



EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

Progress Report

31 March 2017 to 31 March 2019

Introduction

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) recognises that local authorities are uniquely placed to assess the needs of their local residents and have the ability to use their position to improve the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their areas.

In July 2012, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) issued guidance to local authorities requesting the production of a further HECA report by the 31st March 2013, which would set out in local context the energy conservation measures that the authority considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area.

The HECA report is required to be updated on a *Biennial* basis from March 2015 to 31 March 2027. It is anticipated that the whole of the East Cambridgeshire HECA report will be one live and evolving document outlining previous activities, achievements and targets going forward which reflect the energy efficiency ambitions and priorities set out by our Members and local communities.

In 2016 DECC merged with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). New guidance was published in January 2017, the legal requirement remains for Local Authorities to report on what is being done to improve energy efficiency in all residential accommodation.

This includes reporting on:

- Energy efficiency ambitions
- Measures using financial assistance from central Government initiatives
- The use of area based schemes involving communities / partnerships
- Timeframe for delivery
- Costs of measures
- CO₂ emissions
- Personal circumstances of households receiving measures

Local Context

East Cambridgeshire is a largely rural district which covers an area of 655km² and has a population of approximately 81,000 people in 36,672 households. The population and services are centered on the 3 market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport.

Property types

Just over a quarter of the homes in the district were built before 1945, and of these homes 91% are of solid wall construction, making them more difficult to insulate.

The energy efficiency of property across the district is consistent across private and social housing, with the Private Sector Housing Stock survey reporting the SAP rating of private stock to be on average 51¹, with the same figure reported by Sanctuary Housing; the largest provider of social housing within the district.

Fuel Poverty

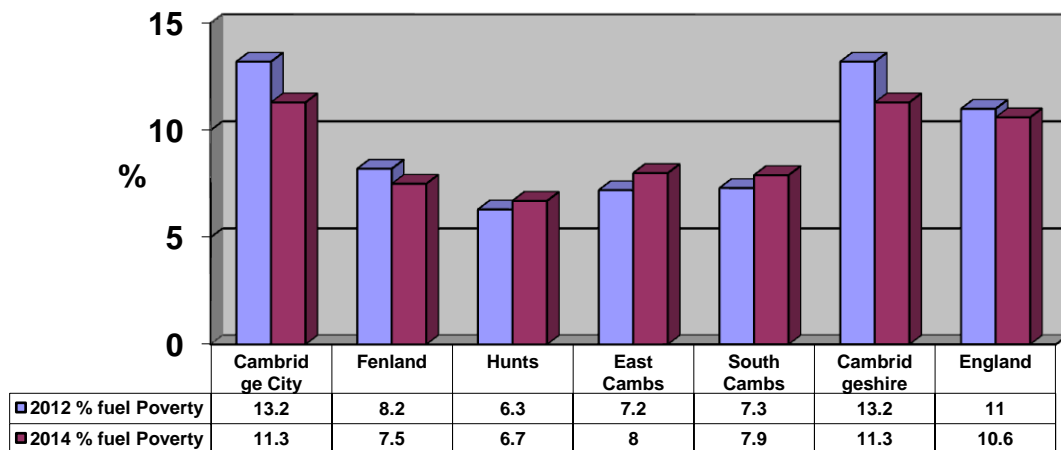
In May 2013 the government adopted a new definition of fuel poverty based on the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) framework².

The new definition considers a household to be in fuel poverty if:

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

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) publishes fuel poverty estimates for the UK, the regions and local authority areas in June each year. The data is published on a two year time lag, so the most recent statistical release in June 2016 is for the calendar year 2014.

According to statistics provided by BEIS³, the percentage of households in poverty in East Cambridgeshire has risen from 7.2 % 2012 to 8% in 2014. This equates to 2853 households.



The above chart illustrated the rates of fuel poverty within each district in Cambridgeshire, the County average and the average for England. Approximately 10.6% of all households in England are in fuel poverty⁴.

