#### ST.HELENS COUNCIL HECA PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2015

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING		
i) LOCAL ENERGY EF	i) LOCAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES			
Strategic Commitments	The Council will work towards adoption of Climate Local	March 2014		
	The Council is committed to delivering actions within the Liverpool City Region Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), Liverpool City Region Low Carbon Economy Action Plan and the Liverpool City Region Deal with Government	March 2013		
	The Council will review its Fuel Poverty Strategy making all linkages with St Helens strategic approach to child poverty	October 2013		
	HECA report actions will assist the delivery of the St Helens Health and Wellbeing strategic priorities.	Ongoing		

# **Progress to March 2015**

St. Helens Council has undertaken work to improve the energy efficiency of domestic properties and also work to promote the range of schemes available to assist homes to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. The Council continues to deliver actions from sub-regional actions plans, including being an active member of Viridis.

Viridis is a sub-regional collective of housing providers and local authorities allowing member organisations to access expertise on a wide selection of key energy and environmental issues. These range from renewables, retrofit and community energy schemes, and housing best practice. St.Helens Council has supported and contributed to a number of initiatives through Viridis such as training programmes and resident engagement activities.

The Council's energy efficiency section has investigated the adoption of Climate Local and established that the energy efficiency of domestic properties is one element of a number of carbon reduction objectives. The adoption of Climate Local will be kept under review.

St. Helens Council are currently finalising a new fuel poverty strategy building on the successes of the previous document. The new strategy will continue to provide the direction for current and future services to help alleviate the problem of Fuel Poverty within the borough.

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING	
ii) MEASURES WE ARE TAKING TO RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS OF OUR RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION			
Green Deal and ECO	The Council will:		
	<ul> <li>a) work with Registered Providers and their partners to support delivery of Green Deal and ECO within priority neighbourhoods and seek to extend delivery to privately owned homes;</li> </ul>	April 2013	
	<ul> <li>b) identify ECO eligible areas and households through available data and local knowledge and provide referrals to delivery partners where appropriate to deliver measures under ECO;</li> </ul>	October 2013	
	c) investigate the potential for procuring preferred delivery organisations for the local provision of Green Deal and ECO and promote schemes using our trusted brand and strategic data;	October 2013 October 2013	
	d) ensure that the delivery processes and information gained through the Liverpool City Region Green Deal Go Early Pilot is maximised through development of partnership procedures;	March 2014	
	e) work with the Liverpool City Region Project Viridis partnership to explore a sub regional delivery mechanism for Green Deal and ECO;	April 2013	
	f) actively promote all nationally available financial incentives and mechanisms through the Council's Home Improvement Agency and the Council website to ensure that households are provided with advice on the most appropriate funding to meet their needs;	April 2014	
	g) work towards enabling a minimum of 1% take-up of potential Green Deal measures per annum till 2027.	April 2015	
	The Council aims to reduce/mitigate increase of fuel poverty from 2010 level of 20% (15,320 households) for life of plan	April 2015	
	The Council aims to Reduce SAP <35 properties at a rate of 5% of the total from 2010 level of 775 properties for the life of plan.		

St Helens Council has a service level agreement with Caribou Green Warmth LLP to facilitate the installation of energy efficiency measures within the Local Authority area. Caribou is a joint venture between local housing providers, Helena Partnerships and The Riverside Group and sustainability specialist, Starfish Group. Caribou was launched in 2013 to act as a one stop shop for people wanting to make their homes more energy efficient. Since July 2013 a total of 545 measures has been installed and brought in over £400,000.00 of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding within the St Helens Council area to tackle fuel poverty and reduce the energy demand of homes.

Through our partnership with Caribou, in addition to providing assistance with accessing ECO funding across the borough, they have provided advice to households investigating the use of Green Deal funding to install the higher cost energy efficiency measures such as External Wall Insulation. This includes work undertaken via the Liverpool City Region Green Deal Go Early pilot which enabled 16 private sector properties to benefit from the roll out of a refurbishment programme previously carried out on neighbouring social sector properties, the majority of this work was undertaken in the same month as the Council's further HECA report was published.

