



Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995 (AS AMENDED) PROGRESS REPORT 2021

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 ('HECA') requires Local Authorities to submit reports to the Secretary of State demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation within that area. Attached is the 2021 progress report for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as requested.

Methodology

New guidance was published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in January 2021. The format and focus for this HECA report remains as for previous years but also incorporates the requirements of this new guidance. The figures from the 2019 EFDC Progress Report and action plan have also been updated to reflect the current status.

Signed off by Sally Devine, Commercial and Regulatory Service Manager, Epping Forest District Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Local authorities have responsibilities under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, in respect of improving the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have updated the guidance for reporting and this report sets out the strategic and operational actions being taken in Epping Forest District, or that are planned, to meet the Council's objectives in terms of home energy conservation.

2.0 LOCAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY OVERVIEW

2.1 Background

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) is in the south-west of Essex. The District covers an area of approximately 130 square miles. The 2011 Census recorded a population of about 124,660 people living in close to 54,400 dwellings.

Of these approximately 54,400 homes, around 6,500 are managed and maintained by the Council. Besides managing these properties, EFDC continues to work with housing associations to develop new, affordable homes. The Council also gives energy advice, support and offers discretionary financial repayable assistance to those residents living in the private sector.

The most recent data from BEIS in 2018 for the Epping Forest District shows that 21% of carbon emissions come from domestic sources¹.

Private sector housing (owner-occupied and privately-rented properties) constitutes approximately 82% and 3% respectively, about 85% in total, of the District's total housing stock. We carried out a Private Sector House Condition Survey in 2011 which indicated that the SAP rating of owner-occupied properties was 54 and privately-rented was 51.

The Council still owns its own stock of social housing which accounts for about 12% of the total housing stock. We have carried out surveys on 80% of our own housing stock and found that the average SAP rating is 71. When properties become available, an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is produced and the resulting information is added to the Council's database.

2.2 Update on strategy and projects

The Housing Strategy 2017-2022 was adopted by Council's Cabinet on 12 October 2017, following detailed scrutiny by the Council's Communities Select Committee. The Strategy sets out the District's housing plans for the medium term. However, these plans have been formulated with regard to the housing objectives for the long term which, in some cases, can span a period of 30 years. The Housing Strategy will be updated during 2022.

The Council are also in the process of developing a Climate Change Action Plan, which includes actions relating to reducing energy use, energy efficiency and the decarbonisation of energy in Council owned housing and in all tenures throughout the District.

To continue to reduce our carbon emissions for the District, the Council has carried out the following actions:

- Information is shared on the website to landlords that explains landlord's obligations to comply with the minimum energy efficiency standard (MEES). Since 1 April 2020, landlords can no longer let or continue to let properties covered by the MEES Regulations if they have an EPC rating below E, unless they have a valid exemption in place.
- Proactive steps are being taken to identify privately rented properties that fail the MEES and to act, including enforcement, where necessary to ensure properties meet at least an EPC rating of E;

¹ [UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2018)

- We have included information on our website about how to apply for financial assistance to make homes more energy efficient and to help with heating bills;
- We continue to improve the energy efficiency of our own housing stock within the resources we have available;
- Successful consortium bid with Essex County Council and seven other District Councils for Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery grant funding, enabling upgrades of low income and low efficiency homes.
- Agreed at Cabinet in October 2020 that new council homes will be built to Passiv Haus standards

2.3 Performance on measures

The Council monitors the performance of the energy efficiency measures undertaken on its housing stock to ensure progress against the targets set in the 2019 Progress Report plan of action table.

For Council properties;

a) Improving SAP ratings:

A new housing management system is under development to monitor EPC data and stock condition.

In line with the remainder of the current Housing Services Energy Efficiency Strategy and the draft Climate Change Action Plan over the next two-years, the Council aims to continue to undertake energy efficiency measures on low SAP properties where these can be identified.

b) Installing energy efficient boilers

The Council continued with the programme of installing gas central heating systems based around SEDBUK 'A'- rated boilers.

