



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 25TH OCTOBER 2012

SUBJECT: ENERGY EFFICIENCY WORKS TO DOMESTIC PROPERTIES

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on the various energy efficiency works which have been undertaken to Council and privately owned dwellings within the Caerphilly borough.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Council's Local Housing objective:

"To provide good quality, well-managed houses in communities where people want to live and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations".

- 2.2 The Caerphilly County Borough Community Strategy and objectives which fall under the Living Environment, Regeneration and Health, Social Care and Well-Being themes.

- 2.3 The National Housing Strategy and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which states that 'all households in Wales are given the opportunity to live in good quality homes'.

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Council has adopted a pro-active approach towards improving the energy efficiency of its housing within the borough. This approach has contributed towards a reduction in climate change, helping to eradicate fuel poverty, improving comfort levels and health of our residents, assisting economic regeneration and improving the appearance of individual properties and communities.

- 3.2 A number of initiatives have been progressed which include:-

- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Loft Insulation
- Double-glazing
- External Wall Insulation
- Heating Replacement
- Solar Panels
- Draught-proofing
- Major Property Refurbishments
- Energy Advice

- 3.3 The Council's performance with regards to the energy efficiency of its homes is measured by the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP).
- 3.4 Welsh Government specify that local authorities should achieve a minimum SAP rating of 65 for its dwellings. Caerphilly's average SAP rating is 73, and works are ongoing to make further improvements via the WHQS Investment Programme.
- 3.5 Energy efficiency initiatives are supported by a number of grant funded schemes, but the process for accessing such funding can be protracted and complex. The Council has however, been successful in receiving grants from the following:

3.5.1 Strategic Energy Performance Investment Programme

This programme was introduced by the Welsh Government (WG) in 2009 to bring social, environmental and economic benefits to Wales and co-ordinate investment into the energy performance of Welsh Homes. This scheme is more commonly known as ARBED which means 'Save'.

The Council has been successful with the completion of two schemes and are currently awaiting confirmation of a further bid for 2012/13 covering properties in Fochriw.

The two previous schemes resulted in 57 Council properties and 34 privately owned properties in Rhymney benefiting from energy efficiency works and a further 19 Council properties and 81 private properties in Markham.

These works included the provision of external wall insulation, heating upgrades or replacement and the provision of solar panels to 17 properties in Rhymney.

The two completed schemes resulted in the Council benefiting from approximately £1.5m of grant funding and a further £1m is anticipated this financial year.

3.5.2 Community Energy Saving Partnership (CESP)

CESP is a central government initiative that requires gas and electricity suppliers to deliver energy saving measures to domestic customers in low-income areas. CESP has been designed to promote a 'whole house' approach to improving the energy efficiency of homes.

The Council has again been successful in entering into CESP arrangements with energy suppliers with contracts ongoing at 79 properties in Panside and a further 58 properties in Markham. These properties are predominantly council owned, although the scheme is also available to private owners, but subject to a possible financial contribution.

Works include loft insulation upgrades, heating replacements, cavity wall insulation and the provision of external wall insulation.

A number of other schemes have recently commenced in other areas of deprivation including Fochriw, Rhymney, Gilfach, Cefn Hengoed, Porset Park, Lansbury Park and Bedwas. The total number of properties to be completed are not known at this time, as they will be subject to the required funding being made available, but this could be in the region of £4m. This scheme is anticipated to come to an end by December 2012 and officers are attempting to maximise the funding that is available to improve the thermal efficiency of our non-traditional type properties.

3.5.3 Home Energy Efficiency Scheme/National Energy Saving Trust

The Council has been very active in promoting the Welsh Government Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES) which has now been superseded by NEST. Officers have played an active role in encouraging residents of all tenures that qualify for a grant to participate in this scheme. Typical measures undertaken within the HEES scheme were cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, draughtproofing, hot water tank jackets and central heating upgrades.

3.5.4 Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT)

CERT has been available for residents of all tenures that meet the qualifying criteria and can benefit from similar measures as indicated within the HEES scheme above. Officers have been active from when the scheme commenced in 2008 in encouraging participation whilst utilising the scheme to maximise loft insulation upgrades to Council properties.

3.5.5 Green Deal/ECO

From 2013 the Government will be launching the Green Deal/Energy Company Obligation (ECO). This is the Government's flagship energy efficiency programme that will supersede the current CESP and CERT schemes. Details on how the scheme is intended to operate are currently being finalised.

There are three roles that a local authority could play. These roles are identified as:-

- 1) Promoter – Light touch approach where local authorities carry out a broad marketing campaign to assist a framework of Green Deal Providers in identifying domestic properties suitable for Green Deal assessment, take up, and insulation.
- 2) Producer – Moderate touch approach where local authorities identify and pass on warm leads to Green Deal Providers for a referral fee.
- 3) Provider – Approach with most control where local authorities finance the Green Deal programmes and work with a selected Delivery Partner to achieve specific goals.

Initially, the Council's role will be one of a promoter whilst assessing the benefits of becoming a producer/green deal provider.

3.5.6 Other Initiatives which have been progressed

- Refurbishment of Non-Traditional Properties – 1,100 properties completed.
- Renewal of Heating Systems – 4,594
- Loft Insulation – 5,000 properties upgraded
- Cavity Wall Insulation – approximately 6,000
- Double glazed windows – installation programme will be completed by 2013

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An EqIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance and no potential for unlawful discrimination and for low level or minor negative impact have been identified, therefore, a full EqIA has not been carried out.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Whilst the Council has been very successful in accessing a variety of different sources of grant funding to progress the above initiatives, there is also a requirement to provide Capital funding to support the delivery of some schemes.
- 5.2 This Capital funding has been made available from the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) to part fund some schemes and to also cover the costs of other associated works such as asbestos removal, replacement of rainwater goods, soil and vent pipes, roofing works, window and door replacements etc.

5.3 The Capital programme for the 2012/13 financial year has included anticipated expenditure of £5m for energy efficiency works which is anticipated to be made available from the CESP and Arbed grants and this has been further supported with £1m of Capital funding by CCBC.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Due to the continued success with bids for grant funding, there has been a requirement to appoint an additional Surveyor to assist existing officers in the management and monitoring of such schemes.

7. CONSULTATIONS

7.1 Any comments from consultees have been included within the report

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members are requested to note the report and support the continuation of accessing grant funding to provide energy efficiency works to dwellings within Caerphilly borough.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The continuation of accessing energy efficiency grants supports the National and Local Housing Strategy and contributes towards the achievement of WHQS.

10. STATUTORY POWER

10.1 Housing Acts 1985, 1996, 2004.

Author: S. Couzens, Chief Housing Officer,
(Tel: 01443 863282 – E.mail: couzes@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees: Nigel Barnett, Deputy Chief Executive
Phil Davy, Head of WHQS Programme
Cllr G. Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing
Steve Greedy, Building Maintenance Manager (Planned Works)