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# Foreword

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Energy efficiency is a subject that affects us all, regardless of where we live, what tenure or property type we live in or our personal and financial circumstances. Recent hikes in energy prices have made the subject more of a hot topic than it ever has been before.

The Energy Act 2011 represents a step change in the financial framework for energy efficiency improvements. It introduced the Green Deal which allows households to pay for improvements over time through savings in their energy bills and also introduced the Energy Company Obligation under which energy companies must meet carbon savings targets by providing funding for improvements for low income households and those living in hard to treat properties and deprived communities.

This report has been produced in response to Government guidance released in July 2012 pursuant to the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. It sets out key baseline energy data relating to Halton, considers the health impacts of energy inefficient housing and describes the Council's approach to the delivery of practical and cost effective energy measures including (but not limited to) its intended approach to the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation.

Given that the new funding frameworks have only recently been formally launched that approach is still in the formative stages at the time of writing this report. Nonetheless, I hope that the report demonstrates our commitment to improving the health and lives of people living in Halton through ensuring that they live in warm and energy efficient homes and gives the reader an indication of our strategic direction of travel.

Councillor Stef Nelson  
Executive Board Member for Environmental Sustainability

# Context

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## The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 placed a duty on local authorities to prepare a report setting out energy conservation measures that the local authority considers practicable, cost effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area. Initially, progress reports were produced on an annual basis but the requirement to produce annual reports ceased in 2008 while a review of the Act was carried out.

In July 2012, the Department for Energy and Climate Change issued guidance pursuant to the Act which requires all local authorities to produce a “further” report to be published on their websites by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. Local authorities must then publish progress reports at two yearly intervals thereafter up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.

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## Description of Halton

Halton Borough Council was formed in 1974 as part of Local Government re-organisation. Formerly a district of Cheshire County Council, Halton became a unitary authority in 1998. The Borough consists of the two townships of Widnes and Runcorn which are located North and South of the River Mersey and the outlying rural areas of Moore and Hale.

The Borough has a resident population of 119,300 and a total housing stock of 54,587. The population of the Borough has grown since 2006, having previously been in steady decline. The development of aspirational housing at Upton Rocks in Widnes and Sandymoor in Runcorn is believed to be a contributory factor to the increase in recent years.

Halton is ranked the 27<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 326 local authority areas according to the 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Over a quarter of the Borough’s population live in areas that fall in the top 10% most deprived nationally. Unsurprisingly higher levels of deprivation are found in wards containing the highest proportions of social housing stock.

## Halton’s Housing Stock

Halton’s housing stock can be characterised by a relatively high proportion of social rented stock (around 25%), resulting from the development and subsequent transfer of housing in Halton’s New Town estates and a private sector skewed towards lower value, semi detached and terraced homes. Figure 1 below illustrates the growth in the private sector (21% in the 12 years from 1999 to 2012) and the steady decline in the social housing stock of around 17%. As illustrated in the chart the Council transferred its housing stock to a newly created Housing Association, Halton Housing Trust in December 2005.

There is a small but growing private rented sector which makes up around 10% of the housing stock (approximately 5,000 dwellings). Census data from 2001 revealed a private rented sector of 4% and this was confirmed by Halton’s Housing Needs Survey of 2006, illustrating the growth in the sector over recent years.

### *Figure 1 – Halton’s housing stock by tenure from 1999*

Source: Housing Strategy Statistical Appendices

## Build date

Halton’s private sector housing stock is relatively new compared to the national stock profile as illustrated in figure 2 below with a third of the stock having been built between 1965 and 1980 with lower proportions built before 1965.

### *Figure 2 – Construction date of private rented stock*

Source: Halton Stock Condition Survey 2009 and English House Condition Survey 2006

### **Property type**

Over 35% of the private sector stock is terraced with nearly 30% semi detached. Figure 3 below compares the dwelling type profile of stock in Halton with the national stock profile.

### *Figure 3 – Dwelling type profile of private sector stock*

Source: Halton Stock Condition Survey 2009 and English House Condition Survey 2006

Halton commissioned a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey in 2009. This revealed that the private housing stock is in relatively good condition when compared to national and regional figures. Just over a quarter of the stock (10,500 dwellings) failed the Decent Homes Standard compared to 36% nationally and 37% in the North West. Similarly, there is a much lower proportion of private sector dwellings containing Category 1 hazards under the Housing, Health and Rating System (11% in Halton compared to the national level of 23.5% and regional level of 44%).

Higher proportions of non decency and category 1 hazards were found in the private rented sector than the owner occupied stock. However all social housing stock met the Decency Standard by the target date of 2010 and the largest Registered Provider Halton Housing Trust is embarking on a multi million pound investment programme to deliver further upgrades to the former Council stock.

# Energy efficiency of Halton's housing

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## Private Sector

The table below summarises some of the key findings from Halton's Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2009:

Number of dwellings failing Decent Homes due to thermal comfort criterion	5,600
Cost to remedy thermal comfort for all dwellings	£8.8 million (average of £1,200 per dwelling)
Number of dwellings with category 1 hazards due to excess cold	2,926
Number of dwellings with category 2 hazards due to excess cold	13,032

## Thermal comfort

Failure of the thermal comfort criterion under the Decent Homes Standard and consequently the work required to remedy the failure is based on the combination of heating system type and insulation present within a dwelling. In Halton 13.9% of the private sector stock (5,600 dwellings) fail the thermal comfort criterion compared to the private sector national rate of 16.7% and the regional rate of 43.8%, with nearly 25% of non decent dwellings failing purely on the thermal comfort criterion.

Figure 4 below shows a breakdown of thermal comfort failures by tenure, building type, age and sub area. As illustrated failures of the thermal comfort criterion are highest in the privately rented stock, small terraces, pre 1919 dwellings and for properties in Runcorn.

### *Figure 4 – Decent Homes failures on Thermal Comfort criterion*

Source: Halton Stock Condition Survey 2009

## Energy Performance

The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey measures the energy performance of dwellings using Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) on a scale of 1 to 100. This can then be translated into Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings from Band A to G. Figure 5 below illustrates the distribution of SAP/EPC for private sector housing in the Borough.

