

Home Energy Conservation Act

Progress Report March 2017





1. Introduction

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) recognises local authorities' ability to use their position to significantly improve the energy efficiency of all the residential accommodation in their areas.

In July 2012, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) replaced the existing statutory guidance on the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995) with a revised version, which asks all English authorities with housing responsibilities to prepare a 'further report' by 31st March 2013, setting out: 'the local energy conservation measures that the authority considers practicable, cost-effective, and likely to significantly improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area'. The first of these reports, known as a "further report", was published in 2013. This and other subsequent reports, known as a progress reports, are published at two-year intervals. This document sets out how Stevenage Borough Council has progressed since the last HECA report in 2015 and how it will meet and continue to meet its strategic objectives in relation to improving the energy efficiency of homes in the borough.



2. Stevenage housing stock: a profile

Stevenage housing stock spans a range of constructions and ages and was built mainly from 1950 through to the 1970s. The stock constitutes a mixture of terraced housing, flatted blocks and multi-storey blocks of flats. The construction types are variable to a certain extent as testing of new build methods and build types were promoted as part of the town's diverse construction brief. Many different types of build may be found on a single estate. However, the property types are predominately terraced housing and low rise flats including both traditional build and some of the new and creative types of construction that were trialled at the time. 46% of SBC owned residential properties are flats or non-traditionally constructed houses.

The housing stock is generally supported by its own landscaping of which there are 480 communal areas in 145 locations around the borough. The landscapes are varied in size and generally give pedestrian access and parking facilities to residents and the general public and include the following assets: hard & soft landscape, car parks, foot paths, boundary walls, fences and retaining walls.

3. Warm Homes for Life Strategy

Stevenage Borough Council, are committed to ensuring that our residents' homes are warm, well insulated, energy efficient and environmentally sustainable.

In 2015 the council published its Warm Homes for Life Strategy. The strategy sets out what we planned to achieve over the three years 2015-2018 through a series of strategic aims and objectives. This document can be found on the councils website here <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/15953/21310/111909/111913/Warm-Homes-Life-Strategy-2015.pdf>

The councils overall strategic aims for this strategy are;

1. To provide warm, well insulated, energy efficient and affordable homes.
2. Improve the well-being of our residents
3. Contribute to mitigating climate change by reducing CO₂ emissions associated with the housing stock

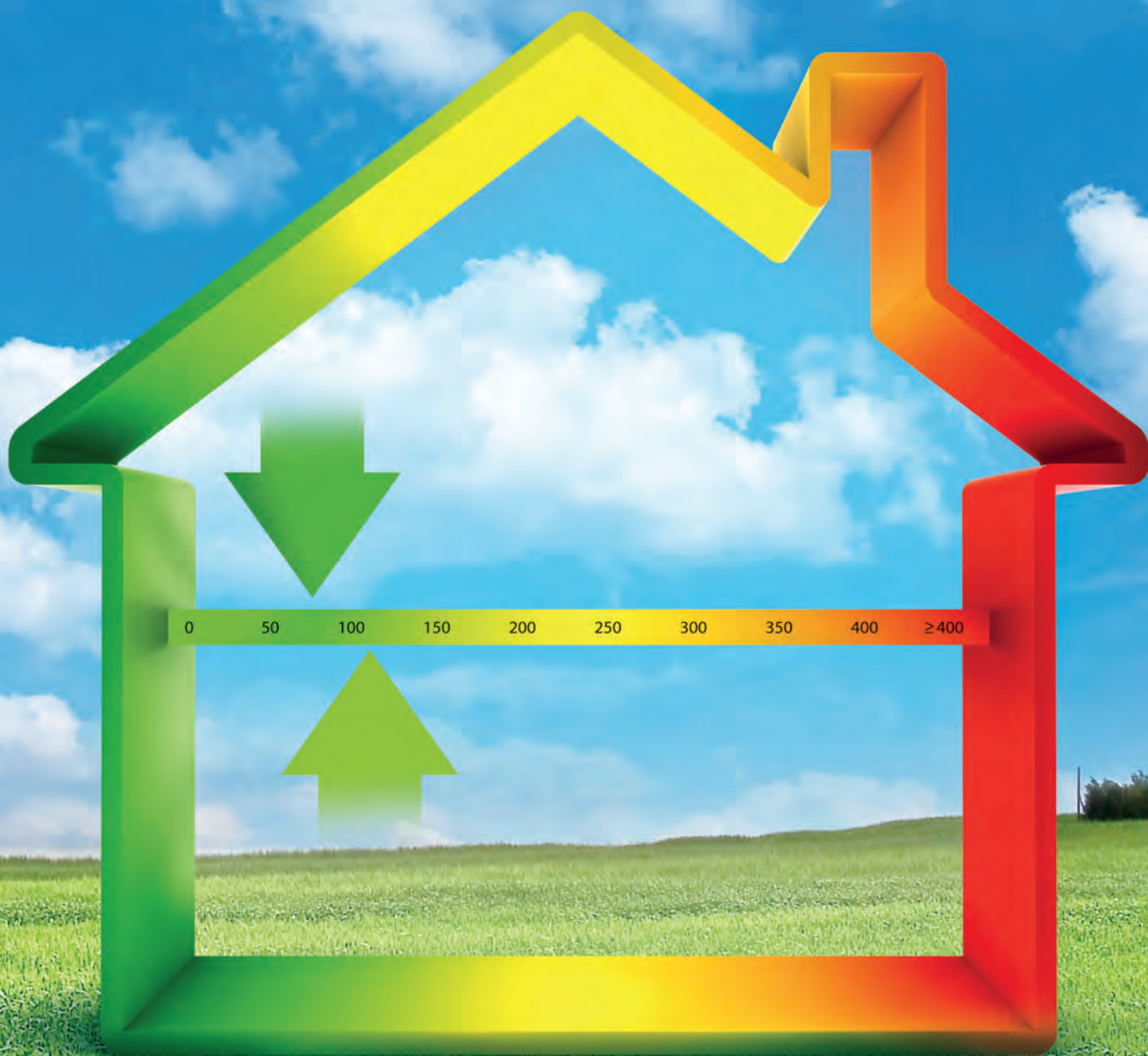
In order to meet our strategic aims we outlined a number of objectives, these are as follows;

