

## **MIDDLESBROUGH HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT (HECA)**

### **PROGRESS REPORT – MARCH 2017**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 requires all English local authorities to report on what is being done to improve energy efficiency in all residential accommodation in their area and on progress in implementing these measures. Authorities are required to publish these reports every two years.

#### **Middlesbrough Affordable Warmth Partnership**

2. The Council is a significant partner within the Middlesbrough Affordable Warmth Partnership (AWP), leading on a number of actions. The AWP is made up of a range of public sector organisations, voluntary sector bodies and businesses from across Middlesbrough. Partners work together to deliver projects which aim to reduce the incidence of fuel poverty in our town and help our most vulnerable residents cope with the cold weather. Please follow link: [Middlesbrough Affordable Warmth Partnership](#)
3. The AWP refreshed its Affordable Warmth Action Plan in 2016. Please follow link: [Affordable Warmth Partnership Action Plan 2016-18](#)
4. Through the Action Plan, partners aim to improve the health, well-being and quality of life for Middlesbrough residents through safe and affordable warmth. The Plan is delivered by a range of organisations through the AWP, chaired by Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC). Please follow link to the MEC website: [Middlesbrough Environment City](#)
5. Deprivation, fuel poverty and poor housing conditions impact the health and wellbeing of Middlesbrough residents. It became clear to the Affordable Warmth Partnership that this is a year round problem which is exacerbated by cold weather, but not just restricted to the winter months. By providing access to these types of services we are also focussing on the wider determinants of health linked to fuel poverty and poor housing and have created a range of measures to help people improve their long-term health and financial resilience. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance and the NHS Cold Weather Plan have provided the Partnership with a framework to allow this revised Action Plan to deliver a wide range of holistic support to Middlesbrough's most vulnerable residents.

6. The Action Plan has four key aims:
  - Ensure a high profile for Affordable Warmth;
  - Promote energy efficiency in the housing stock across all tenures;
  - Improve Affordable Warmth through income maximisation and budgeting advice; and,
  - Improve health and well-being through Affordable Warmth.

### **One Planet Living**

7. The Affordable Warmth Action Plan is entirely consistent with One Planet Living Actions and Outcomes. One Planet Living is the approach used in Middlesbrough to address sustainability and climate change. The One Planet Living framework, created by international charity Bioregional, provides a clear and practical framework to examine the town's sustainability challenges and deliver appropriate solutions; ultimately improving the quality of lives of local residents. One Planet Living is based on the fact that if everyone lived like the average Middlesbrough or UK resident currently does, we would need three planets to sustain our lifestyles. To deliver sustainable environmental, economic and social improvements to the town, Middlesbrough is using the ten principles of One Planet Living. This broad framework enables individuals, communities and organisations to live greener, healthier and more affordable lifestyles, within their fair share of the Earth's resources.
8. Our endorsed One Planet Living Action Plan (2016-25) identifies our priority actions for 2016/17, as well as our longer term intentions to deliver environmental, economic and social improvements. Middlesbrough Council, through its own activities, support for and services to the local community leads the One Planet Middlesbrough Partnership. Middlesbrough Environment City leads on the wider community engagement. Through the One Planet Living: Creating Sustainable Communities project and other initiatives the charity delivers practical interventions enabling local residents and community organisations to make their own contribution to the One Planet Middlesbrough initiative. Delivery of the programme is also supported through strategic partnership work by the Thirteen Group.
9. The following One Planet Living Actions and Outcomes are entirely consistent with the Affordable Warmth Action Plan:
  - Use training and events to promote energy efficiency measures and behaviours in the community and also raise awareness of the health impacts of cold, damp homes;
  - Provide support for residents to help them reduce fuel costs;
  - Ensure that the most vulnerable within the community are protected from the consequences of fuel poverty;
  - Help to develop a more resilient community, reducing fuel poverty and the detrimental impact upon health and well-being;
  - Work to significantly reduce the number of residents living in fuel poverty;
  - Year on year reduction in carbon emissions across Middlesbrough with energy efficient investment in housing stock; and,
  - Reduce the number of households suffering fuel poverty.