### *Figure 5 – Energy Performance of Halton dwellings by EPC (SAP) rating*

The survey found that the average SAP rating in Halton is 56 which was a substantial improvement since the previous survey which indicated an average SAP rating of 48. However as illustrated in figure 6 below there are some differences for different property types, tenure and age of the property although average SAP ratings for Runcorn and Widnes are the same.

### *Figure 6 – Average SAP ratings*

### National Indicator 187

National Indicator 187 measured the proportion of households on an income related benefit living in dwellings with SAP ratings below 35 and 65 and above. The indicator was collected by Government in 2008/09 and 2009/10 but was discontinued in 2010/11. Figures for Halton revealed a slight increase in the number of households in receipt of income related benefits who lived in dwellings with a SAP rating below 35 from 4.4% in 2008/09 to 5.2% in 2009/10. It was felt that this increase was attributable to an increase in the number of people claiming benefits and a lower response rate to the survey in 2009/10 than 2008/09.

### CO2 emissions

Data from the Stock Condition Survey indicates that emissions within the private sector stock were 144,000 tonnes per annum equating to an average of 3.6 tonnes per annum per property or 1.2 tonnes per capita.

Emissions from the main fuel types are given below with coal/wood and smokeless fuel emitting the highest levels of CO2.

Main fuel	CO2 (tonnes)	Average CO2 per property
Mains gas	139,520	3.6
LPG/Bottled Gas	0	0.0
Oil	0	0.0
Coal/wood	511	14.6
Anthracite	0	0.0
Smokeless fuel	354	14.5
On Peak Electricity	931	4.2
Off Peak Electricity	3,263	4.3

Department of Energy and Climate Change statistics give the total amount of CO2 emissions for each fuel type for all the housing stock (including social housing stock) from 2005 until 2009, as shown in figure 7 below. The chart shows how emissions from gas and electricity usage have gradually fallen, perhaps as households become more conscious of their carbon footprint and/or the impact of rising fuel prices on their household income.

### Figure 7 – Domestic CO2 emissions Halton

Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change

### Energy efficiency improvements needed

The survey collated data on the number of energy efficiency improvements needed in the private sector to give an indication of the total scope for improvement (illustrated in figure 8) although not all of the households will require financial assistance to install the measures. It should be noted that while a large proportion of homes require loft insulation in most cases this is a top up only to bring them up to current day Building Regulations (270mm).

### Figure 8 – Energy efficiency improvements needed in the private sector

Source: Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2009

### Fuel Poverty

An estimated 9,420 households were in fuel poverty (where a household must spend more than 10% of its income to maintain a satisfactory heating regime) in Halton in 2010. This represents 18.1% of all households in the Borough which is higher than the national rate of 16.4% but lower than the North West rate of 20.3%. Figure 9 below illustrates trends in the rate of fuel poverty in Halton and in England since 2006 (data for the year 2007 is not available). As shown there has been a steep rise in the proportion of households in fuel poverty, most likely as a result of a combination of rising fuel prices and unemployment and stagnant or declining incomes as a result of the recession.

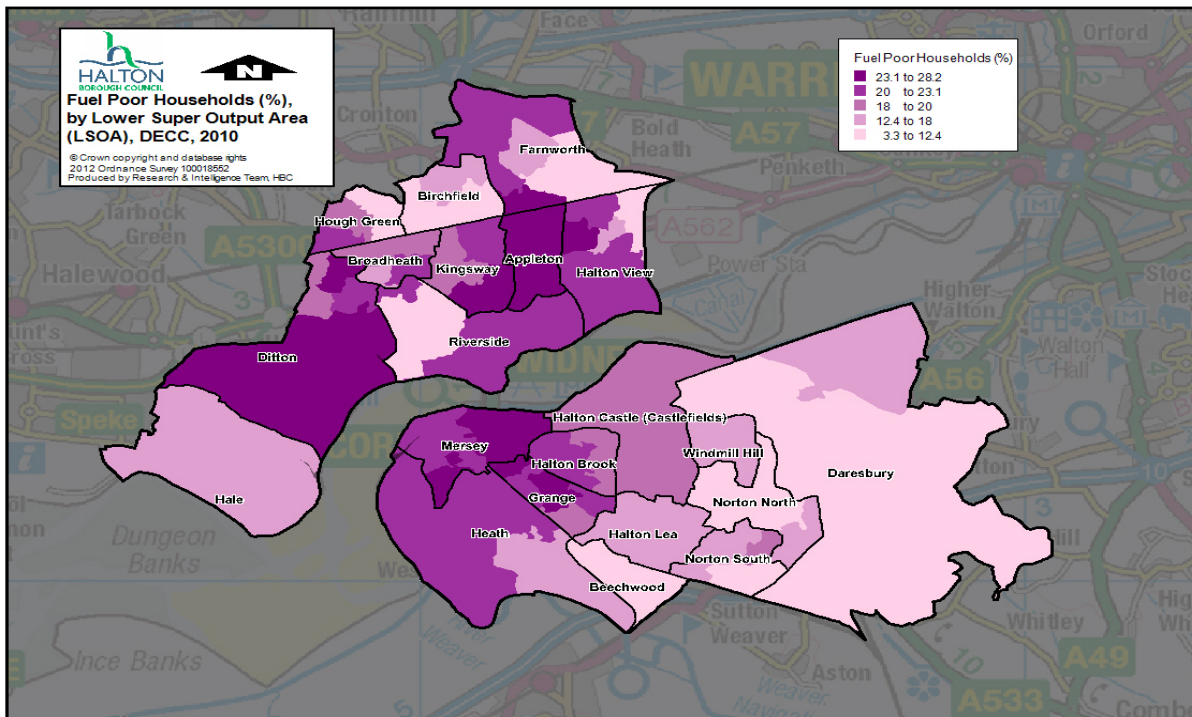
**Figure 9 – Fuel Poverty levels 2006-2010**

Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change

There is wide disparity in fuel poverty levels for different wards as shown in the map below. High levels of fuel poverty are found in Appleton, Kingsway and Mersey where around a quarter of households are affected and lowest levels in Beechwood, Daresbury and Norton North where only 1 in 10 households is affected. It is interesting to note that wards containing high levels of social housing e.g. Windmill Hill, Halton Lea and Hough Green have relatively low levels of fuel poverty despite being amongst the most deprived wards in the Borough. This is likely to reflect the contribution that energy efficiency measures make to reducing fuel poverty since all social housing stock has recently been improved under the Decent Homes programme.

