

Appendix II

Affordable Warmth Strategy 2010-2013

Progress Report

The purpose of this report is to evaluate how the Cheshire West and Chester Council Affordable Warmth Strategy 2010-2013 achieved its vision, aims and objectives, and to report on its outcomes.

An Affordable Warmth Steering Group was established in 2009 to produce and deliver the Strategy. This group consisted of a full range of multi-agency stakeholders including the council and other public service providers, social housing partners, third sector partners and local communities.

The Steering Group met on a quarterly basis throughout the three year life of the Strategy and overtime grew in numbers, strength and influence. The Steering Group continues to meet to coordinate and delivery activity and to develop the new Affordable Warmth Strategy.

The Group has been cited as an excellent example of good practice by the Council, demonstrating how partnership working can really make a difference to our residents.

Steering group partners (2010-2013);

Name	Team	Organisation
Georgina Patel (Chair)	Senior Manager, Private Sector Housing	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Amanda Bloomfield (Secretary)	Housing Strategy Officer	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Adam Shaw	Partnerships Manager	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Emma Coxon	Community Safety Officer	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Debra Brown	Northwich and Rural Team Community Engagement Officer	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Peter Bulmer	Sustainability Manager	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Dianne Harris	Agency Manager	Mears Group, Home Improvement Agency
Emma Davies	Manager (West)	Age Concern
Emma Leigh	Director of Public Health	Central and Eastern PCT
Lorraine Ferguson	Benefits and Take Up Team Leader	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Jeanette Finn	Asset Manager	Plus Dane
Elaine Grant	Locality Officer (Rural communities)	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Paul Ince	Housing Strategy Manager	Cheshire West and Chester

		Council
Joanne Moores	Financial Inclusion Officer	Chester and District Housing Trust
Anne Lancaster	3 rd Sector Assembly Co-ordinator	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Lorrayne Gumbs	Director	Warmzone
Matt Woolley	Energy Officer	Weaver Vale Housing Trust
Dave Tai; Jane Makin ;Ewan McHenry ; Aleeta Steele	Locality Managers	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Paul Nichols	Manager	Cheshire West Citizens Advice Bureau
Peter Owen	Chief Executive	Energy Projects Plus
Ruth Stevens	Planning and Exercising Officer	Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team
Tania Sayer	Cheshire Low Carbon Coordinator	Energy Projects Plus
Susan Taylor	Benefits Manager	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Jackie Thornhill	Public Health Improvement Practitioner	Public Health Team, Cheshire West and Chester Council
William Gillis	Managing Director	Warmzone

1 Vision

The Vision of the Steering Group;

“Working together with partners to eradicate fuel poverty to ensure every resident has the ability to maintain a warm home at an affordable cost”.

2 Aims

2.1 To increase the number of energy efficient properties within the borough

2.2 To reduce the number of households who are in fuel poverty

2.3 To reduce the health impacts on people due to excess cold

3 Objectives

In order to meet the aims of the Strategy, the following objectives were set;

3.1 Develop and implement a targeted approach to tackle the needs of households in fuel poverty and energy inefficient homes

3.2 Raise awareness of Affordable Warmth among key decision makers, communities and householders across the Borough

3.3 Establish partnership working and an effective referral system between agencies in Cheshire West and Chester

3.4 Work with residents, landlords and owners to improve affordable warmth across all tenures

3.5 Maximise incomes of vulnerable households, through benefit take up campaigns and improved access to fuel debt and tariff advice

4 Outcomes

To increase the number of energy efficient properties within the Borough (Aim 2.1)

All council's have a duty to periodically assess the condition of the private sector stock in their area. This is usually undertaken through a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey (PSSCS) every five years. The methodology requires a sample of 3,000 properties to be fully inspected and for borough wide results to be determined using extrapolated information from the sample. A PSSCS was conducted in Cheshire West and Chester in 2010. Part of the assessment included a SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) ratings of the properties surveyed. The higher the SAP rating, the more energy efficient the property is.

The PSSCS in 2010 determined the average SAP rating for private housing in the borough was 56 compared to a national average of 48, eight points higher than the national average. The results indicated that the lowest SAP ratings were found in rural wards, in private rented housing and in accommodation occupied by elderly and vulnerable householders.

The Affordable Warmth Strategy set a target of increasing the SAP ratings in all tenures by at least one point per year to an eventual value of 65 by 2015, as this is the point when fuel poverty is unlikely to occur.