Data provided by DECC indicate that since the start of ECO up to the end of September 2014 there have 3,849 households which have benefited from having an ECO energy efficiency measure, in these properties a total of 4707 measures have been installed.

St. Helens has had 61.5 measures installed per 1000 households, whereas the national average is 35.3 measures per 1000 households.

There has been 1,166 Green Deal Assessments undertaken in St.Helens since the start of the Green Deal scheme this equates to 15.2 assessments per 1,000 households. This is higher than the national average of 12.8 per 1000 households.

Over the last two years there has been in excess of 3.6% take up of measures, this surpasses the Council's target of 1% per annum. Using the Council's UNO<sub>2010</sub> database the potential number of Green Deal measures applicable to properties in the Borough when the Further HECA report was written was approximately 130,000. In addition to the ECO measures installed St.Helens Council has also funded works in properties where, although there was a qualifying person in the property, the required measure did not qualify for any available ECO funding.

Properties in St.Helens with a SAP rating of below 35 have dropped from 775 to 696, between March 2013 and March 2014. This years' data is yet to be provided and a further reduction is expected.

Helena Partnerships, the boroughs largest registered provider, has a strong commitment to improving the energy efficiency of their housing stock. Over the past two years they have installed over 550 boilers, fully insulated over 200 lofts, and have provided 569 properties with external wall insulation (EWI). Helena's commitment to providing quality housing with low energy costs for their tenants has also seen the installation of 143 photovoltaic systems with a combined output of over 300Kwp and approximately 70 solar hot water systems have also been installed.

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING
Additional Funding/ Advice Measures	During 2012/13 the Council accessed the following external funding which was targeted towards energy efficiency and fuel poverty reduction measures:	
	DoH Warm Homes Healthy People;	
	DECC Core Cities Green Deal Go Early;	
	St Helens and Halton Primary Care Trust S256.	Ongoing / as
	The Council will:	available
	<ul> <li>seek to bid for and maximise available funding streams from April 2013 onwards in order to support HECA objectives;</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	b) ensure that the Fuel Poverty/HECA agenda is strategically placed to maximise commissioning opportunities.	April 2014
	The Council's Housing Assistance Policy allows for the targeting of available finance towards energy efficiency measures through mechanisms, which include zero interest loans, grants and low value emergency assistance. Delivery of affordable warmth interventions through the Council's in house Home Improvement Agency ensures effective targeting of resources to vulnerable households and allows effective linkages with a range of referral bodies. The Council will review available Capital finance and commissioner requirements on an annual basis and will develop assistance packages in accordance with fuel poverty strategy / HECA priorities.	
	The Council's Home Improvement Agency provides a range of non financial services and assistance to promote and enable take up of energy efficiency measures. With regard to fuel poverty strategy / HECA priorities we will;	April 2013
	provide a web resource on Council website to assist St Helens residents needing information;	April 2013
	<ul> <li>provide Impartial advice re: measures needed/suitable for the individual and their household circumstances;</li> </ul>	April 2013
	<ul> <li>provide support/signposting to enable access to Green Deal and other nationally available incentives;</li> </ul>	June 2013

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING
	maximise area based schemes by further developing information and support post intervention in order to maximise behavioural change;	April 2013
	<ul> <li>provide benefit advice/income maximisation through the HIA benefit advisors;</li> </ul>	October 2013
	<ul> <li>investigate further development and roll out of the Council's Schools/Education programmes, to include for emerging technologies;</li> </ul>	March 2014
	continue to support delivery of an Annual Affordable Warmth Conference; and	October 2013
	support the development of a Fuel Poverty Focus Group.	

