

Portsmouth City Council

Home Energy Conservation Act Report 2017

Portsmouth City Council is continuing to improve the energy efficiency of homes in Portsmouth. This is happening by improving its own housing stock; providing support and utilising Government funding in the private sector; and providing advice to residents through council services and partnering with other non-profit organisations.

This report will outline the ongoing work and planned projects over the next two years, with links to further reports and information resources.

Portsmouth energy efficiency ambitions and priorities for 2017-18

10.8% of Portsmouth's residents are in fuel poverty. This percentage is higher in the economically deprived wards but affects wards across the whole city. Fuel poverty is the main driver which directs PCC's efforts to improve energy efficiency in residences, but we also include non-fuel poor households wherever we can (legislation and funding criteria dependant).

EPC data has been purchased from DCLG to assist in the targeting of energy efficiency and consumption priorities, and allow us to set targets going forward.

The services listed ensures any resident of Portsmouth will be in a position to access impartial advice in respect of current national or local energy efficiency schemes available.

Fuel poverty strategic lead

Fuel poverty is a specific priority under the Portsmouth City Council [Tackling Poverty Strategy 2015-2020](#) (p. 28)

Out of this strategy the fuel poverty working group was created which "coordinates resources to support frontline staff in reducing fuel poverty and excess winter deaths".

The fuel poverty working group consists of representation from council departments (Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Public Health, Property and Housing and Private Sector Housing) and external partners (Age UK, Citizens' Advice and First Wessex housing association). This partnership aims to deliver support to low income and vulnerable households in a holistic and efficient manner.

Advice to all residents and agencies about fuel poverty is online at [Save money on your energy bills](#)

The background data from which the work will be monitored is in the [Tackling Poverty Needs Assessment 2015](#) (p.131)

Energy Companies Obligation (ECO) funding

Portsmouth City Council has utilised Energy Company Obligation funding and plans to use ECO II in 2017-18

- PCC is doing a full refit at Wilmcote House to EnerPhit standard. This is an energy and thermally inefficient 1960's tower block housing 113 dwellings, many in fuel poverty. By targeting the whole block the whole community is benefiting, both those already in fuel poverty as well as many at risk of becoming so.
<http://www.building.co.uk/wilmcote-house-thermal-vision/5077130.article>
- PCC Housing team plans to utilise ECO II in its own housing stock for loft, cavity wall and possibly solid wall insulation. As per our previous insulation works with ECO we will engage communities (housing tenants and leaseholders) to maximise the ECO II funding and efficiencies of scale, thus getting more benefit for more people.
- PCC Private Sector Housing is working closely with local energy providers and energy efficiency installers to coordinate ECO II funding in the cities private landlord and owner occupied homes. ECO II Flexible Eligibility means households who live in fuel poverty but are not on the benefits system are eligible. This will greatly expand the number of Portsmouth residents eligible for funding as Portsmouth has a high proportion of thermally inefficient homes with non-benefit entitled occupiers.

LEAP Local Energy Advice Programme

Portsmouth City Council is coordinating the pilot LEAP roll out across Portsmouth's relevant organisations. The pilot will end in July and its continuation depends on OFGEMs review which is in progress. LEAP is a new free service, providing important advice, support and energy saving measures to fuel poor and vulnerable households. The programme is delivered in partnership with a number of organisations and is funded by energy suppliers as part of the Warm Home Discount Industry Initiatives fund. It is delivered in a close partnership with Local Authorities and Housing Associations, and Portsmouth was one of the first to go live with the service in December 2016.

The council and its network of local agencies provide referrals of vulnerable local residents who are in (or at risk of falling into) fuel poverty. A highly-trained LEAP Helper then carries out a home visit and carries out a thorough assessment of the home and delivers help immediately:

- Installs a range of simple measures (radiator panels, LED light bulbs, draught proofing for doors, windows and letterboxes, cylinder jackets, pipe lagging)
- Provides energy efficiency advice and training on the use of heating controllers
- Organises the installation of a new heating controller where it is inadequate or broken

- Identifies larger energy efficiency measures that would improve the property where ECO funding is available (arranged after the visit)
- Looks at the potential for savings from switching energy supplier and helps the resident to switch if required
- Identifies other hazards and vulnerabilities in the home and makes the referral on to the appropriate department or agency.

Switch Portsmouth

Portsmouth City Council has launched its own energy switching site to promote residents getting onto the lowest tariffs. This provides the most accurate energy cost comparison service in the market. Although this does not directly provide energy conservation it is being used as a first port of call to engage Portsmouth residents with considering and understanding their energy bills. This can lead to energy conservation measures being considered.

Housing Renewals Policy

PCC's Housing Renewals Policy provides advice and financial assistance in the form of grants or loans to private homeowners to assist in the removal of Category 1 Hazards from Portsmouth properties, and Category 2 Hazards (if feasible) under the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), previously Housing Fitness Standard. We have assisted 131 properties since March 2015, and estimate improvements to a further 200 properties by March 2019.

PCC's Housing Renewals Policy Communities Bid Funding scheme has improved the heating efficiency of at least 73 properties through a boiler replacement scheme and 66 properties with external wall insulation from March 2015 to March 2017. An additional 19 properties benefitted from the installation of new gas fired central heating via our Central Heating Fund to reduce the impact of excess cold to the most vulnerable. During these programs we have partnered up with local energy companies to deliver projects maximising ECO funding for vulnerable and households deemed to be in fuel poverty.

Housing Standards Policy

Under PCC's Housing Standards Policy our additional licensing scheme covering all other HMOs within this area (that are not subject to mandatory licensing) resulted in over 3000 HHSRS inspections ensuring removal of all category 1 and 2 hazards and improving the energy efficiency of these properties housing many vulnerable residents. We will also, if necessary use the enforcement powers available within the Housing Act 2004, to reduce excess cold from private rented accommodation.

Working with Landlords

We continue to work with private sector landlords to help in increasing the energy efficiency of properties, and raise awareness of the new private rental efficiency legislation. Currently we have over 150 landlords as part of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, which includes ensuring the property is energy efficient as possible within 3 years. EPCs are offered to members of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to monitor efficiency ratings in the private rental sector. Current focus is on the responsibility of the landlord not to refuse reasonable requests for energy saving improvements, and improving rental properties to EPC band E and above.

We are hoping to increase this number of properties as part of the scheme taking a more active interest in efficiency requirements through the development of a council led letting agency.

Fuel poverty training workshops

PCC continues to deliver training to its front line staff through three workshops each winter with around 20 staff members at each session. This training gives staff the basic knowledge to identify fuel vulnerable residents and the help they can provide or direct them too.

Energy Advice Officer

The officer provides telephone advice and home visits to advise private sector residents on energy saving measures and reduction of excess cold.

[Homecheck Service](#)

The service provides free draught proofing service for all residents with portable heaters loaned for temporary excess cold relief, and advice given on basic self-help measures.

Heat Network Delivery Unit funding

Portsmouth City Council has been awarded two rounds of funding to investigate the feasibility and then map possible heat networks in the city. In the majority this is looking to link high thermal demand industrial and commercial current users. One aspect is considering the proposed [City Deal regeneration of Tipner and Horsea Island](#) which would include residential dwellings. Over the next two years this will be under further investigation as the Tipner proposals move forward. This development would include affordable housing in which those currently in fuel poverty could potentially move to. These homes would be much more inefficient for all, than the majority of older properties in Portsmouth. Radian housing association is already working on 80 homes at the site, although these would not be connected to a heat network they may be designed to connect later.

Authorised by Meredydd Hughes, Assistant Director of Property and Housing