




Our vision
to protect,
care and invest



Telford & Wrekin's Affordable Warmth Strategy

2021-2026

April 2021

Protect
Care and Invest
to create a
better borough



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL

Our partners:



The Wrekin
Housing Group



We will be working with partners to increase awareness and signpost into energy efficiency programmes.

We will also link to communities and the voluntary sector who can help raise awareness including the Telford & Wrekin Intergrated Place Partnership.

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Foreword

Telford & Wrekin's Affordable Warmth Strategy is about more than just keeping people warm at home. The impacts and benefits are wide ranging, not just for the individual, but for our communities as a whole. As well as the social benefits of addressing fuel poverty and putting money back into people's pockets, it is well recognised that cold homes are a source of both physical and mental ill health.

Warmer homes are healthier homes, and reducing fuel poverty will protect the health of our most vulnerable residents, which in turn will reduce the strain on health and social care services. Fuel poverty is a clear health inequalities issue, and as such this strategy clearly contributes to the ambitions of the Telford & Wrekin Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2023.

There is evidence that babies living in cold, damp homes are more likely to suffer from respiratory illnesses such as asthma and children in warmer homes are proven to do better at school. People with long term conditions are especially vulnerable to fuel poverty, for example those with mobility issues who spend more time at home, and those at high risk of cold-related illness such as heart disease and mental health problems.

The coronavirus pandemic too has obvious relevance, for example its effect on respiratory health and the impact on people struggling to pay energy bills.

We are committed to helping people improve the homes in which they live and, with it, their quality of life. Telford & Wrekin Council with partners has already done a lot of work in beginning to tackle fuel poverty. At 9.4% the proportion of households in fuel poverty in the borough is lower than the national average, but there is still more we can do and we recognise the importance of this issue.

This strategy has been developed with the aim to improve the energy efficiency of all housing stock in the borough. This will involve working with a range of partners, including social and private landlords, residents and businesses. The Strategy is also important in providing a basis for seeking more Government funding to raise the quality of all our homes.

Addressing affordable warmth will also contribute to the delivery of our Climate Change Action Plan by promoting more energy efficient homes and reducing carbon emissions.

There is already a raft of assistance and schemes available in Telford & Wrekin to help people, for example to effect an emergency repair or replacement of a boiler, and to plan for the future through better insulation. We want to ensure everyone who needs help and is eligible, knows how to access it now. This strategy also sets out how we plan to raise standards, attracting investment and working with our partners to improve the quality and condition of some of our older and not so old housing.

Tackling fuel poverty will also bring economic benefits and support local businesses. As well as many small businesses involved in construction and property maintenance Telford has a growing green energy sector with the potential for continued jobs growth. Through this strategy, we want Telford and Wrekin businesses to be at the forefront of new technologies, fitting insulation to properties, innovating in energy measures, creating more local jobs, reducing carbon emissions and making the area more sustainable in the future.

If people aren't spending as much on their energy bills, they will also have money to spend on other things, further supporting local jobs and the local economy.

Decent homes are key to improving quality of life and this new Strategy will help to improve health, wellbeing and comfort contributing to happier more settled lives.



Councillor David Wright. Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure.

Executive Summary

Housing is a key theme within the Council's high level vision for the borough as set out in our programme to protect, care & invest to create a better borough.

The Council's Housing Strategy identifies 3 key objectives:

- To create sustainable, accessible, affordable and integrated communities
- To make the BEST use of our existing homes
- To provide homes to support and empower our most vulnerable people.

This Strategy supports the delivery of our overarching Housing Strategy contributing to the delivery of all 3 objectives. It also compliments a number of other Council strategies The Telford & Wrekin Affordable Warmth Strategy, aims to deliver the expectations of the National Fuel Poverty Strategy - Sustainable Warmth Protecting Vulnerable Households in England.

Our plan has been developed to improve the energy efficiency of all housing stock in the borough to:

- Reduce the number of fuel poor households from a 2018 baseline figure of 9.4% which equates to 7220 households.
- Have a positive impact on improving the health and well-being of the most vulnerable people in Telford & Wrekin by ensuring they live in a warm and comfortable home.
- Close the gap addressing those areas of the borough with the highest levels of fuel poverty and addressing inequalities.

As a non-stock owning authority, we will work with partners across all tenures, including registered providers (RP's), tenants and landlords in the private rented sector and owner occupiers, to ensure we reach our overarching objectives above. We will do this by:

- **Raising Energy Awareness and Providing Support** – working with Marches Energy Agency and AgilityECO to promote and deliver

