



Energy Efficiency Best Practice in Housing Newark and Sherwood District Council case study

A guide for local authorities



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This study is based on figures and information provided by Newark and Sherwood District Council. For further information on Newark and Sherwood District Council's activities visit www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

Introduction

This case study explores the approach, strategies and decisions that have contributed to Newark and Sherwood District Council's exemplary status as sustainable energy champions. It demonstrates how Newark and Sherwood have developed successful policies, strategies and partnerships and shows how they have secured corporate support during the last 20 years.

Most importantly, it aims to share the lessons learnt. There are no definitive answers to the issues that face local authorities and this study does not attempt to provide solutions. The purpose therefore, is to provide information and inspiration for those authorities looking to develop their own strategies.

Local authorities have a significant role to play in the implementation of local sustainable energy strategies, with their emphasis on energy efficiency and the eradication of fuel poverty. Limited funding and powers, along with gaps in current national scheme coverage, particularly within the private sector, present special challenges.

Background to Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC)

Newark and Sherwood covers the largest land area (652 km²) of Nottinghamshire's districts. It is a rural-provincial authority with a population of 106,366 and 46,236 dwellings. The breakdown of dwellings by tenure and by type is shown in figures 2 and 3.

Unemployment stands at 1.8% across the district. However, with the decline of the mining industry, 15% of households in the northwest rural coalfield villages are unwaged. Due to its rural nature, this district also has off-gas areas. Four of Newark and Sherwood wards are amongst the ten most deprived in the county.

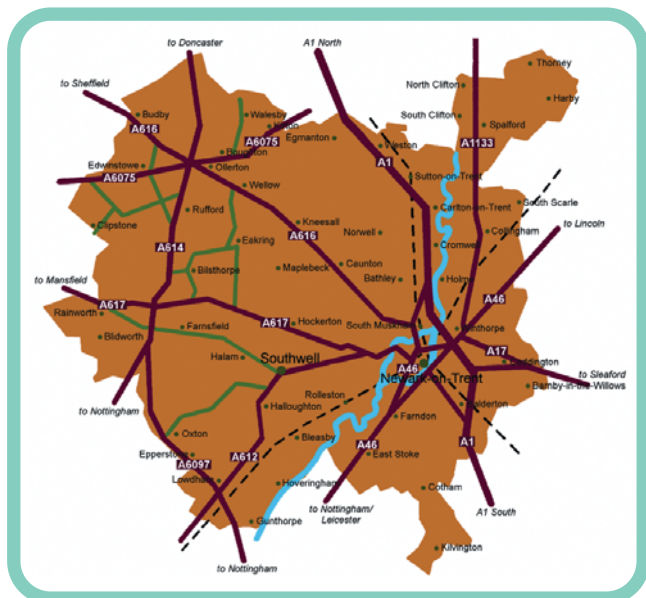


Figure 1: Map of Newark and Sherwood

NSDC is a conventional two-tier authority within an embryonic East Midlands Regional Assembly. With a staff of 600 and an annual spend of £63 million it has standard district council responsibilities for housing, leisure and culture, economic regeneration, environmental health and waste collection. NSDC was awarded Beacon status for tackling fuel poverty, 2002 / 2003.