- Affordable Warmth Outreach Officer (March 2014 March 2015) This post has been funded by the Council's Public Health and forms part of a wider initiative to reduce the rates of Excess Winter Deaths in the borough. The main function of the Affordable Warmth Outreach worker is to provide a home visiting service to help residents access affordable heating, insulation measures, and to assist with setting heating controls to make their homes warmer, healthier, and more energy efficient. In addition to the physical improvements that can be made to a property the outreach worker assists residents to reduce their fuel bills by accessing the Warm Homes Discount, by providing advice about switching supplier to get cheaper tariffs (via both direct price comparisons and through collective energy switching schemes), and assist those people who are in debt with their energy supplier. The home visits have allowed the outreach worker to identify additional housing and social needs and has referred residents to a wide range of partner agencies including Caribou, CAB, Occupational Therapy, Home Improvement Agency Services. By the end of the year the officer would have completed over 300 home visits.
- Affordable Warmth Unit The Affordable Warmth Unit is an integral part of the Council's Home Improvement Agency and exists to reduce the number of homes in fuel poverty and also to provide assistance on any matter related to reducing energy bills. Over the last two years the unit has provided advice to almost 600 homes, this does not included anyone assisted via the Warm Home Discount campaign (details below)
- Save Energy Advice Line The Council also has a service level agreement with Energy Projects Plus to provide an energy efficiency advice line. From April 2013 to the end of Feb 2015 they have provided advice to 890 customers on a range of topics.
- St.Helens Winter Warmer Scheme (2013/14 & 2014/15) This project also funded by Public health follows on from previous warm homes healthy people funded schemes. There has been a scheme each winter since the Further HECA report was written, total value

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING
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including the Affordable Warmth Outreach Officer post is over £240,000. Over the last two winters the initiative has seen the set up a cold weather advice line; the distribution of 11,000 winter survival packs to vulnerable homes; and also provide low cost heating repairs. The winter packs have contained a combination of blankets, scarves, gloves, thermal mugs, torches, soup sachets, hot chocolate sachets, a calendar containing valuable information on staying warm and well, and ways to reduce energy bills including energy efficiency advice. The project is undertaken with the assistance of many local partners, the main partner being Age UK Mid Mersey.

- St.Helens Fuel Poverty Focus Group The focus group has been very successful with members from over 20 local organisations regularly attending the quarterly meetings. The focus group has developed a work plan and smaller action groups have been set up to promote various campaigns, such as a take up campaign for the Warm Homes Discount scheme.
- Warm Homes Discount Campaign In order to maximise the number of vulnerable homes in St.Helens benefitting from the discount it was decided by members of the Fuel Poverty Focus Group to set up an action group to instigate a campaign to promote the scheme. The main part of the campaign was a mail out in conjunction with the Council's revenues and benefits section to send a letter to those households most likely to be eligible to receive the discounts. Not only were clients offered the advice to apply for the discount directly with their electricity supplier but housing staff also assisted clients to make applications online, as the majority of energy companies only accepted online applications. The letter was sent to over 6000 vulnerable households and the response was phenomenal, final counts are yet to be completed but it is expected that there will have been over 2000 enquiries regarding the discount with the majority of people enquiring being eligible to receive the discount, a conservative estimate on combined savings is £280,000.
- **Promotional Activity -** There has been a total of 18 promotional activities undertaken since January 2014 including St.Helens Affordable Warmth Conferences, St.Helens Senior Voice Forum AGM and Safety Event, a number of training events to St.Helens Council contact centre Staff and staff of the Council's Home Improvement Agency, and a variety of other smaller events/promotions with other local organisations, where an information stand was staffed e.g. switching campaigns, St.Helens Central Library Money Matters event, Stroke Association event, presentation to St.Helens Social Inclusion Network, Church Square promotional event for Falls prevention week.
- Training/Affordable Warmth Information Sessions/Big Energy Saving Network In order to further promote the assistance currently available to alleviate fuel poverty and reduce excess winter deaths training/information sessions have been offered to local stakeholders and community groups. Since October 2014 8 sessions have been delivered with 59 people given the advice/information. It is hoped the training will increase the range of St.Helens residents accessing the service and number of referrals. The Council has also linked in with our partner Energy Projects Plus who have been successful in bids to the Big Energy Saving Network, a number of training sessions have been delivered to the Council' contact centre staff.
- **GP Promotions** In addition to the promotional activities undertaken, the Affordable Warmth Outreach service has been promoted to all of the boroughs GP's. A referral pathway has been created via Information Access St.Helens (IASH) for health professionals to refer to the affordable warmth service. A more focussed piece of work is currently being undertaken in an area of the borough with the highest prevalence of excess winter deaths. All the GP's surgeries in that area have identified vulnerable patients and agreed to send a letter to these patients to promote the service.

