

HECA Return 2021 - 2023

Introductory Questions

- Hart District Council
- District Council
- Louise Lyons - Private Sector Housing Manager - louise.lyons@hart.gov.uk

Headline and Overview

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

We have a Climate Change Action Plan.

We also declared a Climate Emergency in May 2021 so it is likely that new policies will be produced because of this.

Hart Local Plan 2032, adopted April 2020, includes a specific policy (NBE9) which requires new development to not only incorporate renewable or low carbon energy technologies, but to also reduce energy consumption through sustainable approaches to building design and layout. Local Plan objectives also specifically refer to providing measures for adapting to the impacts of climate change and minimising the contribution of new development to the causes of climate changes.

- **If yes, please provide a link** [Climate change | Hart District Council](#)
- **If no, are you planning to develop one**

N/A

- **What scheme(s) is your Local Authority planning to implement in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation properties in the next two years?**

Hart District Council will provide financial assistance for home improvements in domestic properties, including energy efficiency. This will be provided via Minor Works Grants up to £5K and low-cost loans for larger scale works. Under our Private Sector Renewal Policy, we offer Prevention Grants using Better Care Fund funding. These grants can be used for such things as heating improvements and insulation where we have a referral from a health professional identifying the need for works.

There is a county wide affordable warmth service Hitting the Cold Spots, funded by Hampshire County Council and delivered by the Environment Centre (tEC), which is available to residents in Hart. The Hitting the Cold Spots service provides information and advice about saving energy to residents of any tenure, and additional practical

support and funding for energy efficiency measures to eligible owner occupiers and private tenants. The Hitting the Cold Spots service will continue until at least 31 March 2022.

Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (GHGLAD2), see below.

Solar Together Hampshire - The Council has teamed up with iChooser to offer Solar Together, through which homeowners and small and medium-sized businesses can buy solar panels and battery storage at competitive prices. Hart residents and businesses can join the group-buying scheme, which offers solar PV with optional battery storage. It also provides retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar PV and are looking to increase their independence from the grid.

The Council is in the process of producing a Technical Advice Note to support the planning application process, which requires developers to consider a series of questions in relation to renewable and low carbon energy opportunities; sustainable materials and construction; energy efficiency; low carbon ways of living. It will be a requirement of the planning application process to apply the checklist and provide details of the provisions to be made and indeed an explanation as to why measures are not included within the proposals if this is the case.

• What has been, or will be, the cost(s) of running and administering the scheme(s), such as the value of grants and other support made available, plus any other costs incurred (such as administration) as desired.

Green Homes Grant LAD2, no figures to date.

Hitting the Cold Spots

Hitting the Cold Spots estimated cost of running and administrating the service, by local authority, 2019-2021:

Local authority: Hart

Service cost: £5,430

• What businesses, charities, third sector organisations or other stakeholders do you work with to deliver the scheme(s)?

The Hitting the Cold Spots service is delivered by the Environment Centre (tEC) charity. Energy efficiency measures are installed by local Buy with Confidence contractors and TrustMark/PAS2035/PAS2030 accredited installers. Households are referred or signposted to a wide range of other organisations to deliver further support, for example Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service for safe and well visits, Blue Lamp Trust for home security and local Citizens Advice branches for income maximisation. Local authorities are members of the Hampshire Energy Efficiency Partnership (HEEP) to facilitate inter-council cooperation, knowledge sharing and joined-up action.

GHGLAD2 – other Local Authorities in the consortium; Greater Southeast Energy Hub and installers.

- **What has been, or will be, the outcome of the scheme(s)? These outcomes could include energy savings, carbon savings, economic impacts such as job creation and/or increased business competitiveness or societal impacts such as alleviation of fuel poverty and/or improved health outcomes etc.**

We are unable to quantify the outcomes of GHG LAD2 currently, but we expect them to include energy savings, carbon savings job creation and/or increased business competitiveness and alleviation of fuel poverty and improved health outcomes.

Hitting the Cold Spots - unfortunately there is not the resource locally to extensively monitor and evaluate all of these outcomes for our schemes or services.

Households provided with energy saving advice through Hitting the Cold Spots, by local authority, 2019-2021:

Local authority: Hart

Total per local authority: 35

Households supported with energy efficiency measures through Hitting the Cold Spots, by local authority, 2019-2021:

Local authority: Hart

Total per local authority: 15

Communications

- **Does your Local Authority provide any advisory services to customers on how to save energy?**

Yes

- **If yes, please briefly outline how this is undertaken.**

Our DFG Caseworkers and Private Sector Housing officers signpost residents with energy efficiency queries to Hitting the Cold Spots for advice.

