

# Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Report 2019

The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995 requires local authorities to publish a report outlining their plans to promote improved energy efficiency of residential accommodation in their areas every two years. The data submitted is used by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to track energy efficiency related activity at a local level and inform policy thinking on energy efficiency and fuel poverty alleviation at both a local and national level.

For 2019 BEIS piloted the submission of reports through a digital platform with a streamlined set of questions. The responses to these questions are set out below. The questions capture information on the councils' current and planned approaches to a range of key issues including, the new Private Rental Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), financial support for energy efficiency, fuel poverty and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding scheme.

Work to improve residential energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty is overseen by the Private Sector Housing Team, while broader work to address climate change and corporate energy saving is undertaken by the Insight and Policy Team. Most of the councils' work on energy efficiency and fuel poverty is undertaken in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities and partners through the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network. The network places a strong emphasis on securing external funding to help vulnerable residents install energy saving improvements in their homes.

<b>Name of Local Authority:</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council
<b>Type of Local Authority:</b>	District/Borough/City Council
<b>Name and contact details of official submitting the report:</b>	Cynthia Calvert <a href="mailto:cynthia.calvert@southandvale.gov.uk">cynthia.calvert@southandvale.gov.uk</a>
<b>Job title of official submitting the report:</b>	Energy Officer
<b>Names of teams working on policy areas covered by this reporting tool:</b>	Private Sector Housing Team (Housing Needs) Insight and Policy Team (Partnership and Insight)
<b>Total number of staff working in above policy areas (by FTE) broken down by team if possible:</b>	1 FTE Private Sector Housing Team (Housing Needs) 0.6 FTE Insight and Policy Team (Partnership and Insight)

1.	<b>Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic or non-domestic properties?</b>	(Y/N) N  As both councils have worked closely with neighbouring local authorities through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to develop and implement a county-wide energy strategy (Oxfordshire Energy Strategy), the councils have chosen not to develop their own carbon reduction or energy efficiency strategies.
2.	<b>If yes, please provide a link to your current strategy here:</b>	N/A
3.	<b>If no, are you planning to develop one?</b>	(Y/N) N  Please see above. As this work is being done in collaboration with partners at the county level there are no plans for the councils to develop their own strategies.
4a.	<b>What scheme(s) has your local authority implemented in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation (such as owner-occupied, privately rented and social housing) or non-domestic properties since 2017?</b>	<p>Both councils are members of the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Steering Group and provide funding annually. In line with NICE guidelines on excess winter deaths the group established Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) – a one-stop health and housing advice service. BHBH provides support to households at risk of fuel poverty and the health effects of cold homes. BHBH provides links to Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and other funding for energy saving home improvements, home energy advice visits, direct referrals to support organisations, financial and debt advice, and training for frontline staff.</p> <p>The councils provide grants of up to £1,000 to enable vulnerable households make essential energy saving repairs and improvements to their homes or to top up shortfalls in ECO funding. The councils also provide grants to community organisations which include development and refurbishment of community buildings. Applications are expected to include energy saving measures where applicable.</p> <p>The councils ensure residents can benefit from external funding by publishing ECO Flexible Eligibility Statements of Intent and issuing declarations. In 2018 the councils combined their own funding with ECO2t and Health through Warmth Funding from npower to insulate park homes. The councils aim to reintroduce the project under ECO3 subject to available funding.</p>