There have also been significant fuel poverty reductions in the Castlefields area of Runcorn, where the Council, in partnership with the two Registered Providers who own stock in the area, has over the last 10 years overseen the demolition of 1,283 unpopular and energy inefficient deck access flats. These have been replaced by over 800 new homes which have been designed to high energy conservation standards and include the first new-build properties in Halton with solar thermal heating, rain-water harvesting and heat recovery.

**Figure 10 – Distribution of fuel poverty levels 2010**



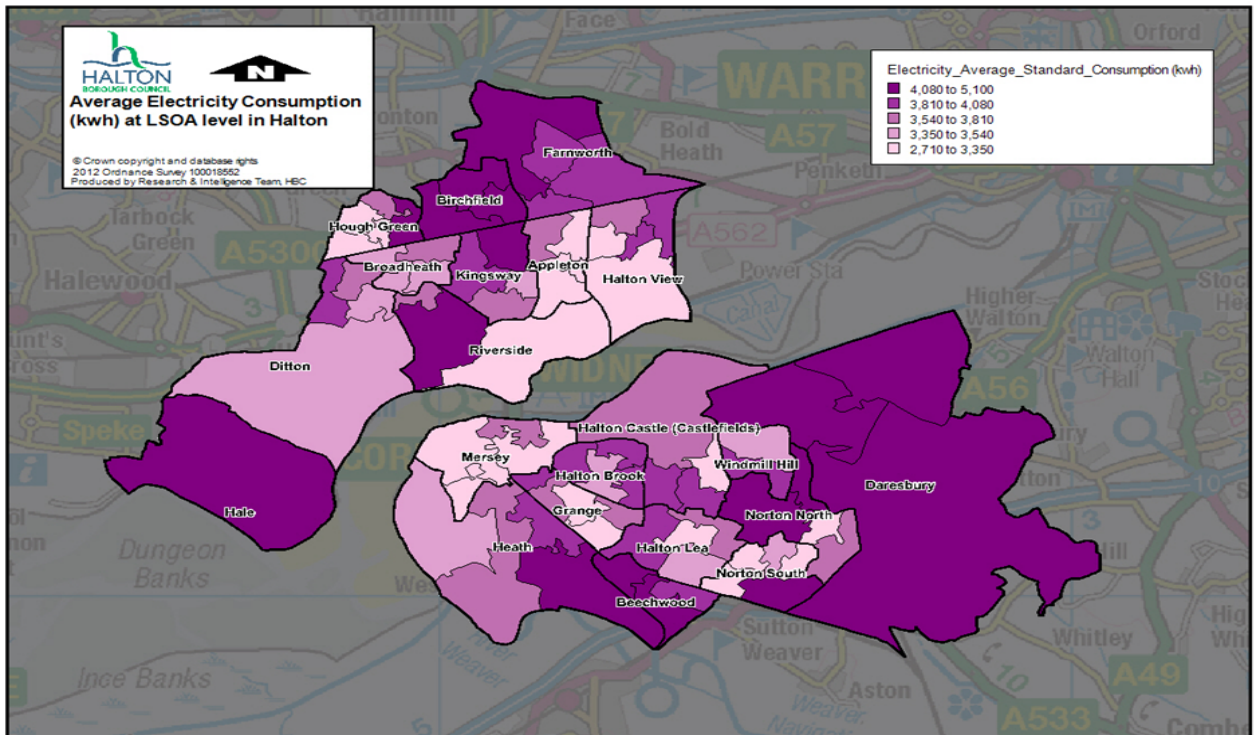
Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change

**Energy consumption**

The maps below show the distribution of average energy consumption across the Borough. In general more affluent areas of the Borough have higher levels of energy consumption than those with lower incomes which is likely to be a reflection of the size of property (and therefore the energy needed to heat it) and the fact that those on lower incomes may be more aware of their consumption (particularly if on a pre-payment meter) and may even under heat their homes.

