

Rother District Council

HECA Progress Report

March 2017

Introduction

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 requires the Council to publish a progress report on its web site, every 2 years until March 2027. The report must also be sent to heca-reports@beis.gov.uk

This report was discussed by the Council's Scrutiny Committee on 24 April 2017 before submission to the Secretary of State.

The Council recognises that improving home energy efficiencies is an important activity to reduce carbon emissions and reduce the number of households who have to spend too much of their disposable income heating their homes, known as fuel poverty.

Between 2006-2011 the Council promoted and funded energy efficiency measures through two successful schemes:

- 2006-08 "Heatstreets" targeted street scheme in partnership with a major utility company delivering free and discounted cavity and loft insulation to 1,100 homes.
- 2008-11 an East Sussex Energy Partnership district wide scheme improved over 1000 homes including insulation measures and solar hot water systems.

Since 2011 the Council has not received capital funding to support any new energy efficiency schemes or initiatives.

Local Energy Efficiency Ambitions and Priorities

Fuel Poverty is an action in our Corporate Plan (2014-2021):

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/corporateplan>

CA4.3 Fuel Poverty

CA4.4 Collective Energy Switching

The Council does not own or manage any housing stock but will support registered social landlords (RSL) in improving the energy efficiency of their stock.

We will participate in local partnerships which aim to improve home energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty. We are members of the East Sussex Energy Partnership and support Your Energy Sussex (YES):

www.westsussex.gov.uk/living/in_your_community/energy_saving/your_energy_sussex.aspx

Apart from funding disabled facilities grants, the Council does not itself have any financial resources to devote to HECA or fuel poverty but we aim to keep our residents informed of opportunities to obtain grants etc and we will signpost residents to reputable advice organisations.

Measures we are taking to result in energy efficient improvements of our residential accommodation

The East Sussex Fuel Poverty Reduction Programme aims to protect individuals and communities from the effects of living in a cold home. It provides practical advice and support to vulnerable people about how to stay warm and well during the winter, and where to get further specialist help.

The Programme is co-ordinated by the East Sussex Energy Partnership (ESEP). The Programme has the following 5 work streams:

- Train health, housing and social care professionals and VCS workers to help people whose homes maybe too cold for their health and wellbeing;
- Raise awareness among professionals and the public about how to keep warm at home;
- Identify vulnerable people who live in a cold home and refer for help;
- Provide vulnerable people with information and advice in order to maximise income; and
- Winter Home Check service – for eligible vulnerable people provide a home assessment, advice and works.

The programme is funded by ESCC Public Health and benefits from funding from other sources. Funds has been secured from the Department of Energy and Climate Change's Big Energy Saving Network fund, National Energy Action, Citizen Advice's Energy Best Deal fund, Foundations Independent Living Trust, District and Borough Councils and Energy Company Obligation funding via the Your Energy Sussex programme.

New Tariffs

We promoted a collective energy switching offer for the third year in 2017, 335 residents participated, saving on average £120.

Private Rented Sector

We will work with private landlords to promote energy efficiency activity via visiting officers and the landlords forum.

Environmental Health Officers in the private sector housing team can take enforcement action using the Housing Act 2004, if properties are determined to have a category 1 or category 2 hazard from excess cold due to inadequate heating or thermal insulation.

Working with ESCC Trading Standards we report landlords who let accommodation without Energy Performance Certificates.

Measures we are taking to result in significant energy efficiency improvements in new affordable homes

Rother District Council remains committed to increasing the energy efficiency of all new affordable homes. This is currently achieved by imposing on Developers and Registered Providers, a minimum planning policy requirement - that requires all new affordable homes to achieve a minimum sustainable code level three or above.

In future the abolition of the sustainable code standards will instead be incorporated under building regulations. Rother District Council will continue to ensure that developers meet these environmental standards, by enforcing the core requirements to increase energy efficiency within the fabric of the building.

In terms of scheme specific environmental designs. Rother District Council has supported our preferred partner, Hastoe Housing Association in the delivery of an innovative environmental housing scheme, known as 'Passivhaus'. The houses are built using the patented Beastie Passive Construction method that provides a continuous insulation seal around the core of a time framed structure which delivers dramatic cost, time and environmental saving benefits. This flagship scheme is currently being developed on site now and is due to complete by the summer of this year.

Hastoe housing association has a long standing history of delivering higher than minimum code level standards. Their vision is centred on seeking innovative solutions to housing issues; with a commitment to environmental sustainability primarily in rural communities, where fuel poverty is inherently high.