<p><b>4b.</b></p>	<p><b>What scheme(s) is your local authority planning to implement in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation (such as owner-occupied, privately rented and social housing) or non-domestic properties in the next two years?</b></p>	<p>The councils hope to reintroduce the park home insulation project started under ECO2t. Changes to deemed scores for park home external wall insulation means that the project is not viable under ECO3. The councils are working with the insulation installer to request that Ofgem review the deemed scores.</p> <p>Under ECO3 innovation funding the councils hope to work with the same park home insulation installer to install innovative solar heating systems to reduce vulnerable residents' reliance upon expensive LPG heating fuel.</p> <p>The councils are working with the Low Carbon Hub and NEF to introduce a retrofit scheme. Cosy Homes Oxfordshire is based on the RetrofitWorks model and is a demonstration project funded by a successful funding bid made to BEIS.</p> <p>The councils are working with Bioregional and Oxford Brookes University to map potential for energy saving measures at a household level under the EU funded OxFutures programme.</p> <p>The councils will continue to be members of the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Steering Group and to fund the BHBH service. The councils will continue to provide grants of up to £1,000 for essential energy saving improvements and repairs and to issue ECO Flex declarations as required.</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>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? Please provide figures and a brief narrative account if desired.</b></p>	<p>In addition to officer time, in 2017/18 and 2018/19 South Oxfordshire District Council spent:</p> <p>Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Steering Group and Better Housing Better Health service: £7,000 p.a. (£14,000 in total)</p> <p>Fuel poverty grants budget: £15,000 p.a. (£30,000 in total) (including NEF management fee)</p> <p>Park home insulation grants: £23,500</p> <p>In addition to officer time, in 2017/18 and 2018/19 Vale of White Horse District Council spent:</p> <p>Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Steering Group and Better Housing Better Health service: £7,000 p.a. (£14,000 in total)</p> <p>Fuel poverty grants budget: £10,000 p.a. (£20,000 in total) (including NEF management fee)</p> <p>Park home insulation grants: £22,900</p>

6.	<p><b>What businesses, charities, third sector organisations or other stakeholders do you work with to deliver the scheme(s)?</b></p>	<p>Both councils work with the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to deliver the Better Housing Better Health service and their fuel poverty grant schemes. NEF also oversee the county-wide ECO Flexible Eligibility process.</p> <p>The councils work with the other members of the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Steering Group including other local authorities, the clinical commissioning group, Age UK and Citizens Advice.</p> <p>The councils will work with the Low Carbon Hub to establish the Cosy Homes Oxfordshire retro-fitting scheme and with BioRegional and Oxford Brookes University on local energy mapping.</p> <p>The councils also lend thermal imaging camera to local community groups.</p>
7.	<p><b>What has been the outcome of the scheme(s) (e.g. energy savings, carbon savings, economic impacts such as job creation and/or increased business competitiveness, societal impacts such as alleviation of fuel poverty and/or improved health outcomes etc.)?</b></p>	<p><b>South:</b></p> <p>South Oxfordshire District Council awarded fuel poverty grants worth £30,281, to 27 households for 19 heating improvements and 8 insulation improvements.</p> <p>The council insulated 16 park homes and secured £57,000 ECO2t funding and £15,000 Health through Warmth funding from npower.</p> <p>The council issued ECO flexible eligibility declarations for 72 households for 23 heating improvements and 49 insulation improvements.</p> <p>The Better Housing Better Health service delivered 253 measures/interventions worth £101,941, resulting in energy savings of £84,331 and carbon savings of 415,983 kgCO<sub>2</sub>.</p> <p><b>Vale:</b></p> <p>Vale of White District Council awarded fuel poverty grants worth £19,738, to 24 households for 18 heating improvements and 4 insulation improvements.</p> <p>The council insulated 11 park homes and secured £42,000 ECO2t funding and £13,000 Health through Warmth funding from npower.</p> <p>The council issued ECO flexible eligibility declarations for 42 households for 12 heating improvements and 30 insulation improvements.</p> <p>The Better Housing Better Health service delivered 207 measures/interventions worth £81,791 resulting</p>

		in energy savings of £68,921 and carbon savings of 334,058 kgCO <sub>2</sub> .
8.	<b>What lessons have you learned from delivering this scheme(s)?</b>	The stop-start nature of funding and the slow start to ECO3 funding has resulted in a lower number of installations during 2018/19 compared to previous years.
9.	<b>Does your local authority provide any advisory service to consumers (and businesses) on how to save energy?</b>	(Y/N) Y
10.	<b>If yes to question 10, please briefly outline how this is undertaken.</b>	Advice on how to save energy is offered to householders who contact or are referred to Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) via the email or telephone helpline. Those who qualify are also offered a free home energy advice visit from (Local Energy Advice Partnership) LEAP.
11.	<b>How do you communicate or encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers and/or local businesses?</b>	<p>Projects, schemes and services are promoted to residents through the councils' websites, press releases, social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook), targeted mailings, town and parish council e-newsletters, resident e-newsletters. The newsletters that were delivered to all households in the districts have been stopped.</p> <p>The councils promote schemes organised by others through their economic development newsletters, social media and public events. The Low Carbon Hub provides free energy audits to SMEs in Oxfordshire, and grants to cover the costs of installing recommended measures</p>
12.	<b>Does your Local Authority promote the use of energy efficient products amongst consumers (and businesses)?</b>	(Y/N) N <p>Advice on energy efficient products and appliances would be offered to consumers as part of the package of advice and support provided by the Better Housing Better Health service provided by NEF and the home energy advice visits provided by the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP).</p>
13.	<b>If yes to question 12, please briefly detail how this promotion work is undertaken.</b>	N/A
14.	<b>What engagement (formal or informal) does your</b>	N/A