The county-wide Hitting the Cold Spots service provides advice to residents in Hart. This includes information on energy efficiency grants, heating systems and controls, insulation, draught-proofing, energy bills, smart meters and switching tariffs.

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) – 157 clients received advice related to energy efficiency and/or fuel poverty between 2019 and 2021. This included advice on:

- Fuel debts
- Complaints and redress
- **GAE CO energy efficiency measure-insulation**
- Selling methods and switching supplier
- Billing/meter reading
- Methods of payment
- Cancellation & withdrawal
- Issues with supply

- Contract terms & conditions
- Customer service
- Price of tariff-gas or electric
- Warm Home Discount
- Priority Services Register
- Smartmeter installation
- Smart meter-switching problems
- Smart meter-awareness
- Smart meter-pre-payment meters
- Smart meter-other
- other energy efficiency measure-double glazing

Social media & website

• How do you communicate or encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers and/or local businesses?

We promote Hitting the Cold Spots to residents, who communicate and encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers and local businesses.

There is information available on the Council website and via social media and our Caseworkers offer advice at any events and networking opportunities they attend.

Referrals to CAB, see above.

Local Green Supply Chain

• Have you made any assessment, or undertaken any analysis of the existing capacity in your local energy efficiency retrofit supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings by 2050? If Yes, please summarise the outcomes.

No.

• What actions are you taking, if any, to upskill and/or grow the local energy efficiency installer supply chain? This could include the facilitation of training, and local installer networking opportunities.

We have promoted training to local business through Greentech South and Energy Hub, and well as supporting the local sustainable business network which provides networking opportunities.

• What actions are you taking, if any, to promote energy efficiency and the installer supply chain to consumers, and encourage households to consider energy retrofit?

We have been promoting any energy efficiency schemes when they become available, as part of an overall promotion of energy efficiency and climate change awareness.

• If no action is taking place in either of these two areas, please let us know of any barriers you have encountered.

The biggest issue is support for householders, to understand what needs to be carried out and then find suitable installers who can carry out the work. We currently don't have the capacity to provide this resource.

It is also difficult to encourage residents to install energy efficiency and grow the local supply chain when there is limited financial incentive for residents to install measures, as many measures have very long return on investments and require significant capital outlay.

Staffing and resources are an issue, we are a small Local Authority with no dedicated HECA Officer.

• How effectively is your LA able to engage (Trustmark/PAS2035/PAS2030 certified) installers?

N/A

• Do you have any plans to develop policies or initiatives in this space over the next five years as part of supporting your local decarbonisation efforts?

See Climate Change Action Plan. We also carried out energy audit on our own buildings with a view to decarbonise these.

The Council has just declared a Climate Emergency so it is likely that policies may change, or new policies be produced because of this declaration.

Social Housing

• What action, if any, has your LA taken to install energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures in social housing? Have these been installed to a satisfactory quality? What actions (if any) have your social housing partners taken?

We no longer have our own housing stock, we transferred this to what is now Vivid Housing Association in 1994.

Vivid - Routine programmes of works have included loft and cavity wall insulation installation, top-ups and/or CWI extract and refill where need is identified and dwelling is suitable. Over 200 dwelling ASHPs have been retrofitted in off-gas areas (numbers in Hart DC area not currently available), similarly pre-merger of Sentinel and First Wessex HAs to form VIVID both organisations had PV retrofit programmes when FIT made retrofit viable.

• Do you have easy access to the information/knowledge within your organisation that you would expect to need for social housing retrofit projects? (e.g. stock condition; property data; approach to procurement; alignment with existing internal maintenance/upgrade plans; tenant engagement and management plans; costings)

Not at present.

• If no, would it be easy/difficult to obtain this information?

Not sure.

• Have you experienced any challenges to retrofit, including during any previous government schemes you have taken part in (e.g. supply chain, funding, tenant cooperation, mixed tenure, split incentive, policy clarity, etc)? Please provide some detail.

N/A

Have social housing partners reported any challenges to retrofit?

Vivid - Yes to all challenges, apart from supply chain, though certainly questions exist around supply chain/resource availability as we and other landlords get deeper into actual retrofit works, and this situation may also be impacted by Brexit in terms of skilled labour, equipment and materials.

