



# **East Staffordshire Borough Council Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Further Report 2015**

## **1. Introduction**

This report has been produced in response of the requirement for local authorities (English Energy Conservation Authorities) to report on their Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) obligations. Local authorities are required to report on energy conservation measures being undertaken to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in their areas.

Fuel poverty continues to be a significant issue for many households in the UK and the Government sees local authorities as being strategically placed to identify how both local and national support can contribute to alleviating this issue. The Government has set in place a number of national schemes designed to offer financial assistance to householders and local authorities can play a role in helping support the uptake of such schemes by those households who would benefit the most.

As well as reducing fuel poverty, energy efficiency improvements also support the reduction of carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions across the residential sector.

East Staffordshire Borough Council's (ESBC) first HECA report was produced in 2013 and we are required to report our progress every two years, as well as identifying new measures going forward, setting appropriate timescales and identifying partners and stakeholders. This report represents our 2015 HECA submission.

## 2. A description of east Staffordshire

The Borough of East Staffordshire occupies a strategic position on the edge of the West Midlands and shares borders with South Derbyshire and Derbyshire Dales in the East Midlands.

The Borough covers an area of approximately 150 square miles with an estimated population of 113,583 according to 2011 Census Data. This represents a 9.5% increase on the 2001 Census figure and is also above the national and regional growth figures. East Staffordshire is located in the eastern part of the County and is predominantly rural. The two main towns are Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter. Almost three quarters (73%) of the population of the Borough reside in Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter. However, these two towns form just 12% of the total land area of the Borough.

East Staffordshire has thrived from a long legacy of manufacturing particularly in Burton upon Trent, however over the last decade the borough has faced a substantial period of change, driven by industrial re-structuring, globalisation and the growth of a service led economy.

A map showing the extent of the East Staffordshire borough is shown below.



### **3. Fuel poverty in east Staffordshire**

Sub-regional fuel poverty data for 2010 showed that 21.5% of households (9,808) in East Staffordshire were in fuel poverty, significantly higher than the national average of 17%. This value was estimated using the 10% definition of fuel poverty, which has now been replaced, but described households as being in fuel poverty if greater than 10% of the household income was spent to maintain an adequate standard of warmth. In order to compare annual statistics, the 2011 and 2012 sub-regional data on fuel poverty is also available based on the 10% definition.

Sub-regional data for the percentage of fuel poverty households in East Staffordshire in 2011 was 17.1% and in 2012 16.4%. This shows a gradual reduction in the number of households in East Staffordshire in fuel poverty, which is also reflected in the national trend. The latest 2012 sub-regional value for East Staffordshire was slightly lower than the West Midlands percentage of 16.7% of households in fuel poverty but higher than the Staffordshire average of 15.2%.

#### The ‘low income high costs’ definition of fuel poverty

2011 and 2012 data is now also estimated on the revised ‘low income high costs’ definition of fuel poverty, where a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average
- were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

This is a relative measure comparing households to the national average fuel bill and average income. The three key components of this definition are household income, fuel costs and fuel consumption.

Of an estimated 46,447 households in East Staffordshire in 2011, approximately 6,825 households were in fuel poverty, which equates to 14.7% of households. For 2012, of an estimated 46,217 households (14.6%) were estimated to be in fuel poverty, which is some 6,740 households. This shows a small reduction between the two years. The reduction, which is mirrored nationally is likely to be due to income increases for higher income fuel poor households according to DECC.

