

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

5 January 2009

Report of the Director of Health and Housing

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPDATE

Summary

This report is to update Members on the recently submitted twelfth annual progress report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) detailing the Council's progress on energy efficiency during 2007/08. A 28.95 per cent improvement in reducing energy usage across the borough has been made during the period April 1996 to March 2008. The Council met its interim target to achieve a three per cent annual improvement in energy efficiency across all housing sectors. The report also gives details of a forthcoming Energy Saving Trust mailing campaign and the Council's Warm Homes Initiative.

1.1 Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) 12th Progress Report 2007/08

1.1.1 Under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, the Council reports annually to DEFRA on the percentage improvement in energy efficiency across the borough. The report also provides information on activities undertaken to assist in delivering its energy strategy.

1.1.2 This year the HECA survey carried out across the borough identified a 3.6 per cent reduction in energy usage during 2007/08 across all housing sectors.

1.1.3 The progress report detailed activities undertaken by the Council to promote affordable warmth and reduce carbon emissions in private sector housing including:

- arranging a mail out in partnership with Warm Front and the Benefits department targeting approximately 2,500 households in the borough promoting Warm Front grants;
- the Council improved 24 properties to meet the Decent Homes Standard through providing Warm Homes Assistance and providing energy efficiency measures to a further six properties through the First Time Buyers Assistance;

- in partnership with the Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership, EDF and Creative Environmental Network submitted a successful Community Energy Efficiency Fund bid in 2007. This will fund the Kent wide Home Visitor scheme to target hard to reach vulnerable groups offering structured impartial assistance to improve quality of life and reduce carbon emissions via energy efficiency measures and education; and
- participated in the West Kent Landlords Forum at local venues providing advice to landlords on energy efficiency and grants/discount schemes available.

1.1.4 The Council has met the annual energy efficiency improvement target identified in the Climate Change Strategy for 2007/8. Officers are currently reviewing the Energy and Fuel Poverty Strategy and it is anticipated this will be replaced by an Energy and Fuel Poverty statement to be included in the new Housing Strategy in 2009.

1.2 Energy Saving Trust advice centre mailing campaign

1.2.1 Following the launch of the Energy Saving Trust advice centre service (ESTac) in October 2008, the ESTac is working in partnership with 16 local authorities, including Tonbridge and Malling, to carry out a direct mail campaign across the South East.

1.2.2 Members are advised that the Tonbridge and Malling mailing campaign is scheduled to be sent to 20,000 households across the borough in February 2009. The mailing will offer a free impartial personalised home energy report that could help householders to save money on fuel bills through practical energy saving advice.

1.2.3 Following on from this initial mailing, the Energy Saving Trust will also run a number of smaller mailings which will specifically address householder's needs, highlighting any grants and discount schemes available.

1.2.4 The Council continues to demonstrate our commitment to partnership working through endorsing the forthcoming ESTac mailing campaign which will enable the promotion of energy saving advice to a significant proportion of households in the borough. The mailing campaign is fully funded by the Energy Saving Trust at no cost to the Council.

1.3 Warm Homes Initiative

1.3.1 After an excellent response last year we continued with our Warm Homes Initiative in November 2008. Letters were mailed out to approximately 1000 households in a designated area, offering a free home energy survey visit by a Creative Environmental Network (CEN) surveyor.

- 1.3.2 As well as providing detailed individual energy advice on how to improve energy efficiency in the householder's home, together with information on grants and discounts available, those householders aged over 60 years were offered a free home security and fire safety check.
- 1.3.3 This year we principally targeted the TN10, TN9, Hildenborough and Borough Green areas; identified in the recent stock condition survey as having;
- a high proportion of pre 1919 constructed properties;
 - above borough average rates of fuel poverty; and
 - in the South West, for example Hildenborough, a higher proportion of properties which exhibit Category 1 'excess cold' hazards under the Health and Housing Safety Rating System.
- 1.3.4 CEN used Geographic Information System mapping techniques to select streets with a high proportion of privately owned/private rented properties and a higher likelihood of requiring energy measures, for example having un-insulated lofts (based on Home Energy Check data). In selecting specific areas CEN maximised the use of their surveyor's time.
- 1.3.5 The Warm Homes Initiative continues to be an effective scheme for promoting affordable warmth to households in targeted areas. In total 42 visits have been undertaken through the initiative, resulting in 14 referrals to energy efficiency schemes for energy measures such as loft insulation, cavity wall installation and new boiler installation. In addition, eight referrals were made to the *In Touch* Home Improvement Agency for home safety measures, for example installing a smoke alarm, security lock upgrade.

1.4 Conclusion

- 1.4.1 The Council continues to demonstrate commitment to promoting affordable warmth through the above energy initiatives. The results of the recent HECA survey confirms that the Council has successfully met the energy saving performance target identified in the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 None arising from this report.

1.6 Financial & Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 None arising from this report.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 None arising from this report.

Background papers:

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Nil

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