

# South Cambridgeshire HECA Report 2021

## Introductory Questions

- *Name of Local Authority*  
South Cambridgeshire District Council
- *Type of Local Authority*  
District Council
- *Name, job title and email address of official submitting report*  
Siobhan Mellon, Development Officer, Climate & Environment  
Siobhan.mellon@scambs.gov.uk

## Headline and Overview

- *Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic or non-domestic properties?*  
Zero Carbon strategy includes sections on Housing and Workplaces
- *If yes, please provide a link*  
<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/nature-and-climate-change/zero-carbon-strategy-and-action-plan/>
- *If no, are you planning to develop one?*  
n/a
- *What scheme(s) is your Local Authority planning to implement in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation properties in the next two years?*
  - 1) The ECO Local Authority Flexible Eligibility scheme**  
We have published a Statement of Intent in which we set out how we will identify low income households eligible for measures through this scheme and are supporting delivery by independent installers by providing declarations of eligibility.
  - 2) The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (GHG LAD) 1b scheme**  
As part of a Cambridgeshire consortium led by Cambridge City Council we are providing energy efficiency measures to park homes through this scheme
  - 3) The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (GHG LAD) 2 scheme**  
We are working with the Greater SE Energy Hub to implement this scheme to provide energy efficiency measures to low income households
  - 4) Ecofurb Low Carbon Home Service** We are working with Parity Projects and RetrofitWorks to support the development of this service in South Cambs
  - 5) Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP)**  
Working with Green Energy Switch and funded through ECO, we have made available this service providing free advice, LED bulbs, draught proofing and radiator panels, and referrals for free loft and cavity wall insulation and other energy efficiency measures

- *What has been, or will be, the cost(s) of running and administering the scheme(s), such as the value of grants and other support made available, plus any other costs incurred (such as administration) as desired.*

The value of grant for capital works to park homes awarded through the GHG LAD1b scheme is £857,062. This is for 100 park homes in South Cambridgeshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire.

The funding allocation for South Cambridgeshire in the GHG LAD2 scheme is £429,578.

The cost of Plan Builder software covering South Cambridgeshire addresses purchased by the Council to support the development of the Ecofurb Low Carbon Home Service was £4,500.

Officer time to support schemes has not been separately costed

- *What businesses, charities, third sector organisations or other stakeholders do you work with to deliver the scheme(s)?*

Cornerstone Ltd for the GHG LAD1b scheme

Agility Eco and Green Energy Switch for the LEAP scheme

RetrofitWorks for the Ecofurb Low Carbon Home Service

- *What has been, or will be, the outcome of the scheme(s)? These outcomes could include energy savings, carbon savings, economic impacts such as job creation and/or increased business competitiveness or societal impacts such as alleviation of fuel poverty and/or improved health outcomes etc.*

All of the above

## Communications

- *Does your Local Authority provide any advisory services to customers on how to save energy?*
- Yes, the Council has a referral scheme aimed at the fuel poor for our residents in private and social housing. LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) is a free energy and money saving advice service. The service is provided by AgilityEco alongside a number of partner organisations. It is delivered in close partnership with Housing Associations and Local Authorities, including South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- We also publish guidance on making historic homes more energy efficient through our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service. We provide free surgeries for owners of historic homes looking to undertake energy efficiency improvements, and held a successful webinar on 'Greening your older home' in February of this year.
- *If yes, please briefly outline how this is undertaken.*
- LEAP offers a free of charge in-home advice visit. The Home Energy Advisors can:
  - install free simple energy saving measures
  - arrange a free money advice consultation
  - help you find funding for further energy saving home improvements
  - check if you are on the best energy tariff
- *How do you communicate or encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers and/or local businesses?*

- Energy saving measures and reducing carbon emissions are promoted and communicated via our own Council website, social media platforms, Tenant & Leaseholder News Articles, South Cambs magazine and wider District publications.  
In addition to the LEAP, we promoted the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme through our residents' magazine and in targeted social media posts.