In the 2010 PSSCS the average SAP rating for private housing in the Borough, as previously stated, was 56 compared to a national average of 48. When the PSSCS was repeated in 2013 the results showed an increase in the Borough's average SAP rating of seven points to 63, compared to a national average of 55. In both instances local SAP ratings are eight points higher than the national average.

Although the Strategy was Borough wide, a targeted approach was taken to encourage uptake of free and low cost affordable warmth measures in areas and to householders with the lowest SAP ratings.

As a further point to note, the electoral wards changed between the 2010 and 2013 PSSCS's which had some impact on SAP ratings. However if we look at the 2010 Survey the lowest SAP rating was the rural area of Broxton which had a SAP rating of 42. This area is now split into Malpas (2013 SAP rating of 54), Tattenhall (2013 SAP rating of 52) and Farndon (2013 SAP rating of 58), this demonstrates a minimum increase in SAP rating of 10 in Tattenhall, maximum of 16 for Farndon which is above the national average increase.

A contributing factor to this improvement was the establishment of a coordinated insulation scheme provided through Cheshire West Warm Zone. During the three year contract the scheme received 11,000 enquiries, completed 6,500 surveys and over 4,500 households were insulated with 5,300 measures including loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and hot water

jacket covers. The scheme delivered very well in terms of the number of properties being insulated across the borough giving total carbon savings of 28,000 tonnes. The project was funded from £300,000 of Council resources which levered in £1.2m of Scottish Power funding.

To reduce the number of households who are in fuel poverty (Aim 2.2)

Following the Hills Review in 2011 the definition of fuel poverty changed to that of the Low Income High Costs framework (LIHC).

Under the new definition, a household is said to be in fuel poverty if they have required fuel costs which are above average (the national median level) and were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Under the old fuel poverty definition, a household is said to be fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime (usually 21 degrees for the main living area, and 18 degrees for other occupied rooms).

For the purposes of this report we will be looking at the older (10%) definition as the 2010 baseline statistics have not been translated into the new definition.

The statistical information on fuel poverty in 2010 evidenced in the PSSCS shows 24.7% of households in Cheshire West or 34,901 households were in fuel poverty. The highest levels were recorded for households living in the private-rented sector and in dwellings constructed pre-1919.

The Strategy set a target of reducing the percentage of fuel poor households by 0.5% per year using National Indicator 187. This indicator measured the number of households in receipt of a means tested benefit together with a SAP rating of less than 35.

The 2010 PSSCS indicated that 24.7% (34,901) of households in the Borough were classed as fuel poor. In 2013 the PSSCS indicates that 19.9% or 23,979 households are in fuel poor, a decrease since the previous survey of 4.8% or 10,922 households.