• How does your LA currently/how will your LA in future plan to go about identifying suitable housing stock and measures for retrofit?

N/A at present.

How do social housing partners identify suitable stock? By the same measures or via a different method?

Vivid - Our Asset Management Strategy 2020-24 includes the commitment to get all homes (where practicable) to a minimum of EPC 'D' during the life of the plan. Longer term the business is committed to carbon reduction and has allotted funds to 'zero carbon' in the business plan. Stock data is being improved and analysed, with the dwellings having the lowest SAP ratings being the priority for improvement. EPC certificate is used to initially identify retrofit measures. An Asset team member has completed PAS2035 Retrofit Coordinator training and the business is contemplating LAD funding whilst building bridges with LAs to be potential partners. Availability of funding is a bonus, although experience of previous funding programmes has resulted in the business not wishing to rely on these.

• What considerations would make you more or less likely to apply for government funding? If known, what is the opinion of your social housing partners?

We are a small Local Authority would want any bidding process to be simple and intuitive.

• To what extent are social housing tenants willing or unwilling to undergo retrofit, and what are the barriers and facilitators to their participation? If known, is this the same opinion across all social housing tenants or is it different with HA and ALMO tenants?

Not known at present.

• Does the approach to retrofit change for leaseholders in mixed tenure blocks? What encourages them to co-operate?

Not known at present.

Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

• Is your authority aware of the PRS Minimum Efficiency Standards regulations requiring private rentals in England and Wales to meet a minimum energy performance rating of EPC Band E as of April 2020, unless a valid exemption applies?

Yes.

• Which team within your authority is responsible for, leading on enforcement of the PRS minimum standard? Please provide the contact details of the person leading this team.

Private Sector Housing team

Louise Lyons

louise.lyons@hart.gov.uk

• What method or methods does your authority use to communicate with landlords and tenants about the standards and other related issues?

Social media, website, letters and emails.

• What barriers, if any, does your local authority face enforcing these regulations (e.g. identifying non-compliant properties/landlords, budgeting/resourcing, any legal issues)?

N/A

• Do you directly target landlords of EPC F and G rated properties to enforce these regulations? If yes, how? If no, please explain.

No - however this may change as we have now received EPC information via the Energy Hub for the Green Homes Grant.

Financial Support for Energy Efficiency

Where possible, please set out your answers to the following questions by tenure (owner occupied, privately rented, or social housing).

• What financial programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency or energy saving? If applicable please outline the budget (and % of the budget that is used), where such funding is sourced and where it is targeted.

Hart District Council provides financial assistance for home improvements in domestic properties, including energy efficiency. This is provided via Minor Works Grants up to £5K and low-cost loans for larger scale works. Under our new Private Sector Renewal Policy which was approved in January 2019 we offer Prevention Grants using Better Care Fund funding. These grants can be used for such things as heating improvements and insulation where we have a referral from a health professional identifying the need for works.

The Hitting the Cold Spots service provides financial support to promote domestic energy efficiency and energy saving.

Hitting the Cold Spots value of grants, Hart, 2019-2021:

Hitting the Cold Spots grant contributions, from Hampshire County Council:
£5,321

Other grant contributions incl. ECO, local authority, energy trusts etc: £25,569

Through the service domestic consumers are helped to access grants for energy efficiency measures, such as boiler repairs or replacements and insulation. Funding is sourced from Hampshire County Council, district authorities, national schemes such as ECO, energy trusts and individual funding options based on a client's circumstance e.g. work history, disability or armed forces connection. Grant funding is subject to eligibility criteria, including broken or no heating, tenure type, means-tested benefits or low income and little savings, plus vulnerability to the cold due to age, health or disability and/or young children.

• What future investment for energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures do you have planned, and when are these investments planned for?

None at present but this may change given we have just declared a Climate Emergency.

Fuel Poverty

• Does your Local Authority have a Fuel Poverty Strategy?

No

• What steps have you taken to identify residents/properties in fuel poverty? What blockers, if any, have there been in identifying households in fuel poverty?

Hitting the Cold Spots identifies residents and properties in fuel poverty through training frontline workers, outreach to target groups or areas, and mapping. Their mapping work utilises publicly available data on energy efficiency, financial circumstances and health conditions.

• How does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall Carbon Reduction Strategy?

N/A

• Please highlight any fuel poverty issues specific to your area.

Not aware of any specific issues.

• What measures or initiatives have you taken to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty? Include information on partnerships with local businesses or energy providers you have.