The chart shows an increase in East Cambridgeshire from 7.2 % in 2012 to 8% by 2014. This figure does not reflect the potential impact of the of the governments Green Deal initiative which ran from January 2013 to September 2016. During which time East Cambridgeshire District Council accessed £991,815 of Green Deal funding helping 223 households.

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2014_sub_regional_fuel_poverty
 2. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment/Fuel_Poverty
 3. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment/Fuel_Poverty_Report
 4. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/fuel_poverty

In 2014, the number of households in fuel poverty in England was estimated at 2.38 million, representing approximately 10.6 % of all English households. This is an increase from 2.35 million households in 2013 (a change of around 1.4 per cent).

One possible explanation is that some households close to fuel poverty threshold have seen a lower than average increase in disposable and income and therefore, have been pushed into fuel poverty.

In addition fuel prices increased more than energy efficiency gains, leaving households with higher energy costs in 2014 compared to 2013.

Fuel poverty can have a range of effects including:

- Excess winter deaths occurring every year across the country
- Negative impacts on mental and physical health
- People on low incomes having to choose between heating their homes and other essential costs such as food, rent etc.
- Negative environmental effects from heating inefficient homes.

The rural nature of the district and the nature of the housing stock, along with a low income, for some of the households that live in these types of properties, are the main reasons for fuel poverty within the district.

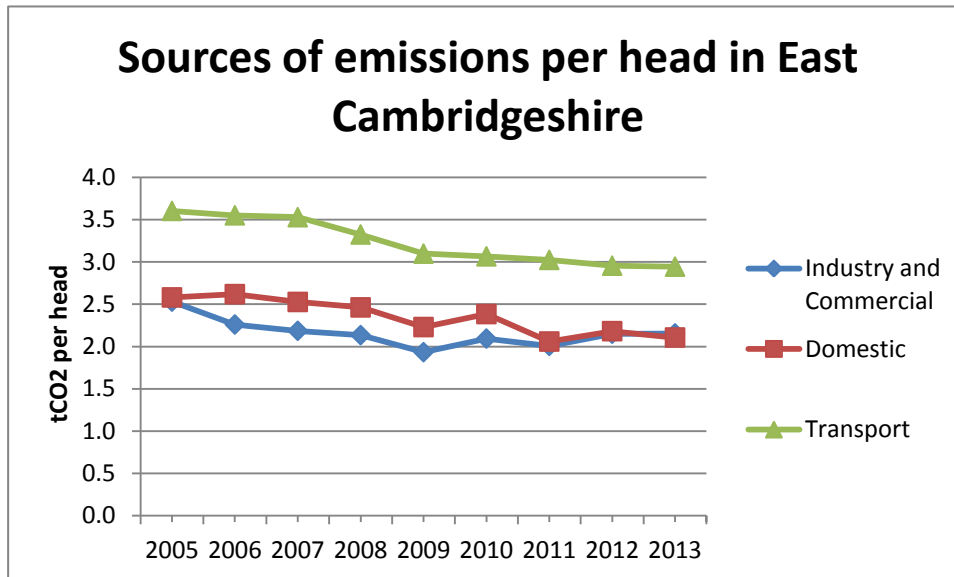
In addition 24% of the households in the district are off the gas network, and so will be using a more expensive fuel type for heating their homes such as oil or electricity; this is significantly more than the national average of 9% of households not connected to the gas network.⁵

Local authorities can support people to address fuel poverty by providing information and advice to maximise income, and by helping to lower fuel costs by lowering home energy efficiency.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/loa-estimates-of-households-not-connected-to-the-gas-network>

Energy Use and Emissions

Energy used in transport is the greatest source of CO₂ emission from the district, which would be expected from a largely rural area, from which residents commute to places such as Cambridge and London for work.



Emissions from road transport accounts for 2.9 tonnes of CO₂ per head each year in East Cambridgeshire. Emissions from the domestic sector and the industrial and commercial sector each come in at 2.2 tonnes per person per year on average⁵. The majority of emissions within the domestic sector will be from home energy use from space heating, lighting and use of other household appliances.

