

Home Energy Conservation Act Further Report 2017

1. Local energy efficiency ambitions and priorities

The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership

‘Develop Swindon and Wiltshire as a nationally significant player in the UK’s energy sector, with particular strengths in the low carbon energy generation sector and the application of hydrogen technologies; and to support smart specialisation and innovation in our priority sectors as the drivers of economic growth.’

From the Strategic Economic Development Plan, published in January 2016.

<http://www.swlep.co.uk>

Swindon Borough Council Local Plan 2015-26, adopted March 2015

Our Local Plan aims to develop the Borough in a sustainable manner.

Theme 5: Infrastructure Needs, Policy IN4 (page 96-99) deals with *Low Carbon and Renewable Energy*.

http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20113/local_plan_and_planning_policy/635/swindon_borough_local_plan_2

Swindon Borough Council’s *Vision for Swindon*

‘By 2030, Swindon will have all of the positive characteristics of a British City with one of the UK’s most successful economies; a low-carbon environment with compelling cultural, retail and leisure opportunities and excellent infrastructure. It will be a model of well managed housing growth which supports and improves new and existing communities. [...]’

Work is prioritised around four priorities, two of which are relevant to our energy efficiency and fuel poverty work.

- Priority one: Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy
- Priority four: Help people to help themselves while always protecting the most vulnerable children and adults

www.swindon.gov.uk/vision

Swindon Affordable Warmth Strategy: To enable all homes in Swindon to be adequately insulated & heated.

The strategy aims to eradicate fuel poverty in the Swindon Borough area. This will help ensure that all householders in the area live in warm dry homes, free from the fear of fuel debt and poor health. This is being delivered through various initiatives and

partnerships active in the Borough. More details can be found at www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20055/home_energy_efficiency/232/affordable_warmth

Private Sector Housing renewal strategy

This is currently being reviewed and will be available on our web-site once approved by cabinet.

2. The measures that take advantage of financial assistance and other benefits offered from central Government initiatives, to help result in significant energy efficiency improvements of residential accommodation

| Action | Details | Timing |
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| Private Sector Housing – Swindon Borough Council Initiatives | | |
| ECO and Fuel poverty | <p>The failure of the Green Deal and problems with delivering the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) has meant that implementing insulation schemes has continued to be difficult over the last two years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have continued to signpost residents to such schemes and have endorsed a surveying company to find suitable households for cavity wall insulation through ECO funding. • We have continued to offer advice to households by phone, supplying information leaflets and through our web-pages. • We are developing programmes based on the ECO transition period from April 2017 to September 2018, which will cover much of the next reporting period. At the time of writing we are awaiting further guidance from the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on how local authorities will be able to implement this. | <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>2017-18</p> <p>On-going</p> |
| Heating Grants. | <p>Vulnerable residents have struggled to get ECO funding for heating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have used residual funding to grant aid central heating, where there has previously been no heating in the property or the system cannot be repaired, and households are within our grant criteria. | Will end when funding used |
| External/Internal Wall Insulation | We have been able to offer a £1000 insulation grant for external or internal wall insulation: | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have worked with our Council housing colleagues to promote this to owner occupier households in areas under-going an extensive external insulation programme to the council owned non-traditionally built properties, specifically BISF houses. The contractor will look for any appropriate ECO funding to reduce the cost to the householder. | Will end when funding used |
| Park Home Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have surveyed our Park Home sites to gain valuable information about the residents and standard of accommodation within our 185 park homes. We understand more help will become available to these residents under the ECO transitional arrangements. | 2017-18 |
| Warm Homes Discount Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During autumn/winter 2014/15 and 2015/16, 4 Warm Home Discount Events were held each year, with our Council housing team, to promote this benefit to their tenants. These events won a Highly Commended 'Outstanding Campaign' award at the <i>UK Housing Awards 2016</i>. Seven events were held autumn/winter 2016/17. We plan to continue these events. Promotion of the Warm Homes Discount to park home owners, who can access this benefit through Charis. | On-going On-going |
| Energy Switching <i>Swindon Energy Matters</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative, launched this year provides a comparison and switching service for gas and electricity combined with additional support for households having difficulty switching. We are particularly interested in low income households and pre-payment customers. http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20055/home_energy_efficiency/727/swindon_energy_matters | On-going |
| Priority Services Register | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are working to ensure that all applicants for Disabled Facility Grants are made aware the Priority Services Register. | On-going |
| Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have attended local community events and a yearly Senior Wellbeing Event | On-going |

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| Minimum Standards in the private rented sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See additional comments below under Specific information requested by BEIS • Swindon Borough Council's private sector housing team continue to take a proactive approach with landlords and tenants to improve and enforce where necessary | On-going |
| Community Energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have used community investment to assist with funding two solar farms, Chapel Farm 5.0 MW and Common Farm 4.8 MW on council land through Abundance Investments: www.abundanceinvestment.com/projects/swindon-chapel-farm-solar www.abundanceinvestment.com/projects/swindon-common-farm-solar • As well as supplying sustainable energy the investment will provide a long term income for Swindon Borough Council, investors and assist defined community initiatives. | On-going |
| EPCs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to develop an energy database of our housing stock (UNO software), and will update this with the EPC data sets from April 2015, when this is released as 'open source'. | On-going |
| Public Sector Housing – Swindon Borough Council initiatives | | |
| Heating upgrades | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has an annual programme to upgrade heating systems in its social housing stock (10,263 homes in total). The programme focuses on replacing less efficient non-condensing gas boilers with high efficiency appliances and distribution systems. • The annual budget is approximately £1.8 million, and affects about 560 homes. • Being predominantly urban, very few homes are heated by fuels other than gas. Our programme includes fuel swaps wherever practicable. For the few homes too distant from the gas network, over the next 12 months we will upgrade them to more efficient appliances, particularly modern 'Quantum;' night storage heaters. | On-going |
| Insulation – non-traditional housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's stock includes a relatively high proportion of homes built using non-traditional methods of construction. • We have commenced an extensive programme targeting the least energy-efficient homes to renew and upgrade their thermal insulation as part of a comprehensive package of measures including heating, roofing and amenity improvements which aims to deal with up to 2,000 properties over the next 10 years at an estimated cost of £76 million. • The first year of this initiative (to March 2017) is expected to deliver improvements to about 170 homes | March 2016 to 2026 |