## HECA Progress Report 2017

10. Like previous reports, the HECA Progress Report (2017) continues to focus on Affordable Warmth Action Plan Key Aim 2 (promoting energy efficiency in the housing stock across all tenures), whilst acknowledging the important links with the other Key Aims.
11. This report describes some of the key achievements since the last report in 2015, and outlines some of the plans for the period 2017 to 2019, which will be guided by the Affordable Warmth Action Plan. This will be further reviewed in 2018, although it is anticipated that the Key Aims will remain the same.
12. Members of the AWP will continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis to monitor progress against the Action Plan and continue to deliver new initiatives intended to reduce fuel poverty and provide affordable warmth by improving energy efficiency in all housing stock.
13. This Progress Report will be placed on the Council's website.

### KEY AIM 2:

#### PROMOTE ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HOUSING STOCK ACROSS ALL TENURES

**Objective: Establish baseline data for the housing stock across all tenures.**

##### UNO database

14. The AWP has established a database (UNO) for the collection of energy efficiency information across all housing stock in Middlesbrough. The data highlights numbers of properties and areas populated with poorly insulated housing stock that require energy efficiency measures to improve thermal comfort. It provides a strong evidence base for the delivery of future energy efficiency schemes and most efficient use of available funding.

**Action** - Members of the AWP will continue to support the development of the database (UNO) to provide a strong evidence base for the delivery of future energy efficiency schemes and a targeted approach to ensure efficient use of available funding.

**Objective: Continue to monitor fuel poverty across Middlesbrough.**

15. Fuel poverty in England is measured by a Low Income High Cost definition, i.e. household requires above average fuel costs but, in spending this amount, would be left with a residual income below the poverty line. The latest data (2014) estimates that 8,292 (14.3%) Middlesbrough households are in fuel poverty. Whilst this is a slight reduction on the 2012 figures (8,457 households or 15.1%) it remains the highest proportion of fuel poor

households in the North East region. Along with the South West, the North East region has the highest proportion of fuel poor households. In some small areas in Middlesbrough (600 to 800 households) the proportion of fuel poor households exceeds 30%.

16. CO2 emissions estimates for the period 2005-14 identify a reduction for domestic emissions from 320.1kt CO2 to 220.5 kt CO2.

**Action** - Using statistics provided by BEIS, continue to monitor levels of fuel poverty to direct and support initiatives that will improve the energy efficiency of properties across all tenures and lift households out of fuel poverty.

**Objectives: Significant energy efficiency improvements to the housing stock across all tenures & Use area based and street by street initiatives to deliver energy efficiency improvements.**

### **Planning Permission for New Homes**

17. On major housing schemes (10 homes or more) planning permission will only be granted where a minimum 10% reduction in energy use is achieved by means of either making improvements to the building envelope and services or adding renewable energy installations, for example, solar panels and wind turbines.

### **House 2 Home (Empty Property Grants)**

18. Using Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) funding, Middlesbrough Council has brought back into use 10 empty properties. The works included fitting new boilers, double glazing, and loft insulation at a total estimated cost of approximately £75,000.

### **Joint Venture – North Ormesby**

19. In partnership, Thirteen Housing Group and the Council have purchased 18 long term empty properties within the North Ormesby ward (ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> within the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015). Again, using HCA Empty Property funding, work has started on site to bring these properties back into use. The works included fitting new A-rated boilers, double glazing, and loft insulation at a total estimated cost of approximately £135,000.

### **North Ormesby Neighbourhood Development Trust (NONDeT)**

20. Having accessed Big Lottery Funding, a Charity organisation, NONDeT has purchase 6 long term empty properties. In partnership with Thirteen Housing, NONDeT has accessed HCA Empty Homes funding. Work has started on site to bring these properties back into use. The works include fitting new A-rated boilers, double glazing, and loft insulation at a total estimated cost of approximately £45,000.