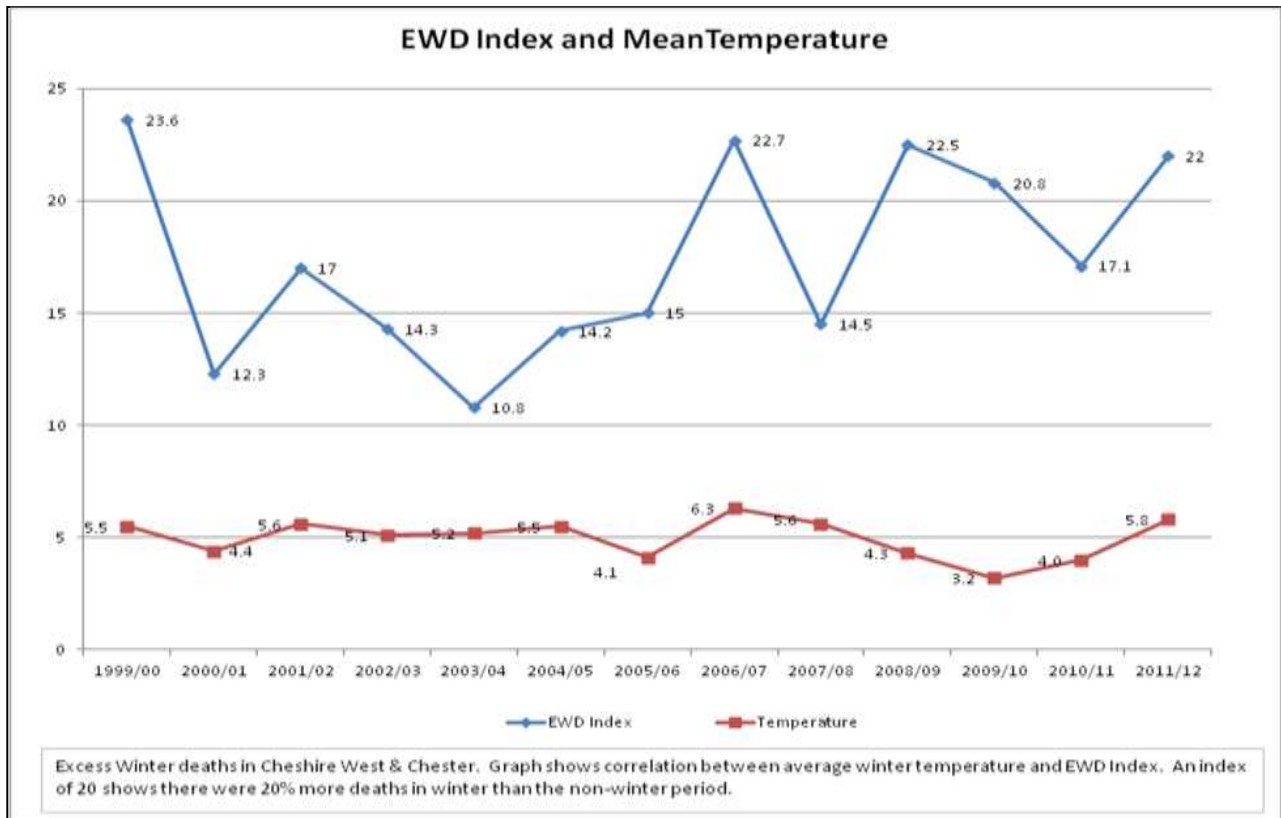
Reduce the health impacts of people due to excess cold (Aim 2.3)

The term Excess Winter Deaths (EWD) which is the measure this aim used, compares the number of deaths that occur between the months of December and March with the average number of deaths in the preceding months of August to November and the following April to July. These 'excess' deaths would not be anticipated as a result of illness or old age.

The effects of cold weather on vulnerable people during this period each year and the associated increased health risks are well documented. The causes of these EWD are somewhat complex and interlinked with numerous other factors including fuel poverty and poor housing.

The figures in the graph below show a decrease in the number of excess winter deaths from 2008-09 to 2010-11 though over the life of the Strategy from 2010 onwards the numbers of

EWD has increased. When addressing the causes of this increase there are many variables to be taken into account. The mean temperature can attribute to the level of excess winter deaths although as the graph below indicates it does not always correlate that the lower the temperature the higher the number of excess winter deaths as is indicated in 2009/10 where we had a drop in the temperature but also a drop in the number of excess winter deaths. There are many other variables which play a part in the number of excess winter deaths including the level of disease in the population.



Objective 3.1 Develop and implement a targeted approach to tackle the needs of households in fuel poverty and energy inefficient homes

Action	Task	Timescale	Achievement	Progress
Develop and implement a targeted approach to tackle households geographically	Investigate suitable targeted delivery models to determine the most appropriate model for Cheshire West and Chester Council	Short	Area based approach deemed most appropriate model and branded as Cheshire West Warm Zone (CWWZ).	Completed
	Work with the Energy Savings Trust to develop a brief to tender for a suitable targeted scheme	Short	Tender brief informed by EST	Completed
	Clarify how other systems would work alongside a targeted approach model	Short	Cheshire West Warm Zone established - all referrals to be made to this scheme	Completed
Utilise databases of dwellings for targeting energy inefficient dwellings	Determine where data already exists to produce a database of households likely to be in fuel poverty.	Short / Medium	Benefits database utilised PSSC areas targeted	Completed
	Establish how to target these groups	Short / Medium	Target based on benefit data	Completed
Create targeting methods to be used by partners	Conduct a gap analysis of the existing targeting methods to determine overlaps and gaps with special reference to rural communities	Medium / Long	Whole wards targeted with letters to householders. Eventual coverage of all wards in the borough	Completed

Objective 3.2 Raise awareness of Affordable Warmth among key decision makers, communities and householders across the Borough

