

Redditch Borough Council HECA Report 2017-19

Introduction

The Borough of Redditch is in Worcestershire, approximately 15 miles south of Birmingham. The Borough has a population of 84,500 with a higher percentage of young people (age 0-15 years) compared with the rest of the County. There is a very diverse population within the Borough and there are four areas that are within in the top 10% most deprived in England.

The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change requires local authorities in England to provide an update report every two years setting out the energy conservation measures that the authority considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in the area. This report builds on previous reports setting out how Redditch Borough Council intends to help householders take advantage of financial incentives such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), Feed in Tariff (FIT) and any other schemes that became available. In addition it will also provide information on funding sourced and provided by the council.



Summary

Since HECA was first introduced Redditch Borough Council has submitted annual reports to the Secretary of State from 1997 until 2011 defining any progress made towards the assumed target of a 30% improvement in energy efficiency in domestic property in our district. With the introduction of additional specific targets under Local Area Agreements we delivered programs and works for energy efficiency, fuel poverty and carbon performance.

We are now in our third reporting stage for the revitalised HECA and this report will detail projects and work we have delivered since the last report in 2015 and will also detail our plans for the next two years to address home energy related issues across our district.

With the introduction of Green Deal in the Energy Act 2010 and the further energy supplier obligations under ECO, the council has supported Act on Energy (a local energy efficiency charity) and continues to support them in creating a referral network to local contractors who can access ECO and other funding sources, this included Green Deal Finance until its demise in 2015. This network will continue into the future to make the installation of appropriate improvement measures as seamless and cost effective as possible. The council does not have the resources to employ a full time HECA Officer and the appointed officer shares this duty with other duties. The officer is supported through a service level agreement with Act on Energy to provide information advice and guidance to both our staff and residents, through a combination of telephone support, community events and home visits providing an end to end journey for residents and ensuring some of our most vulnerable households are supported throughout their energy journey. This present's excellent value for money as it is a service shared with 12 other local authorities and specifically set up to support local authorities to deliver their obligations under HECA.

The Council is also a partner within the wider Warmer Worcestershire network which has been operating in its current form since 2008. This group provides a number of services such as help and advice, practical

support such as boiler/heating replacement, emergency heaters, support for loft and cavity wall insulation, benefit checks to maximise income and practical services from local agencies including home visits, snow clearing, shopping and transport. The group is co-ordinated by the County Council and Act on Energy and utilises the services of agencies across the county. The network has also been successful in bidding for funds through public health, DECC (Green Deal Communities) and most recently NEA Warm and Healthy Homes Fund.

Strategic Ambitions

Redditch Council Plan (2017-2020) sets out the strategic purpose for the borough over the next three years. Redditch Borough Council is committed to providing residents with effective and efficient services that not only meet their needs but understand them too. We have listened to demand from our customers in order to understand what goes on in our communities and considered how we work with partners to support the issues within those communities. Through considering what really matters to our residents we produced a set of seven strategic purposes to guide us; they are based on customer demands and data and evidence about the needs of and issues affecting the people of Redditch Borough.

Our work on energy flows throughout our 'Strategic Purposes' but as part of the strategic purpose 'help me to be financially independent' we are actively promoting work to support a reduction in fuel poverty:



- Work with partners to improve energy efficiency across the Borough
- Work with Act on Energy to support people to manage energy effectively
- Provide funding to improve homes to reduce fuel poverty

In order to deliver our Strategic Purposes we are working differently with partners. Redditch Partnership, the local strategic partnership for Redditch Borough, brings together representatives from public, private, community and voluntary agencies to work together effectively to deliver a range of local projects, services and initiatives. The Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy, developed by the partnership, sets out the four key partnership priorities for the Borough. These are:

- Health inequalities - with particular focus on smoking, obesity alcohol/drugs, and mental health;
- Education attainment and raising aspirations of young people;
- Developing the economy of Redditch; and leading on transformational change of services for citizens in Redditch

The wider Council Plan contributes to the delivery of these partnership priorities and the Redditch Partnership is a key stakeholder in developing and supporting new ways of working.

In addition we are working with countywide partners and have developed a Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan. This document will be the overarching plan for setting strategic direction for housing across Worcestershire. This plan is currently in draft but is going through the council's approval process. The plan has three jointly identified priorities that will be delivered to provide a cost effective solution which will focus on system change to meet customer need in the best way. These priorities are:

- Drive the growth of the right type of homes (to promote opportunity)
- Improve homes and, "transform places"
- Create a partnership approach to enable people to live as independently as possible (prevention/early intervention)

The following elements of the report detail how we have and how we will address some of our strategic actions in relation to Home Energy.