The graph also shows emissions per head in East Cambridgeshire between 2005 and 2013⁶. The graph indicates a downward trend with fluctuations being possibly due to periods of cold weather and other factors such as the recession.

Statistics provided by the government on emissions, are directly linked to the amount of energy used within the district, and a reduction in emissions will show the related reduction in energy use, and a continued downward trend in emissions would be expected if the authority's plans are effective in conserving energy.

This shows how energy use within the district can be influenced by national factors, as well as the work the district council can do on a local level. However, with effective distribution of energy conserving measures (i.e. insulation), the installation of energy efficient appliances (i.e. condensing boilers) and the uptake of renewable technologies (i.e. solar power), energy use and domestic carbon emissions in the district should continue its downward trend over the course of the HECA reporting period to 2027.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-emissions-estimates>

Ambitions

The legal requirements to reduce carbon dioxide emissions are set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Government's Carbon Plan, published in 2011. The Carbon Plan sets the following targets in relation to housing, and its energy use:

- Reduce CO₂ emissions by 29% by 2017, 35% by 2022 and 50% by 2027 of 2009 levels.
- Insulate all wall cavities and lofts, where practicable by 2020
- By 2030, between 1 and 3.7m additional solid wall homes be insulated
- By 2050 emissions from UK buildings be "close to zero"

The regulations specify the following interim milestones:

- As many fuel poor homes in England as is reasonably practicable to Band E by 2020
- As many fuel poor homes in England as is reasonably practicable to Band D by 2025

Along with the national targets East Cambridgeshire has a number of ambitions that it wishes to meet locally that will also help to meet our HECA obligations⁷. These include:

- Maximising the creation of new green infrastructure to combat climate change and deliver social, economic and environmental benefits⁸
- To reduce fuel poverty
- Increase the proportion of private sector housing that is of a decent standard that is occupied by vulnerable households
- Improve Health and Wellbeing and encouraging independence

⁷ <http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/PSH%20jan%202015.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SD1%20presubmissiondraftlocalplanpart1.pdf>

East Cambridgeshire District Council: HECA Progress Report 2017/19 Action Plan

Action	Detail	Date that the action will be met
1. Local Energy Efficiency Ambitions and Priorities		
Fuel Poverty	<p>In 2014, 8% of households in the district were considered to be in fuel poverty (2853 properties)</p> <p>The council will continue to work to reduce fuel poverty throughout the district by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By dedicating resources to target and tackle fuel poverty. Ensuring that those living on low incomes across the district have access to information and support to benefit from opportunities to reduce their energy. Identify and provide tailored support and advice to residents in fuel poverty. This to be achieved by the funding of a fixed term officer post (Sustainability Officer) • Work in partnership with other Local Authorities to tackle fuel poverty. For example being an active member of 'Action on Energy'. Action on Energy is a Cambridgeshire local authorities' partnership set up to help residents access grant funding for home energy saving measures. • The new phase of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO2) was launched in April 2017 and is scheduled to last until September 2018. The council continues to assist local residents in access the funding and seek suitable partnerships to further exploit the ECO2 funding. • We will produce a leaflet dealing with fuel poverty for public distribution. 	<p>Fixed term post (January 2018)</p> <p>September 2018</p> <p>June 2017</p>
Emissions	<p>In 2010 our per capita CO₂ emissions for the domestic sector were 2.4 tCO₂</p> <p>We will reduce carbon emissions in the domestic sector by 20% on 2010 levels by 2020</p>	<p>2014 levels 2.3 tCO₂</p> <p>2020</p>
Community Energy Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise practical drop in sessions geographically targeted which help those attending through practical support in reducing costs and provision of information • Maintain awareness of all funding opportunities that become available, investigate feasibility, and prepare bids where opportunities arise. Seek funding through to subsidise home energy efficiency improvements through ECO or other sources. 	<p>2017 / ongoing</p>