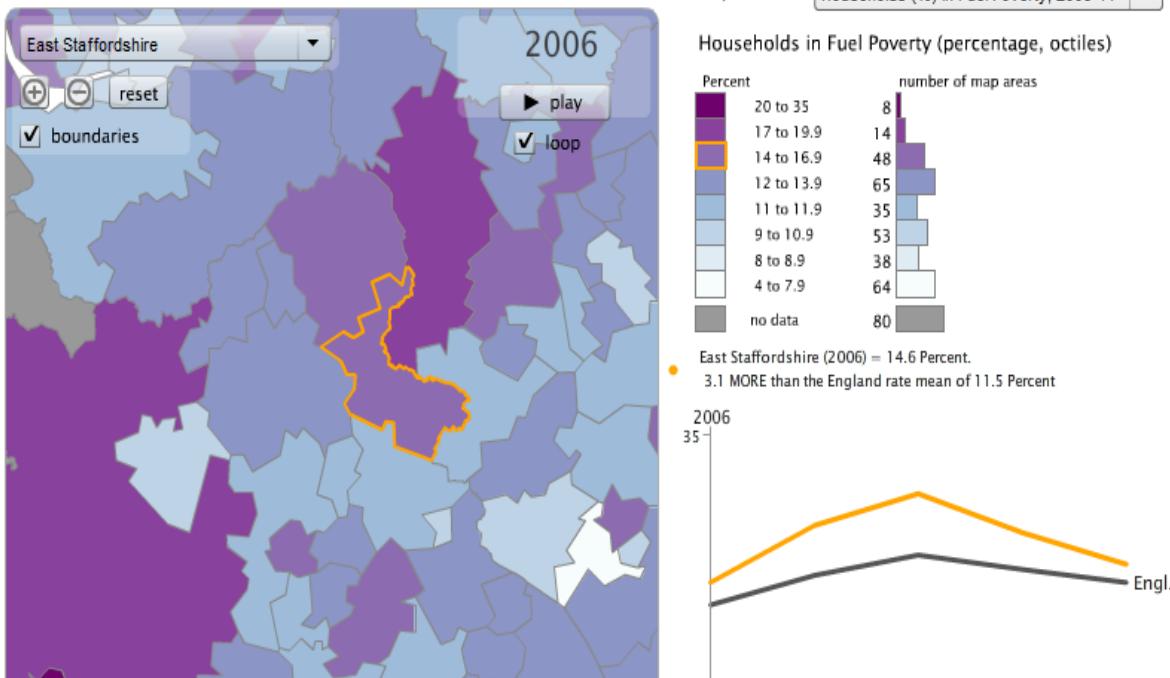
The 2012 value for East Staffordshire value is just below the 15% of households in fuel poverty figure for the West Midlands Region which is the highest in the England, which has an average of 10.4%.

## FUEL POVERTY

Energy Statistics:

Households (%) in Fuel Poverty, 2006-11

By 2009 Local Authority District



Data taken from DECC Website on Fuel Poverty Data taken from DECC Website on Fuel Poverty

[http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/local\\_auth/interactive/fuelpoverty/index.html](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/local_auth/interactive/fuelpoverty/index.html)

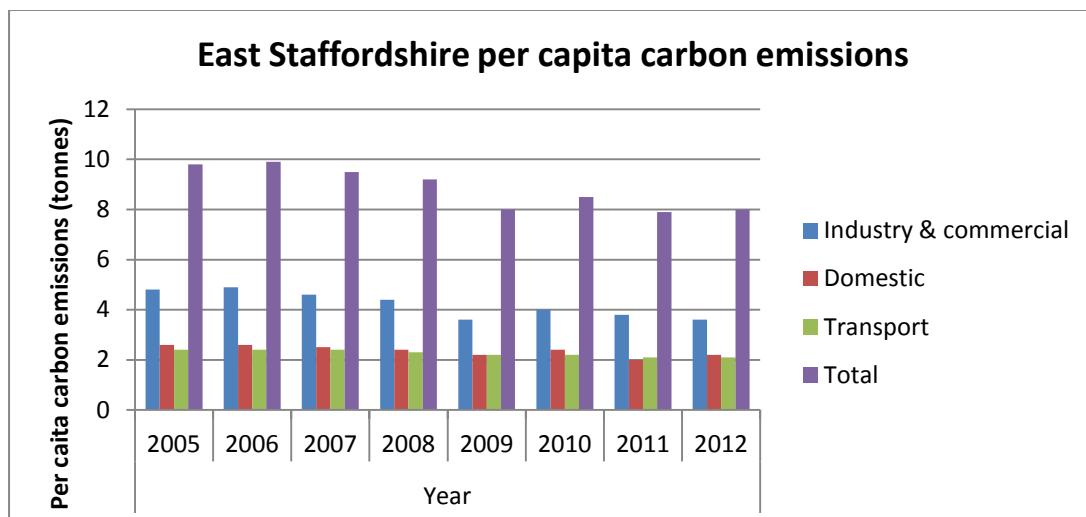
Once 2014 statistics have been compiled, the percentage of UK households in fuel poverty is expected to increase due to increased fuel costs.

## 4. Per capita carbon emissions

Local and regional carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions estimates for 2005-2012 compiled by Ricardo-Aea (26/06/2015 ed) show that for emissions within the scope of influence of local authorities for East Staffordshire in 2011 per capita emissions were 7.9 tonnes and 8 tonnes in 2012. This was a reduction against the 2010 value of 8.5 tonnes which was the previous figure reported in the previous HECA report.