It is envisaged that following an increased service provision of our Exception Site projects this year - to include Hastoe Housing as the leading registered provider – that Rother District Council will continue to support the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas, inclusive of sustainable technology to increase energy efficiency.

Background

Fuel poverty refers to a household unable to afford an adequate standard of warmth and pay for other energy needs to maintain their health and wellbeing. There are two well-known definitions of fuel poverty: "10% definition" and the "Hills definition". The "10% definition" simply states that, a household is said to be in fuel poverty when they have to spend more than 10% of their household income on fuel to keep their home in a 'satisfactory' condition. Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) commissioned the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusions Peter Hill in 2012 to review fuel poverty in the UK. His report recommended a new indicator for measuring and defining fuel poverty. Under the "Hills' definition", households are considered to be fuel poor if they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and were they to spend that amount on fuel, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line. Details on the Hi low definition of fuel poverty can be found on page 5 of the report

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/48298/4663-fuel-poverty-final-report-summary.pdf

Using the Hills definition there are estimated to be 9.0% households in fuel poverty in Rother the East Sussex overall average is also 9%,this compares with 8.3% in the South East and 10.6% in England (DECC 2016). See Appendix A for further ward level information relating to Rother district.

Area	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of fuel poor households	% of fuel poor households
Rother	42,232	3,808	9.0%
East Sussex	239,553	21,631	9.0%
South East	3,674,407	305,289	8.3%
England	22,542,270	2,379,357	10.6%

The two elements of the Hills definition are high heating costs and low income. Heating costs in rural Rother are most likely to be higher than in towns for a range of reasons. The most affordable fuel for heating is mains gas. Rother has 46.5% of properties “off gas” according to the Business Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS) estimated the percentage of non-gas properties using AddressBase and the location details of properties on the gas grid during 2013.

Rother has complex needs when it comes to fuel poverty where higher cost heating factors meet with the low income households. Overall people who are employed in East Sussex receive the lowest average weekly wage of any county or unitary authority in the South East. People in Rother have the lowest average full-time wage in East Sussex of £423. The highest average full-time wage is found in Lewes of £480 per week a difference of 14% or £57 higher according to East Sussex in figures.

When looking at low income households in Rother it we can see significant areas of deprivation have been identified using the Indices of Deprivation 2010 (ID2010) measure deprivation in relation to seven different factors. These are:

- low incomes;
- lack of work;
- poor health;
- education, skills and training;
- poor housing and access to services (such as the distance to nearest GP, supermarket, primary school or post office);
- crime; and
- poor living environment.

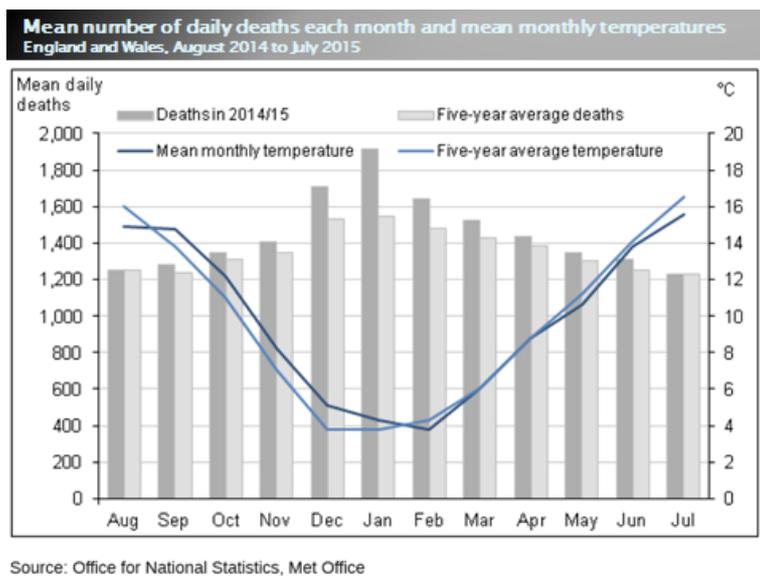
The ID2010 measures deprivation for small areas called lower layer super output areas (LSOAs) which contain around 1,500 people. Of the 327 LSOAs in East Sussex, 22 are amongst the 10% most disadvantaged in England. Of these, two are in Rother, 15 are in Hastings and the remaining five are in Eastbourne.