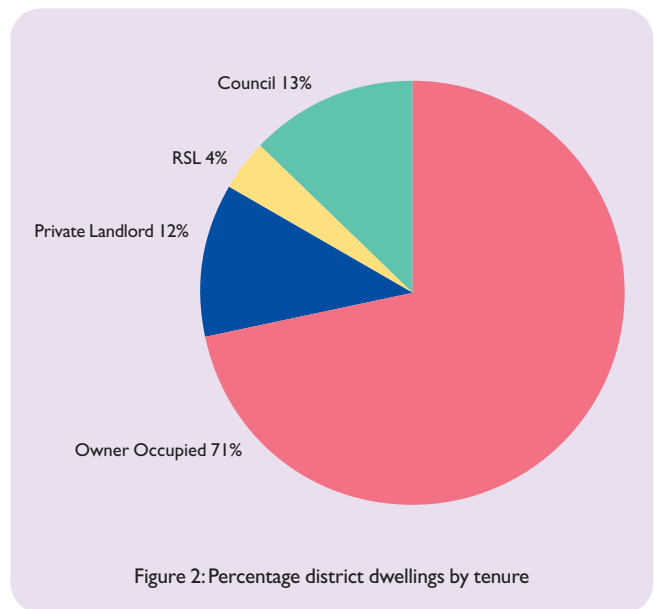


Figure 2: Percentage district dwellings by tenure

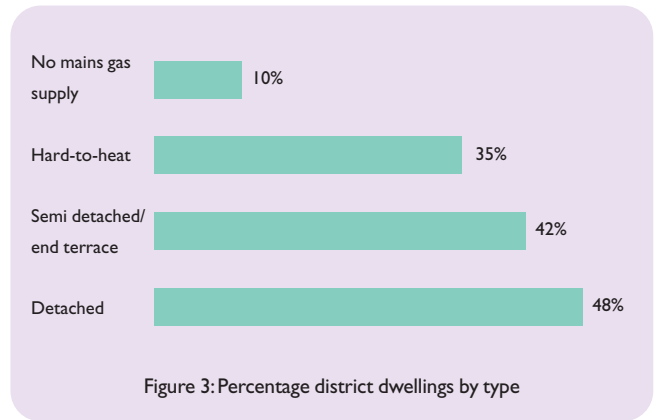


Figure 3: Percentage district dwellings by type

Fuel Poverty

A fuel poor household is one which needs to spend more than 10% of its income (excluding housing costs) on all fuel use and to heat the home to an adequate standard of warmth. This is generally defined as 21°C in the living room and 18°C in the other occupied rooms. (DTI)

UK fuel poverty targets: eradication of fuel poverty from vulnerable households by 2010 and from all dwellings, as far as reasonably possible, by 2016 (UK Fuel Poverty Strategy, DTI, Nov 2001 and Energy White Paper, DTI, 2003).

1985: a council-tenant driven energy strategy

NSDC initially addressed fuel poverty in 1985. This was a response to a health problem in their own housing stock – severe damp, condensation and mould in 50% of dwellings in the Newark estates.

As a result the tenants formed the Damp Action Group (DAG). They secured the help of expert consultants who helped them carry out technical studies that could support litigation under the Public Health Act 1933. DAG called a public meeting with NSDC. The meeting resolved that if the council could clearly demonstrate that they were prepared to work with DAG to rectify their poor housing conditions, they would abandon plans for litigation. The council was given six months to resolve the issue.

On closer analysis NSDC found that the typical winter internal temperature was 12°C; and that only one in sixty tenants knew how to use their heating systems efficiently. Council staff at that time blamed the tenants' lifestyles for their problems and advised them to turn up heating and open windows. Meanwhile, local doctors were complaining about unacceptable levels of illness associated with damp and mouldy homes, whilst teachers reported that pupils' clothing smelled musty. On examination of records since 1974, NSDC noted a significant increase in pensioner mortality during the winters, especially when external temperatures dropped below 4°C for more than two days.

Once minimum acceptable comfort and cost standards were agreed with DAG it was established that (as shown in Table 1) only 6% of the 7,500 dwellings owned by NSDC were then capable of delivering affordable energy.

The council's immediate priority after the DAG public meeting was to demonstrate that it was serious about the problem. NSDC requested that the DAG tenants select 34 dwellings suffering from severe mould and condensation problems. From these, NSDC selected 17 properties which were of solid brick wall or no-fines concrete construction. They were then improved with a package of measures which included:

- full gas central heating with full controls
- roof insulation, internal wall insulation, double glazing to living room window, and the insulation of 'energy design defects' such as half brick walls, passage ceilings
- draught stripping, trickle vents and humidistat-controlled fans
- a package of education, advice and guidance

Very high levels of tenant satisfaction resulted. However, the housing maintenance team wanted to establish a timescale for rolling-out this standard of improvements to all 7,500 NSDC dwellings. The calculated timescale was 60 years, based on 1985/86 budgets. The challenge was to work with the tenants' DAG to find a practical and affordable solution to eradicate fuel poverty from the entire housing stock.

