken on a regular basis
- Yes – but rarely
- No – resourcing constraints have curtailed potential activity
- No – we are not aware of any issues

If you received funding under Local Authority Delivery, Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, did availability of PAS 2030:2019 or MCS certified and TrustMark registered supply chain affect your ability to deliver?

- Yes
- No

If yes please can you tell us, which parts of the supply chain were particularly affected (please select all that apply)?

- Installers of insulation
- Installers of windows/doors
- Installers of heat pumps
- Retrofit assessors
- Retrofit coordinators
- All of the above
- Other (please state)

Please can you tell us, what actions did you take to overcome those barriers (please select all that apply)?

- Marketing to drive supply chain interest
- Use of frameworks or a local DPS to reach more businesses

- Supporting training and upskilling more generally
- Using a main contractor and requiring them to source suitably certified supply chain (either through contracting or training up their own staff)
- Delivering in-house e.g. by upskilling existing social housing maintenance teams, directly employing retrofit coordinators etc.
- Other - The scheme managers were not able to overcome the lack of heat pump installers nationally during the delivery period for the Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 scheme, so heat pumps were not installed as part of this scheme.

Social Housing Decarbonisation

Did you apply to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1?

- Yes, and successful in securing funding
- Yes, and not successful in securing funding
- No
- Don't know

**Which, if any, of the following motivated you to apply for SHDF Wave 2.1?
Please select all that apply.**

- Financial support for retrofit
- Technical support for retrofit
- Tenant needs
- Expectations of future energy performance regulations
- Other – please tell us your motivation(s) for applying

Have you carried out/planned to carry out any retrofit work in absence of SHDF funding?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If yes, how is this funded/how would this be funded?

- Internal funding
- Funding from other Government schemes
- Don't know
- Other

Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) Regulations

Do you enforce the PRS MEES Regulations in domestic tenancies?

- Yes
 No

Do you use the PRS MEES Exemption Register?

- Yes
 No

Are you aware of the PRS MEES draft toolkit for supporting local authorities?

- Yes, and I've used it
 Yes, but I haven't used it
 No

In the past 2 years, how many domestic private rented properties have you engaged with in respect to enforcement of the PRS MEES Regulations?

None

In the past 2 years, how many domestic private rented properties have you found to be non-compliant?

None

In the last 2 years, how many non-compliant properties have been improved to EPC Band E after you have engaged with them?

None

How many compliance notices have you issued in the past 2 years for non-compliance of the PRS MEES Regulations?

None

For information, resource pressures means we are unable to look at project work and additional powers. All work is reactive and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is the core tool used to address energy efficiency.

Green Home Finance

What programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency improvements for those who are able to pay? Please provide links to any relevant online materials.

Our Warm & Safe Wiltshire advice service offers advice on energy efficiency improvements for all residents, but is especially targeted at lower income households and/or those with health conditions. www.cse.org.uk/wsw

The Futureproof Wiltshire LEAD project targets more affluent able to pay households to offer advice on energy efficiency and low carbon retrofit measures. This may include looking at Green Finance for such measures later in the project.

www.futureproof.uk.net/wiltshire-and-swindon-home-survey-offer/

Do you take any steps to raise awareness of the availability of private financing options (such as green mortgages) to fund retrofit works?

- Yes
- No, but we have plans to do this in the future
- No

Do you refer homeowners interested in energy efficiency to retail lenders offering green finance products?

- Yes
- No, but we have plans to do this in the future
- No

Fuel Poverty

Does your Local Authority have a Fuel Poverty Strategy?

- Yes
- No

How do you identify fuel poor households? Please select all that apply and provide additional information if possible.

- Used local data sets on energy efficiency/housing
- Used local data sets on household income
- Campaigns to encourage potential households to reach out
- Other - Awareness of the Warm & Safe Wiltshire advice service is raised amongst our voluntary and community sector partners, and also our health partners. This includes the provision of a health and housing referral network for all partners to use to refer clients for support.

What actions are you taking to reduce fuel poverty in your area? Please select all that apply and provide additional information if possible.