1. Deliver affordable warmth
2. Improve energy efficiency of the housing stock
3. Help tenants to take advantage of the competitive supply market
4. Reduce CO₂ emissions and adapt homes to climate change
5. Invest in renewable heat and power

4. Strategy review

The main detail regarding the council's aims and ambitions in relation to home energy conservation are outlined in the Warm Homes for Life Strategy and its associated action plan. This action plan covers a three year period 2015-2018. When this period ends, the strategy will be reviewed and details relating to the associated actions and targets will be published alongside a refreshed document focusing on future years. It is the intention that the future warm homes for life strategy will form part of the councils overall asset management strategy which is due to be published towards the end of 2018.

For the purpose of this HECA progress report, details of what has been accomplished since the last HECA report in 2015 have been outlined below.



5. Progress

Major works programmes

Over the last 2 years we have continued to deliver energy efficiency measures to the councils housing stock. The below table demonstrates the number of measures installed since March 2015 and those planned for 2018. ECO funding has been used to supplement a number of these measures, enabling the council to deliver more measures with the budget provided.

	Heating	EWI	Cavity Wall Insulation	Loft Insulation	Windows	Doors	Roofing including upgraded loft insulation
Completed in 2015/16	188	134	0	185	221	455	1341
Completed in 2016/17	26	297	168	14	131	177	191
Planned for 2017/18	30	350	150	0	300	300	350


Herts Healthy Homes (HHH)

Since 2012 the council has been an active partner in the Hertfordshire wide scheme, from bidding for funding to being on the management board. The project provides home visits for temporary heaters, draught proofing and energy advice, such as switching tariffs and advice on the efficient use of the heating system as well as providing referrals to ECO and other support agencies. To increase referrals and home visits to the scheme the council commissioned a Greenaiders Gardening project which helped to identify vulnerable people and therefore increased referrals to HHH. The council continues to work with other local authorities to progress projects of this nature, accessing funding opportunities where available to support the delivery of these schemes.

SAP data

SAP is the acronym for Standard Assessment Procedure and RDSAP is a reduced version of the procedure specifically for the energy assessment of existing dwellings where SAP would not be appropriate because of the difficulty in assessing such things as U-Values of insulation etc. Resulting from an energy audit of the property, the SAP is a numerical indication of the energy efficiency of the property. It reflects the heating and insulation standards of the property, but not the householder's income. A target SAP rating of 60 will remove most households from fuel poverty, although this may be difficult and expensive to achieve in certain types of properties, such as those with solid walls.

Stevenage housing stock has an average SAP rating of 69, this compares well to national averages and ensures that the majority of those living in council owned homes are not forced into fuel poverty because of a poorly performing home.



The councils SAP data is continually updated with information about works completed to our housing stock to improve the energy efficiency rating. As and when the RDAP data requirements are updated small changes in the rating may be seen. We continually work to ensure our rating stays within the targets we have set for ourselves and above the national average.

A project is required to understand the current average SAP rating of private housing in Stevenage.

6. Future plans 2017-2019

SBC continues to work hard towards the principles of HECA, already completing projects that, as stated within the HECA guidance, 'take advantage of financial assistance and other benefits offered from central Government initiatives, such as ECO.' Additionally, as one of the corner stones of HECA's principles SBC has sought to 'implement energy efficiency improvements cost-effectively in residential accommodation by using area based/street by street roll out, involving local communities and partnerships (e.g. social housing partners, voluntary organisations).'

The Herts Warmer Homes project aims to support over 700 vulnerable and low income households across Hertfordshire from September 2017, to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. A joint project between Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and the district councils, it will use energy supplier funding via the ECO to install measures such as boiler replacements, first-time central heating and insulation that will reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions in people's homes.

In 2017 we will continue to deliver our external major works programme, delivering EWI, windows, doors, roofing and loft and cavity insulation to street properties. This programme is due to end in June 2018.

In 2018 we will commence our major refurbishment contract (MRC) which will include addressing the energy efficiency of our council owned flat blocks in Stevenage, supporting both council tenants and private leaseholders.

In 2018 we will let a contract for upgrading our communal heating systems. Each system will have an options appraisal carried out and renewable technologies will be investigated as alternative systems as appropriate. This upgrade programme will be delivered over a five year period between 2018 and 2023.

The next HECA progress report will be published in March 2019.