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| Insulation – older housing stock | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's stock includes approx. 300 19th Century, Grade II Listed terraced homes in the Railway Village, which are among its least energy efficient and which are unsuitable for cavity wall insulation. • It is proposed to install internal wall insulation and upgrade heating systems (where appropriate). | March 2018 to 2021 |
| Specific information requested by BEIS | | |
| <p>Fuel Poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority has a part time dedicated Affordable Warmth Co-ordinator. We have no dedicated funding for delivery but look for external funding bids as they become available. • Swindon Borough Council has a Fuel Poverty Strategy. This is currently being refreshed to run from 2017. There will be more information on our Home Energy Efficiency web-pages once the refresh is approved. www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20055/home_energy_efficiency • We run schemes as previously mentioned locally and to take advantage of national schemes, such as Warm Homes Discount and any available ECO funding. We use leads from our partners and our dedicated UNO software database to target suitable households. We also work with internal housing team to identify tenants needing assistance. We carry out evaluation of these activities to improve targeting and cost effectiveness. • With the completion of our Safe & Warm scheme in 2016, we are now part of the Safe and Independent Living Scheme (SAIL), led by Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service which targets vulnerable and low income households. We are also developing partnerships to provide a health and housing referral network. www.dwfire.org.uk/your-community/safe-and-independent-living-sail/ <p>Boilers and Heat pumps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Control at Swindon Borough Council has no comments on this at the current time. <p>Smart Meters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have no funding to enable us to engage or support our residents, other than council tenants, with the Smart Meter roll out. • We have provided links on our web-site to the Smart Energy GB web-site • We are intending to write to Letting Agencies to remind them about Smart Meters and their availability to private tenants. | | |

- We would be interested in developing schemes to get the best from the energy efficiency materials provided by Smart Energy UK. If smart meter data is made available then we would be keen to take advantage of this to assist our targeting and delivery of services.
- We feel that this work will be more appropriate as the Smart Meter role out evolves.

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector.

The Energy Act 2011 proposes that from April 2018 the minimum standard for private rented properties will be an Energy Performance Certificate rating of Band E.

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/48199/3211-energy-act-2011-aide-memoire.pdf)

- Swindon Borough Council is planning on integrating the Energy Performance Certificate requirements into its ongoing enforcement regime in the private rented sector. Swindon has an active Housing Standards enforcement team that carries out inspections of private rented properties constantly. The EPC requirements will be added to the suite of tools already used to assess properties, and will be enforced accordingly.
- Environmental Health officers in the enforcement team deal with the hazard of Excess Cold using the Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS) and supporting legislation. All properties that present with Category 1 hazards of this nature are remediated through enforcement processes, mitigating the hazard to well within Category 2 where possible. All properties inspected, whether the hazard of Excess Cold is complained of or not, are assessed for this hazard, and improvements enforced where appropriate. This will be extended to include an examination of the EPC in parallel with any inspection.
- Our private sector leasing scheme ensures that all properties used meet the Decent Homes Standard. Our Safe & Warm scheme continues to be promoted to landlords through targeted mail outs.
- Tenants' rights with regard to document production, and protection from retaliatory eviction when complaining of poor conditions, are communicated both to tenants and landlords at every opportunity.
- Swindon Borough Council encourages landlords to become members of the National Landlords Association.

3. The measures which an authority has developed to implement energy efficiency improvements cost-effectively in residential accommodation by using area based/street by street roll out involving

| local communities and partnerships (e.g. social housing partners, voluntary organisations and town/parish councils, wider partnerships/innovation and procurement). | | |
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| Action | Details | Timing |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As we reported in 2015 our <i>Safe & Warm</i> initiative completed an area based approach in 9 of our wards, working with an insulation installer, focusing on our more deprived and older areas of housing. Our remaining areas consist of mainly more recent developments and it would not be cost effective to target these in such a way. There is also no available funding to carry out an area based initiative. We work with our Swindon Borough Council social housing colleagues on various fuel poverty initiatives as outlined, which target specific areas within the Borough. We are less successful in working with other Housing Associations. We have no formal or informal partnerships with community groups, voluntary organisations or town/parish councils prepared to carry out this type of approach. However we have engaged with a number of voluntary organisations within our fuel poverty work. | <p>Completed</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> |
| 4. A timeframe for delivery and national and local partners – this includes Combined Authorities | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swindon Borough Council has partnerships with Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service and Citizen's Advice, primarily through the SAIL scheme. We work with our Public Health colleagues promoting the health benefits of a warm and safe home, including falls prevention. This will continue for the foreseeable future. We intend to continue with the initiatives outlined, but delivery may be affected by dwindling resources. Our council stock is undergoing a rolling programme of improvements. We will continue to work on schemes which take advantage of cross departmental working, such as financial inclusion. | <p>2017-19</p> <p>2017-19</p> <p>2017/19</p> |