Action	Task	Timescale	Achievement	Progress
Establish and understanding of affordable warmth amongst key decision makers in key agencies	Establish key messages with linked agendas and share in a coordinated manner	Short / Ongoing	Key messages shared via Policy Development Boards, Environment Sustainability Group and Health and Well Being Board.	completed
Raise awareness of affordable warmth amongst front line staff	Identify front line key partners dealing with households likely to be in fuel poverty	Short / Medium	Key partners identified through AWS consultation events. Frontline worker established	completed
	Establish and roll out training programme for key front line staff	Short / Medium	Training provided by CWWZ to front line workers. Big Energy Network funding used to disseminate information to key frontline staff.	completed
	Use Cheshire West and Chester Council / NHS websites to provide access links to briefing, presentations and specialist websites	Medium	CWWZ website produced and partners asked to link to website. Referral website under development via Keep Well project	completed
Raise awareness amongst general public	Identify and utilise suitable promotional methods and mechanisms including local media, community newsletters and websites.	Medium	Website launched, media articles released, leaflets produced, newsletters update, Email updates sent out, letters sent to all Cheshire West and Chester Council residents, community groups accessed and rural wards targeted	Completed
	Raise awareness amongst private landlords, tenants and residents groups	Short	Landlords informed via e-mails, Landlords forum and regular newsletter. Tenants and residents groups informed through press releases and partner linkages	Completed

Action	Task	Timescale	Achievement	Progress
	Use promotional opportunities at various venues across the borough.	Medium / Ongoing	Road-shows promoting energy efficiency and affordable warmth message Attendance at community events	Completed
	Produce a specific action Plan for rural communities	Medium / Ongoing	Liaison with Rural Ward Co-ordinators to disseminate information Early targeting of rural communities	Completed
Reduce domestic fuel bills by behaviour change at household level	Incorporate educational elements to the targeted approach scheme to educate households to use domestic energy most effectively	Medium	Use of the ECO house at Blacon. Green Doctor project in Winsford used to give one to one advice	Completed

Objective 3.3 Establish partnership working and an effective referral system between agencies in Cheshire West and Chester

Action	Task	Timescale	Achievement	To Do
3.1 Identify local agencies likely to provide referrals including any existing mapping	1. Use existing needs assessment projects and mapping exercise – with potential to include fuel poverty mapping	Medium	Front line worker schedule in place. Effective partnership working and referral systems working well	Completed
3.2 Identify existing assessment systems in order to include fuel poverty triggers	1. Identify existing assessment systems across Cheshire West and Chester Council to ensure that fuel poverty trigger is included	Medium / Ongoing	Frontline workers trained to identify fuel poverty, assessment/visit forms to be adapted to ensure triggers can be formally registered.	Ongoing
3.3 Establish effective central referral system	1. Establish a central referral system as part of a targeted approach	Short	Referrals made to Cheshire West Warm Zone. System working effectively. New referral web based system being developed via Keep Well project.	Completed

Objective 3.4 Work with residents, landlords and owners to improve affordable warmth across all tenures

Action	Task	Timescale	Achievement	To Do
Encourage social landlords to aim for affordably warm homes	Encourage RSLs to set targets to increase SAP rating. Ensure all RSLs are engaged, including smaller ones	Short	RSL have provided stock SAP ratings The larger RSLs are engaged, most of the stock is of a higher standard than the private sector. Strategic Housing Partnership re-established June 2013, engagement with smaller RSLs on-going.	Completed
Encourage homeowners to make their homes affordably warm and use energy efficiently	Promote discounted prices from energy companies to vulnerable households	Short	Collective Switching scheme launched in Cheshire West and Chester Council Autumn 2012	Completed
	Establish a coordinated scheme and communication strategy for energy efficiency to give householders confidence that insulation companies are working for the council or another recognised authority	Medium	Single brand identified for insulation scheme - CWWZ	Completed
	Identify and support 'energy champions' within communities	Medium	Champions identified with communities i.e. Ashton Heyes, Sustainable Blacon, Snow Angels, Village Agents	Completed
Encourage private landlords to make homes affordably warm	Encourage private sector landlords and letting agents to install energy efficiency measures in private rented properties	Medium / Ongoing	Energy efficiency promoted to all private landlords in the borough through newsletter and direct emails.	Completed
	Utilise landlord Forums to provide information about affordable warmth	Medium	Presentation on energy efficiency made at landlord forums and messages contained in newsletters	Completed
	Provide / promote incentives for private landlords to improve energy efficiency	Medium	Landlord grants available for energy efficiency work. Free measures promoted to private sector	Completed