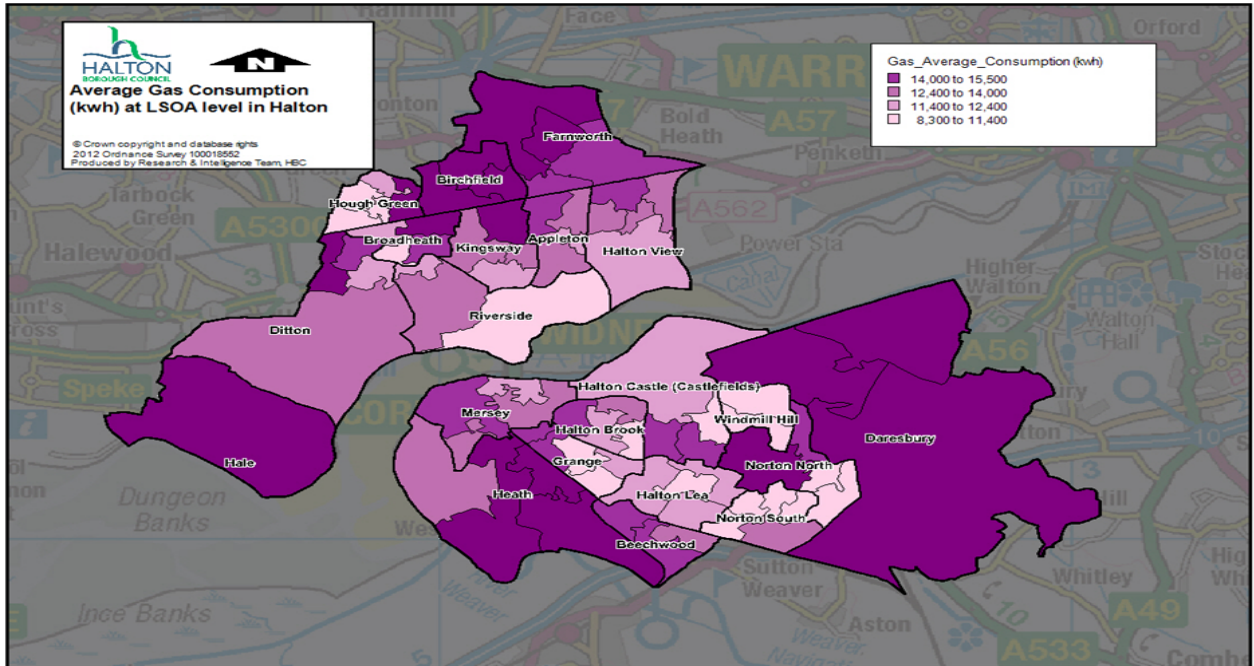


Figure 11 – Average electricity consumption (kwh) in Halton 2009



Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change

Figure 12 – Average gas consumption (kwh) in Halton 2009



Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change

### Social Housing Stock

Halton’s social rented stock is in relatively good condition compared to the private sector, all homes having met the Government’s Decent Homes Standard by the target date of 2010. However, there is scope for further energy efficiency retrofits particularly in the non traditional and solid wall stock and opportunities to deliver further improvements through the installation of renewable energy schemes.

Registered Providers in Halton have engaged with energy providers under the Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) to deliver external wall insulation and other improvements in Castlefields, Halton Brook and Grangeway and have installed air and ground source heat pumps and solar pv at various locations in Runcorn. Halton Housing Trust has also delivered cavity wall and loft insulation to around 200 homes in Widnes under the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target.

Registered Providers in Halton are keen to replicate this work in other areas utilising the new Energy Company Obligation, Green Deal and Renewable Heat Incentive schemes.

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# Health and Housing in Halton

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## Introduction

Households suffering from fuel poverty have an increased chance of ill health. Illnesses such as influenza, heart disease and strokes are exacerbated by the cold and living in a cold home can make it more difficult to recover from illness. Nationally, fuel poverty is a factor in thousands of excess winter deaths each year, particularly amongst pensioners and can also contribute to social exclusion, which has an adverse impact on mental health and well being.

## Healthcare costs of fuel poverty

NHS Halton and St Helens conducted a study into the impact of poor private sector housing, including fuel poverty, on healthcare costs in Halton in 2012. Using a calculation tool developed by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health which is based on the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the study estimated an annual cost to the NHS of £1,950,000 resulting from an expected 39 excess winter deaths due to excess cold.

The study also used a calculation developed by Bolton PCT which estimated that the total health care cost of treating mental health caused by fuel poverty to be in the region of £539,500 to £768,200.

Clearly, therefore, there are huge potential benefits of increased joint working between health and housing professionals. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, certain Public Health functions will come under the control of the local authority from April 2013, bringing with it greater opportunities for collaborative working. In preparation for this, a Halton Healthy Homes Network has been developed which is described in more detail in the next section of this report.

## Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-15

Halton's first joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed by Halton's Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board as an overarching Strategy to all related plans and strategies. It sets out how the Board aims to achieve its vision to improve the health and wellbeing of Halton people so they live longer, healthier and happier lives.

The Strategy sets out five priorities for action:

- Prevention and early detection of cancer
- Improved child development
- Reduction in the number of falls in adults
- Reduction in harm from alcohol
- Prevention and early detection of mental health conditions

With the exception of reduction in alcohol harm, tackling fuel poverty can make a significant contribution to each of these priority areas as described below.

### Prevention of Cancer

Cancer is the highest single cause of death in Halton and the death rate from cancer amongst females is the highest in England.

The Hills review on fuel poverty<sup>1</sup> published in March 2012 highlighted that feeling cold can affect a cancer patient's health and well being. In their response to the review MacMillan Cancer Support highlighted that 40% of cancer sufferers experience a drop in income as a result of their illness and that 60% have incurred higher fuel costs during their illness with 1 in 4 struggling to pay their heating bills. Improving the energy efficiency of properties can help to maximise income, allowing the occupant more disposable income that can be spent on improving comfort and quality of life.

### Improved child development

In 2010-11 Halton had the highest percentage of children who do not reach a good level of development by age 5.

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<sup>1</sup> "Getting the measure of fuel poverty: Final report of the Fuel Poverty Review": John Hills March 2012

A briefing published by Save the Children<sup>2</sup> in 2011 concluded that increasing fuel bills are putting the health and wellbeing of children at risk. The organisation commissioned YouGov to carry out a survey which found that almost half of families earning less than £12,000 per year were considering cutting back on food in order to pay their energy bills and half were planning to leave their heating off for longer to cut down on bills.

The Marmot Review into the health impacts of fuel poverty<sup>3</sup> highlighted studies that show that improving the energy efficiency of dwellings thereby reducing fuel poverty has demonstrable positive impacts on child development in terms of infant weight gain, hospital admission rates and a self reported reduction in the frequency and severity of asthmatic symptoms.

It is not just the health of children that is affected. The lack of a warm place for independent study can have a detrimental effect on children's educational attainment, thereby restricting their life chances and wellbeing in later life.

#### **Reduction in the number of falls in adults**

Hospital admissions due to falls in those aged 65+ were one of the highest in the country for 2010-11. The Marmot Review also found that strength and dexterity reduces as temperatures fall and that conditions such as arthritis and circulatory disease are exacerbated by living in a cold home. These can all increase the risk of falls within the home. Improving the energy efficiency of homes can, therefore, help to reduce the number of hospital admissions and need for hip replacement surgery as a result of injury attributable to falls helping older people to maintain their independence for longer.

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<sup>2</sup> *“Rising Energy Costs: The Impact on Low Income Families”* Save The Children December 2011

<sup>3</sup> *“The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty”* Marmot Review for Friends of the Earth May 2011

### **Prevention of mental health conditions**

Mental health is the single highest cause of ill health in the Borough. One in four people attending GP surgeries seek advice on mental health.

Successive studies measuring the health impacts of the national Warm Front Programme on households receiving energy efficiency improvements, found that a significant proportion (around a third) of households suffered from lower levels of anxiety and depression after the measures had been installed. It is probable that this is as a result of the combined effect of living in a warmer home, the alleviation of physical symptoms of ill health, increased disposable income/reduced debt and reduced feelings of social isolation resulting from feeling more able to invite friends into the home.

Research published by the National Centre for Social Research on behalf of the EAGA Charitable Trust<sup>4</sup> also established strong links between common mental disorder and fuel poverty and recommended that tackling fuel poverty is a priority for mental health professionals.