Our DFG Caseworkers make referrals to HTCS when they find clients who they suspect may be in fuel poverty.

Hitting the Cold Spots promotes fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty, through energy advice, support with switching tariff or supplier, guidance on fuel debt and help with applying for Warm Home Discount.

Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery

Of the £2bn Green Homes Grant scheme introduced in summer 2020, £500m was assigned for Local Authority Delivery (LAD). LAD enables Local Authorities to bid for grant funding to support low-income households in their area with energy efficiency and low carbon heating upgrades. £200m was made available through Local Authority grant competitions in 2020, known as phases 1A and 1B and £300m was allocated under Phase 2 between the five regional Local Energy Hubs.

• Has your Local Authority Participated in GHG: LAD?

o If yes, please indicate which phase you participated in and briefly outline the project.

o If no, please indicate what barriers prevented you from participation in the scheme.

Yes. We have been working with the local Energy Hub to access the GHG LAD2 through a consortium. Currently we're waiting for the management agent to be appointed and finalised before we can sign the agreement, before any projects begin.

• Would your Local Authority be in a position to manage the delivery of upgrades through a scheme such as LAD in 2022?

o If yes, please indicate the anticipated number of homes that could be upgraded per year.

o If no, please indicate what barriers would prevent you from delivering upgrades in your area.

No. The council does not have the capacity in terms of the staff or resources to manage and deliver upgrades through a scheme such as LAD in 2022, unless it is part of a consortium as per GHG LAD2.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

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 ECO “Local Authority flexible eligibility” (LA 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 in the LA Flex programme 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.

• Has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility? (Y/N)

No.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) has published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility.

Link to HCC Sol:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/coldspots>

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

• How many declarations were issued for low income vulnerable households?

N/A

• How many declarations were issued for Fuel Poor households?

N/A

• How many declarations were issued for in-fill?

N/A

• What is the highest income cap published in your Sol?

N/A

• If you have used an income over £30k gross, what reason have you given?

N/A

• Do you charge for declarations to be signed? If so, please state how much?

N/A

Smart Metering

• Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to promote smart meter take up and supporting residents to achieve benefits.

Through Hitting the Cold Spots, the Environment Centre (tEC) engages and supports residents, including those in vulnerable circumstances, to promote take up of smart meters and achieve associated benefits. tEC is a member of Smart Energy GB Partnership Programme, and has previously received Smart Energy GB in Communities funding to reach out to low income households.

We will raise awareness regarding the roll out of smart meters and the benefits to our residents of being in control of their energy use and how this can help reduce energy bills. We will provide information on our website and utilise resources from Smart Energy GB to distribute at events.

• Please provide further information on activities relating to smart metering, including but not limited to:

a. Integrating approaches to delivering energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation

b. Arranging for smart meters to be installed by energy suppliers in vacant social housing premises

c. Using social landlords to promote smart meter uptake

Not at present.

d. Including smart meters in landlord licencing schemes

N/A

e. Supporting residents who have had appliances condemned for safety reasons

Hart District Council can provide financial assistance in the form of Minor Works Grants up to £5K and low-cost loans. Under our new Private Sector Renewal Policy which was approved in January 2019 we now offer Prevention Grants using Better Care Fund funding. These grants can be used for such things as heating improvements.

Hitting the Cold Spots funding may be available to replace condemned gas heating appliances, for eligible owner occupiers.

f. Other supporting activities

Future Schemes and Wider Incentives

• **Please outline any further schemes or wider initiatives not covered above that your local authority has carried out or is planning to undertake to improve energy efficiency in residential accommodation.**

Planning

Hart District has high house prices which means that its affordability ratio (Ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings) = 10.72 (2020 data). This indicates that housing affordability is a critical issue, which could result in significant loan to value mortgages, leaving less income for other expenses including fuel and potential for fuel poverty, hence application of Local Plan policy and emerging TAN to reduce such instances and ensure all new developments (both market and affordable) are efficient to run for the individual occupants whilst making a positive contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

The Council is actively engaging with developers to ensure that new development proposals maximise energy efficiency and is anticipating some zero carbon dwellings to come forward in the future. The Council is also aware of local property developers developing their own sustainability standards through exploring opportunities across the sustainability spectrum of biodiversity net gain; EV charging points; cycle storage; use of air source and ground source heat pumps to generate a truly sustainable place.

Hart is starting to use the HEET (Heritage Energy Efficiency Toolkit) developed by Oxford City Council to provide advice to applicants, their architects and Members.