### **Refurbish & Rent Scheme**

21. The Council will continue to engage with Empty Property owners with the aim of bringing 30 properties back into use, utilising HCA Funding. The works will include fitting new boilers, double glazing, and loft insulation.

### **Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) & Energy Company Obligation (ECO)**

22. Accessing Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding, Middlesbrough Council promoted a “Free” A-rated boiler scheme to all residents within the borough who were in receipt of qualifying benefits:

	<b>Boilers installed</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
<b>2015/16</b>	28	£44,800
<b>2016/17</b>	31	£49,600

23. The Council will continue to engage with HHCRO providers. The Council is also looking to work closely with Ofgem to create a Flexible Eligibility Criteria as part of the ECO reform, with energy companies required to provide struggling households with free energy efficiency measures to make their homes warmer and bring their bills down. It is anticipated this will help people in fuel poverty who would otherwise be excluded from existing schemes.

### **Solid Wall Insulation**

24. Middlesbrough Council has continued to engage with organisations looking to deliver solid wall insulation through their ECO obligations. The Council is in advanced negotiations with one of the big 6 energy companies looking to tackle 1,700 properties within an area of high fuel poverty.

### **UNO Database – Various measures**

25. UNO was updated recently from Building Control data and shows that the following measures were taken in respect of Middlesbrough homes, between March 2015 and January 2017.

<b>Hard Measure</b>	<b>No of Households</b>
Cavity Wall Insulation	224
Loft Insulation	11
External Wall Insulation	57
Double Glazing	614
Boiler installation	2304
Solar PV	145

## **District Heating**

26. The Council is evaluating opportunities/potential benefits of a district heating system (where heat is generated centrally and distributed to multiple buildings) for the town centre commercial market, and possibly to the domestic market if there is a strong business case.

## **Registered Housing Providers – Social Housing**

27. Registered Providers have an important role to play in delivering energy efficiency improvements. Some examples of recent and planned initiatives are described below.

### **Thirteen Group**

28. Thirteen, which owns the vast majority of the social housing in Middlesbrough, reported on the following activities between 2015 and 2017:

- Cavity Wall Insulation to 25 properties at a cost of £27,500;
- Loft Insulation to 50 properties at a cost of £16,500 (mainly replaced due to contamination or water leaks);
- 664 boiler/heating installations, including in-excess of 500 fuel switch properties - electric to gas/Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and 18 gas/ASHP hybrids at a total cost of £2,120,000;
- External wall insulation to 15 properties at a cost of £150,000; and,
- Photovoltaic Panels (2KW) were fitted to 75 properties (by Solarplicity - 3<sup>rd</sup> party arrangement) at a cost of £245,000.

29. Since the last HECA progress report Thirteen has built 266 new homes in Middlesbrough to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. Over the next 5 years it is proposing to develop a further 500 new homes in Middlesbrough. Enhanced energy efficiency for affordable homes will require sufficient subsidy. Thirteen will seek to obtain such subsidy wherever possible.

30. Thirteen's plans for the next three years also include:

- Loft Insulation - Approximately 25 replacements due to leaks/contamination only at a cost of £8,750; and,
- Approximately 2,750 boiler swaps based on stock condition survey results have been planned into investment schemes at a cost of £4,575,000.

31. Cavity wall replacements are up to date and all qualifying external wall insulation is fitted.

32. Thirteen is currently exploring replacing electric night storage and lower energy rated gas boilers with either ASHPs or electric/ASHP hybrids, in line with current Renewable Heat Incentive payments. Thirteen is also carrying out feasibility study to remove 67 NIBE heat recovery units and replacing them with commercial ASHPs or communal gas plant.