### **Local Green Supply Chain**

- *Have you made any assessment, or undertaken any analysis of the existing capacity in your local energy efficiency retrofit supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings by 2050? If Yes, please summarise the outcomes.*  
We have not undertaken any formal assessments due to business team focus on supporting pandemic recovery efforts over the past 10 months. We are currently building and formalising relationships with the CleanTech community (e.g. including Cambridge CleanTech and University partners) who we will lean on heavily to support future retrofit/energy supply chain initiatives.
- *What actions are you taking, if any, to upskill and/or grow the local energy efficiency installer supply chain? This could include the facilitation of training, and local installer networking opportunities.*  
We will be working with the Combined Authority's recently formed skills team, alongside colleagues and partners from the Greater Cambridge Partnership to ensure existing suppliers and those potentially interested in working in the sector have access to various forms of support, whether vouchers/grant related initiatives, Kickstart/apprenticeship or other training possibilities and digital upskilling to help companies expedite their sales and marketing capabilities if required. We are also actively building relationships with local business networks such as the Federation of Small Business and Chambers of Commerce in order to help with developing supply chain connections.
- *What actions are you taking, if any, to promote energy efficiency and the installer supply chain to consumers, and encourage households to consider energy retrofit?*  
The business team promotes all green/clean energy related business news to our local business database, a bi-weekly newsletter of which reaches over 2,000 local businesses. More work will be needed in due course to facilitate more of a connect between what households can and should be doing before 2050 and what the local supply chain can offer.
- *If no action is taking place in either of these two areas, please let us know of any barriers you have encountered.*  
Barriers to date include insufficient Council resource dedicated to overseeing these areas and clarity of initiative ownership where multiple team stakeholders are likely to be involved. Covid has also seen Officers redeployed / focussing on crisis related priorities rather than being able to take a proactive and medium-long term planning view for 2030 and beyond. Inevitably, as we start to move out of crisis response to recovery, strategic and operational plans for a green recovery will be a must. Early scoping work is in progress as part of our revised business strategy 2021-2022.
- *How effectively is your LA able to engage (Trustmark/PAS2035/PAS2030 certified) installers? n/a*

- *Do you have any plans to develop policies or initiatives in this space over the next five years as part of supporting your local decarbonisation efforts?*

A green recovery is very much part of our short-medium and long-term vision and Council strategy. Accordingly, ongoing focus will be given to initiatives that bolster green jobs, green supply chains, accelerate the retrofit agenda, support greener travel and ultimately, ensure we achieve our obligations as a District by 2050.

## **Social Housing**

- *What action, if any, has your LA taken to install energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures in social housing? Have these been installed to a satisfactory quality? What actions (if any) have your social housing partners taken?*

The Council has successfully completed a number of quality energy efficiency measures:

- Installation of external wall insulation (EWI) to its Solid wall properties to improve thermal efficiency.
  - Old fossil fuelled Oil fired, and solid fuel heating systems have been replaced with high efficiency Air Source heat pumps
  - Photo Voltaic panels have been installed on some 2500 properties
  - Smart heating controls have been retrofitted and incorporated into new heating installation specifications
  - Highly efficient and controllable quantum electric storage heater systems are being installed in electrically heated properties, particularly bungalows
  - All properties are fitted with double glazed windows. Replacement of older windows with new windows fitted with energy efficient triple glazing is now underway.
  - Front and rear entrance doors are being replaced with highly efficient draught proofed composite doors.
  - Where it is identified that loft insulation is either lacking or significantly less than it should be, this will be increased to a minimum of 300mm.
  - Loft insulation in all vacant properties will be brought up to a minimum 300mm before the property is re-let.
- *Do you have easy access to the information/knowledge within your organisation that you would expect to need for social housing retrofit projects? (e.g. stock condition; property data; approach to procurement; alignment with existing internal maintenance/upgrade plans; tenant engagement and management plans; costings)*  
Yes, we asked Savills Associates to complete an Energy Audit of our stock which was completed in April 2020. We also plan to complete a Stock Condition Survey which will commence later this year and complement two previous Stock Condition Surveys.

We recently transferred our Asset data to Orchard Asset Management System from Keystone

- *If no, would it be easy/difficult to obtain this information?*
- *Have you experienced any challenges to retrofit, including during any previous government schemes you have taken part in (e.g. supply chain, funding, tenant cooperation, mixed tenure, split incentive, policy clarity, etc)? Please provide some detail. Have social housing partners reported any challenges to retrofit?*  
Yes we have experienced some tenants refusing to have energy efficient measures completed to their home. We have continued to engage with these customers on a

regular basis to check whether their views have changed. Where it has not been possible for us to invest in our properties the work will be completed when it becomes empty.

