

# DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL HECA REPORT (Annex)

## 1. Local Energy Efficiency Priorities and Ambitions

Derbyshire Dales District Council has been an active member of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities' Energy Partnership since its formation in 1996. As an Authority we have found membership of the Partnership invaluable in order to help to form an approach to energy issues that is relevant for Derbyshire Dales as a district. There is no doubt that making use of the expertise of our partner authorities has helped to ensure that our residents have in turn received a better service than would otherwise have been the case.

In the first instance Derbyshire Dales District Council's approach to its responsibilities under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 centred solely around improving the energy efficiency of domestic properties, mainly through offering advice and signposting to other services. Over time this approach has grown to include the whole fuel poverty and affordable warmth agenda and to encompass our response to the threats of climate change.

The activities of Derbyshire Dales District Council in respect of tackling fuel poverty and helping to provide affordable warmth are shaped through the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities' Energy Partnership. Previously Derbyshire Dales District Council hosted and chaired and High Peak and Derbyshire Dales joint Affordable Warmth Steering Group which was attended by partners from other agencies with a role to play in this agenda, including High Peak Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council Welfare Rights, local Citizens Advice Bureaux, Derbyshire County PCT Public Health (shortly to become Derbyshire County Council Public Health), Age UK, Warm Front, Metropolitan Home Improvement Agency and Rural Action Derbyshire.

Through this Group Derbyshire Dales District Council and High Peak Borough Council developed a joint Affordable Warmth Strategy. The Strategy was adopted by Derbyshire Dales District Council in 2006 and although it is need of refreshing to take account of changes in the funding and priorities of local authorities and partners, it is still considered to be fit for purpose in principle.

The Strategy is a high level document that sets out the scale of the issue on a local level and describes the ambitions of partners in attempting to address fuel poverty. It is supported through a series of Action Plans that are revised annually and set out in more detail the activities that will be undertaken by members of the Group.

Since 2012/13 the Strategy has acknowledged the difficulty of attracting funding through Green Deal and ECO and the lack of resource to do this at the single local authority level. Derbyshire Dales District Council has concentrated its efforts in supporting the development of strategies, policies and schemes as part of the LAEP and played an active part in the development of the Healthy Home Scheme. Through links with one of the Clinical Commissioning Groups that serves the District we were able to identify 2 GP practices to participate in the initial pilot study.

As a result of this change in emphasis in respect of fuel poverty work the most recent action plans have been amended to show a different way of working.

## **2. Energy efficiency improvements 2015-17**

### **2.1 Information, advice, education and promotion**

In order to provide our residents with information about energy efficiency Derbyshire Dales District Council continues to contribute towards the LAEP Communications Core Service, which gives access to a website that provides advice and guidance to residents and active low carbon community groups to encourage and support domestic energy efficiency and other low carbon behaviour change. One to one advice is available for community groups wanting to set up community energy schemes or undertake other low carbon initiatives.

The communication service provided by MEA and the LAEP's relationship with National Energy Action (detailed below) has also enabled access to health through affordable warmth training for frontline staff including social workers and health visitors.

These resources now form the majority of Derbyshire Dales District Council's methods of providing this information.

### **2.2 Tackling Fuel Poverty**

Derbyshire Dales District Council no longer employs dedicated staff to specifically tackle fuel poverty, although contributions towards this agenda are made by staff working in areas such as Environmental Health undertaking housing inspections and Benefits offering advice on benefit entitlement.

Targeted fuel poverty work is now undertaken in partnership with others, most notably the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities' Energy Partnership (LAEP). Derbyshire Dales District Council has been a member of this Partnership since its formation and contributes financially towards its continuation.

Since 2014 the main LAEP project with which Derbyshire Dales District Council has engaged is the Healthy Home project referenced in Part 1 of this HECA report. Since the previous HECA report this project has engaged directly with 4 GP surgeries within the District and also accepts referrals from the District Council, primary and secondary care, Adult Care, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, vSPA and the Home Improvement Agency operating in the District.

Over this time the Project has assisted the following within the Derbyshire Dales:

- Residents assisted: 81
- Households assisted: 43 (most comprise older couples, both with health conditions)
- Total number of visits made to households: 150
- Total number of cold sensitive health conditions encountered: 172
- Average age of residents: 67

These interventions are estimated to have saved Derbyshire Dales residents approximately £3,010 as a result of home energy efficiency advice.

In addition 18 households received free heating improvements, amounting to a total of £24,100 in capital investment, and 23 households received fuel management services amounting to £9,336 household income generated.

In addition to these services directly related to energy efficiency the Project also provides a range of services to improve the wellbeing of households, such as a trips and falls service, provision of key safes, minor mobility adaptations, smoke alarms etc. 24 such interventions were provided over the period covered by this report.

Finally 2 households received intensive one-to-one support through the Project to tackle long standing complex issues such as housing disrepair, condemned heating systems, debt, isolation and mental health issues.

Clients experience substantial improvements in their circumstances and in their ability to keep warm and well at home.

- 65% of clients questioned said their health condition had *improved significantly* as a result of receiving services.
- 90% said that they are now able to *comfortably* keep their home warm.
- 80% said that the services they received had *exceeded* their expectations.

We expect to continue to work closely with the Healthy Home Project to identify and support vulnerable householders and to attract funding through grants and ECO (including the new flexi group policy) to deliver these essential services.

### **3.3 Boilers and Heat Pumps**

Derbyshire Dales District Council is one of 6 Derbyshire local authorities that is committed to creating a Building Control company to cover their areas, known as the Derbyshire Building Control Partnership. One of the reasons for creating this Company is to build on the expertise that exists around the 6 constituent authorities and to concentrate it in one place so that consistent quality of building works, including boiler installations, can be guaranteed. The new Company has been formed and staff are due to transfer into it on 31 May 2017.

As a Board member Derbyshire Dales District Council will have an opportunity to influence the development of the Company and to ensure that it is fit for purpose in respect of energy efficiency works, including novel technologies.

### **3.4 Smart Meters**

Although Derbyshire Dales District Council does not have the capacity itself to support the roll out of smart meters we are committed to working with others who have this role as part of their remit. In particular we are working with Rural Action Derbyshire who are undertaking this role and who we host in our main offices.

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

Through its Environmental Health team Derbyshire Dales District Council is committed to ensuring its residents are suitably protected from the named hazard of Excess Cold, contained within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. As a District with an ageing private sector housing stock we recognise that a high proportion of homes will be energy inefficient and that significant numbers of households are likely to be living in fuel poverty. All calls for service in respect of housing standards are routinely assessed for excess cold and where appropriate householders are referred into the LAEP's services.

### **3.6 Area based/street by street roll out of energy efficiency improvements**

Although Derbyshire Dales District Council does not currently have any area based schemes we have recently been successful in bidding for Estate Regeneration funding for Hurst Farm, our most deprived area. We are now planning how we will approach this scheme and expect to include energy efficiency improvements as part of the offer.

### **3. Looking ahead 2017-19**

Over the next 2 years we expect to be able to make significant improvements in a number of aspects of the built environment on Hurst Farm as part of the Estate Regeneration project mentioned in 3.6 above. Due to limited resources this is likely to be the only significant area for improvement over the next 2 years, but we will continue to review the level of resources that we are able to assign to this area of work and will look to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

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For further information about this HECA report, please contact:

Tim Braund, Head of Regulatory Services, Derbyshire Dales District Council, Town Hall,  
Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3NN, Tel: 01629 761118, Email:

[tim.braund@derbyshiredales.gov.uk](mailto:tim.braund@derbyshiredales.gov.uk)