Partnerships

To ensure that we can reach the wide and varied homes across the district and are able to continue our important progress towards our goal of achieving a significant reduction in energy use in domestic homes across the district. It is important to continue and further develop our work with partners and use a number of different channels to ensure we reach out to all of our residents in a joined up and effective way. Some samples of our partnerships include:

Green Deal Communities Group

This is a countywide group and builds on a previous work to deliver extensive external wall insulation across both the borough and county from our successful Green Deal Communities bid of £3.6million. This enabled us to install External Wall Insulation in over 120 properties across the district.

Redditch Sustainable Community Partnership

Redditch Partnership is responsible for producing and delivering the Redditch Sustainable



Community Strategy. This document sets out the vision of Redditch Partnership for the next three years, and outlines the work that members of the partnership have committed to deliver; this includes delivery of energy efficiency works through a combination of information, advice, guidance and physical interventions. This help to deliver our priorities of the boroughs residents.

Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership

The aims of the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership (WSHP) is to ensure that wide range of high quality housing and related services are available across all sectors of the house market, which is secure, affordable, of a high standard and meets varying and changing needs and aspirations.

Poor and unsuitable housing circumstances affect our physical health and mental health. Providing the right home environment protects health and wellbeing, reduces hospital admissions, aids rapid recovery from periods of ill health and enables people to live at home longer. Under the Care Act 2012 there is a requirement for closer cooperation of services that support the health and wellbeing of those who may be in need of care and support. Working together we will seek to address housing need and achieve the wider benefits to partner organisations.

The group comprises of a range of strategic partners including; Adult Services & Health, Children's Services, Quality Leads from the Clinical Commissioning Groups, CRC, Homes & Communities Agency, 2 reps from Registered Social Landlords, Local Authorities Strategic Housing Officers, Community Safety Partnership Lead, Chair of the Worcestershire Delivery Group, Third Sector representative, Department of Works and Pensions.

Warmer Worcestershire

This group aims to deliver reductions in both fuel poverty and carbon emissions through improved energy efficiency across the housing stock. The membership of the group consists of the six district councils, county council, Act on Energy, Age UK and public health. The group has recently redrafted our Countywide Fuel Poverty Plan which is due to be ratified by the Health and Well Being Board this spring.



Local Authority Consortium Groups

We are a key member of the Act on Energy Local Authority Consortium Group and Association of Local Energy Officers which identify and share best practice in energy efficiency with other local authorities on both a regional and sub regional basis. These groups not only allow us to share experiences but enable us to feed into consultations and provide a link through to BEIS through the ALEO Executive.



Worcestershire Heat Network Group

We worked with a range of partners to commission a heat mapping exercise of Worcestershire to understand where heat is most used by the private and public sector. Heat demand mapping across Worcestershire included the identification of heat demand “hot spots”. These are areas with concentrated heat demand that have the potential for the development of a heat network which were then considered further as part of the energy master planning stage.

Achievement since last reporting period 2015 – 2017

Over the last two years we have undertaken a number of activities to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. Many of these initiatives provide information, advice and guidance through a variety of routes including at flu jab clinics, front-line staff training, community presentations and advice surgeries to give bespoke advice on managing fuel bills, energy efficiency products and grants available. A summary of some of the more major projects are set out below:

Boilers on Prescription

Through our Warmer Worcestershire Partnership we have been running a boiler on prescription programme. This combined funding from the Better Care Fund with redress funding through National Energy Action (NEA). The programme offered replacement heating systems for households at risk of fuel poverty where a resident has a long term health condition that could be made worse by living in a cold, damp home. Investment from the Better Care Fund is expected to provide a return on investment of around 5 years for NHS and Social Care service benefits. For our district we have supported 13 residents with new heating systems and have improved their average EPC ratings. In addition to this we are delivering our own ongoing programme as detailed below.

Redditch Energy Efficiency Fund



This fund was set up in 2016 to support a whole house approach to energy efficiency, with a focus on households on low incomes and with in-efficient systems. The scheme provides replacement and first time heating for owner occupiers along with loft and cavity wall insulation if appropriate. In addition the scheme also helps with servicing and repair costs. The fund is long term to provide continuity of support. 21 households have so far benefitted from the fund. The average SAP rating improvement is 15 SAP points. This moves the average household from a Band E to Band C, which would be in line with the government 2030 target.