2. Measures we are taking to result in significant energy efficiency improvement of our residential accommodation		
Promotional activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring households are accessing the best energy deals, where eligible receiving financial support. Targeted promotion of energy options to households. This will be achieved by working in partnership with existing groups and organisations. Maximise engagement through established mechanisms. Maintaining dialogue with external groups and ensuring inclusion at all relevant events. • Promotion and support in the provision of basic energy efficiency measures. This to be achieved by utilising a wide range of mechanisms, for example, council website, literature, social media, articles in relevant publications, newsletters, attendance at relevant events plus use of frontline staff working within the community. Face to face contact with residents. 	ongoing
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure both energy and water efficiency measures are built in to any strategic planning policy documents and updated as national policy changes. • Working in partnership with Health Agencies to target vulnerable groups living in cold homes 	ongoing
Feed In Tariffs (FITs) and Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to signpost householders to advice and guidance relating to installations that are entitled to FITs and RHI payments. • We will provide information and links via our website on the most up to date information on FITs and RHI. Energy efficiency planning guidance is now available on our website. 	ongoing
Housing Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District council does not hold residential housing stock. We will work with housing associations and social landlords to identify suitable sources of funding and advice. 	ongoing

Housing strategy	We will investigate the addition of carbon and/ or energy efficiency targets in our East Cambridgeshire District Council Housing Statement.	2017 On going
Zero Carbon Homes	<p>Our Local Plan (which manages growth and development in the District over the next 20 years) was ratified in April 2015. Within the plan there are key policies relating to energy efficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council expects all non-domestic developments over 1000m2 to achieve BREEAM Very Good, or equivalent though an alternative environmental rating scheme. This will demonstrate good levels of energy efficiency and sustainable design. • All proposals for new development should aim for reduced or zero carbon development in accordance with the zero carbon hierarchy: first maximising energy efficiency and then incorporating renewable or low carbon energy sources on-site as far as practicable. • The Council will work with property owners to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings through initiatives that may be developed centrally or locally. <p>The council will continue to monitor further legislation in the Code for Sustainable Homes and develop appropriate policy as and when changes occur.</p>	<p>On going</p> <p>ongoing</p>
EPCs	We will continue to use publicly accessible EPC data to target suitable energy efficiency improvements and campaigns across the district. EPC data is being used to assist in suggesting suitable measures for residents reporting issues with cold, damp and mould and in assessing HHSRS cases. We will continue to ensure that landlords, letting agents and those selling their property are aware of the legal obligations to provide an EPC.	ongoing
Private Rental Sector	We will raise awareness of changes to the Energy Act which from 2018 requires all rented properties to have a minimum EPC rating of 'E'. To date we have met with a number of letting agents through pre-arranged meetings and landlord forums to outline funding options available to landlords to improve their properties.	ongoing

	We will consult with Landlords over the best use of incentives for energy efficiency measures for their properties, with a view to reducing fuel poverty in the private rental sector. The council renewed the Private Rental Sector Housing Policy in Jan 2015, within the policy there are key objectives to increase the proportion of private sector housing that is of a decent standard that is occupied by vulnerable households, this includes increasing the thermal comfort of homes and reducing the category 1 hazards under HHSRS of which 'Excess Cold' is one of the highest scoring and most prevalent hazards.	ongoing
3. Measures we propose to cost effectively deliver energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation involving local communities and partnerships		
Stay Well Fund	Department of Health Funding has now been given directly to the County Council. However we will continue to work in partnership with them on relevant projects, and submit bids for funding where money is made available although no joint projects are currently taking place.	Ongoing / dependant on funding
Communal Switching	We will continue to work with the County Council to promote local communal switching auctions, to help residents get a better deal on their energy bills, thus reducing incidents of fuel poverty.	ongoing
4. National and local partners		
Partners	Fenland District Council Cambridge City Council	ongoing

	Cambridgeshire County Council South Cambs Council Huntingdonshire District Council Sanctuary Housing East Cambridgeshire Care and Repair HECA East Action on Energy	
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Prepared by

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Sustainability Officer

Updated March 2017.