

**Three Rivers District Council
Home Energy Conservation Authority (HECA)
Progress Report 2017-2019**

Introduction

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) recognises that local authorities are uniquely placed to assess and improve the energy efficiency in residential accommodation. Reports were published in 2013 and 2015 setting out how Three Rivers District Council would achieve this. A progress report is required every 2 years. This report sets out how Three Rivers District Council has progressed since the last HECA report (2015-17) and also sets out actions and priorities for next 2 years for home energy conservation.

Background

Three Rivers is a blend of countryside and quiet villages mixed with bustling small towns.

A majority of the housing in the area is either made up of old original small towns and villages or is part of two major development phases, one of which was the building of 'Metro-land' homes in the 1920s and 1930s when the Metropolitan Railway came to Moor Park, Rickmansworth, Chorleywood, and then Croxley Green and a similar style of homes in Oxhey Hall. The other major development, South Oxhey, was built by the London County Council in the 1950s and 60s. More recently, old industrial brownfield sites have been converted and redeveloped with modern homes and there have been gradual additions and infill to settlements.

Strategic Overview

One of the four major thematic areas of activity in the Council's Strategic Plan for 2016-19 is Clean and Green – we want to maintain a high quality local environment and reduce the eco-footprint of the district. Specifically, this includes an objective to minimise energy consumption, reduce CO₂ emissions and increase the use of renewable energy.

The Three Rivers Housing Strategy seeks to improve the standard of housing including improving energy efficiency and affordable warmth across all tenures.

The Council's Green Expectations Strategy (March 2015) seeks to tackle the effects and impacts of climate change and to improve sustainability and the environment. The strategy includes objectives to:

- Minimise greenhouse gas emissions from new developments in the District in line with our Local Plan
- Encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from existing properties in the District in line with our Home Energy Conservation Act priorities.

Further to the strategy, the Council has committed to taking action in a changing climate by signing the Local Government Association Climate Local Commitment.

Three Rivers Home Energy Efficiency Progress

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Emissions

The latest data for 2014¹ indicates that the per capita domestic CO₂ emissions rate for Three Rivers was 1.95 tonnes per person. This is a fall of around 17% from 2.4 tonnes the previous year, in line with the national trend, due to a warmer winter requiring less heating and also less coal for electricity generation in 2014². Emissions are nearly 30% lower per capita than those reported in 2005 but are slightly higher than the national and Hertfordshire averages of 1.7 tonnes per person. This may in part be due to the type of properties in the District, with a higher than average proportion detached or semi-detached and a smaller proportion of flats or terraces³.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty is now recorded using the low income and high cost (LIHC) definition. Under this definition of Fuel Poverty, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- it has required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level)
- were it to spend that amount, it would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

The District has a lower than average level of fuel poverty of 7.1% or 2,559 of households, in 2014 (the latest data available). However, it should be noted that this level varies across the District from between 3.3% and 10.8%. This is a reduction from 8% and indicates that 310 fewer households were in fuel poverty compared to the previous year. This is compared to a Hertfordshire average of 7.5% and an East of England average of 8.4%. The average for England of 10.6% of households, which was a slight increase on the previous year.⁴

The District is generally affluent but it does contain some areas which have multiple indices of deprivation, including one Lower Super Output Area within the highest 10% of deprived areas nationally. There is some correlation between fuel poverty and deprivation, as the more deprived areas also often have a higher than average fuel poverty level. However, even a very affluent area in the District, in the lowest 5% of deprivation in the country, is estimated to contain 9.4% of homes in fuel poverty. This is in part because areas with older housing stock are likely to have higher costs for fuel and therefore those in that area with a lower income are at risk of fuel poverty. Conversely areas with modern, energy-efficient homes will have lower costs and therefore be less likely to experience fuel poverty.