Delivering External Wall Insulation (EWI) through Green Deal Communities

We have been working with our partners to continue to deliver EWI across our district. Through close partnerships with Worcestershire County Council, Act on Energy and the energy supplier (EON) we engaged with 230 households to encourage improved energy efficiency and to enable 121 residents to have EWI with funding of £606,726 leveraged in for Redditch residents.



Delivering Energy Efficiency Works in Our Own Stock

We are continually improving our stock and have delivered a number of significant programmes over the last two years. One of the most of these schemes is the continuation of EWI utilising funding from ECO. We have recently completed works on 215 properties through a joint partnership with EON and subsequently YES Energy; both provided some Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding toward the cost of works. In addition we continue to upgrade boilers and insulation as part of our planned maintenance programme. Since the last report we have installed the following:

- 1235 'A' rated boilers
- 330 cavity wall and loft insulation installations
- 215 External wall installations

Providing Information, Advice and Guidance



As a district we feel that advice provision for residents is essential and recent finding within the Bonfield Review has highlighted both the importance and value of energy advice. For us that advice is delivered locally through our energy advice partners Act on Energy, who offer a combination of quality telephone advice through to community based and even in home support so that we can rest assured that our residents have access to the right support to allow them to make ongoing decisions about energy usage, from switching through to physical measures.



To ensure we maximise the support we give to residents we have run a Warmer Winter campaign with regular advice sessions and briefings to ensure both residents and frontline workers are provided with the most up to date information on all energy matters ranging from Smart Meters through to Switching. Our energy partners Act on Energy were also successful in receiving funding from Smart Energy GB and BESN which has enabled an even greater level of engagement with residents. Since our last report they have provided support and advice to over 1,800 residents across our borough.

Private Landlords

We provide regular updates on energy policy and energy efficiency opportunities through our landlord’s forums. We will be running a session on the forthcoming PRS Energy Efficiency Regulations and our landlords are encouraged to access our local support line run through Act on Energy.

Although we do not have a dedicated resource to enforce the minimum energy efficiency standards we aim to work with known landlords to ensure they are aware of requirements and encourage and support compliance rather than looking to limit the availability of an already stretched private sector housing team.

Where are we now?

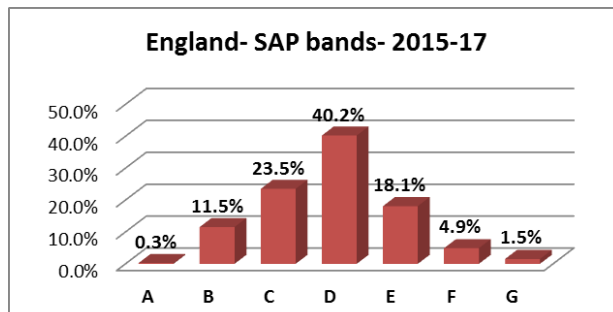
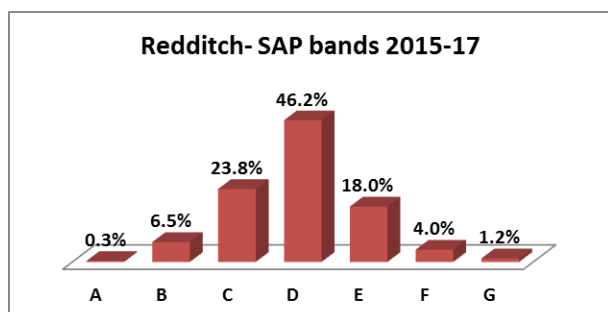
This section gives details of energy related data and how we are working to address the issues raised by these statistics.

Carbon emissions

In 2014, 4.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) was emitted per person. This is a 27% reduction compared to 2005. When looking at emissions from the domestic sector only, the carbon emissions are the lowest in the county. This is likely to be due to age of the housing stock and the fact that the majority of the housing stock is on the mains gas network.