## **Northstar Housing Group**

33. Northstar Housing Group has installed 52 heating systems/boilers at a cost of £130,000 between 2015 and 2017.
34. Northstar is considering options for Solar PV for all housing stock and investigating options for funding for External Wall Insulation. These schemes are not confirmed and will be reliant on external funding streams, which may not transpire.
35. Since the last HECA progress report, Northstar has built 9 new homes in Middlesbrough to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. Its current Development Programme will deliver homes to Code Level 3 thermal efficiency levels. Northstar has been unable to exceed this within current costs and subsidy levels, but will continue to explore this during the design stage.

## **Coast & Country**

36. Between 2015 and 2017, Coast & Country purchased 5 long-term empty properties in the Middlesbrough area. New heating installations were installed in 3 properties, including boilers, with loft insulation topped-up in 1 property.

## **Promoting energy efficiency improvements in the Private Rented Sector - Landlord and Tenant Engagement**

37. The Council has engaged with Private Landlords and Tenants in a number of ways, including:
  - a Tenancy Referencing Service, which provides information and support to landlords in the private sector, including opportunities to engage with private landlords and private rented sector tenants to promote energy efficiency measures in the home;
  - a circulation list of approximately 500 private landlords for mailing out advice /information on a range of issues, including energy efficiency measures;
  - over 100 landlords received advice on affordable warmth measures;
  - routine inspections and licensing of all three storey houses in multiple occupation offer engagement opportunities;
  - complaints (approximately 800 – 900 per year) providing an opportunity for random visits/inspections to private sector properties;
  - Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme in North Ormesby, which includes a full Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspection, including an “excess cold” assessment – 300 properties are inspected per year; and,
  - a Private Landlords’ Forum, which meets annually; and,
  - more than 130 post-tenancy visits in which tenants identified the need for advice on affordable warmth measures.

## **Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector**

38. The Council is currently considering exactly how it will enforce the new minimum standards in the private rented sector from April 2018. It has, however, included a condition in its Selective Landlord Licence requiring landlords to make Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) available on demand, and landlords are also legally required to provide certificates to tenants in new tenancies, for which there is a Trading Standards related fixed penalty process.
39. When conducting an inspection using the HHSRS system, the Council must consider excess cold and will take the necessary action to require works to meet minimum standards.

## **Staying Put Agency**

40. Middlesbrough's Home Improvement Agency – the Staying Put Agency - supports older people, people of all ages with disabilities and those who are vulnerable, to remain and live more independently in their own homes. It has supported independent living and affordable warmth between 2015 and 2017 in the following ways:
- 5,982 home visits, of which 454 residents identified the need for advice on affordable warmth measures;
  - Joint funded boiler schemes - 31 separate works costing over £30,000;
  - Council Funded 6 separate works through loans totalling £59,000, most of which related to improving home energy efficiency; and,
  - Disabled Facilities Grants – 792 separate works costing £2.4million – although only a very small proportion of works relate to improving home energy efficiency

**Action** - Encourage energy efficiency improvements and the raising of standards for properties across all tenures.

**Objective:** Promote energy efficiency measures

41. Through the AWP, Middlesbrough Environment City continues to co-ordinate a wide range of activities across Middlesbrough, some of which are described below.

## **British Gas Healthy Homes**

42. The Warm & Healthy Homes project is funded by British Gas and is aimed at people who are vulnerable to the cold weather, particularly: older people (over 65), people with illnesses made worse by the cold weather, e.g. cardiovascular disease, lung diseases and asthma; people living with sensory loss, or dementia and their carers; people with disabilities and mobility problems; people from BME communities, asylum seekers and refugees.



43. The project has been running since December 2015 and will end in March 2017. The aim of the project is to give householders whose health is vulnerable to the cold a wide range of energy efficiency advice and small measures designed to save money and make the home more energy efficient.