The next three years saw 120 NSDC dwellings improved through a series of 12 pilot projects covering all construction types within the stock.

It was established to the satisfaction of DAG that, with a good quality central heating system, affordable energy could be delivered without the expensive wall insulation of 'hard to heat' solid-walled dwellings. This reduced the total housing stock implementation programme to 40 years.

Further consultation led to the tenants' suggestion that the NSDC post-war kitchen and bathroom modernisation programme be abandoned in favour of an energy efficiency programme. Their view was that 'we would rather be warm and free of mould than have a fancy new kitchen.' By 1988, NSDC was able to establish a £16.4m 20-year energy efficiency investment programme for their 7,500 dwellings.

Hard to Heat: a least-cost route to eradicating fuel poverty

Following the series of pilot projects on solid walled dwellings between 1985 and 1988, NSDC's approach has been that, given good quality gas or oil central heating, there is no 'hard to heat' problem. However, with electric heating, walls must be insulated.

These projects were revisited as part of NSDC's Beacon status dissemination package and applied to the private sector quinquennial stock condition survey. With A-rated gas and oil boilers, affordable energy can be delivered to vulnerable single pensioners in any Newark and Sherwood dwelling without the need for expensive solid wall insulation.

For details, including under-occupancy protocols, visit:
<http://www.nsdcc.info/downloads/fuelpoverty/hardtoheat.pdf>

Table 1: Energy performance of NSDC-owned dwellings 1985 to 2003, with 2020 projection on basis of investment policies already in place

Council housing progress	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2020
Affordable energy – % of dwellings capable of delivering affordable energy	6%	-	48.10%	91.15%	92.60%	96.67%	97%	-	100%
Average NHER – energy performance of the home as marks out of 10	2.3	5.6	6.6	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.4	7.7	9.1
#Average SAP – energy performance of heating and hot water as marks out of 100	23	42	56	61	63	63.75	64	66.4	80
Average CO₂ – theoretical tonnes of CO ₂ emissions of home if adequately heated.	-	7.6	6.7	5.4	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.13	3.4
Theoretical CO₂ reduction – as %	-	baseline	12%	29%	39%	41%	42%	-	55%
Likely actual CO₂ reduction – as % after betterment in terms of extra warmth where NSD community residential target is 30% reduction in CO ₂ emissions 1990 / 2010	-	baseline	6%	14.5%	19.5%	20.5%	21%	-	40.01%
Average GJ – energy used by the home if heated to an adequate standard	-	94.12	78.52	69.80	67.92	67.7	66.3	61.7	50.2
Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 – council house energy efficiency improvement. NSD community target is 30.3% 1995 / 2010	-	-	baseline	11%	13.5%	13.8%	15.6%	-	36.1%

using SAP version 1998 software. For 2004 average SAPI998 calculated as 66.4, and with SAP2001 calculated as 70.2

All dwellings need to be affordable – a local Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI)

The aim of the 1988 energy strategy was that all council-owned stock should be capable of delivering affordable energy to vulnerable householders by 2008. Implementation involved two parallel campaigns: a 'worst first campaign' focusing on whole house central heating for all dwellings with solid walls; and a 'most cost-effective campaign' that included roof insulation and draught-stripping, followed by cavity fill.

NSDC developed an energy strategy which reflected that:

- fuel poverty moves around the housing stock as incomes and family makeup varies, and as householders change properties. For the first 1985 pilot project, six of the 17 households had moved out of their homes within 12 months
- in 1985 it took a whole day to prepare a theoretical heat cost calculation, and likewise for every 'what-if' scenario

It was therefore decided to work with the worse case householder scenario on the premise that, if a dwelling is affordable to a single pensioner, then it is affordable to every other vulnerable household. The council intended to 'fuel-poverty-proof' its entire stock by 2008. NSDC has always had a monetary target for its affordable energy strategy. Tenants and key decision-makers cannot relate to professional indicators, such as NHER, SAP, GJ and CO₂ emissions, which are calculated in addition to the costs. At the outset, DAG agreed to an affordable warmth target definition of 75% of the annual £340 heating allowance of the then DHSS Supplementary Benefit. This target has evolved over the years with Newark Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), currently providing affordable energy targets during April each year. At April 2003, 97% of council owned dwellings were affordable to a vulnerable single pensioner.