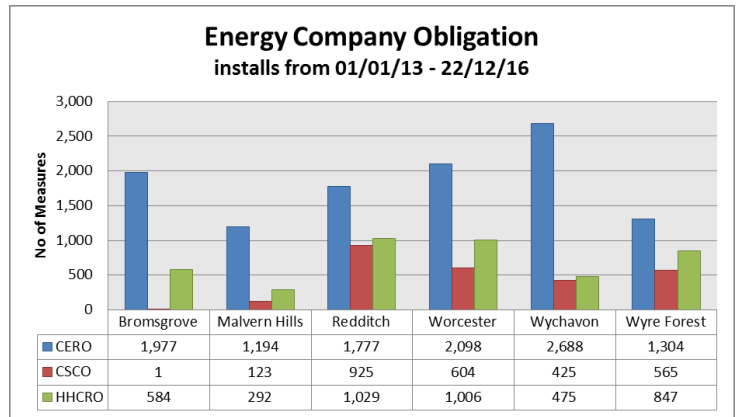
Energy Performance Certificates

Unfortunately due to data not being available we were unable to complete a full analysis of EPC data but based on available ratings data we do have SAP figures very similar to national averages. We want to be able to analyse the data further when this becomes available so we can start to target schemes appropriately.



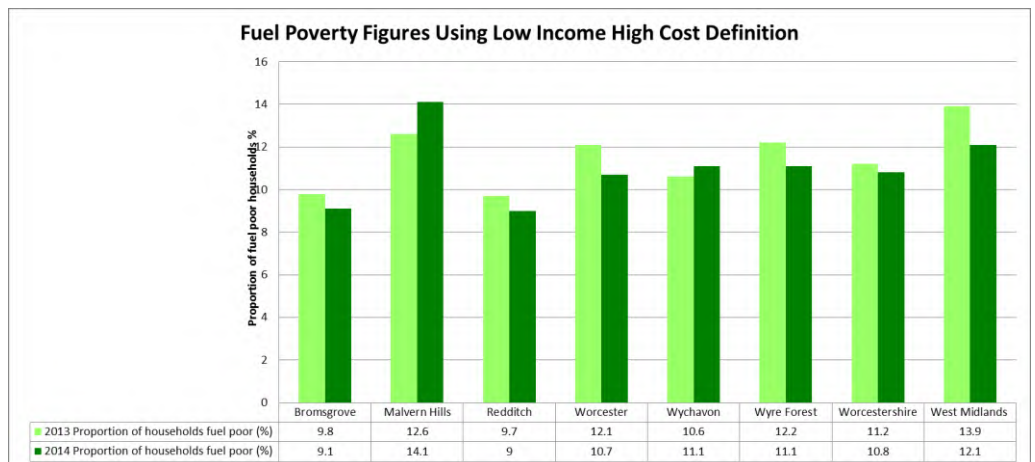
Energy Company Obligation

We have worked with partners to help deliver the Energy Company Obligation across the district and we have promoted the importance of energy saving measures to residents with a specific focus on the fuel poor. Although we have had a reasonable take up of HHCRO measure we want to ensure that we work with partners on the new ECO obligations to ensure we can support those whose health might be at risk from living in a cold home. This links to our aspirations under the ECO: Help to Heat Flexible Eligibility as detailed further in this report.

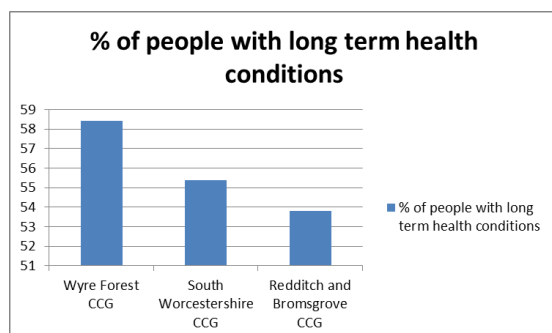


Fuel poverty

In 2014, 3,146 households (9%) in Redditch were fuel poor; this is a decrease from 9.7% in 2013. This is below the Worcestershire (10.8%) and national (10.6%) averages. Even though our overall figures are lower than some of our neighbours there are



areas who are experiencing higher levels of fuel poverty than the national average. Fuel poverty at a local level uses lower super output areas (LSOAs) which are small areas covering around 1500 residents. We currently have 14 LSOA with fuel poverty levels over the national average of 10.6. Within these LSOA's there is an estimated 1261 households who are fuel poor. The LSOA with the highest estimated levels of fuel poverty is shown opposite and it is estimated to have 22% (155) of households who are fuel poor.