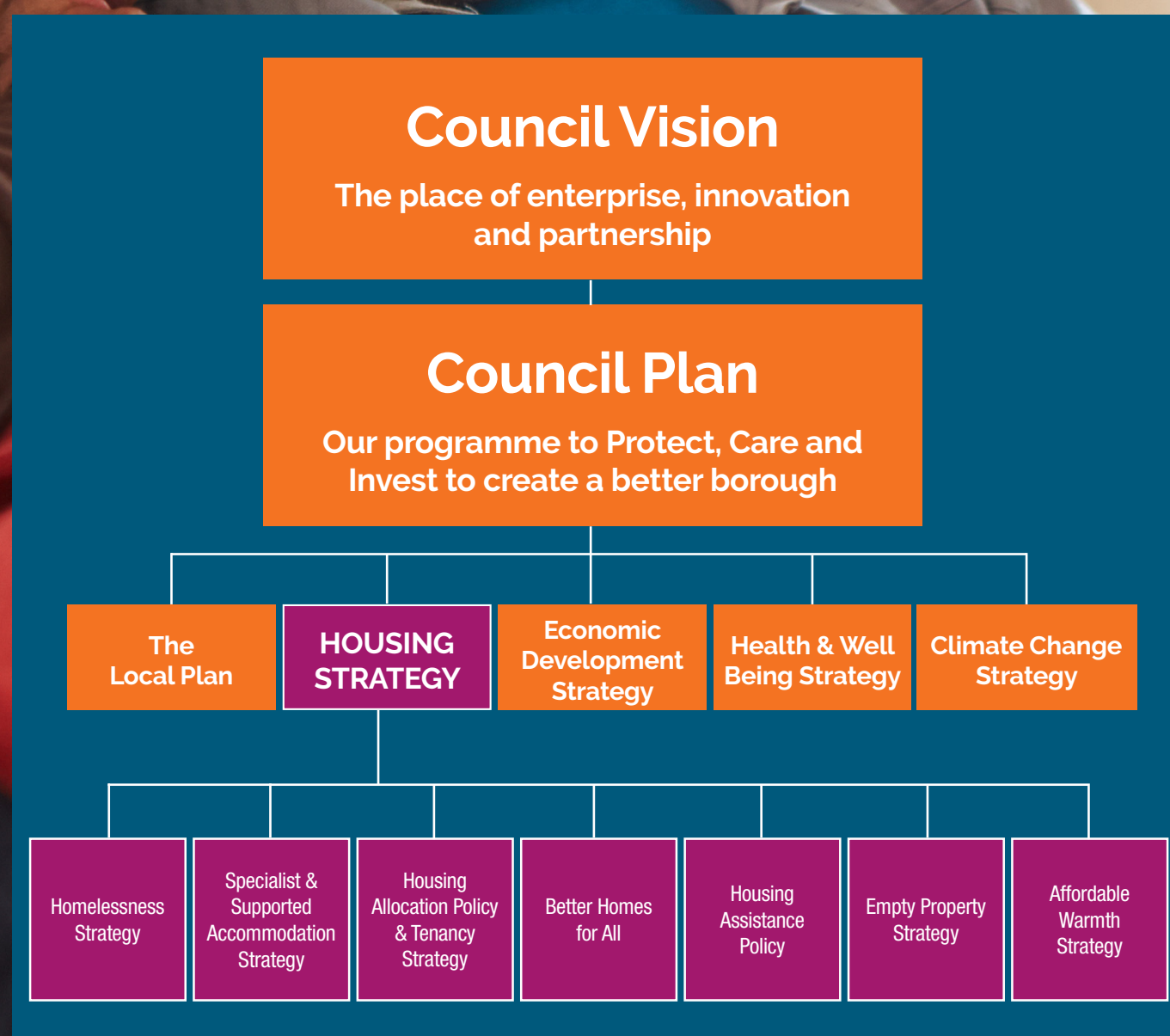
existing schemes as well as accessing funding to create new programmes

- **Maximising Household Income and Benefitting our Local Economy** – raising the profile of schemes such as Switch Telford, Wrekin Debt Advice, Telford & Wrekin Citizen's Advice Bureau and Telford Energy Advice (TEA)
- **Improving the Energy Efficiency of the Borough's Housing Stock** – in partnership with Registered Providers (housing associations), regional bodies and local businesses be successful in attracting funding to deliver retrofit programmes, with a particular focus on those areas, such as South Telford, that suffer with the highest instances of Fuel Poverty.

We will **evidence, monitor and report** on our progress by:

- Publishing an Annual Action Plan and reporting publically on our progress.
- Setting and monitoring performance targets for our delivery partners.
- Reporting to the Secretary of State for the Environment bi-annually, as required by the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.
- Ensuring that our Action Plan supports and influences other strategies including our Climate Change Action Plan, the Local Plan, Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the Safer & Stronger Communities Programme.

By tackling fuel poverty and improving the energy efficiency of the borough's homes, we will help secure better homes for all, while improving health, wellbeing and tackling health inequalities. We will also support the Council's commitment to make all its activities and operations carbon neutral by 2030.



There are 7220 households in the area considered to be in fuel poverty.

This is likely to increase with the knock-on effect of COVID-19 and associated job losses and economic down turn.

Definition of Fuel Poverty

The official definition of fuel poverty used in England, until February 2021 was the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) definition, which defines a household to be in fuel poverty if:

- They have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level - 1) and;
- If they spent that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line (approx. £18,800 in 2020)

The key components of fuel poverty are:

- The energy efficiency of the property (and therefore, the energy required to heat and power the home)
- The cost of energy
- Household income.

Based on the above definition, Telford and Wrekin has shown a marked improvement in reducing the amount of households in fuel poverty. These figures were published by the government in 2020:

There are still, however, 7220 households in the area considered to be in fuel poverty and significant variations between parts of the

borough and this is likely to increase with the knock-on effect of COVID-19 and associated job losses and economic down turn.

A new, national Fuel Poverty Strategy for England “Sustainable Warmth: Protecting Vulnerable Households in England” was published on 11th February 2021. This strategy adopts the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator for fuel poverty. Households will be considered fuel poor if:

- their disposable income (after housing and energy costs) is below the poverty line and
- they live in a property with an energy efficiency rating of Band D or lower.

The energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of a property is used to show how affordable a home is to keep warm. Homes rated C or above are more cost-effective to heat. EPC ratings do not take into consideration if a heating system is broken, faulty or simply not being used.

This definition will be used going forward, and will alter the baseline position nationally for all local authority areas from 2022.