	<b>local authority have with local businesses/supply chains involved in promoting energy efficiency products or carbon reduction?</b>	
15.	<b>Is your authority aware of the PRS Minimum Efficiency Standards which came into force in April 2018?</b>	(Y/N) Y
16.	<b>Which team within your authority is responsible for, or will be responsible for, leading on enforcement of the PRS minimum standard?</b>	Private Sector Housing Team (Housing Needs)
17.	<b>Please provide the contact details of the person leading this team.</b>	Shaun Berry <a href="mailto:shaun.berry@southandvale.gov.uk">shaun.berry@southandvale.gov.uk</a>
18.	<b>What method or methods does your authority use to communicate with landlords and tenants about the standards and other related issues?</b>	Information for landlords and tenants is available on the councils' websites.  An information event for landlords on the standards is being organised by Oxford City Council (a neighbouring local authority) as part of a BEIS funded pilot project. Both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils will share details of the event with the landlords and letting agents they hold details of.
19.	<b>Do you directly target landlords of EPC F and G rated properties? If yes, how? If no, please explain.</b>	(Y/N) N  The Private Sector Housing Team has dealt with cases of F and G rated properties as and when they have been made aware of them. If resources permit the team may take a more proactive approach in future. The councils will monitor and pay close attention to the outcomes of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards enforcement pilot funded by BEIS that is currently underway in the neighbouring Oxford City Council area.
20.	<b>What financial programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic and non-domestic energy efficiency or energy saving? If applicable,</b>	The councils provide grants of up to £1,000 to enable vulnerable households make essential energy saving repairs and improvements to their homes or to top up shortfalls in ECO funding. South Oxfordshire District Council has an annual budget of £15,000 and Vale of White Horse District Council

	<b>please outline the sums, where such funding is sourced, and where it is targeted.</b>	<p>has an annual budget of £10,000 and both are taken from the councils' capital grants budgets.</p> <p>Grants are available to homeowners and private renting tenants who receive benefits or are in fuel poverty (according to the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) fuel poverty calculator). In cases where the grant is used to top up ECO funding then applicants must either meet ECO criteria or council's ECO Flex Statements of Intent (SoI) criteria.</p>
21.	<b>Does your local authority have a fuel poverty strategy?</b>	<p>(Y/N) N</p> <p>As both councils work closely with neighbouring local authorities through the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network the councils have chosen not to develop their own fuel poverty strategy. Instead the network is considering developing a county-wide fuel poverty strategy to build upon the links between housing conditions and health that have been identified in the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023 which recognises that housing and the quality of housing, is a wider determinant of health.</p>
22.	<b>What steps have you taken to identify residents/properties in fuel poverty? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)</b>	<p>The councils work with their revenues and benefits contractor to use data to carry out targeted mailings to households who meet the benefits-based qualifying criteria for assistance.</p> <p>The councils use the annual fuel poverty indicator data published by the Government to map fuel poverty by LSOA.</p> <p>Other available data is also mapped to help identify factors contributing to fuel poverty including electricity consumption, gas consumption, solid walls etc. Mapping is carried out by Data Analyst employed by councils to provide the county-wide District Data Service. Mapped data is also available from Local Insight - an online data, analysis and mapping tool that the councils subscribe to.</p>
23.	<b>How does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall carbon reduction strategy? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)</b>	N/A
24a.	<b>What measures or initiatives have you taken to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel</b>	Residents who contact the Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) service will be offered advice on switching energy suppliers or energy tariffs. For residents who qualify for free home energy advice visits, LEAP will check if a resident is on the best