- *How does your LA currently/how will your LA in future plan to go about identifying suitable housing stock and measures for retrofit? How do social housing partners identify suitable stock? By the same measures or via a different method?*  
We have entered into a collaboration project with a company called NetZero. A small sample of our stock is being monitored through data loggers which look at heat loss and energy consumption. Once this data is assessed retrofit works will be specified that make the properties more energy efficient and reduce carbon emissions. The performance of these measures will continue to be monitored allowing us then move forward with retrofit programmes at scale.
- *What considerations would make you more or less likely to apply for government funding? If known, what is the opinion of your social housing partners?*  
Current government funding process is far too onerous and difficult to access.
- *To what extent are social housing tenants willing or unwilling to undergo retrofit, and what are the barriers and facilitators to their participation? If known, is this the same opinion across all social housing tenants or is it different with HA and ALMO tenants?*  
Vast majority of tenants are willing to accept improvements to their homes, generally the older generation are less likely as they do not want any disruption even with the benefits explained.
- *Does the approach to retrofit change for leaseholders in mixed tenure blocks? What encourages them to co-operate?*  
Leaseholders are more likely to engage as improvements will benefit their home and asset value

#### **Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards**

- *Is your authority aware of the PRS Minimum Efficiency Standards regulations requiring private rentals in England and Wales to meet a minimum energy performance rating of EPC Band E as of April 2020, unless a valid exemption applies?*  
Yes
- *Which team within your authority is responsible for, leading on enforcement of the PRS minimum standard? Please provide the contact details of the person leading this team.*  
Lesley Beevers 01954 713134 [lesley.beevers@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.beevers@scambs.gov.uk)
- *What method or methods does your authority use to communicate with landlords and tenants about the standards and other related issues?*  
No proactive contact with landlords and tenants
- *What barriers, if any, does your local authority face enforcing these regulations (e.g. identifying non-compliant properties/landlords, budgeting/resourcing, any legal issues)?*  
Identifying properties that aren't compliant; resourcing has also been an issue
- *Do you directly target landlords of EPC F and G rated properties to enforce these regulations? If yes, how? If no, please explain.*  
No, because of the issues in the point above

### **Financial Support for Energy Efficiency**

Where possible, please set out your answers to the following questions by tenure (owner occupied, privately rented, or social housing).

- *What financial programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency or energy saving? If applicable please outline the budget (and % of the budget that is used), where such funding is sourced and where it is targeted.*

LEAP

No financial programmes for owner occupied or private rented other than Green Homes Grant funding.

- *What future investment for energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures do you have planned, and when are these investments planned for?*

The Council has an ongoing commitment and investment to carbon reduction and promoting the installation of renewable energy products within its housing stock. Retrofitting of Smart energy heating controls, installation of ground and air source heat pumps in suitable properties. The data from our energy audit and stock condition survey along with the results of the NetZero project will allow us take forward programmes at scale.

### **Fuel Poverty**

- *Does your Local Authority have a Fuel Poverty Strategy?*

South Cambridgeshire DC does not have a fuel poverty strategy. However, tackling fuel poverty is integral to the Health & Wellbeing Strategy. In July 2020 we partnered with an external agency to deliver fuel poverty services to all residents. An inter-departmental steering group was set up in February 2021 to share information on grants and initiatives and to help to identify residents at risk. One of the longer-term aims of the steering group will be to develop a Fuel Poverty Strategy.

- *What steps have you taken to identify residents/properties in fuel poverty? What blockers, if any, have there been in identifying households in fuel poverty?*

A Fuel Poverty Steering group has been organised to share information across the council and discuss means in which more “at risk” families can be identified; the Covid-19 pandemic has helped identify some vulnerable residents as a result of the increase in food bank requests. However, inter-departmental blockages prevent opportunities to share data as a result of GDPR regulations.

- *How does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority’s overall Carbon Reduction Strategy?*

There are close links with the Council’s Zero Carbon Strategy. We are in the process of upgrading out-of-date heating systems such as storage heating in our own housing stock and replacing them with more efficient forms of heating such as air source heat pumps.