	2017 households in Fuel Poverty	2018 households in Fuel Poverty
England	10.9%	10.3%
West Midlands	12.6%	11.4%
Telford & Wrekin	11.0%	9.4%

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882159/fuel-poverty-factsheet-2020-2018-data.pdf

We aim to reduce the number of fuel poor households in the area.

Our joined up approach is supported and complimented by our other strategies and policies; at local, regional and national level.

Strategic context

Developing and delivering an Affordable Warmth Strategy for Telford and Wrekin, not only focuses attention on reducing the number of residents suffering from the effects of living in a cold, damp home, it also supports other national, regional and local strategies.

National Strategies and Schemes

Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995

– requires all local authorities in England to report bi-annually to the Secretary of State to demonstrate what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation within that area. The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) uses data submitted to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency measures.

The Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 – created duties for Government to tackle fuel poverty which remains in force today.

Housing Act 2004 – Among other legislation, this act introduced the Housing and Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The HHSRS is a risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. It includes damp and mould as well as excess cold. This is addressed through our 'Better Homes for All' programme to educate, encourage and enforce better standards in the private rented sector.

In November 2020 the Prime Minister announced a new ten point plan for a green industrial revolution which is intended to create and support up to 250,000 British jobs. Housing features heavily in the ten listed points including more investment into cleaner energy sources, innovation and finance. Measures in relation to improving the energy efficiency of homes and public buildings include:

- **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)** extended from 2022 until 2026 – requiring energy companies to invest into schemes and projects that support the fuel poor and upgrade inefficient homes.
- **Local Authority Delivery Fund** – funding available via Regional Hubs – for Telford The Midlands Energy Hub – for new technology and insulation measures.
- **Homes Upgrade Grant** – opportunity for off-grid properties to receive funding to install green technology from 2022.
- **Private rented sector** – strengthening of requirements by landlords to make homes energy efficient through advice, enforcement and works in default.
- **Future Homes Standard** – future proof new homes to avoid expensive retrofit
- A consultation is also due on **Green Homes Finance**.

A new national Fuel Poverty Strategy – “Sustainable Warmth: Protecting Vulnerable Households in England” – was published in February 2021, providing the context for implementing the ten point plan. The Government makes 21 commitments to ensure all fuel poor households are made more energy efficient by 2030. There is also a focus on the health benefits of action and links to the national target to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Better Care Fund – is a programme spanning both the NHS and local government which seeks to join-up health and care services, so that people can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

Regional Groups and Organisations

Telford & Wrekin Council as a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), is able to access a number of regional programmes including:

WMCA/SHAP (Sustainable Housing Action Partnership) – a regional approach to improving the energy efficiency of existing homes, with a focus on warm homes saving lives. The partnership is an opportunity to access major investment into fuel poverty retrofit schemes including investment to address poor insulation and renewable heating solutions which support households and address climate change.

Midlands Energy Hub is a Central Government funded initiative, to support the capacity of Local Energy Partnerships (LEPs) and Local Authorities to deliver local low carbon energy projects, reduce carbon emissions, tackle fuel poverty and create new green jobs. The Hub will lead on the development of LAD (Local Authority Delivery) projects to create sustainable housing retrofit projects in 2021.



The Marches – we continue to work in partnership with our neighbouring authorities – Shropshire and Herefordshire in the Marches to maximise funding and link up projects where these will benefit across our communities.

Local Strategies and Action Plans

Telford & Wrekin Council is a **Co-operative Council** which means we are working together with our residents, partners and local organisations to collectively deliver the best we can for Telford and Wrekin with the combined resources we have. This includes delivering schemes to reduce the number of fuel poor households in area.

Our Council Plan – In July 2019, the Council adopted a new plan too **Protect, Care and Invest to create a better borough**. This strategy will support delivery of the Council plan ensuring:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- Our natural environment is protected, and the Council has a leading role in addressing the climate emergency
- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.



Telford & Wrekin Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025 – making our homes more energy efficient supports all the Housing Strategy objectives to:

- Create sustainable, accessible, affordable communities
- Make best use of existing homes
- Provide homes that support and empower vulnerable people, by providing warmth and comfort

Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2023 – vision is “Working together to enable people in Telford and Wrekin to enjoy healthier, happier and more fulfilling lives”. The key high level outcomes of the strategy are to:

- Improve overall healthy life expectancy in men and women
- Halt the increasing inequalities gap in healthy life expectancy and continue to narrow the gap
- Narrow the inequalities gap in life expectancy for people with serious mental health problems

Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides a suite of documents to build a picture of the social, cultural, health and economic needs of our communities and helps identify those communities in need of support. The Public Health Outcomes Framework used to monitor health and wellbeing in the borough includes an indicator on fuel poverty.

Better Homes for All – sets out to improve the quality of accommodation for people who privately rent in the borough by providing advice and support to landlords and using enforcement action, where required, to address poor standards and landlord practice. It is estimated that more than 20% of homes in the borough are now rented privately and this number is increasing. We will work with landlords and tenants to maximise the opportunities to improve energy standards across the private rented sector.

Climate Change Action Plan – The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 25th July 2019. As part of the response to this, the Council has committed to ensuring that its operations and activities are carbon neutral by 2030. The up-

dated Action Plan adopted by Cabinet in March 2021 is a living document that sets out how we intend to do this, and includes a focus on both how we address our own accommodation and support improvements across the borough including through retrofit schemes across all tenures.

Safer & Stronger Communities Programme – The Council has made a commitment to support the development of safer, stronger, more resilient communities. On the basis of data including measures of deprivation, health, employment and housing quality the Council has identified a number of Wards to be the focus of this Programme. This includes the former New Town Estates, and will see over £1.5m invested over the next 2 years. The quality and standards of housing will be a key part of the programme and the actions identified in this Strategy will be prioritised to support delivery of this Programme.