	<b>poverty? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)</b>	energy tariff and will help them to find and switch to a better deal if not.
<b>24b.</b>	<b>If you have taken measures or initiatives to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty, what partnership with business or energy providers have you undertaken? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)</b>	The councils work with the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) to provide eligible residents with free home energy advice visits where they check if a resident is on the best energy tariff and will help them to find and switch to a better deal if not.
<b>25.</b>	<b>Has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility?</b>  <b>If yes, please include a link to your Sol below.</b>	(Y/N) Y  South: <a href="http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/managing-your-home/improving-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-grants">http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/managing-your-home/improving-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-grants</a>  Vale: <a href="http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/managing-your-home/improving-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-grants">http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/managing-your-home/improving-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-grants</a>
<b>26.</b>	<b>Please use the following space to provide any further information you feel might be of benefit to BEIS, in helping us to understand ECO Flex delivery in more detail. For example, the number of declarations signed versus the number of households helped.</b>	Once an ECO Flex declaration has been issued installers/funders do not provide information on the progress or success of the measure installed and the value of the ECO funding awarded.  Installers have approached the councils to ask if they will issue declarations however, the councils have no prior knowledge of these companies, their quality of work, customer service or marketing/sales practises. In response to this the National Energy Foundation (NEF) set-up a county-wide installer network and oversee the process for installers to request declarations from local authorities. Installers must pay fees to be a part of this network and request declarations.  ECO Flex is open to abuse by installers. South Oxfordshire District Council identified one instance where a householder was misled by the installers to provide an income figure that was lower than their actual household income in order to meet the council's eligibility criteria.
<b>27</b>	<b>Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to:</b>  <b>Engage and support your residents (including those in vulnerable</b>	Currently neither council has adopted a formal approach to promoting take up of smart meters but instead have dealt with queries about smart meters on an individual basis. Both councils follow the national smart meter publicity campaign run by Smart Energy GB and review opportunities to promote take up of smart meters.



	<p>circumstances or with pre-payment metering) to promote take up of smart meters and achieve associated benefits (e.g. ability to control energy use, identify best value tariffs)? Please detail any work undertaken or planned with local/community groups, housing associations, micro businesses, Smart Energy GB under their Partnership Programme and energy suppliers.</p>	
28	<p><b>Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to:</b></p> <p><b>Integrate your approaches to delivering energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation with the opportunities presented by the installation of smart meters, drawing upon materials from the Smart Meter Energy Efficiency Materials Project or other sources of independent information.</b></p>	<p>As stated above, neither council has adopted a formal approach to delivering energy efficiency improvements through the installation of smart meters however, the councils review opportunities to promote take up of smart meters and their associated wider benefits.</p>
29	<p><b>Please detail any:</b></p> <p><b>Resources/support (e.g. services, funding) available to residents who have had an appliance(s) condemned for safety reasons and cannot afford to replace it (e.g. during visual safety checks conducted during their smart meter installation or otherwise)</b></p>	<p>Both councils provide grants of up to £1,000 for essential energy saving repairs and improvements which could be used for this purpose. Recipients must be either home owners or private renting tenants and receive benefits or are in fuel poverty (according to the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) fuel poverty calculator) or meet ECO eligibility criteria. Where these works are the normal, legal responsibility of landlords they would be expected to carry these out.</p>
30	<p><b>Please detail any:</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>

	<b>Existing relationships with energy suppliers to help ensure that the opportunities presented by vacant properties under your control are effectively utilised (i.e. gaining access to install a smart meter).</b>	
31	<b>Please outline any future schemes or wider initiatives not covered above that your local authority has carried out or is planning to undertake to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation or businesses in your area, for example, within your Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Energy Strategy (if you do not plan any future schemes currently, please enter 'N/A').</b>	<p>The Oxfordshire Energy Strategy, produced by the Local Enterprise Partnership, is fully-aligned to both the UK Industrial Strategy and the Clean Growth Strategy. The delivery plan for the strategy is currently under development. The strategy's objectives include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Secure a smart, modern, clean energy infrastructure – including increased electricity grid capacity.</li> <li>2. Lead nationally and internationally to reduce countywide emissions by 50% compared with 2008 levels by 2030 and set a pathway to achieve zero carbon growth by 2050.</li> <li>3. Support ambitious and innovative clean generation projects across the county, both in urban and rural areas, and in growth locations.</li> <li>4. Support projects that reduce energy demand and increase energy efficiency for domestic, industrial, commercial buildings and transport energy.</li> <li>5. Enhance energy networking and partnership working to date to focus on the low carbon energy challenges and funding arising from the Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy.</li> </ol>

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