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<sup>4</sup> *“Health, mental health and housing conditions in England”* National Centre for Social Research Nov 2010

# Current and future activity

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## Introduction

This section of the report sets out the energy conservation measures that Halton Borough Council considers practicable, cost effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the area.

## Local energy efficiency ambitions and priorities

In December 2012, Halton Borough Council's Executive Board endorsed three climate change commitments which set out Halton's ambitions in relation to energy efficiency:

- EU Covenant of Mayors
- Liverpool City Region Sustainable Energy Action Plan
- Climate Local

## EU Covenant of Mayors

The EU Covenant of Mayors recognises that local authorities play a vital role in achieving the EU's carbon reduction commitments. It contains the following key commitments:

- To go beyond the objectives set by the EU for 2020, reducing CO2 emissions by at least 20%;
- To submit a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) within one year of signing, outlining how the objectives will be reached;
- To submit with the SEAP a Baseline Inventory Report;
- To submit an implementation report at least once every two years;
- To organise Community "Energy Days" to encourage energy efficiency; and
- To attend and contribute to the annual EU Conference of Mayors for a Sustainable Energy Europe.

## Liverpool City Region Sustainable Energy Action Plan (LCR SEAP)

Officially launched in July 2012, the LCR SEAP sets out a number of prioritised actions to deliver a low carbon economy across the city region, with the potential to add value through:

- Joint applications for EU funding and investment opportunities;
- Efficiencies in procurement of goods and services to deliver energy projects;
- Combining projects to increase the scale of energy projects to improve rates of return for investors and help to de-risk investment decisions;
- Development of a LCR heat network;
- Support for integrated programmes of action such as the development of a domestic, industrial and commercial retrofitting programme;
- If appropriate, to design and develop proposals for a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to reduce risk, attract subsidies, create revenues and deliver economies of scale in the delivery of the programme;
- Work across administrative boundaries and ensure co-ordination; and
- Signal to investors and energy companies that the LCR considers the SEAP to be a key priority and driver of the City Region's low carbon ambition

## Climate Local

The Executive Board has endorsed that the Council sign up to the Local Government Association's Climate Local initiative which replaced the previous Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change which Halton Council signed in 2007. This is wider in scope than the EU Covenant of Mayors in that it also addresses climate resilience and managing the future impacts of climate change such as extreme weather. In signing the Council commits to:

- Set locally owned and determined commitments and actions to reduce carbon emissions and to manage climate impacts. These will be specific, measurable and challenging;

- Publish our commitments, actions and progress, enabling local communities to hold us to account;
- Share the learning from our experiences and achievements with other councils; and
- Regularly refresh our commitments and actions to ensure they are current and continue to reflect local priorities.

### **Halton's Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011 to 2015**

Halton's Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011 - 15 sets out how the Council intends to reduce levels of fuel poverty within the Borough. The Strategy, which was developed on the Council's behalf by National Energy Action in conjunction with a wide range of partner agencies, contains five aims:

- To raise awareness and understanding of fuel poverty;
- To establish effective referral systems amongst agencies in Halton;
- To improve the housing stock so it is affordably warm;
- To maximise incomes and improve access to affordable fuel;
- To ensure co-ordination and monitoring of the Strategy.

### **Halton draft Housing Strategy 2013-18**

Halton's emerging Housing Strategy recognises the importance of energy efficiency in helping to reduce health inequalities and maximising household income, particularly in light of impending welfare reforms. Improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty is one of the draft Strategy's key priorities.

## **Measures we are taking to result in significant energy efficiency improvements of our residential accommodation**

The measures we are taking to improve energy efficiency can be categorised under three headings:

- Awareness raising measures;
- Measures to deliver physical improvements;
- Other measures

### **Awareness raising measures**

#### **The Halton Healthy Homes Network**

The Halton Healthy Homes Network was launched in February 2012 principally as a means of raising awareness of the health implications of living in poor end energy inefficient housing and the help that is available to those affected. Specifically the Network aims to:

- raise awareness of the issues associated with fuel poverty and poor housing conditions so that professionals and community advocates are able to identify households at risk, provide basic advice and either signpost to appropriate agencies or make appropriate referrals;
- provide strong strategic links across relevant working groups/partnerships;
- ensure that relevant and accurate information on the advice and assistance available to households is communicated in a timely manner to front line professionals and community representatives;
- provide a consultation forum for the development of related local policies, strategies and initiatives e.g. Affordable Warmth Strategy, Housing Strategy, Housing Assistance Policy to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have the opportunity to input into policy/strategic development;
- identify opportunities for joint working, co-ordinated activity and joint training; and
- identify gaps in relevant service delivery and opportunities to develop new related services.

The network operates as a virtual group of statutory health, social care and housing professionals, elected members and representatives from community and voluntary organisations who have a professional and/or personal interest in improving the housing conditions and reducing levels of fuel poverty in Halton. Communication is sustained via quarterly newsletters and ad hoc emails and the network is overseen by a small steering group.

To date the Network has 103 members, made up of the following:

Community representatives	7
Council officers	36
Elected members	13
Registered Provider representatives	14
Statutory organisation representatives	10
Voluntary sector organisation representatives	17
Private landlords	3
Unknown	3

### **Training**

Working with local Environmental Charity Energy Projects Plus the Council facilitates fuel poverty training for front line staff from statutory, voluntary and community organisations. To date xxx front line staff from organisations such as the Council, PCT, Citizens Advice Bureaux and Registered Providers have attended a half day awareness raising session and full day more intensive training sessions are to be held in February and March 2013 specifically for Housing Officers who regularly visit tenants in their homes. This will enable specific, tailored advice to be delivered on a one to one basis.

Halton has also developed an e-learning training package to raise awareness amongst other staff who are unable or perhaps do not necessarily need to attend full training sessions.

In addition, officers from Energy Projects Plus and the Council have attended team meetings of Council and partners' teams to give an overview of the issues related to fuel poverty and what assistance is available and to promote the Halton Healthy Homes Network.

### **Save Energy Advice Line**

The Council values the availability of a locally based energy advice line which can direct callers to the most appropriate assistance, whether that be through a national scheme such as the Green Deal or through a locally developed initiative. Consequently, when Energy Savings Trust funded advice lines were devolved from the regions to London in April 2012, the Council identified funding through the Department of Health's Warm Homes, Healthy People programme to make a contribution to a Merseyside based advice line delivered by Energy Projects Plus.