The Telford & Wrekin Local Plan – The Development Plan for the Borough this sets out policies that will influence the quantity, location and standard of new housing built over the next 20+ years and is the starting point for assessing planning applications. The latest version of the Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in January 2018. The Local Plan is currently subject to review and key priorities underpinning that review link with the fuel poverty agenda –

- Tackling climate change and achieving carbon neutrality;
- Securing better homes for all;
- Improving health, wellbeing and tackling health inequalities.



Our Borough

Telford & Wrekin is situated in the West Midlands region, North West of the West Midlands conurbation. It is a rapidly growing urban area, now the largest in the region outside of the West Midlands and North Staffordshire conurbations.

Telford is the largest centre but the borough is a place of contrasts, a mix of urban and rural areas with contemporary housing developments, older Borough Towns including Madeley and Dawley and traditional market towns including Newport. Part of the borough was designated as a New Town in 1968.

While new housing is important, 80% of the homes that we will have in 20 years' time are here now, and we need to ensure that these are as good as the best of the new ones being built today.

Our borough has the third lowest fuel poverty figure in the greater West Midlands.

The Housing Strategy consultation discovered that important themes for our residents include:

- Existing homes
- Affordable homes
- The housing needs of older, disabled and vulnerable people
- Climate Change

All opportunities for improvement linked to the affordable warmth agenda



7220 households are considered to be **in fuel poverty** in Telford & Wrekin

FUEL POVERTY STATS

9.4% Telford and Wrekin

11.4% in the West Midlands area

10.3% in England

Fuel poverty is higher for just over 700 households



14.4% - 15.4%
Edgmond & Ercall Magna



over 14%
Brookside, Donnington, Oakengates & Ketley Bank and Malinslee & Dawley Bank



REMEMBER **6520 homes** suffer from living in cold /damp conditions **are scattered across the borough**



While Telford & Wrekin is a growing and successful borough with a healthy and diverse housing market there are contrasts between our communities. A total of 18 areas (out of 108) in the Borough are ranked in the 10% most disadvantaged nationally, 26% of the Borough's population, some 53,800 people are living in areas in the 20% most disadvantaged 16% in areas in the 10% most disadvantaged. These include areas identified as having a higher than local average number of households in fuel poverty.

