

Broxbourne Borough Council's report to the Secretary of State in response to the local authority requirements under the Home Energy Conservation Act

Purpose

To provide an update on the energy conservation measures that Broxbourne Borough Council considers practicable, cost effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in Broxbourne.

Background

Strategic focus

Broxbourne Borough Council joined the Local Government Association's Climate Local initiative in October 2013. The Council has produced a [Sustainability Plan](#) to cover the period 2013–2018, and is committed to helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough of Broxbourne. The Council's Corporate Plan includes an objective to 'encourage renewable energy and energy conservation measures'.

Condition of housing stock

The last housing conditions survey in 2009 identified that the overall energy efficiency of the housing stock in the Borough of Broxbourne performed slightly better than the national average. It also showed that 17,679 dwellings had less than 100mm of loft insulation and 17,836 dwellings had un-insulated cavity walls. Between 2008/09 and 2012/13 there were 11,258 loft insulations and 11,512 cavity wall insulations in the Borough of Broxbourne. This uptake is below the national average. There were 3,890 households in 2011, 10.2 per cent of households in the Borough, categorised as being in fuel poverty, which is below the national average and a 19 per cent reduction compared to 2010. Domestic electricity and gas consumption in the Borough was 4,230 and 13,970 kWh per consumer in 2013 (seven and two per cent higher than the average consumer in Great Britain).

Role of the Council

The Council does not have a housing stock, as social housing in the Borough is maintained by B3 Living and other housing associations. The Council acts as a promoter, encouraging the take up by residents, landlords and businesses of third party energy efficiency improvements and funding. This includes advocating the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation locally and promoting the Energy Saving Trust.

Promotion of third party energy efficiency improvements and funding

A comprehensive communications campaign to promote energy efficiency has been delivered during 2013/14 and 2014/15, which includes:

- Content on the [Council's website](#);
- Display of a [leaflet](#) at Council and third party outlets;
- Presentations at the Environmental Panel (offers residents the opportunity to speak to Council officers about environmental issues), Area Forum (community) meetings and Landlords' Forum;
- Content in the [Environmental Monitor](#), a quarterly publication to provide an overview of environmental service performance;

- Adverts in the local media, on the Council's waste vehicles and on the Council's network of notice boards; and
- Content in corporate publications, such as Broxbourne News and in the Guide for Older People.

The Council's planning and building control functions

The Council encourages energy efficiency as part of new development schemes through the implementation of building control regulations and planning policies. It is often unviable to undertake full sustainability assessments at the planning stage for smaller housing schemes, such as housing extensions, but the Council does promote appropriate energy efficiency initiatives to landowners. The [Broxbourne Local Plan](#) contains the planning policies the Council uses to determine planning applications, which includes: encouraging energy conservation in building design; seeking energy efficient layouts; and encouraging, wherever appropriate, the development of renewable energy sources. A statement of intent on sustainability is required by the Council from developers for large scale developments, which are categorised as developments with more than 10 houses or more than 500 sq. metres floor space. Specifically, the developer is required to clarify how the proposed development will maximise energy efficiency. All housing schemes are expected to adhere to the highest possible level of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The Broxbourne Local Plan will be updated shortly, to include Building for Life 12 criteria and more stringent energy efficiency requirements. The updated Plan is also likely to make specific reference to district heating schemes, as the Council considers the Borough of Broxbourne as ideally suited to such an initiative, due to the close proximity of industry with other land uses.

Partnership working

The Council is committed to working with its partners to promote improved energy efficiency of residential accommodation in the Borough of Broxbourne, which includes working with Hertfordshire County Council, the Broxbourne Local Strategic Partnership and private and social housing landlords.

Future actions to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation

Action	Timescale
Undertake a comprehensive energy efficiency communications campaign	2015/16 to 2026/27 – reviewed on an annual basis
Consideration of the scope of a possible housing conditions survey to be undertaken in 2016/17	2016/17

Reporting on progress with improving the energy efficiency of residential accommodation

The Council will continue to review progress on an annual basis and report to the Secretary of State at two yearly intervals, with the next report due by 31 March 2017. This report and subsequent reports will be made available on the [Council's website](#).