- Delivery of government wide schemes such as the Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Actions to increase financial support to low income or vulnerable households.
- Other - Promotion of other energy efficiency schemes including the Energy Company Obligation, Great British Insulation Scheme, ECO and GBIS Flex

schemes, and the Connected for Warmth scheme. We also help households access Energy Trust Funds to address energy debt, and provide access to both Government funds and other external funds for financial support. All fuel poverty related activity is covered by our [Affordable Warmth Strategy](#) and Action Plan.

Does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall Carbon Reduction Strategy?

- Yes
 No

If yes, please can you explain how it does this?

The promotion of energy efficiency measures through the fuel poverty work will link to the wider aims of the carbon reduction strategy. In particular:

- Objective 5 in the Carbon Reduction Strategy is to reduce energy related emissions from SBC owned housing stock (including sheltered housing schemes).
- Objective 9 is to identify other council led interventions – this includes bidding for suitable funds for SBC owned housing stock.
- Objective 11 seeks to encourage emissions reduction from Swindon residents, notably to provide guidance and influence the private sector to improve the efficiency of housing stock.

Local Authority Delivery

Does your local authority have access to good quality housing data for on-gas properties?

- Yes
 No

If no, please specify what is lacking.

Accurate data to an individual household level is lacking. Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) data is not reliable, while data from measures installed under Government energy efficiency schemes is not provided to a household level (only postcode level). We have some data for our own social housing, and are in the process of carrying out a stock condition survey of our own properties to provide better data to inform future activity.

Home Upgrade Grant

Does your local authority have access to good quality housing data for off-gas properties?

- Yes
 No

If no, please specify what is lacking.

Accurate data to an individual household level is lacking. Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) data is not reliable, while data from measures installed under Government energy efficiency schemes is not provided to a household level (only postcode level). We have some data for our own social housing, and are in the process of carrying out a stock condition survey of our own properties to provide better data to inform future activity.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

Did your local authority have a published Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility under ECO3, during 2022?

- Yes
 No

Please answer the following questions to help us to understand LA Flex delivery in more detail during the course of 2022:

How many declarations were issued for low-income vulnerable households during ECO3?

12

How many declarations were issued for Fuel Poor households under ECO3?

1

How many declarations were issued for in-fill under ECO3?

0

What was the highest income cap published in your Sol?

£30,000

Did you charge for declarations to be signed?

- Yes
 No

If so, please state how much and how you decided on this figure.

Swindon Borough Council does not charge for signing declarations. However, all other administration of the ECO Flex scheme is carried out by the Centre for Sustainable Energy and they charged a fee to cover their costs. The fee during ECO3 was £50 for a single measure and £100 for a dual measure per property. The fee was benchmarked against other admin fees for ECO Flex schemes in other areas.

ECO4 commenced in July 2022, has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility under ECO4?

- Yes
 No

Do you directly engage with energy suppliers either for ECO Flex (or other domestic energy efficiency schemes)?

- Yes
 No

Which route(s) do you envisage submitting referrals through under ECO4 Flex?
Select all that apply.

- All four routes available
 Route 1
 Route 2
 Route 3
 Route 4

Smart Metering

The following questions refer to smart metering advice. Please provide any additional details where possible.

Do you provide smart metering advice when implementing energy efficiency improvements (including through grant schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation and the Home Upgrade Grant) in residential accommodation?

- Yes
 No

If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this.

We don't install measures through these schemes – this would be done by the installers. Smart meter advice is given as part of the Warm & Safe Wiltshire advice service though.

Do you encourage landlords to promote smart meter uptake, e.g., landlord licencing schemes.

- Yes
- No

If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this.

This wasn't considered within a review of licensing regime at Swindon Borough Council in 2018 as energy efficiency can be considered under part 1 of the Housing Act and HHSRS. We will look to promote smart meters during site visits and communications with landlords to improve costs and efficiencies all round.

Do you arrange for smart meters to be installed by energy suppliers in vacant social housing premises?

- Yes
- No

The 2023 Home Energy Conservation Act report has been submitted online to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) as per their issued HECA 2023 Reporting Guidance. This is a summary version of the report based on the questions asked in the survey. For more information on this report, please contact:

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