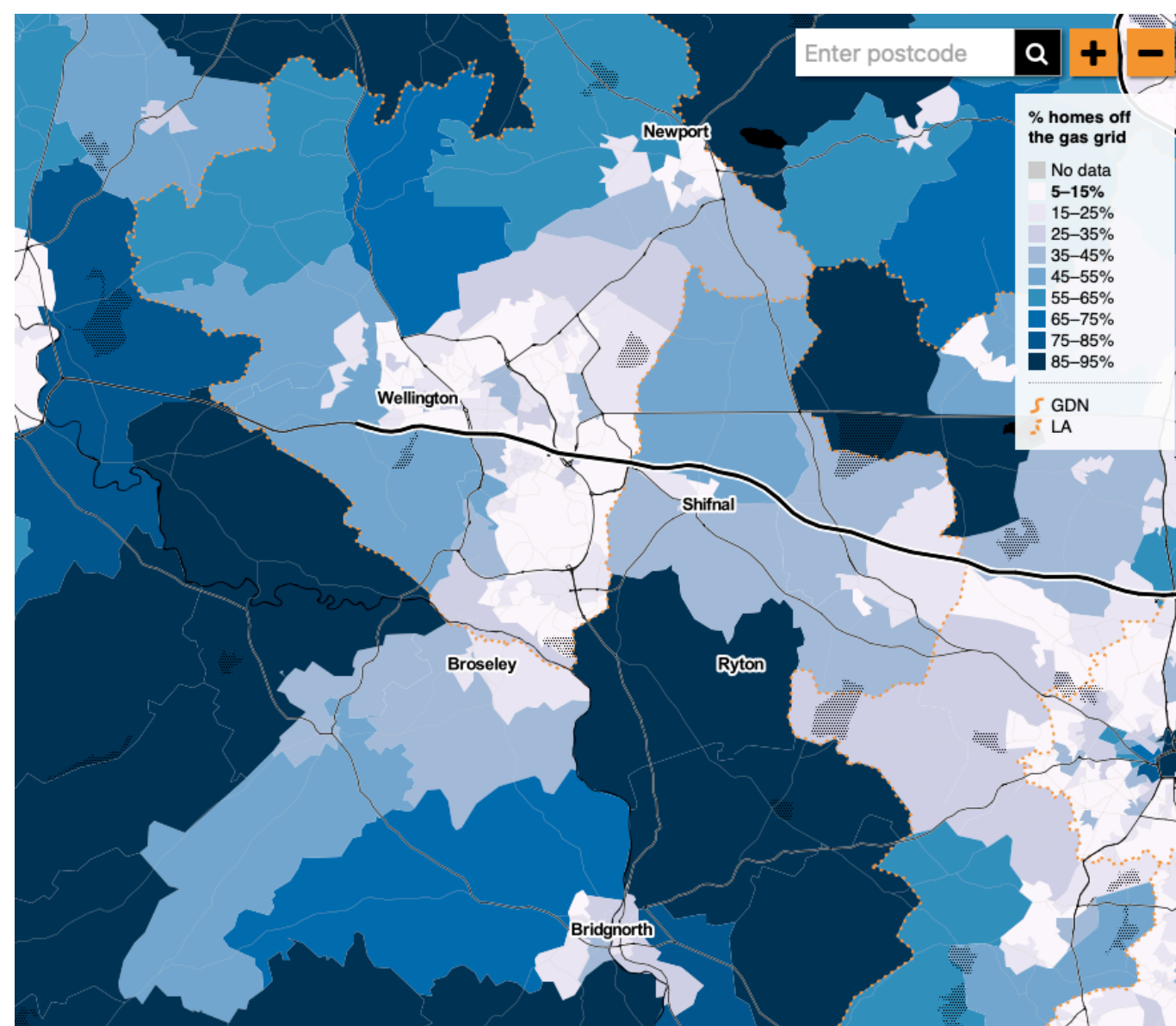
Our People

The borough's population is projected to rise to just under 200,000 by 2031. While the borough's population is still comparatively young, it is becoming older and more diverse with over half of the population increase anticipated to be in the

over 65 age group. As the population increases and people live longer, in line with other areas we are seeing an increase in older and vulnerable residents. This Strategy will support addressing those who are living with health problems or disability to live more comfortably for longer in their homes.

31,000 - report a health problem or disability (higher proportion than England)

11,100 adults 18-64 report a moderate to severe disability



The Public Health Outcomes Framework 2018/19 has fuel poverty and excess winter death as indicators. These indicators show no significant difference against recent trends. Excess winter deaths in the area are 16.6% in over 85's, currently below national and regional averages of 18.2% and 17.9% respectively.

Non-gas Properties

There are approximately 2400 properties that are not currently on the gas network. 1280 of these are EPC band E or below, which will enable us to explore attracting funding to heat with efficient renewable systems as an alternative to fossil fuel. As 52% of these are privately rented, we will be looking at ways to engage with landlords to help them meet their Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).

Partnership Working Health and the Voluntary Sector

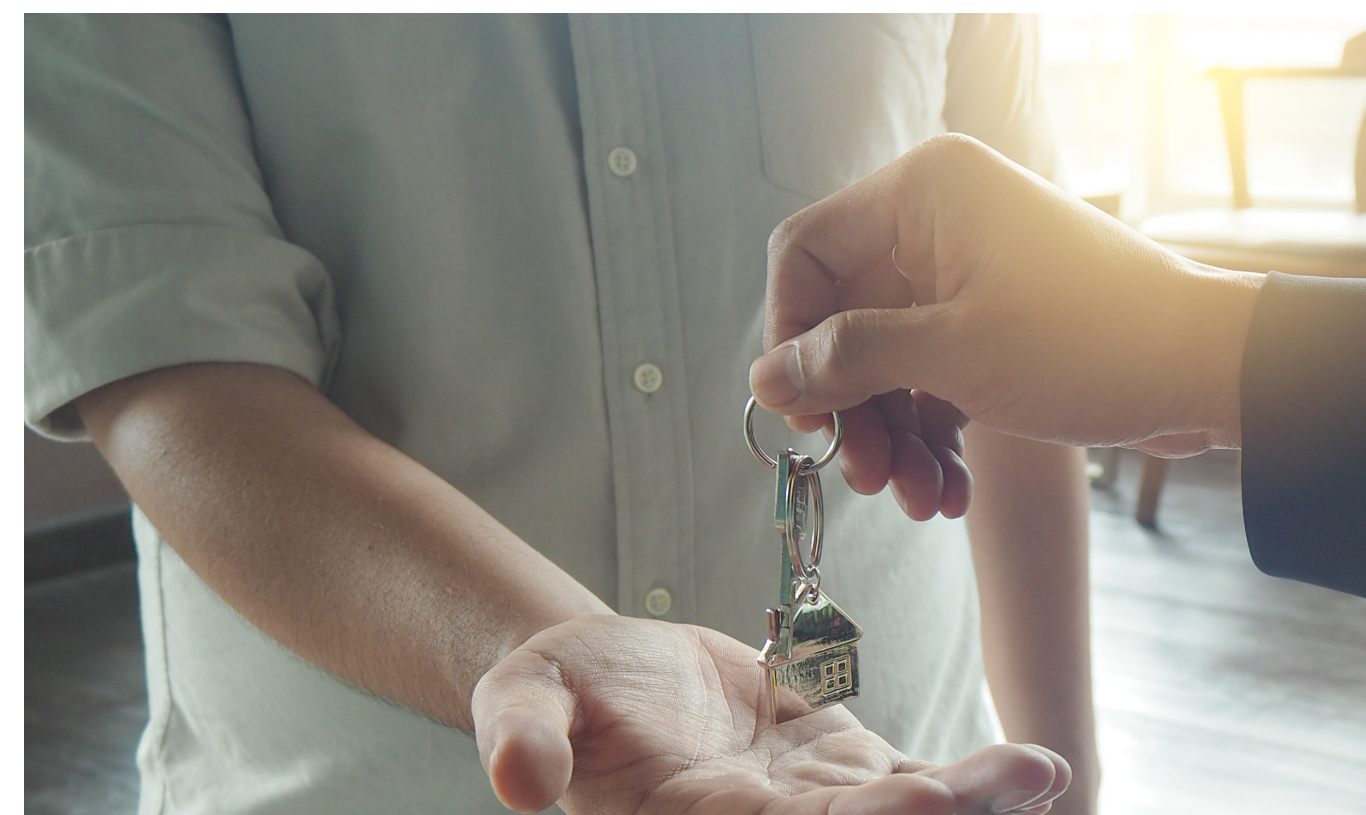
The Telford & Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership provides support to people to live well and independently by engaging G.P's and health providers in consultation on important areas of delivery. Addressing fuel poverty increases the

opportunity for elderly and vulnerable residents to live longer, at home.