The per capita carbon emissions for East Staffordshire are composed of a contribution from industry & commercial sources, domestic sources and transport.

The trend since 2005 is shown below.



East Staffordshire's 8 tonnes per capita emissions in 2012 are higher than the national average of 6.2 tonnes, although our domestic proportion at 2.2 tonnes is the same as the national average. East Staffordshire's relatively high proportion of industrial and commercial activity means that the per capita carbon emissions contribution is the highest for any Staffordshire local authority.

## **5. East Staffordshire's housing stock**

Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 requires all local housing authorities to keep the housing conditions in their area under review. This is widely interpreted as keeping knowledge and information relating to private housing conditions up to date.

As an alternative to a traditional housing stock survey, ESBC commissioned a housing stock model as an alternative method of reviewing the condition of the housing stock.

The housing stock model considered three criteria for the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety and Rating System) - category 1 hazards, excess cold and falls. The following data is taken from the housing stock model:

Tenure	Dwellings	Cat 1 Hazard	Excess Cold	Falls
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	34,389	24%	13%	9%
<b>Private Rented</b>	7,588	29%	15%	12%
<b>All Private Stock</b>	41,977	25%	13%	10%

(East Staffordshire Borough Council Housing Stock Model Strategy for Private Housing 2014)

The stock model shows the privately rented dwellings are more likely to have category 1 hazards, though there are more hazards in owner occupied since that section of private housing is greater. The current national averages are set by the 2009 English Housing Survey (EHS) and for Category 1 hazards the average is 22%, for excess cold it is 9% and for falls it is 13%. To meet the national average would require the removal of Category 1 hazards from 1,260 dwellings and improvement of excess cold for 1,679 dwellings.

As the stock model includes the number of properties with excess cold when considering those with category 1 hazards, if the Council were able to facilitate the improvement of the 1,679 dwellings with excess cold, the total of category 1 hazards would reduce to below the national average. Working on removing excess cold would have a wider impact.

Fuel poverty creates excess cold and this is a function of low income and or the state or type of property. The stock survey has mapped areas of low income and property types to identify specific areas where excess cold is likely and can be used to inform our policies for tackling excess cold.

## **6. Update on the 2013 HECA report**

### **6.1 Climate Local sign up**

ESBC signed up to Climate Local in July 2014, which was an action included in the 2013 HECA report.

Climate Local is a Local Government Association (LGA) initiative aimed at supporting local authorities to reduce carbon emissions and also improve resilience to the affects of climate change. Participating Councils sign up to a Climate Local Commitment indicating what their priority actions are. Sign up demonstrates commitment to taking action and to build on existing commitments.

Sign up requires us to publish our main commitments and we now have published our priority actions.

The Climate Local Action Plan can be found on the ESBC website at [Climate Local Action Plan](#)

One of the actions relates to encouraging stakeholders and community groups to develop their own climate change/adaptation action plans to allow communities to focus on local issues for local residents and led at a local level. See sections 6.3 & 7.2 for further information.

### **6.2 Review of Climate Change Strategy**

Since the previous HECA report in 2013 ESBC has reviewed the Climate Change Strategy for the local authority.

The review was an action identified in the last HECA report and focuses on three key areas;

1. Corporate commitment and service provision to include various policies aimed at enabling our work on climate change mitigation (resource efficiency) and adaptation.
2. Addressing our own estate focussing on efficiencies and maintaining our local authority services.
3. Providing community support in relation to energy efficiency, adaptation and energy and other climate change mitigation community measures.

The community support measures will support activity to reduce fuel poverty across communities, working with other stakeholders and partners.

A cross section of measures has subsequently been included in the Climate Local Action Plan.

A copy of the Strategy can be found at

## Climate Change Strategy

### **6.3 Community Action Plans**

The 2013 HECA report included an action to work with a number of community groups to help them develop action plans aimed at locally significant issues relating to energy saving (fuel poverty), renewable energy, adaptation, building improvements etc. Some areas may have high levels of fuel poverty, others prone to flooding or have old inefficient community buildings. Others may want to get renewable projects off the ground. Based on the experience of our Climate Change Strategy and Adaptation Plan, we will help community groups draft simple plans tailored to their individual needs and resources. This will also be a good opportunity to form a support network of like minded groups and enable us to communicate issues such as the Green Deal, ECO, feed in tariffs and the renewable heat incentive.

It was decided to work in partnership with Staffordshire County Council on extending a “trial” scheme of a similar nature in another Staffordshire village which had focussed on climate change adaptation. An opportunity did arise to potentially work with a specific village in our area, although after discussions with the particular community group, due to their limited resources, they wanted to initially focus on air quality issues which were of more concern locally.