Action	Task	Timescale	Achievement	To Do
			landlords and tenants.	
Encourage Gypsy and Travellers and Park Homes occupants to insulate their homes and heat their homes efficiently and affordably	Ensure that plans for any new Gypsy and traveller sites include insulation in the day room and mains electricity to the site.	Medium	Planning applications for six sites will include insulation measures. One site now has full planning permission	Completed
Secure finance for low income households not eligible for grants	Use loan schemes to raise finance if households are not eligible for grants	Short	Promotion of Cheshire Neighbourhoods Credit Union as a means of low cost finance for energy efficiency measures Cosy Loans scheme in place for boiler repair/replacement.	Completed
	Establish 'emergency fund' from various sources to provide grants or loans	Medium	Grants /loans available via; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Through Warmth • Emergency heating grants • Discretionary Grants 	Completed
Ensure that all available finance is being utilised for energy / heating improvements to dwellings	Provide information about all sources of finance available for domestic energy efficiency, for both householder and landlords	Short / Medium	A-Z Booklet produced by Cheshire West and Chester Councils Benefits Team. Helping Hands Scheme provides advice on sources of finance.	Completed
Encourage the use of renewable energy sources	Raise awareness and encourage the use of renewable energy sources in existing stock	Short / Medium	Renewable technology handbook produced by CLASP.	Completed
	Work with the RSLs to encourage the use of renewable energy in new or remodelled developments	Short / Ongoing	European Regional Development Funded (ERDF) renewable technology project delivered by social housing providers across the sub-region.	Completed
	Work with Spatial Planning to further develop policy to reduce energy through the use of renewable energy sources and	Long	Spatial Planning have incorporated policies relating to 'high quality design and sustainable construction' and 'alternative energy supplies' into the Local Plan (Part one). These policies reflect	Completed

Action	Task	Timescale	Achievement	To Do
	sustainable building techniques		the findings of the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study (2012). Additional detail and implementation of the policies will be taken forward through Part two of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plans.	

Objective 3.5 Maximise incomes of vulnerable households, through benefit take up campaigns and improved access to fuel debt and tariff advice

Action	Task	Timescale	Achievement	To Do
Maximise benefit take up	Ensure benefit checks are made when householders enquire about energy efficiency measures	Short / Medium	Benefit checks and referrals are made through CWWZ when householders enquire	Completed
	Inform benefit take up campaigns about the opportunities for benefit recipients to access energy grants	Short / Ongoing	Direct mailings by Benefits Team Helping Hands Scheme offers home visits.	Completed
Provide advice on fuel debt, tariffs and supplier switching	Map information on who currently provides fuel advice and how	Short / Ongoing	Stage one of survey completed through Survey Monkey – survey tested on Affordable Warmth Steering Group. Stage two to Third Sector Assembly completed by Nov 2013	Analysis of results and mapping to be completed
	Make information available to households who do not use the internet, preferably face to face and literature	Short / Ongoing	Frontline workers trained to signpost householders to schemes available.	Completed
Ensure affordable warmth issues are included in domestic money management initiatives	Ensure staff who manage domestic money management initiatives are aware of affordable warmth measures	Short / Ongoing	Domestic money management initiative staff trained and sent updated information	Completed

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Affordable Warmth Strategy has produced some significant results and gone a long way in achieving its vision, aims and objectives.

Over the three year life of the Strategy the energy efficiency of the Borough's housing stock has increased, evidenced by an improvement in SAP ratings, well above the national average. This is as a direct result of the thousands of surveys and insulation measures installed. The number of households classed as fuel poor is 4.8% or 10,922 less now than in 2010 (Using the new definition of Fuel Poverty). Of concern however, and an issue to address within the next Strategy, are our Excess Winter Death figures.

With this level of success there is no room for complacency. There is still work to be done to ensure every resident in our Borough has the ability to maintain a warm home at an affordable cost as we strive to eradicate fuel poverty. The next Affordable Warmth Strategy 2014-17 will build upon the successes of the current strategy, tackling areas which weren't as successful, and developing it further setting more ambitious targets.

One of our initial hurdles in producing the next Strategy will be the new definition of fuel poverty and how the individual members of the steering group interpret it.