Figure 4: Examples of NSDC stock

Since 1996 this housing stock driven approach to tackling fuel poverty has been extended to cover all tenures of housing within Newark and Sherwood district. The target is that every dwelling should be capable of delivering affordable energy to a vulnerable single pensioner by 2016. This is a NSDC local BVPI. At April 2003, 28% of dwellings did not meet this standard.

Towards a residential carbon management strategy

By 1992 the council had largely eradicated severe mould problems from its own housing stock. Senior officers and elected members could identify:

- progressive quality-of-life improvements amongst tenant households; in particular frontline health service staff reported reduced illnesses associated with damp and condensation
- lower energy costs, thus increasing tenants' disposable income. this additional money in the local economy, together with upgrading investment in energy efficiency, was creating jobs
- lower housing management costs and significant reductions in rent arrears
- the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro had highlighted the CO₂ emission reduction agenda

With such positive outcomes the question was posed: 'How can we roll out these benefits into the home-owner housing sector?' A pilot initiative was needed to explore this aspiration and the village of Boughton was selected. For private sector homes the council's role was to be limited to 'initiate, facilitate and enable'.

In 1992, Greenhouse Demonstration Programme funding was secured from the Department of Environment for 'Boughton Energy Village 2001'. Its target was to reduce CO₂ emissions by 60%. This initiative has been influential in shaping Newark and Sherwood's residential carbon management policies. This project:

- explored cost-effective mechanisms for the mass energy auditing of 1,291 village dwellings. During 1994 and 1995, it was rolled out across all of Newark and Sherwood district at a cost of £1 per dwelling. Energy performance results on individual dwellings were linked to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) electronic maps
- deployed condensing boilers in NSDC-owned dwellings (33% of village homes), thus delivering a 46% reduction in CO₂ emissions. After improvement, many dwellings achieved a NHER of 10
- showed that for all 1,284 dwellings, cost-effective energy efficiency investment would deliver 43% CO₂ emission savings after improvement
- analysed the views from private householder surveys and meetings, which made it absolutely clear that they expected 'grants' to encourage them to invest in energy efficiency. This led to the council's concept of grouping householders to enable them to qualify for bulk discounts from suppliers – in effect a grant that does not cost the public purse. EAGA delivered the first bulk discount scheme for cavity fill in 1995: 680 cavity fills across Newark and Sherwood at a 30% discount

- modelled the energy performance of Boughton's housing stock – showing that the 60% CO₂ emission target could only be met if locally generated renewable electricity could be used. With 1994 DTI funding, a 'Renewable Energy Scoping Study for Boughton Energy Village' was undertaken, covering what local people considered to be their sub-regional catchment area: 'Ollerton and district'. This study demonstrated the potential for electricity generation using local wood. During 1995 a suitable location for a wood power plant site was embedded into the Local Plan. Unfortunately, private sector developers just failed to secure Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation (NFFO) support.

To further inform Council policy and priorities, Table 2 shows the Newark & Sherwood District's potential local renewable resources which were considered viable in a report produced during 1999.

This was shortly followed by the 'Supplementary Planning Guidance for Wind Energy' which was published by the council's Planning Department¹

These studies revealed that even with 100% take-up of renewable electricity, 60% reduction of CO₂ emissions could only be sustained if all further residential CO₂ emission growth could be capped – showing the need to move towards 'net zero CO₂' emission housing. For some years the council's own new-build housing had been built to NHER 10 standards, but the Boughton studies showed that even these standards were inadequate. The council has since supported and encouraged 'ultra low energy' and 'net zero CO₂' developments within the district. The district now has an ever-growing cluster of private sector exemplar projects. Since 1994 NSDC has had a target for 100 'net zero CO₂' emission dwellings.