ESBC will be revisiting this action for 2015-2017 and is discussed later in this document.

### **6.4 Green Deal & ECO**

A Green Deal communication strategy was corporately agreed and implemented since the 2013 HECA report. Measures included both broader activities and more targeted communication using mosaic data on fuel poverty, lower super output areas etc.

Although uptake of the Green Deal has been low both locally and nationally, the framework of the communications strategy may be used for similar schemes and activities in the future.

We are still making households aware of Green Deal and Energy Company Obligations (ECO) where appropriate the ESBC newsletter and website.

### **6.5 Supplementary Planning Document**

The HECA 2013 report highlighted an action to draft a supplementary planning document to help the transition to “zero carbon” homes and encourage good quality sustainable development and encourage the uptake of appropriate renewable energy. Production of the supplementary planning document was to commence the adoption of the Council’s Local Plan.

This measure is still proposed although is now scheduled to be completed 2015-2017, and is discussed further in this report.

## **6.6 The Winter Warmth project**

Following on from our 2013 “Warmer Homes Healthy People” project a similar “Winter Warmth” scheme was completed November 2014-March 2015.

In 2014 a bid for £40k under Staffordshire County Council’s “enabling resilient communities” fund was successful, which resulted in a joint project involved all the Staffordshire local authorities and voluntary sector agencies, coordinated by Beat the Cold.

The project aimed to follow NICE guideline recommendations on how to reduce the risk of death and ill health associated with living in a cold home:

- Reducing preventable, excess winter death rates
- Improving health and wellbeing among vulnerable groups
- Reducing pressure on health and social care services
- Reducing fuel poverty and risk of fuel debt or being disconnected from utility services (including self-disconnection)
- Improving temperature in homes, by improving energy efficiency, may also help reduce unnecessary fuel consumption (addressing cold homes is likely to involve an increase in fuel use by people living in fuel poverty).

The project consisted of the following components:

- A free phone referral service offering advice on keeping warm and signposting and referring the public to third party support and funding.
- Emergency heating repairs for those who meet the qualifying criteria, undertaken by the appointed Home Improvement Agency for Staffordshire (Revival).
- Home visits for those most vulnerable to fuel poverty, offering benefit checks, access to additional services and advice.
- Training for staffs who work with those who are at risk of fuel poverty and may be affected by cold.
- Publishing and promoting a series of resources to raise awareness amongst professionals and the public about how to keep warm at home.

## **6.7 Enforcing housing standards**

At least 44 notices and orders under the Housing Act 2004 were served in the last financial year (2013-14). Of these 18 were Improvement Notices which included remedial works to improve the energy efficiency and thermal comfort of the property under the Excess Cold hazard. Under the Housing Health and

Safety Rating System Excess Cold is considered a Category 1 hazard and presents a significant risk to health.

In some extreme cases of disrepair to owner occupied properties the team have carried out works in default which has allowed the occupant to continue living in their own home. This has included works to heating systems to improve the thermal comfort of the property and remove or reduce the Category 1 hazard of Excess Cold.

## **7. New and revised actions for 2015-2017**

### **7.1 LEP projects**

ESBC is a member of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and with representation at officer level on a low carbon technical group and at leader level on the Green Commission supervisory board.

The European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy sets out how European funding will be allocated to the GBSLEP between 2014-2020 and forms part of the wider Strategic Economic Plan (and the Strategy for Growth 2013) which has the three key “pillars” of business, people and place.

One of the six priorities of the ESIF is “low carbon and resilient places” which focuses activity on driving growth in the low carbon economy through action on energy efficiency and its economic impact on the supply chain, sustainable transport and resource efficiency.

This priority has been allocated £35million, which exceeds the amount required by the EU.

Within this priority, it is recognised that the LEP area has a high number of energy inefficient building stock and there is a need for intervention beyond national measures. This also helps create green growth and green jobs.

The GBSLEP recognises the potential for progressing work on retrofitting beyond the existing schemes and focussing this on areas of fuel poverty and the development regionally, of the latest technologies to support retrofitting. The GBSLEP also recognises that there is an opportunity to explore a systematic approach to improving the energy efficiency of hard of treat homes.

With this in mind ESBC will aim to actively participate in at least one project that will benefit households in fuel poverty in our area.