There has been some recent variation in the rate of Excessive Winter Mortality in the District. The most recent data for 2014/15 estimated that there were 70 excessive

¹ Department of Energy and Climate Change - UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2014>

² Department of Energy and Climate Change - 2014 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496942/2014_Final_Emissions_Statistics_Release.pdf

³ Census 2011- Accommodation Type, Households

⁴ Sub Regional Fuel Poverty England 2014, Low Income High Costs (LIHC) Definition, DECC <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2014-sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-low-income-high-costs-indicator>

winter deaths, which was 27.4% above the average non-winter deaths. In the previous year there were only an estimated 10 excessive deaths but this was a significant drop from the reported 70 the year before (2012/13). Before that the rate was generally estimated be around 30 to 50 per annum. Nationally, 2014/15 saw the highest excess winter mortality since 1999/2000 with 43,850. Provisional data has shown that the number of Excess Winter Deaths has fallen to 24,300 nationally in 2015/16 but information is not yet available at Local Authority area level. It is also noted that the number of excess winter deaths for local areas is relatively small. Calculations based on small numbers of events are often subject to random fluctuations. There is no consistent pattern across local areas in England and Wales. So one local area may have a really high level one year, compared with neighbouring areas, but then will be about the same or much lower in other years.

Excess Winter Mortality⁵.

	Mean winter temp in degrees C	Three Rivers (EWM and Index*)	England and Wales (EWM and Index*)
2015/16	6.2	n/a	24,300 (14.7)
2014/15	4.8	70 (27.4)	43,850 (27.0)
2013/14	6.2	10 (5.1)	17,460 (11.2)
2012/13	3.4	70 (29.2)	31,280 (19.4)
2011/12	5.8	30 (11.2)	24,200 (15.3)
2010/11	4.0	40 (16.4)	26,080 (16.7)
1999/2000	5.5	90	48,440 (28.0)

*EWM index is calculated as the number of excess winter deaths divided by the average non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage.

It is noted that respiratory diseases cause the most excess winter deaths⁶. Cold homes can affect or exacerbate a range of health problems including respiratory problems, circulatory problems and increased risk of poor mental health. Interventions to improve the energy efficiency of the home, including insulation and central heating upgrades, are likely to lead to warmer homes and to reduce cold home-related ill-health.⁷

As part of the Herts Healthy Homes initiative, 77 vulnerable households in Three Rivers have received a free energy efficiency advice home visit since October 2014.

The Council's long running 'Beat the Killer Cold' campaign also provides extra help to residents of pensionable age and on qualifying benefits who are in need in the District. 121 households were helped by the scheme in the winter of 2015/16 and 115 in 2016/17.

⁵ Office for National Statistics - Excess winter mortality data, England and Wales, 2015/16 (provisional) and 2014/15 (final)
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/excesswintermortalityinenglandandwalesreferencetables>

⁶ Office for National Statistics - Excess winter mortality in England and Wales: 2015/16 (provisional) and 2014/15 (final)
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/excesswintermortalityinenglandandwales/2015to2016provisionaland2014to2015final>

⁷ Public Health England - Local action on health inequalities: Fuel Poverty and cold home-related health problems
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355790/Briefing_7_Fuel_poverty_health_inequalities.pdf

Fuel Poverty issues are addressed through a combination of resources in the Community Partnerships, Sustainability and Residential Environmental Health teams and aims within the Community Strategy, Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and Housing Strategy. Furthermore, the Herts Healthy Homes/Safe and Well visits and the proposed Warmer Homes scheme, whilst concentrating on the health of vulnerable residents, will help those who are in fuel poverty.

Energy Efficient Measures

In 2014-15 308 new homes were built in the Three Rivers District and a further 243 were built in 2015-16, all of which were required to submit a 'CPLAN Energy and Sustainability Statement'.⁸ These statements needed to demonstrate how the development will produce 5% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part I requirements, having regard to feasibility and viability.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. Under the scheme, larger energy suppliers have to deliver energy efficiency measures to homes. As of September 2016, 1,102 households in Three Rivers were in receipt of 1,280 ECO measures. Further, 43 households benefited from the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund before the scheme ended.⁹

	Up to March 2015	April 2015 - Sept 2016	Total
ECO measures	778	503	1,280
ECO households	659	443	1,102
Green Deal Home Improvement Fund	6	37	43

In 2015/16 Three Rivers District Council, in partnership with Thrive Homes and with the help of Green Deal Communities Funding managed by the National Energy Foundation, installed external wall insulation to 115 'hard to treat', 'Wimpy no fines' homes. This was the second phase to an earlier project with Watford Community Housing Trust which insulated 74 homes. The estate was split between Three Rivers and Watford Borough Council areas and in total 286 properties on the estate were insulated, 130 in Phase 1 and 156 in Phase 2.