Local analysis completed by the East Sussex Public Health Intelligence team has proposed high priority Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) for East Sussex based on percentage of households in fuel poverty and a number of other deprivation measures. There are 44 LSOAs in East Sussex where the percentage of households in fuel poverty is above 12%, and 15 LSOAs where it is above 15%. This targeting approach has been agreed by the East Sussex Energy Partnership. Although the majority of areas with a high percentage of households in fuel poverty are in urban areas, rural areas where there is high fuel poverty (e.g. due to being off-gas) have also been identified as part of the targeting approach.

There are 10 high priority LSOAs in Rother district:

Ward	Number of high priority LSOAs
Rother	10
Bexhill Central	1
Crowhurst	1
Darwell	2
Ewhurst and Sedlescombe	1
Eastern Rother	1
Brede Valley	1
Salehurst	1
St Stephens	1

The effects of fuel poverty



Excess winter deaths (EWD) are the additional deaths that occur in winter months when compared with the non-winter months, due to various factors including:

- the temperature
- the level of disease in the population
- how well equipped people are to cope with the drop in temperature

In the last five years an average of over 300 more people each year in East Sussex have died in the winter period compared with the rest of the year, with nearly a third of these deaths believed to occur because of the impact of cold temperatures in the home on vulnerable people (ONS: Public Health England Annual Births and Mortality Extracts).

The study by Age UK the cost of cold 2012 found "...that the annual cost to the NHS in England of cold homes is £1.36 billion, not to mention the associated cost to social care services, which is likely to be substantial"

Cold weather also causes an increase in associated health problems, particularly heart attacks, strokes and respiratory problems. It has been shown that this leads to an increase in winter hospital admissions, while GP consultations for respiratory infections can increase by as much as 19 per cent for every 1°C drop in mean temperature below 5°C.

Around 30 per cent of excess winter deaths are attributable to respiratory problems. This is a particular risk to people who already have a problem such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), chronic bronchitis or asthma. Even more significantly, cardiovascular diseases – strokes caused by blood clotting and heart attacks – account for a further 40 per cent of excess winter deaths. Following a cold snap, a peak of deaths due to heart attack has been observed two to three days later, and a peak due to strokes five days later. Older people with an existing heart problem are particularly at risk in winter.

According to the BRE report: The cost of poor housing to the NHS - by Simon Nicol, Mike Roys, Helen Garrett, the costs, and benefits to the NHS, of reducing HHSRS Category 1 hazards Excess cold to an acceptable level (using median harm proportions and revised cost estimates) would cost on average £4,574 per household.

An evaluation of the Warm Homes scheme in Northern Ireland between 2001 and 2008 showed that for every £1 spent on the scheme, the NHS saved 42p. C. Liddell (2008) University of Ulster and Marmot Review Team

By improving the energy efficiency and affordability of heating a home we can prevent suffering and save money.



Historically, there have been Government grants available to assist households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Such grants are now only available for short periods of time and normally only households on income related benefits are eligible to apply. These grants are normally funded directly by Energy companies or indirectly through charitable organisations appointed by Ofgem, who receive income from Energy companies by way of a levy.

East Sussex Energy Partnership and fuel poverty reduction programme

The Council is a member of the East Sussex Energy Partnership (ESEP). The local councils in East Sussex formed the Partnership in 2007 to promote home energy efficiency, insulation and renewable measures. The Partnership aims to help to protect individuals and communities in East Sussex from the effects of living in a cold home. It is currently chaired by Public Health, East Sussex County Council, and includes all the district councils and voluntary groups including the Citizens Advice Bureaux. In 2016/17 East Sussex County Council allocated £325,000 to activities to reduce the impact of fuel poverty on health, with the ultimate aim reducing excess winter deaths. The East Sussex Energy Partnerships sets the priorities for this programme of activity. Appendix B provides additional information on the work of the East Sussex Energy Partnership.

East Sussex Fuel Poverty Coordinator post

As part of the fuel poverty reduction programme East Sussex County Council Public Health funds a Fuel Poverty Coordinator, hosted by Hastings Borough Council. The work involves:

- engaging with national and local organisations, such as Community Energy Organisations, Energy Savings Trust and National Energy Action;
- being a point of contact to maintain relevant expertise and knowledge and to disseminate that information;
- supporting the monitoring and effective delivery of Winter Home Check service in collaboration with partners; and
- providing training to the employees of relevant organisations and volunteers.