One of the key roles of the current local advice service has been to provide a local anchor point for residents to contact, confident that they will receive high quality, locally specific, advice that will link to the range of local initiatives including advice schemes (such as Heat Aware), fuel poverty or health related programmes (such as Health Through Warmth), local referral networks (such as Halton Healthy Homes Network) and contact details of key local authority officers or third party organisations able to provide more detailed support (for example benefits advice or fire home safety assessments).

## **Measures to deliver physical improvements**

### **Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO)**

The Council is working with Registered Providers with the largest stockholdings in the Borough through the newly formed Green Deal/ECO Co-ordination Group to investigate models and approaches for early delivery of the Energy Company Obligation, particularly the Carbon Savings Communities (CSCO) element of the obligation and increase take up of the Green Deal. There are 33 CSCO areas in Halton (those Lower Super Output Areas that fall within the 15% most deprived in the country). These areas are indicated at Appendices A and B. We have also entered discussions with an energy company to explore a potential partnering arrangement focusing on delivery of ECO.

Through the Liverpool City Region City Deal we have also secured funding to carry out Green Deal works on two homes in the Borough, with the intention that they act as showhomes to demonstrate the benefits of the Green Deal and test the Golden Rule.



### **Renewable Heat Incentive and Feed in Tariffs**

The partnership approach with Registered Providers will also provide an opportunity to share best practice of the Renewable Heat Incentive and Feed in Tariffs and promote the benefits of these schemes. At least two Registered Providers are considering using the Renewable Heat Incentive to provide district heating and biomass boilers for their stock.

### **Merseyside Renewables and Energy Efficiency in Community Housing (REECH) scheme**

The Merseyside REECH scheme is a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded project aimed at improving energy efficiency in some of the most deprived areas of Merseyside and Halton. The project has a strong emphasis on hard to treat and renewable technologies and a key element is the upskilling of local people to build capacity within the supply chain for new technologies. In Halton the scheme has part funded external wall insulation and other measures to 86 two storey concrete panel flat roofed houses in Castlefields, Runcorn, of which 60 are socially rented with the remaining 25 owner occupied. Other funding has been provided through CESP and the social landlord Plus Dane. There are ambitions to roll out the improvement works to other areas of the estate and at the time of writing funding for Phase II and beyond is being sought.

### **Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) and Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT)**

Working with energy suppliers and providers a number of Registered Providers benefited from CESP and CERT funding, schemes included:

- Liverpool Housing Trust provided 150 mixed tenure properties within Castlefields, Runcorn with external wall insulation, boiler replacements and other commentary measure. Scheme delivered July 2012 – March 2013;
- Riverside Housing provided external wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing and boiler & control upgrade works to 170 Riverside owned properties and 216 private homeowners within Halton Brook, Runcorn. Scheme delivered in 2012; and
- Halton Housing Trust provided external wall insulation and boiler replacements to 36 flats at Coronation and Centenary House in Runcorn and delivered air and ground source heat pumps and solar pv heating panels to 107 properties at various locations using CESP funding. The organisation has also delivered loft and cavity wall insulation to around 200 properties in Widnes using CERT funding.

### **Health through Warmth**

The nPower Health through Warmth scheme helps vulnerable households who suffer from long term, cold related illnesses and who need assistance to pay for heating and insulation works in their home. Referrals are made from health and social care professionals, welfare agencies and voluntary organisations who have been given basic awareness training in the scheme. In 2012, 24 households living in Halton received works to the value of £69,000 through the scheme bringing the total number of households assisted to 245 and the total value of works to over half a million (joint funded through nPower and local authority and householder contributions).

### **Other local schemes**

Wherever possible the Council will take advantage of short term funding streams to help improve the energy efficiency of homes and reduce heating bills for Halton residents. For example, for the last two funding rounds (2011/12 and 2012/13) we have successfully bid for Department of Health funding under their Warm Homes, Healthy People funding. This has enabled the Council to develop the Emergency Heat scheme which, as the name suggests, provides emergency heating repairs and renewals for vulnerable households and the Heat Aware scheme which provides tailored one to one advice on operating heating controls, reading meters and energy bills and switching supplier to vulnerable households within the home.

We were also successful in securing £115,000 funding from the Department of Energy and Climate Change under their Fuel Poverty fund to provide around 45 households with grants to pay for much needed upgraded heating systems and insulation.

## Zero Carbon Homes

Halton's Core Strategy was adopted in November 2012 having been through Examination in Public and having been subject to examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The Strategy sets a minimum housing requirement of 9,930 net additional homes between 2010 and 2028, equating to 552 dwellings per annum.

To ensure that all new build homes are zero carbon by 2016 the Strategy contains a policy to the effect that:

"The Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 will be required as a minimum standard for new residential development, rising to Level 4 in 2013 and Level 6 (zero carbon) in 2016."

The Council has experience (including through its regulatory functions) of delivery of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 and 4 properties within the Borough, notably as part of the Castlefields Regeneration Programme.

## Minimum standards in the private rented sector

Like many other authorities, Halton takes a "carrot and stick" approach to the private rented sector. The Council's Environmental Protection team use legal powers to compel landlords to upgrade their properties when they fall below minimum standards while the Landlord Accreditation scheme seeks to encourage landlords to improve the condition of their properties. The Halton Private Landlords Forum continues to provide a useful way of promoting energy efficiency initiatives available to private tenants and landlords via regular newsletters and presentations at meetings.

Although the number of privately rented properties remain relatively small, the dramatic growth in the sector has fuelled demands for a more targeted "worst first" approach and following an elected member led scrutiny review a variety of options for this are being considered.

The Energy Act 2011 requires that all privately rented properties achieve at least an "E" rating by 2018. Minimum energy standards are an integral part of both the Council's enforcement role and as part of the eligibility criteria for the Landlord Accreditation Scheme and this new requirement will be built into our approach. In the run up to 2018 we will wherever possible seek to assist landlords with advice and signposting to help them improve their properties.