An estimated 383 properties with old gas heating systems have been upgraded with 'A'-rated boilers since the previous report in 2019. In this time 5 heat pumps have also been installed.

Currently the total number of properties in Council housing stock with inefficient gas central heating boilers is:

SEDBUK Profile 2021;

- SEDBUK Band G = 24 properties
- SEDBUK Band F = 28 properties
- SEDBUK Band E = 150 properties

The table below shows the percentage difference in the number of energy efficient gas boilers installed in Council properties between 2014 and 2021;

Band	SEDBUK Range	2014	2019	2021	% difference
A	90% and above	3122	3890	4189	34.2
B	86%-90%	54	55	44	-18.5
C	82%-86%	1315	1137	1059	-19.5
D	78%-82%	890	562	437	-50.9
E	74%-78%	388	209	150	-61.3
F	70%-74%	102	31	28	-72.5
G	Below 70%	162	31	24	-85.2

Source: Gas maintenance property attributes list 2021

The SEDBUK table shows that between 2014 and 2021 the percentage of properties with efficient SEDBUK A rated boilers has increased by 34.2%.

The number of properties the most inefficient gas boilers in bands E, F and G have reduced by 61.3% for Band E, 72.5% for Band F and 85.2% for Band G.

Most Council-owned residential properties are fitted with loft and where possible cavity wall insulation, we will continue to carry out insulation improvements and upgrades when identified during inspection surveys to properties. This information is stored on our database and updated whenever surveys are completed and works carried out.

3.0 FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND OTHER BENEFITS OFFERED TO HELP RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

3.1 Information, Advice, and Financial Assistance

EFDC provides energy saving advice for homeowners and landlords on the Council website and publicises grant funding opportunities such as the Green Homes Grant Voucher and Local Authority Delivery Schemes.

When appropriate, the Council provides information to residents on energy saving tips or when grant opportunities change.

Private Sector Housing Officers are all aware of the health impacts caused by cold homes and are trained to advise customers on low-cost, no-cost ways to reduce energy, information on where to turn for larger projects, and where funding may be available. This incorporates the ECO initiative and working with an approved contractor, work is currently under way to identify households in fuel poverty or those vulnerable to the cold who will benefit from the installation of insulation measures. Further information on the ECO Flex programme can be found in section 3.3.

The Council provides discretionary financial assistance to private sector residents by way of Decent Homes Repayable Assistance and Small Works assistance. The first is a means tested, repayable grant of up to £10,000 for work to bring properties up to the Decent Homes Standard; the second is for smaller works of up to £3,000 that can be specifically for improvements to thermal comfort. This forms part of the Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022 and the funding is met from Council resources.

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme has also been used to provide financial assistance to those with a low income and low EPC ratings of E,F and G. More detail on this can be found in section 3.4.

3.2 Fuel Poverty

Upgrading the energy efficiency of homes is the most sustainable means of tackling fuel poverty. The Government has a statutory target to raise as many fuel poor homes in England as reasonably practicable to energy efficiency Band C by 2030, with an interim milestone of as many fuel poor homes in England as reasonably practicable to Band D by 2025.

Fuel poverty in England is measured using the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator. Under the LIHC indicator, a household is fuel poor if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and
- were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

This captures the fact that fuel poverty is distinct from general poverty: not all poor households are fuel poor, and some households would not normally be considered poor but could be pushed into fuel poverty if they have high energy costs. Fuel poverty is therefore an overlapping problem of households having a low income and facing high energy costs.

The table below, shows data from the latest Sub Regional Fuel Poverty Statistics², with Epping District in context with the nearest sub regions. Whilst the data suggests that the proportion of fuel poor households in the Epping District is lower in comparison to the East region and London, there remains a significant number of households that struggle to keep their homes warm at an affordable cost.