The East Sussex Fuel Poverty Coordinator has delivered a range of training and information sessions, including Making Every Contact Count sessions and training of general practice staff participating in Hasting & Rother CCG's locally commissioned service to identify and then refer vulnerable patients living in a cold home to local services. Additional training delivery in 2016/17 has been commissioned by the East Sussex Fuel Poverty Coordinator (Hastings Borough Council) and funded through a partnership agreement with East Sussex County Council. National Energy Action, the national fuel poverty charity, was commissioned to deliver 7 face-to-face training sessions in Eastbourne (x2), Hastings (x2), Rother, Wealden and Lewes. A total of 109 practitioners attended training in autumn 2016.

During 2016/17 a total of 1143 frontline staff engaged in information sessions or received training. The fuel poverty coordinator also facilitates a fuel poverty practitioners network or to share information and best practice.

Keep Warm and Well in East Sussex website

In March 2016 Hastings Borough Council was commissioned by ESCC to develop the East Sussex Energy Partnership's fuel poverty reduction programme information and communications offer in order to help raise awareness among professionals and the public about advice, services and support on how to keep warm at home.

The 'Keep Warm and Well in East Sussex' website is due to have a 'soft' launch shortly and feedback will be sought from members of partnership and other partners. The website will be available at:

www.keepwarmeastsussex.org.uk



'East Sussex Stay Well This Winter' small grants programme

In autumn 2016 ESCC Public Health and the East Sussex Energy Partnership launched the 'East Sussex Stay Well This Winter' small grants programme. In December 2016 awards totalling £12,231 were made to four local community voluntary sector groups (4 Centres CIC, Matthew 25 Mission, Lewes and District Citizens Advice Bureau and Smarter Living Network CIC). The projects funded will raise awareness of services to tackle fuel poverty, offer practical assistance, advice and support or run activities to help people stay warm and well.

Winter Home Check Service (WHC)

The East Sussex Winter Home Check service is a key part of the ESEP fuel poverty reduction programme. East Sussex County Council has commissioned Osborne Energy Ltd, an energy efficiency firm based in St Leonards-on-Sea, to deliver the service. It offers a winter warmth home assessment to identify how to keep warm and well and carry out preventative minor measures including reducing drafts, improving insulation, clearing gutters, lagging pipes and emergency repairs or replacement boilers. Major measures, for example replacement boilers, have been provided utilising additional funding from external sources (such as National Energy Action grant funding awarded to ESEP). This free service helps vulnerable people on low incomes and families on low incomes with children, to get advice, support, improvement works and financial help to keep their home warm

Since November 2015 the Winter Home Check service has received referrals for 228 Rother residents, delivered 161 'minor' heating and insulation measures to 131 homes and 31 'major' measures.

The East Sussex Energy Partnership was awarded £325,000 for installation of measures in at least 100 households between November 2015 and March 2017. Due to early completion, ESEP/ESCC was awarded a further £58,500 in October 2016 and £65,000 in March 2017 to enable install measures in a total of at least 138 eligible homes. In August 2016 the East Sussex Energy Partnership was, in addition, awarded £30,000 by NEA for the installation of small measures in 120 homes by March 2017 (this complemented the small measures already funded as part of the Winter Home Check service).

An East Sussex Better Together and Healthy Hastings and Rother programme "Healthy Homes" project is underway to tackle fuel poverty in five wards in Hastings and Rother (Central Bexhill). The £627,000 programme is funded by NHS Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group. This programme can provide grants to eligible households in Central Bexhill to enable the Winter Home Check service to provide thermal insulation and replacement boilers or heating systems. Rother residents have received 6 major measures since December.

Other Measures

- **ECO flex** – we intend to target fuel poor households but we are in discussion with other members of the ESEP on how to jointly progress this action.
- **Boilers and heat pumps** – ESEP and the WHC service ensures that quality measures are in place to ensure compliance with building regulations and ensuring that appropriate technologies are installed.
- **Smart meter rollout** – plans to engage with residents on the roll-out program are being developed.