Boundary Way External Wall Insulation

	Private	Housing Association	Total
2013/14 (with WCHT)	35	39	74
2015/16 (with Thrive Homes)	53	62	115
Total	88	101	189

Changes to the ECO scheme will mean that from April 2017 local authorities will be able to determine eligible homes under the new flexible eligibility mechanism, known as 'ECO Flex'. Suppliers will be able to use this voluntarily for up to 10% of their Affordable Warmth obligation which focuses on low income and vulnerable people. The Affordable Warmth obligation will account for 70% of the estimated £640m

⁸ Annual Monitoring Report 2014-15 and 2015-16 Three Rivers District Council
<http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/annual-monitoring-report>

⁹ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - Household Energy Efficiency National Statistics <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-energy-efficiency-national-statistics-headline-release-february-2017>

available per annum. The Government intends that flexible eligibility for local authorities should help delivery of the scheme and in particular, for two main categories of private tenure household that may otherwise be excluded under Affordable Warmth:

- Fuel poor households, in particular, those which are not in receipt of eligible benefits; and
- Low income households which are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home¹⁰

Following publishing of the Government guidance to local authorities, Three Rivers District Council will seek to declare the households which are eligible under these criteria.

Awareness

Promotion of energy efficiency has included a Home Insulation Guide. Home energy efficiency advice was provided also on the Council website, on the bespoke 'Greenourherts.org.uk' website, in *Three Rivers Times* delivered to all households, through social media, at events and in the Environment Newsletter.

Renewable Energy

As of December 2016, 557 households in Three Rivers had installed Solar PV capacity of 1,656kw and were claiming a Feed-in Tariff¹¹. This is equivalent to 151.3 per 10,000 households which is low compared to the national average of 278.7.

Between April 2014 and December 2016 there were 27 accredited Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) installations in the District¹². RHI is applicable to a range of technologies such as biomass boilers, small solar thermal, ground and air source heat pumps, and CHP (combined heat and power)

¹⁰https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586260/ECO_Help_to_Heat_Government_response_FINAL_26_Jan_17.pdf

¹¹ BEIS Sub-national Feed-in Tariff Statistics <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/sub-regional-feed-in-tariffs-confirmed-on-the-cfr-statistics>

¹² BEIS RHI Deployment Data: December 2016 and Q4 2016
www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rhi-deployment-data-december-2016

Progress and Action Plan

In order to improve home energy efficiency in the District actions and priorities for 2015-17 were proposed. Progress against these actions is indicated below and future actions for 2017-19 are set out:

Key:




Good progress







Limited progress





No progress

Action	2015-2017	Timing	Progress 2015-2017	Action 2017-19
ECO and Home Energy Efficiency Measures	<p>A new partnership with Thrive Homes and Watford Borough Council was established to externally insulate a further 170 homes. Due to the change in ECO funding this project later secured DECC Green Deal Communities funding as well as additional funding provided by the partners.</p> <p>The promotion of any Green Deal successor scheme will be considered, once it has been determined.</p>	April 2017-Sept 2018	 <p>156 Wimpy No Fines homes in were insulated in 2015/16 of which 115 were in Three Rivers.</p> <p>Since the last HECA report there has been no replacement scheme to Green Deal announced.</p> <p>Between April 2015 and September 2016, 503 ECO measures were installed in the District.</p>	<p>Promote ECO and any other available funding for energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>From April 2017 'ECO Flex' will allow a Local Authority to provide a declaration to an energy supplier that the Authority had determined a household, or a number of households, as eligible for funding. Following publishing of the Government guidance to local authorities, including the criteria to be used to identify the desired target groups, Three Rivers District Council will seek to declare the households which are eligible under these criteria. See later action to identify potential areas.</p>