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING	
NHS England Funding – The Council were also successful in attracting £20,000 funding from NHS England to deliver an insulation scheme to improve the thermal comfort of homes and to improve mental well-being. It is hoped by the end of the March 2015 this scheme will see 40 properties improved with insulation measures such as cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, loft top ups, and also enabling works to allow the insulation to be installed. These works could include loft hatch widening, access equipment, or even removal of stored items in loft spaces.			
Feed in Tariffs scheme	Installation of photovoltaic in St Helens has been significantly lower than the national average so this is a key priority area as part of a wider renewable energy promotion. 437 Solar PV systems were installed between June 2010 and June 2012 which access the Feed in Tariff, the majority of which are in the social rented sector. However St.Helens Council currently performs higher than sub-regional local authorities and will seek to maximise potential by working with local Registered Providers and their delivery agents to enable approximately 1000 installations, assisting inclusion of private households as appropriate.	April 2015	
	The Council's Home Improvement Agency will actively promote the household benefits arising from Feed in Tariffs and will ensure that staff are regularly updated to provide relevant and current information on emerging schemes and technologies.	April 2013	
Progress to March 201	5		
Through the Council's website, the Council promote the Feed in Tariff Scheme. As of December 2014 there have been 1,192 photovoltaic installations. Of these 143 have been installed by Helena Partnerships. The Council will continue to promote the availability of the scheme.			
Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)	Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) is different from the RHI. The RHI offers a continuous income stream for twenty years to anyone that installs an eligible renewable heating system. The RHPP voucher scheme is a government scheme that gives money to householders to help them buy renewable heating technologies – solar thermal panels, heat pumps and biomass boilers. This is a short-term scheme making one-off payments.		
	The Council's Home Improvement Agency will prepare for Government roll out of Renewable Heat Incentive in Summer 2013 and will ensure that staff are regularly updated to provide relevant and current information on emerging schemes and technologies.	July 2013	

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING	
Progress to March 201	5		
Figures supplied from D to promote the availabili	ECC show that there have been 8 RHI applications accredited up to the end of January 2015. The ty of the scheme.	ne Council will continue	
Zero Carbon Homes	The St Helens Local Plan Core Strategy October 2012 seeks to achieve at least Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 for all new residential development, rising to Level 4 between 2013-2016 and Level 6 after 2016. (Subject to Building Regulation amendment)	October 2012	
Progress to March 2015  Up to the end of December 2014 there has been 235 post construction stage Sustainable Homes certificates issued. St. Helens Council will continue to support any Government agendas for sustainability of new homes/zero carbon homes.			
Data Use/EPCs	We will continue to incorporate Energy Performance Certificate data into the Council's energy efficiency housing stock database to ensure updated information is available to effectively target interventions.	April 2014	
	We will update our stock intelligence by assessing the condition of housing stock, including excess cold, using BRE stock modelling process and Health Impact Assessment.	June 2013	
	We will use our data to identify and prioritise interventions with regard to properties achieving SAP of 35 or below.	June 2013	
	We will continue to ensure that owners are aware of their legal obligation to provide and make available EPCs when selling or letting their homes.	April 2013	

St. Helens Council have continued to purchase the EPC bulk data available through Landmark. This data has been used to update the Council's UNO energy efficiency database. This data is important in allowing the Council to effectively target interventions to those areas most in need of assistance.