## Other measures

### Collective switching

Although not directly related to carbon savings, collective switching schemes offer opportunities for households to save money on their energy bills by collectively negotiating the cheapest possible tariff, usually through a third party acting as a broker. The Council views collective switching as a positive step to maximise households' incomes thereby reducing levels of fuel poverty and potentially helping to minimise the impacts of impending welfare reforms.

Consequently we are working with other Liverpool City Region authorities and Energy Projects Plus to examine the potential for a sub regional scheme.

### Energy data

As part of the Council's submission to the DECC Fuel Poverty fund an amount was included to purchase a property specific energy database. The database will bring together relevant available data, including Energy Performance Certificate data, to help inform our approach and take a "worst first" approach to area based activity. It is anticipated that the database will be used to:

- hold, manage and analyse data on large numbers of individual dwellings;
- produce profile reports to show energy ratings, running costs, CO2 emissions;
- produce data to support bids for funding or partnerships;
- provide data to inform future HECA progress reports;
- provide data for other statistical returns e.g. English Local Authority Statistics on Housing (ELASH);
- identify households at risk of fuel poverty;
- target streets and areas, to produce address lists, work programmes etc;
- analyse the effect of improvements, price rises and other interventions on levels of fuel poverty and CO2 emissions and

- monitor progress towards carbon savings and related targets.

## **Measures we propose to cost effectively deliver energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation by using area based/street by street roll out**

It is fair to state that previous activity has largely been targeted at specific client groups e.g. older people, those on low incomes and those with cold related health conditions rather than geographical location. However the Council recognises the benefits of area based approaches to target interventions within a specific residential neighbourhood, which often share similar physical, social and economic characteristics pursuant to a particular type of intervention and funding stream. An area approach offers economies of scale and is particularly desirable in light of the measures offered by the Energy Company Obligation and Green Deal e.g. external wall insulation and windows which have the potential to add aesthetic value and kerb appeal as well as energy savings benefits.

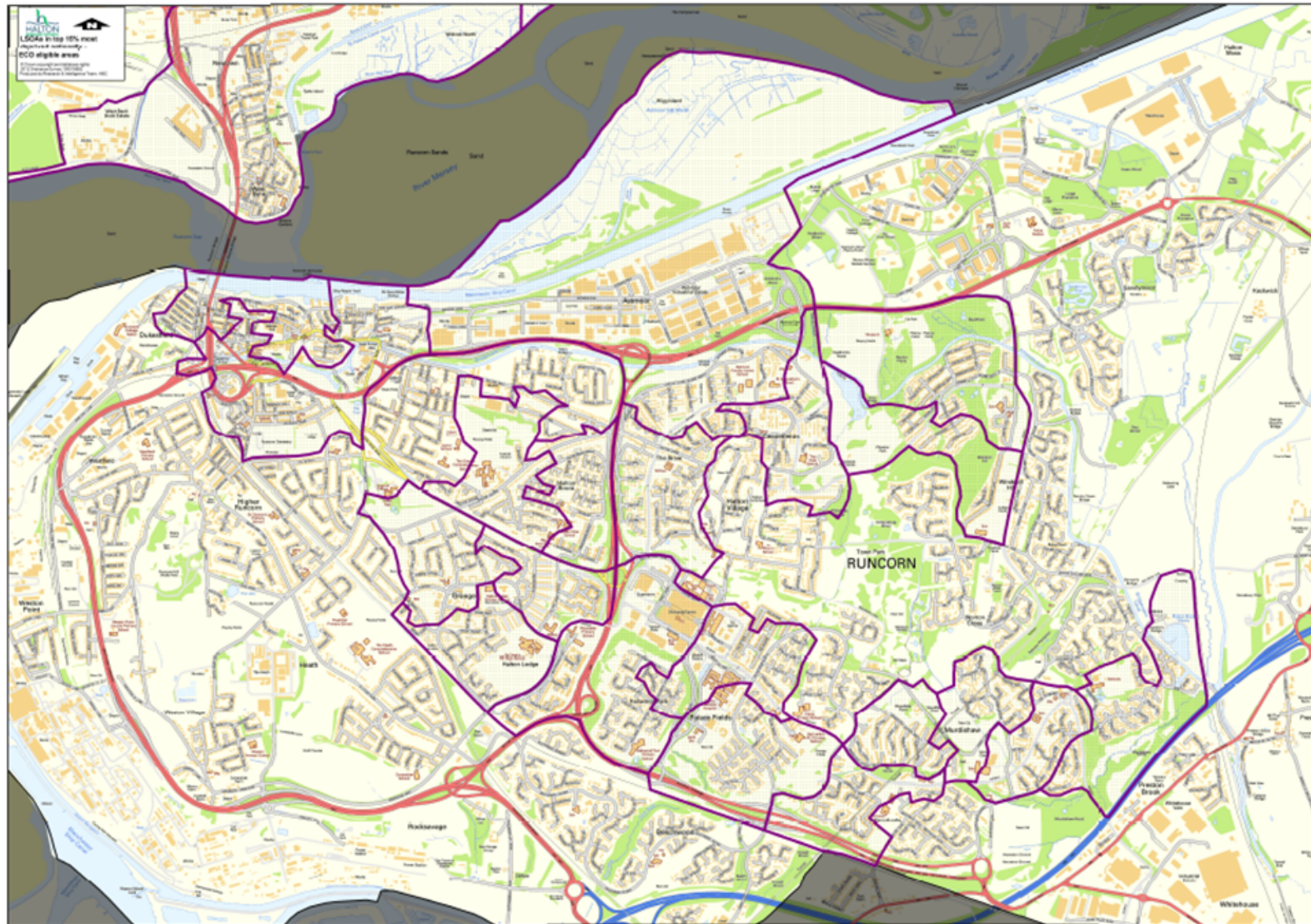
Initially our approach will be led by whether an area sits within an ECO Carbon Saving Community (for socially rented stock) or, for private stock, where the area has a higher than average level of fuel poverty and of privately rented housing (where conditions are poorest). An example of the latter is with the grants offered under the DECC Fuel Poverty Fund. Although the grants were available Borough wide, promotional activity was specifically targeted in the ward with the highest level of fuel poverty (Appleton) and where there is a higher than average level of private rented housing.