We will work with the Partnership to raise the profile of the Strategy and support 'live well' priorities.

Registered Providers (Housing Associations)

Wrekin Housing Group are the largest social housing provider in the Borough with c.10,000 homes and are committed to increasing their properties energy efficiency rating to an EPC C rating or above. The Group are in the process establishing a Strategy to deliver on its carbon neutral ambitions by 2050. Bromford are one of our larger providers with over 1400 properties. Sanctuary Housing have a similar level of stock ownership including some within our New Town Estates. BVT (Bourneville Village Trust), Housing Trust, Walsall Housing Group and Trident also have some stock in the area. We will continue to work with all our RP partners, including through the local Registered Provider Forum, to support delivery of their targets and raise standards across the sector.



Raising Energy Awareness and Providing Support

There are a wide range of schemes in place that provide advice, support and finance to those in fuel poverty a number of which are detailed below.

The range and different means of accessing these can be a challenge particularly for vulnerable members of the community.

Telford & Wrekin Council works in partnership with Marches Energy Agency (MEA) and AgilityECO to offer streamlined advice and support to residents targeting those in fuel poverty through:

TEA (Telford Energy Advice) – Free Hotline
 - a free phone advice line for households from all tenures. It is managed by Marches Energy Agency, and is staffed by local advisors, who have an in-depth knowledge of the Telford and Wrekin area. This hand-holding service refers into all Telford schemes and offers advice on national initiatives such as energy suppliers Priority Services Register. The service includes home visits to fit simple energy efficient measures such as LED lights, draught proofing and radiator panels. The advice line also refers into other services to support the elderly and vulnerable including Disability Facility Grants provided via the Council to support the adaptation of properties.

ACTION: We will provide streamlined, accessible advice and support to all members of the community through a single hotline number.

ACTION: We will launch a bespoke Affordable Warmth web-site and communications campaign in Autumn 2021 to raise the profile and streamline access.

ACTION: We will continue to support the TEA free service that refers and advises residents into all energy efficiency schemes.



Case study

A 96 year old Telford resident lived alone with no heating or hot water, using just a gas hob to keep warm.

She had to sit on a very uncomfortable chair in the kitchen as it was the only place she could keep warm.

A home visit, funded by energy redress monies – resulted in referral to Emergency Central Heating Offer programme funding a boiler replacement. In the meantime, TEA provided emergency oil-filled electric radiators for immediate heat.



Case Study

Joe contacted Telford Energy Advice (TEA) as he was struggling to affordably heat his home. We carried out a home visit under the LEAP programme, helping him with low energy measures and advice. He mentioned that he was concerned about how well his 25 year old boiler was working. As it had not been serviced for some time, we arranged for this to be done by a local company, with the cost covered by funding. Some weeks later he contacted us to say the boiler was not working. It was just before Christmas, and with a number of health conditions, he was distressed and worried

about how he would manage. TEA referred Joe for a boiler replacement under the ECHO scheme. Due to the complexity of the work, the cost was high, so secured additional funds from Shropshire RCC's Winter Warmth fund to pay the balance. The contactors from ECHO were really responsive, given the urgency of the situation, and worked hard to get the boiler replaced and heating back on before the New Year. Usually this is the end of the story.... however, we were delighted this summer to hear back from Joe. He had now secured work with a support agency in Telford and had a client to refer to Telford Energy Advice for support.

ECOFlex – under the Energy Company Obligation, local households can access energy efficiency measures funded by energy companies. We have published a Statement of Intent (SOI - also known as Local Authority Flex) which extends the nationally set criteria for households who can apply. This funding relates to owner occupiers and private tenants only – more information is available via <https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20675/do-you-need-advice-on-saving-money-on-your-energy-bills/5186/eco3-local-authority-declaration-for-telford-and-wrekin-council>

Other schemes that can be accessed by residents include:

ECHO (Emergency Central Heating Offer) – a free emergency boiler repair or replacement scheme. It is open to owner occupiers who are on a means tested benefit or covered by ECOFlex Statement of Intent (see above).

Connected for Warmth – first time gas central heating open to owner occupiers and privately renting tenants. The applicant must be on a means tested or disability benefit, or qualify for ECOFlex. There can be an occasional contribution to make. From the financial year 2021-22, Telford & Wrekin Council will be providing top up funding to cover the contribution to support our most vulnerable residents. Details of who can apply will be published alongside this Strategy.

Heart – replacement white goods scheme. It covers all tenures but the applicant must be on a means tested or disability benefit, or qualify for ECOFlex.

Telford & Wrekin Council Wellbeing Grants

The Council provide a range of grants including Wellbeing Grants to prevent hospital or care admission, or to speed up hospital or care discharge, by improving conditions in the home. We are also creating links with the Wellbeing Independence Partnership – an information and advice service for adults with care and support needs who are not known to statutory services.

ACTION: we will continue to work with partners including Telford & Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership to ensure that grant assistance is maximised and targeted to fuel poor homes and to support independent living.



The schemes mentioned rely on external funding to continue to support residents. Although ECO has been extended until 2026, there is an annual allocation, which means all capital works are administered on a first come, first served basis. To allow grants to extend further, Telford & Wrekin Council are investing into energy efficiency schemes to:

- Ensure continuity
- Support those clients who cannot afford to make a contribution that may be a requirement to access existing grants
- Have a greater say on the measures available and grant criteria
- Ensure effective targeting geographically to reach those most in need

The Council's aim is to ensure grant funding for affordable warmth is tailored to the borough's requirements. We will seek to either directly develop or manage, all energy efficiency capital programmes to maximise the benefits to residents and the local economy – including local employment – and to ensure high-standard services.