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING
Minimum Standards in the Private Rental Sector	The Energy Act 2011 proposes that from April 2018 all private rented dwellings should be brought to a minimum energy efficiency standard rating, likely to be set at "E". We will work with landlords and their prospective tenants to:	April 2013
	highlight the benefits of energy efficiency works;	
	<ul> <li>secure improvements to their homes / properties through signposting to local Green Deal and ECO providers;</li> </ul>	
	secure improvements to their homes through delivery of externally funded grants / loans when available;	
	<ul> <li>encourage landlord participation in the Council's Accreditation scheme which ensures that EPC information is proved to all new tenants;</li> </ul>	
	where necessary, we will take enforcement action against private landlords where they refuse to remove Category 1 Excess Cold Hazards from their property.	

St.Helens Landlords Forum is held annually to provide updates to local landlords on any national housing policy amendments and what responsibilities they may have as landlords to improve housing standards. The Council invite speakers from a variety of organisations including the National Landlords Association. The forums are also used to promote the assistance available through Green Deal, ECO, Green Deal Home Improvement Fund and Council Housing assistance.

Smart Meters	We will make available appropriate information to respond to queries with regard to the national roll out of smart meters by the Utility Companies.	April 2014
	We will identify and develop opportunities to maximise behavioural change following smart meter installation through coordination of Home Improvement Agency advice services.	April 2014

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING	
Progress to March 2015  St. Helens Council are keeping up to date with progress with the smart meter roll out and are aware of Government intentions for all homes and small businesses to have smart meters by 2020. St. Helens Council has staff available to provide advice and support to any residents requiring further information.			
Collective Energy Switching	Using the AGMA contract model, the Council linked into a collective energy switching scheme during January 2013. The Council intends to link into further quarterly energy switching auctions during 2013/14 and will further develop its marketing action plan in order to maximise take up by vulnerable households, including those with pre payment meters.	March 2013	
St. Helens Council are now part of the Liverpool City Region collective energy switching scheme, the 'Switch Together, Save Together' scheme. So far St. Helens Council have been included in two switching rounds, with a third underway at the time of writing. Total savings for St Helens residents from two rounds combined is £51,409.46. The scheme is administered by our project partner Energy Projects Plus, who also provide the Save Energy Advice Line available to all St. Helens residents. The scheme has recently been submitted for an award by Energy Projects Plus has been shortlisted for the National Housing Awards Campaign of the Year.			
Communication/ Marketing	We will develop and annually review a marketing plan (with focus on hearts and minds) to ensure effective promotion of all new and emerging green technologies and available schemes utilising our unique position of trusted brand and data holder.	April 2014	
	We will assist and encourage Council staff and partner organisations to achieve and maintain appropriate skills and knowledge of emerging technologies and available schemes.	April 2014	
	We will ensure effective linkages with other Council Departments / Services i.e. Planning, Building Control, Trading Standards, Health in order to maximise communication regarding emerging technologies and available schemes and to identify those in need of help and refer them to appropriate schemes.	April 2014	

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING
	We will engage with community and voluntary groups, churches and schools to promote green schemes and empower these groups to take lead on promoting Green Deal within their own communities.	April 2014

Working with the Council's marketing team a marketing plan has been developed and updated annually to promote the assistance available to improve the energy efficiency of St. Helens households. The Council's Affordable Warmth Unit (AWU) works with a range of local services and organisations through the St. Helens Fuel Poverty Focus Group. This enables the AWU to promote the assistance available to as many vulnerable residents as possible.

The AWU has also been working closely with St.Helens Public Health, St.Helens CCG, and Integrated Access St.Helens (IASH) IASH is an integrated multi-disciplinary team consisting of Social Workers, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and General Nursing. IASH coordinate and carry out assessments from referral request from health proffessionals, including GP's. IASH have also been undertaking winter warmer checklists for all residents referred to the service, when a client requires assistance with heating, to reduce energy costs or improve the thermal efficiency of their home they are referred on to the AWU. The AWU service has been promoted to GP surgeries in the borough and is all able to refer to the service via IASH.