Dr Anthony Leonard

Executive Director of Operations (Head of Paid Service)

Appendix A Fuel Poverty by ward

Appendix B East Sussex Home Check Service in Rother

Appendix C National Statistics

Fuel Poverty

3808 households or 9% of households were fuel poor in 2014

Wards	Percentage of fuel poor households	Total households	Number Solid Walled	Number Off Gas	Solid wall %	Off gas %	Index HTT
Battle Town	6.5	2,414	589	329.81	25.6%	14.4%	0.03682
Brede Valley	10.1	2,083	628	413.42	31.6%	20.8%	0.06556
Central	11.2	3,126	2,135	134.00	69.3%	4.3%	0.03010
Collington	6.1	2,229	243	48.24	11.3%	2.2%	0.00253
Crowhurst	16.1	1,060	422	742.93	44.0%	77.5%	0.34090
Darwell	13.3	2,129	1,050	790.50	53.4%	40.2%	0.21431
Eastern Rother	10.9	2,348	720	1,271.45	29.6%	52.2%	0.15440
Ewhurst and Sedlescombe	13.2	1,169	440	377.33	40.8%	35.0%	0.14260
Kewhurst	6.2	2,349	221	0.00	9.4%	0.0%	0.00000
Marsham	6.7	1,870	327	147.18	17.0%	7.7%	0.01308
Old Town	7.0	1,823	310	115.00	17.3%	6.4%	0.01111
Rother Levels	9.1	2,162	685	507.59	32.9%	24.4%	0.08037
Rye	10.8	2,115	1,106	98.84	51.0%	4.6%	0.02326
Sackville	7.4	2,503	1,501	148.30	53.4%	5.3%	0.02817
St Marks	7.0	2,171	207	302.04	9.8%	14.3%	0.01403
St Michaels	6.2	2,253	200	61.19	9.5%	2.9%	0.00276
St Stephens	7.7	2,194	370	0.00	18.7%	0.0%	0.00000
Salehurst	11.1	1,866	567	577.32	31.0%	31.6%	0.09796
Sidley	8.6	2,477	315	107.53	12.7%	4.3%	0.00546
Ticehurst and Etchingam	10.5	1,891	812	617.78	47.2%	35.9%	0.16976

Key: HTT: Hard to Treat property

Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics>

Reference: www.ruralfuelpoverty.org.uk

Reference: www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk

Reference: www.nongasmap.org.uk

East Sussex Winter Home Check service – referrals received and measures provided to Rother residents, November 2015 to March 2017.

Referrals received	TOTALS	
Eastbourne	224	16%
Hastings	578	41%
Lewes	156	11%
Rother	228	16%
Wealden	179	13%
Other ineligible (Brighton & Hove)	47	3%
	1412	100%

Since November 2015 the WHCs has received referrals for 228 Rother residents, delivered 161 minor measures to 131 homes and 31 major measures.

Minor Measures	No.	%
Winter Warmth Pack	7	4%
Boiler repair / Heating repairs (gas)	10	6%
Insulating curtains	9	6%
Gutter clearing	8	5%
Chimney or flue sweep/clean	4	2%
Microwaves	0	0%
Heaters /Temporary heating (e.g. portable heater)	12	7%
Fireguard	0	0%
Lagging/insulation/draught proofing	12	7%
Doors, windows repair or replace	10	6%
Electric blankets	0	0%
ECO funding boiler replacements	0	0%
Rapid Ice	0	0%
Boiler service	11	7%
Gas fire service	3	2%
Gas fire repair	0	0%
Installation of thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs)	6	4%
Energy saving bulbs x 10	28	17%
Radiator repair	8	5%
Radiator bleeding	6	4%
Hot Water Tank Jacket	4	2%
Chimney Balloon	1	1%
Radiator foils	12	7%
Loft Clearance	0	0%
Miscellaneous	10	6%
TOTAL	161	100%

Major Measures:	No.	%
New central heating system	5	16%
Replacement boiler	23	74%
Storage heaters	3	10%
Cavity wall insulation	0	0%
Hard-to-treat cavity works	0	0%
Loft insulation - full	0	0%
Loft insulation - Top up	0	0%
Solid wall insulation - internal	0	0%
Solid wall insulation - external	0	0%
	31	100%

Other:	No.	%
Energy Advice	124	
Fuel switching advice	123	
	0	
Households receiving 1-2 measures	88	67%
Households receiving 3 -4 measures	36	27%
Households receiving 5 or more measures	7	5%
	131	100%

BEIS publish the Household Energy Efficiency National Statistic Headline release, which contains detailed breakdowns on the Energy Company Obligation on a quarterly basis. Table 2.2.1 reports ECO measures by ECO obligation by administrative area and Table 2.2.4 reports households in receipt of ECO measures by administrative area

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/household-energy-efficiency-national-statistics#headline-releases>

CO2 Emission statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics>.

Sub-national gas consumption statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sub-national-gas-consumption-data>

Sub-national electricity consumption statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sub-national-electricity-consumption-data>

Fuel poverty statistics <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-sub-regional-statistics>