44. Up to February 2017, the project has:

- engaged with 873 residents;
- provided small energy saving measures, e.g. LED lightbulbs, reflective radiator panels, etc. to 729 residents; and,
- provided emergency boiler repairs/replacements to 61 households.

45. The project has enabled a home visit service to help the most vulnerable residents and has so far visited over 70 residents at home. Regular drop-in sessions have also been established in all Middlesbrough's community hubs, giving energy efficiency advice, energy supplier switching advice and making onward referrals for help with insulation or boiler grants.

### **Smart meter rollout**

46. Funding was received from Smart Energy GB to deliver a project aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of fitting smart meters in the home, explaining the Government rollout of smart meters, the benefits of having one fitted, and how to apply for one.

47. Between October and December 2016 a series of four, two hour information sessions targeted specific groups including BME communities and the deaf community, and one training session was aimed at private landlords and front-line workers coming into contact with the target groups. Each session focussed on increasing awareness of smart meters, their purpose and features, and encouraging residents to have a smart meter installed.

48. In addition, one session was provided for front-line staff, including health visitors, the Selective Licensing Team, and private landlords, covering the same topic areas. This will enable them to identify residents without a smart meter, talk through the benefits and where necessary make a referral through to Middlesbrough Environment City who can support the resident to obtain their smart meter. Front-line staff were encouraged to become Smart Meter Champions. During the life of the project:

- 85 people attended these events;
- 63 of these were from the target groups;
- 10 people attended the training sessions for front line staff; and,
- 500 information leaflets were distributed

## **Public Health & NICE best practice**

49. Middlesbrough Affordable Warmth Partnership receives funding from Public Health to deliver a winter warmth programme. The Partnership incorporates NICE best practice into its winter warmth project delivery. The Affordable Warmth Action Plan is fully aligned with NICE recommendations for reducing excess winter deaths and hospital admissions for cold related illness. NICE has recognised the Action Plan as best practice for the way in which the guidance has been integrated into the Action Plan.
50. The project is coordinated via a central hub administered by Middlesbrough Environment City which acts as a single point of referral, allowing clients to access a wide range of help and support including, emergency heating, emergency boiler repairs, one to one energy advice, fuel debt advice, welfare benefits advice, buddying/befriending services, and healthy lifestyle advice.
51. As part of our commitment to the NICE guidelines a free phone number was launched in February 2017 to improve easy access to the Affordable Warmth Hub. This new free number will encourage residents to call the project for any help or advice they need to help them keep warm, safe and healthy at home.

## **Big Energy Saving Network (BESN)**

52. BESN is a Government funded network which is made up of local community groups and charities across Great Britain who can advise on energy saving in the home, switching energy suppliers, different energy tariffs and available government support to help the most vulnerable get warmer homes and lower fuel bills.
53. Middlesbrough Environment City has been delivering BESN locally since 2014. During the past two winters – 2015/16 and 2016/17 - 303 Middlesbrough residents have been given advice and support about switching energy suppliers.

## **Frontline staff training**

54. Between April 2015 and February 2017 Middlesbrough Environment City has trained 206 front line staff members including representatives from:
  - The Selective Landlord Licensing Team;
  - Library staff;
  - Members of the BME Network;
  - West Middlesbrough Children's Centre;
  - Troubled Families Team;
  - Sanctuary Housing;
  - Thirteen Group;
  - Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency;
  - Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind;
  - Know Your Money;
  - Developing Initiatives Supporting Communities (DISC); and,
  - Middlesbrough Council Social Work Team

55. The training focuses on home energy efficiency, fuel supplier switching advice and the health impacts of fuel poverty. After training, front line staff are able to give simple energy advice, give advice about changing fuel tariffs and can identify issues for concern regarding health impacts of living in cold, damp homes. They can also refer clients directly into Middlesbrough Affordable Warmth Team who can help with a wide range of issues including insulation, boiler replacement, emergency heating etc.

**Action** - Continue to promote energy efficiency measures through partnership working.

March 2017