It was the exploratory activities within Boughton Energy Village, working with the Association for the Conservation of Energy, that evaluated the practicality of implementing the various private members' bills preceding the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA).

Table 2: Target to deliver local renewable energy generation equivalent to 10% of estimated district electrical demand by 2010. Newark and Sherwood District Renewable Energy Balance Plan. De Montfort University 1999. Funded by EU SAVE II Energy Agency Networks

Energy source	Total annual output	Number of Newark and Sherwood households served electricity	% of Newark and Sherwood households whose electricity needs are met	Number of Newark and Sherwood households served heat	% of Newark and Sherwood households whose hot water needs are met
Seven 225 kW wind turbines	3,294 MWhe	784	1.8%	-	-
PV (2,979 systems)	6,256 MWhe	1,490	3.4%	-	-
Solar hot water (4,469 systems)	5,005 MWth	-	-	1,668	3.8%
3 hydro schemes	9,336 MWhe	2,223	5.1%	-	-
Anaerobic digestion (pig and cow waste)	21,623 MWhe 3,674 MWth	5,149	11.8%	1,224	2.9%
Energy from crops	6,281 MWhe	1,495	3.43%	-	-
Landfill gas (2 sites)	19,500 MWhe	4,643	10.7%	-	-
Total	66,290 MWhe 8,679 MWth	13,784	36.23%	2,892	6.7%

¹ Supplementary planning guidance wind energy July 1999. This can be downloaded from <http://planning.network-sherwooddc.gov.uk/pp/gold/viewGold.asp?IDType=Page&ID=6805>

Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA)

Developing a systematic approach to energy upgrading the entire housing stock, NSDC's corporate HECA expenditure since 1996 has been one full-time HECA Officer plus £12,900 expenses.

Since 1996 this has been supplemented by the council's membership of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authority Energy Partnership (covering 19 councils with 2 million citizens). Most notable involvements have been a series of successful HECA Action initiatives, a shared mobile energy advice centre and a bi-monthly schedule of best-deal grants and discounts available to householders.

Over a 12 year period, most NSDC-owned dwellings will have been visited by five different contractors undertaking energy efficiency improvement works. Since 1988 the council has been running a 'Council House Energy Performance Database'. This ensures effective monitoring and management of progress, assessment of progress against fuel poverty targets, and securing value-for-money improvement packages.

The lessons quickly learnt with Boughton Energy Village confirmed that 'if you cannot measure, you cannot manage'. In 1994, with Department of Environment partnership funding, a complete audit of all Newark and Sherwood District dwellings was attempted at a budget of £1 per dwelling.

With the Home Energy Conservation Act's 'Energy Conservation Plan 1996', the Newark and Sherwood Residential Energy Performance Database was set to support a programme of work focused on its HECA target of 30.3% improvement in energy efficiency for its pre-1995 housing stock by 2010.

The database had been set up on a council tax address list and then populated with existing information on council-owned properties. It was supplemented by a walk past external survey covering 90% of the private sector dwellings.

NSDC was disappointed by the lack of address based information about energy efficiency grants/discount schemes, and continue to be frustrated by the lack of joined-up information. Without this, NSDC needed to establish a cost-effective method of collecting data.

The 1996 HECA Energy Conservation Plan set out to send energy advice by post to every private householder at least once every five years. It was not until 1999 (with some Rural Development Commission project funding) that NSDC was able to establish procedures that were effective and compatible with annual HECAMON (software for monitoring HECA activity) surveys. Each year since has seen further incremental improvements to processes.

In 2003/4 NSDC provided postal advice to 7,285 householders including a DIY householder energy survey, which secured a 43% response rate. Combined with all other 2003/4 contacts, energy efficiency advice was given to 7,948 households (20.5% of the private sector housing stock) at a cost of £6.30 per address.