<p>Reducing Carbon from New Homes</p>	<p>Applications will continue to be assessed through C-Plan to ensure they comply with the policy to demonstrate that development will produce 5% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L requirements (2013) as set out in the Three Rivers District Council Local Plan. To show that these will be met, Three Rivers is leading the way by requiring applications to submit a 'CPLAN Energy and Sustainability Statement' demonstrating the extent to which sustainability principles have been incorporated into the location, design, construction and future use proposals, and the expected carbon emissions.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	 <p>551 new homes were built in the District in 2014-16.</p> <p>From 21 March 2016 C-Plan was no longer available in Three Rivers. From this date, applicants have been required to submit an Energy Statement demonstrating the extent to which relevant proposals meet the requirements of Policy DM4 of the Development Management Policies document. This is required before an application is Validated.</p> <p>All applications are required to meet the policy and for major applications the Sustainable Projects Officer is also consulted.</p>	<p>Assessment of Energy Statements for development proposals to ensure they comply with the policy to demonstrate that development will produce 5% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L requirements (2013) as set out in the Three Rivers District Council Local Plan.</p> <p>Consult Sustainable Projects Officer on major applications.</p>
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Home Energy Efficiency Awareness	To promote the benefits energy efficiency measures generally.	Ongoing	 <p>Energy Efficiency has continued to be promoted through Three Rivers Times, on the Council website, on the Green our Herts website, through the Environment Newsletter and through social media.</p> <p>A Home Insulation Guide was produced in conjunction with other Hertfordshire authorities.</p>	Promote the benefits of home energy efficiency activity and measures, including smart meter technology, to help residents manage their energy use.
Identification of areas for funding opportunities		Ongoing	 <p>EPC data has been mapped.</p>	<p>EPC data and maps will be used to identify key areas for potential future schemes.</p> <p>Opportunities for future schemes will be considered depending on availability of funding.</p>
Warmer Homes	New project	Sept 2017-Sept 2018	 <p>The Warmer Homes project and core funding has been approved by Public Health and will be overseen by the Housing Quality Working Group.</p>	TRDC will work together with other districts and the County Council to install energy efficiency measures to low income private households. The project is aimed primarily at those living in excess cold with serious health implications.

<p>Keep Warm, Stay Well</p>	<p>We will continue to work together with partners including home energy efficiency visits, and bid for funding when available.</p> <p>Continued monitoring of Excessive Winter Deaths.</p>	<p>2017/18</p>	 <p>Keep Warm Stay Well was rebranded to Herts Healthy Homes and 77 vulnerable households have received a free energy efficiency advice home visit since October 2014. The Herts Healthy Homes project is now closing and is being replaced with Safe and Well visits.</p> <p>Beat the Killer Cold provided assistance to 121 households in 2015/16 and 115 in 2016/17.</p> <p>Excessive winter deaths fell to just 10 in 20 in 2013/14 before rising again, in line with the national trend, to 70 in 2014/15.</p>	<p>Promote Safe and Well visits, a joint initiative run by the county council's fire and rescue service and public health department, which will to give advice to vulnerable residents on a range of health issues including keeping a home warm enough and will point them towards the specialist support services available. Where appropriate residents will be directed to the new Warmer Homes project.</p> <p>The Beat the Killer Cold scheme will continue to support those of pensionable age on qualifying benefits who apply for assistance.</p>
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<p>Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector</p>		<p>2017-18</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Housing standards are currently enforced across the District and, following clarification of requirements, an assessment will be undertaken regarding any implications on staffing and resources, as a result of the requirements from the 1st April 2018 for any properties rented out in the private rented sector to normally have a minimum energy performance rating of E on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for new lets and renewals and the imposition of a civil penalty for breaches.</p>
<p>Hertfordshire Building Futures</p>	<p>Guidance is available to help maximise sustainability and practical tips to meet policy requirements in 'Building Futures: A Hertfordshire Guide to Promoting Sustainability in Development.'</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> Guidance is signposted.</p>	<p>Guidance is available to help maximise sustainability and practical tips to meet policy requirements in 'Building Futures: A Hertfordshire Guide to Promoting Sustainability in Development.'</p>