The Council will continue to source and lobby for additional funding working with partners, to extend the impact of existing schemes and establish new opportunities.

ACTION: to access funding and develop a bespoke Telford & Wrekin Affordable Warmth Grant to support existing grant schemes from 2021/22.

ACTION: We will provide a 'top up' grant to cover the household contribution required to access affordable warmth grant schemes, namely through ECO finance, targeting at our most vulnerable tenants.

Options to help keep those on low incomes warm and debt free.

Maximising Income and Benefitting the Local Economy

As the cost of energy and low household income are two of the major contributory factors in people suffering from fuel poverty, through our Strategy we will also deliver and support services that maximise income and encourage residents to find the lowest suitable energy tariff. We are also committed to ensuring local businesses benefit from opportunities to deliver energy and home improvement schemes where possible and to promoting the growth of the green energy sector encouraging innovation.

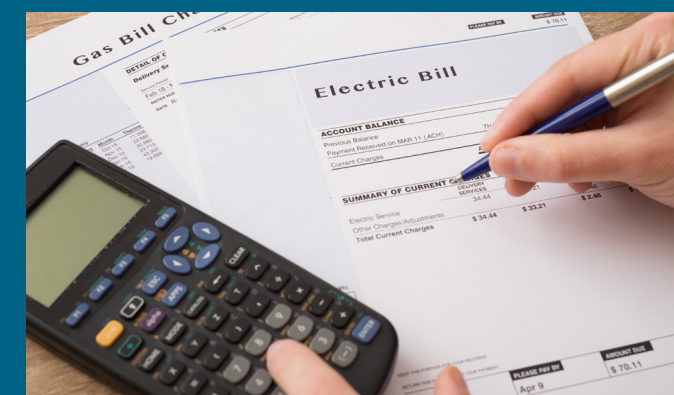
Telford Citizens Advice Energy Project – this Energy Advice Programme involves advising clients on energy issues including complaints on disputed bills with energy suppliers, dealing with energy arrears and applying for grants including supplier's hardship funds. CAB offer support including presentations to groups, to promote energy awareness.



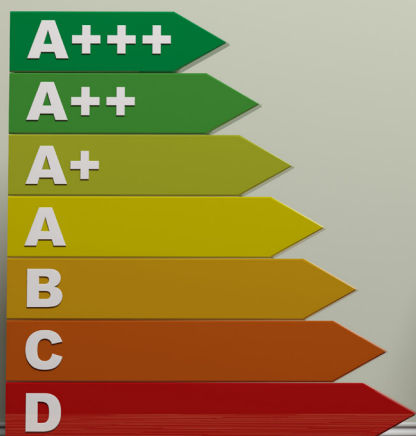
Wrekin Debt Advice – Free debt advice to all tenants of the Wrekin Housing Group that includes help and support on energy bills.

TEA (Telford Energy Advice) – provides access to income maximisation checks, as well as offering advice on funding available to vulnerable households including Winter Fuel Payment, Warm Homes Discount and Cold Weather payment.

ACTION: We will streamline access to debt advice through new web-site.



The Wrekin Housing Group



Case Study

Wrekin Housing Groups Money Matters Team, were approached by a customer from South Telford, who was struggling with an energy debt of nearly £3000, and was finding it hard to prepare meals as their old cooker was broken.

Our Advisor successfully secured a grant from the EDF Energy Fund to clear their energy arrears...and whilst we were waiting for the outcome of the EDF grant application we provided them with fuel vouchers so they could heat and light their home and cook food. We also successfully applied to the 'Children in Need' emergency essentials program for a new A Rated cooker for the family,

We have now helped them to plan their weekly budget, with a good understanding of their average daily energy consumption and supported them onto an affordable payment plan for their gas and electric. They are now paying enough to not fall behind again, and we have helped to educate the household with managing their utility bills over the whole year to reduce the risk of arrears building up in the colder months.

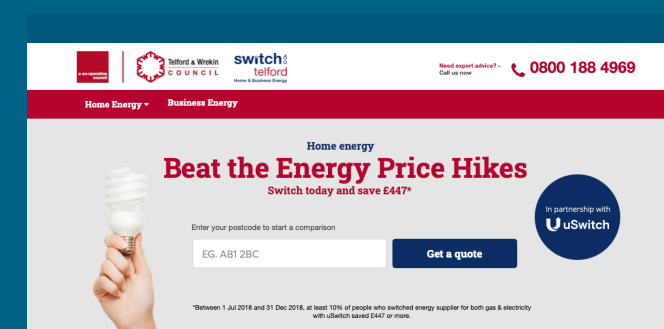
ACTION: We will continue to support partners to deliver advice on fuel debt joining up offers and promoting them via our website and communications campaign.

Maximising Income

Switch Telford – Telford & Wrekin Council's energy supplier price comparison and switching site is open to all Telford's businesses and homes including those on pre-payment meters.

Since Switch Telford was launched in April 2017, there have been in excess of 1,755 switches and between January-June 2019 at least 10% of people switching saved £447 or more on their heating bills. There is a green energy option to support the climate change agenda.

ACTION: We will continue to promote Switch Telford to encourage and enable residents to regularly compare and switch energy suppliers to ensure value for money innovation.



Benefitting the Local Economy

Working with the Council's **Business Support Team** we will maximise opportunities for local trades and suppliers to deliver capital works linked with the programmes in this Strategy and those the Council brings forward. We will also work together to inform local businesses of growth opportunities in the energy efficiency sector supporting them to diversify and attract new inward investment and growing our green technology sector. We will work with the Telford Business Board and Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to attract further investment in this sector and encourage innovation.