The outcomes from DIY Householder Energy surveys and similar HECAMON surveys are:

- an 'educational' sustainable energy message to the householder of a 'global to local' nature, utilising the otherwise blank reverse of the covering letter to the DIY survey papers
- a 43% return rate of DIY energy surveys to NSDC, of which 44% are from pensioners. In response, an energy advice pack is sent, focusing on the most effective energy efficient improvement highlighted in the returned survey. A schedule of all best deal energy efficiency grants and discounts is also enclosed. Turnaround for this advice is within two working days
- potential Warm Front referrals are identified and details forwarded by post. Any households not subsequently contacting NSDC Energy Agency receive a follow-up telephone call. Insulation-only measures are accommodated by EEC, saving Warm Front for clients with any future heating problems
- all returned survey forms are converted into electronic format and entered into the NSDC Residential Energy Performance Database
- survey forms are electronically re-arranged into a format required by the local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC), who then provide an additional and more authoritative energy advice pack to the householder
- similar DIY survey forms are used for HECAMON for the annual HECA progress analysis. The data is analysed to assist with Housing Investment Programme returns for average SAP ratings for the stock and percentage of dwellings with a SAP of less than 20
- the holistic cost-benefit analysis on the residential energy strategy can be updated
- an estimate of those householders in fuel poverty. Using Beacon status funding for tackling fuel poverty, special studies were undertaken within NSDC's most rural localities. It was unexpectedly found that the incidence of fuel poverty was half that of the NSDC stock average. However, there appears to be no correlation between property values and incidences of fuel poverty (see Table 3).
- a stock analysis to show dwellings 'Capable of Delivering Affordable Energy' (CODAE), assuming vulnerable single pensioner occupation to all dwellings, was also undertaken (see Table 4)

Table 3: Non-council fuel poverty analysis 2003

Fuel poverty analysis 2003: private dwellings			
NSDC total	Dwelling type	in fuel poverty	
40,391	Total private tenured	3,594	8.9%
4,200	Rural with mains gas supply	180	4.29%
3,150	Rural with no mains gas	123	3.9%

Table 4: Dwellings Capable of Delivering Affordable Energy (CODAE)

NSD	Fuel poverty from sample survey 2003		Capable of delivering affordable energy CODAE		'Proportionality' CODAE 100m ² cut-off	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Non-council dwellings						
40,391	3,594	8.9%	11,230	27.8%	5,340	13.2%

- 13.2% were dwellings less than the minimum reasonable size of 100m²
- 27.8% of dwellings were not CODAE. The cost of eradicating the risk of fuel poverty in these properties has been estimated at £19.65m. Many of these costs concern households that could afford energy efficiency upgrades. The potential investment in these households ensures any future vulnerable single pensioner householder could have affordable energy, proofing the stock against future fuel poverty

The accuracy of DIY surveys was assessed when NSDC compared them with the results from their NHER surveyor qualified five year private sector housing stock condition survey of 2001. There was a surprisingly good correlation between the two. As a result, NSDC have increased confidence in the DIY surveys, which generate valuable information on an annual basis and provide the trigger for tailor-made postal energy advice. Household addresses are now receiving their second contact in five years – returns remain the same with an average of 43%.

NSDC posts some 7,500 surveys to targeted areas each year, including a modified postal HECAMON annually to 4,000 dwellings. The DIY surveys have over the years been co-financed by funding from:

- Rural Development Commission
- EU Save II Energy Agency Networks
- EU DG5 Directorate for Employment and Social Affairs
- Newark and Sherwood Primary Care Trust
- Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire EEAC
- Nottinghamshire County Council's Social Services

HECA 2020

An energy condition survey of the 200 most energy inefficient council-owned dwellings highlighted the importance of 'education, advice and guidance' when it found that:

- 20% of households have poor energy housekeeping, leading to significant waste of money on lighting, appliances and heating
- 60% of householders do not understand their heating controls
- 5% of households have energy bills above the council's target
- 45% of households have not switched fuel suppliers to achieve optimum savings
- 52% of households have no low-energy light bulbs
- 12% of households were found to be eligible for a new A-rated fridge for £50
- 10% of householders report that they are not warm enough in winter

To further establish the council's future HECA priorities, a 'what-if' analysis has been undertaken which looks ahead to 2020. This Energy Audit Company study showed 1996-2020 HECA energy efficiency opportunities of:

- 36.1% to council-owned dwellings with policies already in place (see Table 1)
- 58.9% to the private sector housing stock with regulation and policies anticipated from the 2003 Energy White Paper

With energy efficiency moving up national and regional agendas, the council sought to identify how to add value to initiatives such as changes to the Building Regulations and EEC targets. The 2003 review of the Newark and Sherwood 'Warmth for All – Tackling Fuel Poverty Strategy' set out a role that would focus increasingly on the 'hard to reach' groups within the community. The NSDC Housing Strategy 2004-2007 includes:

- identifying all dwellings in the district (and prioritising those less than 100m²) that are not Capable of Delivering Affordable Energy (CODAE) to vulnerable householders and share address lists with Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services & the local Primary Care Trust
- continuing postal contact with 7,000 householders each year
- forming partnerships to improve take-up of cavity wall insulation in the owner-occupier sector and assembling schedules of addresses for targeted contact
- considering replication of the existing municipal 'Utility Affinity Deal' for council housing and embedding it within a revived Energy Advice Programme for council tenant householders
- developing a 'soft loans' scheme for low income homeowners who are not eligible for adequate energy grant assistance, and link this to NSDC credit union aspirations, and/or potential partnership with the HelpCo ESCO²
- assisting small registered social landlords to develop their own affordable energy development plans
- using EU SAVE II co-funding and engaging more effectively with the private landlord sector – to identify issues of mutual benefit at a series of landlord breakfast meetings

²Visit www.helpco.org.uk for more information.

Securing corporate and political commitment

NSDC is fortunate to have a champion for energy efficiency in the form of the Energy Manager of the Energy Agency. However, pure enthusiasm alone is not enough to engage the key decision makers and stakeholder partners of a local authority. The key motivation for these parties is in terms of wider community benefits – socially, economically and environmentally.

To this end NSDC has developed a holistic cost-benefit analysis that enables the cross-sector payback of energy efficiency to be analysed. The real challenge then comes in attempting to attract equally joined-up funding to deliver.

Holistic cost-benefit analysis of eradicating fuel poverty from the NSDC housing stock

Stock condition surveys of 46,236 dwellings during 2002 showed that 27.8% of dwellings of a reasonable size were not capable of providing affordable warmth for a vulnerable householder. This calls for investment of £19.65m, which would deliver the following benefits:

- **£2.47m pa collective increase in disposable income** after allowing for householders taking additional comfort in the home (50% of potential savings taken as extra warmth by those presently in fuel poverty and 30% for those not in fuel poverty)
- **£1.38m pa savings to the local health service** with the eradication of cold, damp homes for the fuel poor (£262.76 per household, 2002)
- **£0.40m pa unemployment avoidance savings** (34 jobs for 13 years @ £11,824 pa)
- **£0.15m pa landlord benefits** reducing management costs
- **£0.08m pa CO₂ reduction benefits**

This gives a joined-up payback of less than 4 years.

This holistic cost-benefit analysis enables local benefits to be assessed and a monetary value applied to them. This is a very important tool for engaging key stakeholder partners within the Newark and Sherwood Strategic Partnership.

NSDC responsibility for residential energy efficiency, fuel poverty and carbon management lies with the Newark and Sherwood Energy Agency. It is a strategic partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council, and was established in 1997 with European SAVE II seed-corn funding. The Agency has been involved in 12 European co-financed projects since 1997.

In 1998, as part of NSDC's Modernisation Agenda, Sustainable Development, including the Energy Agency, was placed within the Chief Executive's Policy Unit.

This central positioning has enabled the successful adoption of a corporate carbon management strategy with proposals for 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions (1990-2010) currently going through council member scrutiny, prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Long standing partnerships with local stakeholders have ensured that the Community Plan has sustainability deeply embedded. These local partnerships have also now been formalised through the Community Plan process.