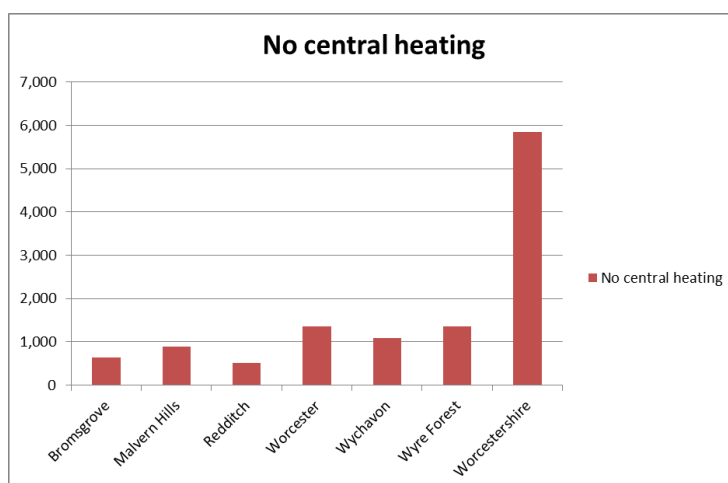
In addition to looking at fuel poverty it is also important to consider households where the residents may be vulnerable to cold, for example, households with long term health conditions. When looking at current data for the Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group over 50% of its patients had long term health conditions. Mental health is a particular area of concern for Redditch.

Our Future plan for 2017 – 2019 and beyond

To contribute towards our long term strategic ambitions, we are planning a number of actions and initiatives going forward, to improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and improve health, housing and lifestyle choices. A selection of our key actions are detailed below.

Delivering the Energy Company Obligation

We are aiming to work as a partnership with the other six councils and county council to deliver energy efficiency measure and advice through the Energy Company obligation (ECO) with a specific focus of working in partnership with a supplier to deliver the ‘flexible’ element to allow us to support fuel poor households who are not in receipt of benefits and low income households whose health could be adversely effected from living in a cold home. From census



data we are aware that Redditch has a number of homes with no central heating and as part of our ECO work going forward we would like to address this. We have already as part of our Warmer Worcestershire partnership undertaken market engagement and are looking to procure a delivery partner. We intend to make a formal declaration of our Statement of Intent (SOI) so that we can support households who are not in receipt of benefits but who may be on a low income and vulnerable to cold. This SOI will be a joint statement between all six district councils and the county council. The SOI will include our methodology for the identification of eligible households who may be able to receive energy efficiency measures (subject to funding and technical survey). We are also aware of a significant number of uninsulated solid wall properties often associated with areas of fuel poverty but we are also acutely aware that ECO funding is unlikely to address this in the short-term; however should this change we are well placed and would be keen to take a scheme forward.

Redditch Energy Efficiency Fund

As part of our commitment to support some of our most vulnerable residents we will continue to offer whole house support for residents living in our borough to ensure that residents who are on low incomes can get physical interventions such as heating alongside information and support.



Warmer Worcestershire

We will continue our successful partnership to ensure we are delivering a cohesive approach to tackling fuel poverty for some of most vulnerable residents. The group is often used a conduit for both funding and delivering of works. This group will be key in our delivery of ECO and its flexible element.

Private Rented Sector Energy Efficiency Regulations

We will continue to work with partners through a combination of landlords forums and direct communication. To highlight the changes in regulations and detail how we as a council will legislate for this alongside other district and county partners.

Heat Networks

We have recently been involved with a countywide heat map study. The study concluded that there could be significant potential for commercially viable urban district heat networks in the future but that this would require further investigation.

Information, Advice and Guidance

This is a critical aspect of the energy journey for many households and without it, residents may find making the appropriate energy decisions more of a challenge especially as some of our most vulnerable residents maybe digitally excluded or socially isolated. We will continue to offer the following support services through our energy advice partners Act on Energy:

- Freephone energy advice line offering up to date local support and guidance
- Community based support ensuring we reach our most rural communities
- Energy clinics offering switch advice
- Smart metering – offer advice and support on the roll out of smart meters through dedicated community events
- Warm Homes Discount – promotion of the scheme to householders
- Home visits for the most vulnerable in our community
- Working with partners to ensure we provide a one stop advice provision and onward referrals. This will build on our already excellent relationships with the Fire Service, GP's and third sector.
- Continue to link to other support services provided by the council including connecting families.

White Label Energy Suppliers

We are exploring with our district partners the possibility of partnering with a licensed energy supplier to offer a 'white label' energy supply or similar in order to improve options for some of the most vulnerable in our communities. We have been liaising with colleagues across the county on this to maximise the viability of this project.