### **7.2 Community Action Plan**

Further our previous HECA report, we will be revisiting our community action plan proposal. We will identify and support a suitable community group to commence drafting a local action plan for local people and issues that are important to themselves. Where possible we will seek to engage the support of other stakeholders, including Staffordshire County Council. We will encourage action plans to consider the affordable warmth agenda, targeting a community that would benefit the most from an action plan of this nature, whilst at the same time has the structure and community resources to take charge of their own plans.

Action Plans will develop at a pace that the community is comfortable with, and we would use this model to potentially extend the programme to additional communities.

This project also ties in with community resilience activities around predominantly flooding that are undertaken by the Risk Manager at this organisation.

### **7.3 Supplementary planning policy**

The Local Plan for east Staffordshire is currently at examination stage and then will go through a consultation stage for any changes. The target is for adoption of the Local Plan by the end of 2015.

Once this has occurred, a supplementary document will be produced, as discussed in section 6.5.

It is envisaged that the supplementary policy will include both energy efficiency measures and wider environmental considerations. Encouraging energy efficient new development is important, but this may also create the opportunity through developer contributions, to help improve the condition of the existing housing stock through “retrofitting” and other local opportunities such as district heating etc.

### **7.4 Fuel poverty projects and support**

ESBC will continue to be involved and support local and regional projects supporting households in fuel poverty and vulnerable people.

As discussed in section 6.6, projects such as the Winter Warmth project are important and provide an opportunity to work with existing stakeholders and partners and tailor future projects to maximise their effect.

### **7.5 Housing Stock Model Action Plan**

Following sign off of the Housing Stock Model an Action Plan has been drafted. At this stage the actions are potential targets for future consideration, although resources permitting, we hope to implement many of the suggestions and have therefore included in this report.

Identified proposals include improving the energy efficiency and thermal comfort for households identified in the survey as being most likely to benefit and eligible under government schemes. Certain wards are also identified in the survey as being suitable for area improvements such as loft insulation and top ups and having low Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)s.

Other measures support the further promotion of the Green Deal and ECO, and implementation of initiatives to tackle fuel poverty.

There will also be targeted campaign(s) aimed at raising the awareness of landlord's and HMOs (houses of multiple occupation) responsibilities for private rented housing and meeting legislation requirements.

## **7.6 The Housing Strategy 2015-2020**

This strategy is the basis for which East Staffordshire Borough Council will fulfil its strategic role as the local housing authority for east Staffordshire. It identifies housing issues that require attention over the next five years. A copy of the strategy can be found here [Housing Strategy](#).

Tied in with the findings of the Housing Stock Model the strategy sets out a number of actions to tackle sub-standard housing, which includes;

-developing a scheme to address disrepair using s106 monies and also seeking investment from other sources such as the health sector.

-it will publicise grants available from other sources within priority areas

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-consider a pilot of targeted pro-active enforcement funded from homelessness resources.

The scheme will also consider encouraging supporting/complimenting the Green Deal to treat fuel poverty as part of the actions.

## **7.7 Housing Standards**

The Housing Standards Team has continued to support energy efficiency measures in both the private rented sector and owner occupied properties by referring any enquiries to the energy saving trust helpline to advise on any national or government schemes they may be eligible for.

Remedial works such as fixed source heating systems and loft insulation will continue to be regularly requested through informal interventions and formal enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System when dealing with disrepair complaints regarding privately rented properties.

<b>HECA activity timetable 2015-17</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>1. Soilmill &amp; Greater Birmingham Local Enterprise Partnership projects</b> ESBC will aim to actively participate in at least one project which will support improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock in our area.	<b>2015-2020</b>
<b>2. Community Action Plan(s)</b> ESBC will support at least one community group to commence their own Community Action Plan to focus on local issues around energy efficiency, including fuel poverty.	<b>2015-16</b>
<b>3. Supplementary planning policy-environmental sustainability</b> ESBC will adopt a supplementary planning document to encourage developments that minimise environmental impact and support the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through improved energy efficiency in both new built and existing housing stock.	<b>2016</b>
<b>4. Fuel poverty projects and support</b> ESBC will continue to work with stakeholders to deliver projects help tackle fuel poverty in our area.	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>5. Housing stock model action plan</b> Commence measures identified in the housing stock model action plan.	<b>2015-2016</b>
<b>6. Housing Strategy scheme to address disrepair</b> Draw up the scheme, including supporting the reduction of fuel poverty	<b>November 2015</b>
<b>7. Continue to enforce housing standards legislation</b> ESBC will continue to enforce formal improvements under housing legislation and also support informal interventions supporting the improved environmental efficiency of the privately owned housing stock.	<b>Ongoing</b>