Job Box – is an all age employment support service operated by the Council. Job Box offers help with accessing training, applying for jobs, updating CVs and connecting people directly into work. We will work with Job Box to promote and deliver training and business opportunities within the heating and insulation market particularly and to promote job opportunities in the energy sector.

ACTION: We will support local trades and suppliers to benefit from delivery of energy efficiency capital programmes wherever possible.

ACTION: We will support the development of the green energy sector locally.

ACTION: We will promote employment opportunities through Job Box.

Improving Energy Efficiency & Raising Standards

As an Authority we have a track record of delivering capital funding to address energy efficiency including the Green Deal Communities Fund under which 400 homes across the Borough benefitted from £4.9m of external wall insulation.

As part of this Strategy we will develop opportunities to deliver larger scale energy efficiency programmes with the help of external funding and capital investment. We will also ensure we encourage the use of renewable technology in line with our Climate Change Plan.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Since ECO was introduced in 2013, it has improved approximately two million homes nationally with the current Affordable Warmth scheme, running to 2026, entirely focused on low income and vulnerable households. We will ensure this is maximised and targeted to communities in greatest need in Telford & Wrekin.

Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD) this Central Government funded scheme aims to raise the energy efficiency of low-income and low EPC rated homes (those with Band D, E, F or G). This includes those living in the worst quality off-gas grid homes, delivering progress towards reducing fuel poverty, the phasing out the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating and the UK's commitment to net zero by 2050.

LAD2 is administered by the Midlands Energy Hub. £59.95 million has been distributed across the greater West Midlands area for projects to be delivered in 2021. Telford and Wrekin's initial allocation is £566,800 and we are currently working on a suitable bid with our partners which will target investment into key areas of the Borough, including South Telford, supporting residents across all tenures. This pilot scheme will concentrate on delivering high quality interventions benefitting approximately 50 households and providing the basis to attract further investment.





West Midlands Combined Authority/ SHAP Project - Warm Homes Saves Lives is an ambitious programme to tackle fuel poverty across the West Midlands. The programme brings together local authorities, health sector and voluntary sector to target households that are hard to reach or invisible to mainstream programmes. This will be an on-going programme, with an initial demonstrator year. Telford & Wrekin Council will be contributing to the WMCA feasibility study and seeking to develop projects to benefit local residents.

ACTION: Develop retrofit programmes to improve insulation standards and reduce fossil fuel heating targeting our most vulnerable residents and areas with the highest levels of fuel poverty and supporting our Zero Carbon target of 2030.

Nuplace – Supporting a Low Carbon Future

Nuplace Ltd, the Council's wholly owned housing company, is now the largest private landlord in the Borough and setting a standard for quality in the sector. Nuplace latest phase of 320 new and refurbished homes will include measures to address carbon reduction and support affordable warmth. These benefits will be realised, wherever feasible, through improvements to the building's fabric as well as the introduction of carbon reduction technology. Nuplace have already started delivering on this objective on their site at Southwater Way which is currently under construction. All properties are to have photo voltaic panels and electric car charging points to help reduce carbon emissions, reduce energy bills for tenants and work to address fuel poverty. In this way Nuplace are working towards a low carbon future.

ACTION: Through Nuplace we will seek to set a standard for delivering energy efficient homes.

Registered Providers - We will be working with our RP partners on their plans to achieve zero carbon supporting them access national funding and ensuring investment targets our most vulnerable communities.

Better Homes for All - We will encourage private landlords to meet their Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), by providing information and guidance, as well as access to some grant funding to improve the EPC rating of their property to the required band E. We hope to encourage and educate landlords to improve their properties, avoiding the need for enforcement.

Telford & Wrekin Council Temporary Accommodation – the Council owns and manages a number of properties providing temporary accommodation for individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with being so. Where EPC's are available, 74% of these properties are already EPC band C or above. We are committed to ensuring all properties are assessed and to raise the standard to band C or above, where required, ensuring they provide warm, safe homes for those who come to us in housing need.

ACTION: To ensure that the accommodation that we own is EPC C rated or above and we continue to raise standards in carbon reduction linked with our Climate Change Strategy.





We will put in place quality control mechanisms, accountability against actions and use a local workforce wherever practical.

External funding programmes will be monitored in accordance with the requirements set out by the funder, and will include anti-fraud mechanisms and adhere to any audit requirements.

Evidence, monitoring and reporting

We will report annually on our Strategy and Action Plan (2021/22 Action Plan included at Appendix 1) Through our Annual Report we will set out the impact of our work to reduce fuel poverty, set out savings to services, where we are able, and the impact on reducing carbon emissions. We will also report on impacts on the local economy in terms of investment and jobs.

This update will be informed through our partners reporting quarterly and annually on the outcomes of the programmes. The information collected will include:

- Promotional activity
- Number of households assisted
- Type of assistance
- Average amount invested pre household
- Geographical take-up in areas by ward and lower super output area
- Take-up based on age
- Take-up based on tenure

- Measures installed including insulation and renewable sources
- Complaints and compliments
- Referral's into other schemes
- Breakdown of Match Funding where applicable
- Local fuel poverty figures and national and regional comparator data

We will also report bi-annually to the Secretary of State under the **Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995**. This information is used to inform national fuel poverty policy.

External funding programmes will be monitored in accordance with the requirements set out by the funder, and will include anti-fraud mechanisms and adhere to any audit requirements.

We will also put in place quality control mechanisms to protect residents, and use a local workforce wherever possible.





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