However, it is anticipated that the property specific database referred to above will allow us to develop a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of where measures such as the Green Deal and ECO are likely to have the greatest impact and, particularly in the case of Green Deal, the greatest take up potential so that specific programmes can be drawn up and prioritised effectively.

## **Timeframe for delivery and national and local partners**

The timeframe for delivery of existing programmes and our delivery partners is outlined in the Summary at Appendix C.

## Appendix A - ECO Carbon Saving Communities areas – Runcorn



Appendix B – ECO Carbon Saving Communities Areas – Widnes



## Halton Borough Council HECA Report 2013 – Summary of approach

ACTION	EXAMPLE	TIMING
<b>i) LOCAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES</b>		
<b>Overview of Council's approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halton has committed to sign up to Climate Local and the EU Covenant of Mayors.</li> <li>• The Council is committed to delivering actions within the Liverpool City Region Sustainable Energy Action Plan and the Liverpool City Region Deal with Government.</li> <li>• We will continue to deliver on the actions contained within the Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011-15.</li> <li>• We will deliver on the actions contained in the draft Housing Strategy 2013-18</li> <li>• We will continue to develop the Halton Healthy Homes Network as a means of raising awareness of the help that is available to improve energy efficiency.</li> <li>• As long as funds allow we will continue to raise awareness by offering training opportunities to front line staff with a view to them making appropriate referrals for advice and assistance</li> </ul>	<p>2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2015</p> <p>2018</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<b>ii) MEASURES WE ARE TAKING TO RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS OF OUR RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION</b>		
<b>Green Deal and ECO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to work with Registered Providers, Green Deal Providers, energy companies and/or installers to develop an approach which maximises the benefits offered by the ECO Carbon Savings Communities Obligation.</li> <li>• We will build upon and learn from the Liverpool City Region Green Deal Go Early pilot with a view to promoting the benefits of the Green Deal.</li> <li>• We will explore opportunities with energy companies and Green Deal Providers and assessors to develop a delivery vehicle for Green Deal and ECO locally.</li> </ul>	<p>2013/14</p> <p>2013</p> <p>2013/14</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will publicise the Green Deal and ECO through our website and other communication channels</li> </ul>	2013
<b>Feed in Tariffs scheme/Renewable Heat Incentive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will promote Feed in Tariffs as a mechanism for increasing take up of renewable electricity technologies and will work with Registered Providers to share learning and best practice of delivering such schemes within the social housing sector.</li> </ul>	2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the launch of the Renewable Heat Incentive we will promote the scheme as a means to increase take up of renewable heat technologies and encourage Registered Providers to share learning and best practice of such schemes.</li> </ul>	2013/14
<b>Zero Carbon Homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that all new build homes are zero carbon by 2016 Halton's Core Strategy contains a policy that: "The Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 will be required as a minimum standard for new residential development, rising to Level 4 in 2013 and Level 6 (zero carbon) in 2016."</li> </ul>	2016
<b>Energy data/Energy Performance Certificates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will purchase a property specific database</li> </ul>	2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will collate data on the energy performance on residential accommodation in the area and use this to inform our approach</li> </ul>	2013 onwards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will monitor nationally available home energy data for Halton to assess trends and influence our approach</li> </ul>	2013 onwards
<b>Minimum standards in the private rental sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will promote Green Deal and other energy efficiency schemes with private landlords through the Landlords Forum and Landlord Accreditation Scheme e.g. through Housing Benefit.</li> </ul>	2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will incorporate energy efficiency inspections into our housing enforcement inspections.</li> </ul>	2013
<b>Local grants and other financial assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to seek all available funding opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of homes occupied by vulnerable people and to reduce levels of fuel poverty</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<b>iii) MEASURES WE PROPOSE TO COST EFFECTIVELY DELIVER ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS IN RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION BY USING AREA BASED/STREET BY STREET ROLL OUT.</b>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In partnership with Registered Providers on the Green Deal/ECO Co-ordination group we will prioritise areas for ECO Carbon Saving Communities Obligation based on levels of need, deliverability and fit with other regeneration schemes and develop a pilot scheme.</li> <li>• For private stock we will prioritise activity on Green Deal/ECO and other initiatives according to levels of fuel poverty, proportion of private rented stock, deliverability and where appropriate the likelihood of Green Deal take up.</li> <li>• In areas containing a mix of social rented and private stock, the Council advocates that an offer of the same energy efficiency improvements is made regardless of tenure, wherever possible.</li> <li>• The Council will actively seek partnership approaches with energy companies, Registered Providers, Green Deal Providers and assessors and with local installers to deliver the agreed area based approach. It is anticipated that the Council will provide the following support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Within data protection constraints and to the best of its ability, information about the area and its housing stock;</li> <li>➤ Identifying opportunities to promote schemes with the local community;</li> <li>➤ Providing introductory letters to householders on Council letter headed paper;</li> <li>➤ Providing reassurance to householders that schemes are genuine;</li> <li>➤ Providing other support and assistance to reduce energy bills e.g. referring to welfare rights, entrance into a collective switching scheme;</li> <li>➤ Act as a key contact for partners involved in the scheme in the case of queries;</li> <li>➤ Signposting to other Council departments and partner agencies as may be necessary for the operation of schemes;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2013
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	<p>➤ Working with a third party, arrange for householders to receive appropriate advice post installation to ensure that they maximise the benefits of the improvement works.</p>	
<b>iii) TIME FRAME FOR DELIVERY AND NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNERS</b>		
	<p>The authority has well established partnership arrangements with Registered Providers through the Halton Housing Partnership and Strategic Housing Visioning Group. A Green Deal/ECO Co-ordination Group was established with Registered Providers at the end of 2012 specifically to maximise the opportunities provided by the new funding regime. The initial aim of the group is to develop a pilot scheme to test ECO and Green Deal from which lessons can be learned and replicated in other areas by the end of 2013.</p> <p>The Council also has well established and successful partnering arrangements with local environmental charity Energy Projects Plus, having commissioned the organisation to deliver and manage a number of energy efficiency initiatives on the Council’s behalf over the past decade. It is anticipated that this sort of third sector organisation would play a significant role in terms of community engagement and behavioural advice.</p> <p>The Council has had initial approaches from an energy company with a view to developing an ECO delivery model, although at the time of writing, no formal arrangement has been agreed.</p>	