² [Fuel poverty sub-regional statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fuel-poverty-sub-regional-statistics)

Region	Number of households	Number of households in fuel poverty	Proportion of households' fuel poor (%)
Epping District	55,618	4,572	8.2
East	2,587,918	244,343	9.4
London	3,425,063	391,924	11.4
South East	3,810,452	301,317	7.9

As part of the current Housing Strategy 2017- 2022 the following measures will be implemented in part to tackle fuel poverty in the District;

- Small Works or Decent Homes Repayable Assistance to eligible residents in the private sector whose homes fail the Decent Homes Standard
- All officers in our Private Sector Housing teams are trained and can give advice on heating, insulation and energy efficiency
- Bringing the condition of as many as possible of our Council-owned residential properties up to a standard in excess of the Decent Homes Standard to avoid high energy use; and
- Providing budgeting support and advice through specialty trained officers to help those who are concerned about paying for their fuel, or other budgeting and money matters.
- Implementation of ECO Flex funded works with approved specialist contractor.
- Enforcement where necessary of sub-standards properties in the private rented sector to ensure they have at least an E rated EPC (unless exempted).
- A proposal has been submitted for Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 funding to upgrade eligible low income, energy inefficient households.

3.3 The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

We have a Memorandum of Understanding with our preferred partner to promote and deliver energy efficiency measures (EEM) to private sector housing across the District. This includes promotion and marketing EEMs available under the Governments ECO3 scheme, to carry out energy efficient assessments, inform customers of options and funding measures and, installations of EEMs where requested.

Under The flexible eligibility criteria for ECO Funding, local authorities can target fuel poor households not in receipt of eligible benefits and low-income households that are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home. We have published our [`Statement of Intent`](#) detailing the methodology and criteria for identifying eligible customers and we are working with our preferred partners to identify and refer on to ECO obligated suppliers for support under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO.

Through the ECO3 scheme from May 2019 to December 2021 XXX energy efficiency measures for private sector households have been installed.

The Council works with a specific contractor to carry out energy efficiency work on the Council's own housing stock and claim back ECO funding on the measures installed. Energy efficiency measures are identified and prioritised through:

- Details on Energy Performance Certificates for each property
- Stock Condition Surveys carried out by EFDC; and
- General tenant queries and requests for works.

3.4 Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme was launched in August 2020 providing grant funding for energy efficiency and low carbon heating projects for low income households across England.

Phase 1A of the scheme comprised of a competitive bidding process. EFDC submitted a bid through a consortium with 7 neighbouring District Councils and Essex County Council as the lead authority. The scheme was successful in receiving funding, which is to be spent by the end of June 2021.

For Phase 2 of the scheme funding has been allocated to the 5 Local Energy Hubs who will work with their local authorities to continue to deliver energy efficiency upgrades. EFDC have submitted a proposal for Phase 2 and will working with the South East Energy Hub to deliver energy efficiency projects in the District.

3.5 Smart Meters

While the Smart Meter roll out is being managed by utility companies, EFDC recognises that it has a part to play to ensure that residents are fully acquainted with the facts so that they can decide if to have a Smart Meter installed.

The Council is currently looking at ways to provide the necessary information to the staff that give housing support to residents including the information that Smart Energy GB has made available. We are also planning:

- A briefing session, provided by a national energy advice charity, for all relevant staff
- Providing information to our own tenants and leaseholders via our tenants and leaseholders' newsletters; and
- Providing information all our residents by appropriate means such as using social media, press releases and articles on the Council's own website.

3.6 Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector

The Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations (the Regulations) apply to all privately rented properties in England and Wales. The Regulations are designed to ensure that those tenants who most need more thermally efficient homes, particularly vulnerable people and the fuel poor, can enjoy a more comfortable living environment and lower energy bills.

Since 01 April 2018, landlords of relevant domestic private rented properties must not grant a tenancy to new or existing tenants if their property has an EPC rating of F or G and from 01 April 2020 the rules apply to all tenancies. Where a property is sub-standard, landlords must normally make energy efficiency improvements which raise the EPC rate to minimum E before they let the property. In certain circumstances, they may be able to claim an exemption and the Government has also introduced a maximum cap of £3,500 that landlords are expected to spend towards energy efficiency improvements.