- *Please highlight any fuel poverty issues specific to your area.*

High cost of housing; and many rural homes not connected to the gas mains and still reliant on oil fired central heating.

- *What measures or initiatives have you taken to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty? Include information on partnerships with local businesses or energy providers you have.*
  - Partnerships with Green Energy Switch Via LEAP
  - Age UK Handy Persons Service
  - Raising the issue within GP practices and referrals to LEAP

### **Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery**

*Of the £2bn Green Homes Grant scheme introduced in summer 2020, £500m was assigned for Local Authority Delivery (LAD). LAD enables Local Authorities to bid for grant funding to support low income households in their area with energy efficiency and low carbon heating upgrades. £200m was made available through Local Authority grant competitions in 2020, known as phases 1A and 1B and £300m was allocated under Phase 2 between the five regional Local Energy Hubs.*

- *Has your Local Authority Participated in GHG: LAD? ○ If yes, please indicate which phase you participated in and briefly outline the project.*  
We are participating in GHG LAD 1b. As part of a Cambridgeshire consortium led by Cambridge City Council, we are providing energy efficiency measures to park homes through this scheme.  
  
We are in the early stages of working with the Greater SE Energy Hub to implement GHG LAD2.
- *If no, please indicate what barriers prevented you from participation in the scheme.*  
n/a
- *Would your Local Authority be in a position to manage the delivery of upgrades through a scheme such as LAD in 2022? ○ If yes, please indicate the anticipated number of homes that could be upgraded per year.*  
We are collaborating with neighbouring local authorities and with the Greater Southeast Energy Hub and are currently in discussion to determine the best approach for this area.
- *If no, please indicate what barriers would prevent you from delivering upgrades in your area.*

### **The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)**

*The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by installing energy saving measures. Following the Spring 2018 consultation, the Government set out in its response that ECO3 will fully focus on Affordable Warmth – low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households. The ECO “Local Authority flexible eligibility” (LA Flex) programme allows LAs to make declarations determining that certain households in fuel poverty or with occupants on low incomes and vulnerable to the effects of cold homes, are referred to ECO obligated suppliers for support under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO.*  
*LAs involved in the LA Flex programme are required to issue a Statement of Intent that they are going to identify households as eligible, and the criteria they are going to use; and a declaration that the LA has been consulted on the installation of measures in a home.*

- *Has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility?*  
Yes

*Please answer the following questions to help us to understand LA Flex delivery in more detail:*

- *How many declarations were issued for low income vulnerable households?*  
105 at 27/04/21
- *How many declarations were issued for Fuel Poor households?*  
38 at 27/04/21 (NB many of the households for which low income vulnerable declarations are provided are also fuel poor)
- *How many declarations were issued for in-fill?*  
0
- *What is the highest income cap published in your Sol?*  
£30,000 net of taxes for a couple
- *If you have used an income over £30k gross, what reason have you given?*  
n/a
- *Do you charge for declarations to be signed? If so, please state how much?*  
No

### **Smart Metering**

- *Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to promote smart meter take up and supporting residents to achieve benefits.*  
None
- *Please provide further information on activities relating to smart metering, including but not limited to:*
  - Integrating approaches to delivering energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation*
  - Arranging for smart meters to be installed by energy suppliers in vacant social housing premises*
  - Using social landlords to promote smart meter uptake*
  - Including smart meters in landlord licencing schemes*
  - Supporting residents who have had appliances condemned for safety reasons*
  - Other supporting activities*
n/a

### **Future Schemes and Wider Incentives**

- *Please outline any further schemes or wider initiatives not covered above that your local authority has carried out or is planning to undertake to improve energy efficiency in residential accommodation.*  
We are working with Parity Projects Ltd and not-for-profit delivery partner RetrofitWorks to support the extension of the **Ecofurb Low Carbon Home Service** into South Cambs. This one-stop-shop retrofit service for the able-to-pay market has been piloted in London with funding from BEIS. We have funded a one-year licence for PlanBuilder software for South Cambridgeshire. This allows our residents to explore their options for energy improvements using the software. If they wish, they can then engage with Ecofurb to get more detailed advice and support to complete relevant works.