Regular reporting and annual briefings are also of great importance in sustaining corporate commitment. Local Best Value Performance indicators exist for:

- HECA energy efficiency improvements since 1996 (on track for its 2010 target of 30.3%)
- fuel poverty target: numbers of dwellings incapable of delivering affordable energy to a vulnerable householder

These BVPI's, the HECA 2020 'what-if analysis' based on the existing council policies and the Energy White Paper 2003 projections, along with their residential holistic cost-benefit analysis, have managed to engage the council's key policy decision makers and their stakeholders within the local strategic partnership.

Lessons learnt

NSDC has learnt a number of key lessons:

- least-cost route – attention should be focussed on areas which can make a real difference
- securing corporate and political commitment needs to be sustained through regular member briefings and promotion of joined-up benefits through holistic cost-benefit analysis. It involves recognition of social, economic and environmental benefits
- exemplar projects bring to life the reality far greater than shelves of strategies
- practising what you preach – NSDC as an organisation has a successful corporate carbon management strategy
- partnerships – working with other organisations to secure stakeholder buy-in, lever in additional funding and ensure maximum use of limited resources
- scheme integration – delivery of the main issues within the sustainable energy policy agenda can reduce the costs attributable to individual issues. There needs to be information exchange between schemes
- strategic approach – learning from project based and opportunistic approaches used in the past. Opportunism can attract funding benefits by tweaking strategies to reflect the 'flavour of the month' – but this can also detract from core priorities
- systematic approach – the need for measuring, monitoring and targeting and the development of an all-tenure 100% residential database
- tenant consultation is of great importance. Tenant buy-in can help with difficult situations – for instance prioritising between kitchen/bathroom modernisation or warm, damp-free homes.
- tackling fuel poverty on a property basis rather than occupant basis: using worst-case house occupation scenarios rather than a current occupants basis
- training is a crucially important factor. Basic energy-awareness training must be given and continuously topped-up to individual householders, to front line health workers, CAB's, district and county council staff, voluntary sector staff, and elected members from parish, district and county councils.
- perseverance – if a scheme fails to secure support or funding try, try and try again

Further reading

Energy Efficiency Best Practice in Housing publications

These publications can be obtained free of charge by telephoning the Helpline on **0845 120 7799** or by visiting the website at www.est.org.uk/bestpractice

Energy efficiency in new housing – summary of specifications for England, Wales and Scotland (CE12)

Energy efficient refurbishment of existing housing – case studies (GPCS418)
The Hockerton housing project – design lessons for developers and clients (CE15)

BedZED – Beddington zero energy development, Sutton (GIR89)

Other Useful Publications

Tackling fuel poverty – A Beacon Council toolkit for local authorities
This is available to download from:
www.nea.org.uk/localauthorities/beacontoolkit.htm

How to achieve successful scheme integration – a guidance document
This is available to download from
www.practicalhelp.org.uk/briefings/sub.cfm?main_id=6&sub_id=125

Further information

Energy Efficiency Best Practice in Housing: Hard to Treat

A range of information and tools are obtainable by visiting www.est.org.uk/bestpractice/hardtoreat. The purpose of the site is to give information on the range of measures that are available to landlords when developing a refurbishment strategy for hard to treat dwellings. General information on heating systems, insulation measures and ventilation strategy are available in the summary sections.

Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA)

Improvement and development programmes for local government including the Beacon Council scheme: identifies innovation and excellence in local government services. Visit www.idea.gov.uk/beacons for more information.

Practical Help

The Energy Saving Trust's service for local authorities: offers help, information, support and funding to facilitate implementation of sustainable energy and road transport policies. Visit www.practicalhelp.org.uk for more information.

The Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency has taken over responsibility for advising government and taking action on issues relating to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the English countryside, following the merger of the Countryside Commission and the Rural Development Commission. Visit <http://www.countryside.gov.uk> for more information.

Green Street

Green Street contains detailed information and advice on why and how to take action to improve your homes in the following areas: energy efficiency, water efficiency, material use, waste reduction, health and wellbeing, residents' lifestyle, and the overall environmental improvement of your stock. Visit www.greenstreet.org.uk for more information.

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For further information on Newark and Sherwood District Council's activities visit www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

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Energy Efficiency Best Practice in Housing Newark and Sherwood District Council case study

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