Local authorities have enforcement powers to ensure that landlords meet their legal obligations under these Regulations and the Housing Act 2004, that assesses a range of potential hazards, including damp and excess cold. While some landlords of F and G rated rental properties may be able to claim valid exemptions from the requirement to improve a property to EPC E, this exemption will not excuse them from meeting the existing obligation to keep their property free from serious hazards. Officers in the Private Sector Housing team will use both enforcement powers to ensure that substandard properties are improved to a satisfactory level as soon as possible.

By mapping various data bases of information including publicly available data on property EPCs, approximately 80 properties were identified as likely to be failing the minimum energy efficiency requirements. These properties and landlords were targeted to ensure improvements are carried out to meet the required standards for energy efficiency and excess cold, or where they meet the exemption criteria, they are recorded as such on the Exemptions Register.

APPENDIX 1

ACTION PLAN 2021

ACTION	DETAIL	PROGRESS AND MILESTONES
1. Local Energy Efficiency Priorities	1.1 Update the Housing Strategy 2017-2022	During 2022
	1.2 Continue to carry out surveys on our own residential stock to determine SAP ratings until we reach 100% of our own housing stock.	When properties become available, we carry out EPCs for any not on the database.
	1.3 Analyse and report the SAP ratings on our own residential stock annually.	April 2022 April 2023
	1.4 Continue to develop and populate the NHER database with full EPC level data set.	All Council stock to have EPC completed and populate NHER database by March 2025
	1.5 That the average SAP rating of our own housing stock will increase annually (as recorded on the NHER database).	April 2022 April 2023
	1.6 Review of Energy Efficiency of the Councils Housing stock and plan the proactive retrofit of council owned properties to EPC C and above where the building condition allows.	2021 - 2023
	1.7 Replace all inefficient electric storage heating with renewable heating by 2022.	March 2022
	1.8 Develop an agreed approach, with targets, to the reduction of fuel poverty (timescale dependent on further data being made available by the Government).	March 2022

MEASURES PLANNED TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN OUR RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION		
2. ECO, DRHI and other Schemes	<p>2.1 Continue to install air source heating under the DRHI funding opportunity to ensure properties have a less carbon intensive heating source.</p> <p>2.2 Develop the Council energy efficiency/Fuel Poverty programme taking advantage of available schemes.</p>	<p>Incentive available until the end of March 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (DRHI) available until end of March 2022 • ECO Flex scheme is ongoing • GHG LAD Phase 2 proposal submitted, the Council plan to carry out energy efficiency works on approximately 38 homes by end December 2021. The Council will submit proposals for any subsequent GHG LAD schemes.

3. Minimum Standards in Private Rented Accommodation	<p>3.1 Continue to update the legislative requirements available via our website, e-newsletters and our social media avenues.</p> <p>3.2 Notify private sector landlords the Private Sector Housing team currently deal with of the forthcoming requirements. Use available EPC data to continue to target action/ enforcement at those properties that with in band F or below.</p> <p>3.3 Carry out enforcement action where landlords fail to comply with the legislation.</p>	<p>April 2021 and ongoing</p>
4. Energy Advice to residents	<p>4.1 Provide advice on fuel switching, reducing fuel bills via website, face to face and telephone contact. Update energy saving information on the Council website.</p> <p>4.2 Continue to use the Council's communication channels to best effect to provide appropriate advice and information on energy efficiency to householders.</p>	<p>Include energy saving tips in the Housing newsletter and create a newsletter that residents in the wider District can sign up to.</p> <p>Continue to promote energy switching opportunities</p> <p>April 2021 and ongoing</p>
5. Smart Meters	<p>5.1 Relevant staff in front line roles to receive training on Smart Meters.</p>	<p>April 2021 and on going</p>
6. Additional Measures	<p>6.1 Continue discussions with partners in the delivery of cross-tenure, ECO-funded Schemes, Green Homes grant Local Authority Delivery Schemes and on 'hard-to-treat properties'.</p>	<p>This work is continually planned into the EFDC works programme, and partners sought to assist when necessary.</p> <p>Additional schemes to be considered as funding becomes available</p>