There has also been additional promotional work undertaken in the area of St.Helens with the highest rates of excess winter death. In this area the GPs agreed to undertake a mailout to their most vulnerable clients to promote the assistance available via the AWU.

# iii) MEASURES WE PROPOSE TO COST EFFECTIVELY DELIVER ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS IN RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION BY USING AREA BASED/STREET BY STREET ROLL OUT

The Council will effectively utilise the data held within the 'UNO' energy efficiency / stock database to develop area based intervention within the highest ranked LSOAs. We will profile the Borough's stock to highlight priority "Hard To Treat" properties by LSOA. We will work strategically with partners to avoid a piecemeal approach.	March 2013
The Council will investigate use of Housing Assistance finance where available to contribute and / or enable energy efficiency measures in priority LSOAs to maximise area interventions.	April 2013

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING
Progress to March 2	015	
The Council has conti	Caribou a number of area based schemes have also been in operation since the further HECA Renued to update the UNO energy efficiency database using the available EPC data and knowledge providers. In addition to using the UNO database the Council has also used the most up to date IM get assistance.	of local improvements
funding, creating a ma	a based work with Caribou it was established from the early stages of the ECO scheme that there also barrier to getting the large scale of work as hoped. In order to overcome this, the Council has uo provide assistance within areas of strategic priority.	
csco	We will target area assistance on homes within those Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which are eligible for assistance under the Carbon Saving Communities Obligation (CSCO) element of the ECO (i.e. those LSOAs that are within the 15% of the highest score on Indices of Multiple Deprivation and areas adjoining these as determined by the Council and in line with DECC requirements.  (See Appendix 1 of St.Helens Council further HECA report 2013)	March 2014
	The Council will work with Registered Providers and their delivery agents to ensure that potential roll out of interventions to the private sector are maximised.	June 2014
Progress to March 2	015	
has been operating in CSCO areas in the bo	It ECO scheme the Council has promoted the assistance available to properties within CSCO area sulation schemes that have provided Cavity Wall and Loft Insulation for many years prior to the updrough have previously been targeted. Therefore the strategic focus in these areas has been on the requiring solid wall insulation.	dated HECA. All of the
Affordable Warmth ECO	We will target assistance to those LSOAs exhibiting the highest level of fuel poverty, as identified through annual analysis of UNO database (See Appendix 2 of St.Helens Council further HECA report 2013)	June 2013

ACTION	DETAILS	TIMING

Using the UNO data base and IMD data a number of areas have been identified and assistance offered to maximise the works available via the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation. A mail out was undertaken in each of the areas identified and followed up with a door knock. In properties where there was a shortfall in funding the Council's Housing Financial grant assistance was provided. Works in these areas included heating and standard insulation measures.

# iv) NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNERS

Registered Providers
Viridis / Local Enterprise Partnership
St Helens Health and Wellbeing Board
EST
NEA
St Helens Chamber
NLA
St Helens CAB
VCO/St Helens Forum
St Helens Ward Councillors
Carbon Action Network
Merseyside HECA Forum
LCR/NW Fuel Poverty Group

# **Progress to March 2015**

Through our work via the St.Helens Fuel Poverty Focus Group we have forged stronger links with existing partners and created new synergies with many other local partners including our local public health, Clinical Commissioning Group, and many GPs

## **Abbreviations**

AGMA Association of Greater Manchester Authorities

**BRE** British Research Establishment

CO<sub>2</sub> Carbon Dioxide

CSCO Carbon Saving Communities Obligation
DECC Department of Energy and Climate Change

DoH Department of Health

ECO Energy Company Obligations
EPC Energy Performance Certificate
HECA Home Energy Conservation Act
IMD Indices of Multiple Deprivation
JSNA Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

LCR Liverpool City Region
LSOA Lower Super Output Area
ONS Office for National Statistics
SAP Standard Assessment Procedure

**UNO** The Council's Energy Software database