

# **HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT (HECA)**

## **REPORT FOR**

**NUNEATON & BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**AND**

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**



Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire  
Joint Private Sector Housing Service

## Contents

<b>1.0 Home Energy Conservation Act – Report Update.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0 Local Perspective - Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0 Fuel Poverty within Warwickshire .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4.0 Council Housing Portfolio.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.0 Private Sector Housing .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6.0 Home, Environment, Assessment &amp; Response Team (HEART).....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7.0 Partnership Working .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## **1.0 Home Energy Conservation Act – Report Update**

**The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 ('HECA') requires all 326 local authorities ('LA's) in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State identifying the energy conservation measures that the Authority considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area. This covers measures to improve properties in the owner-occupier, private rented sector, and social rented sector. BEIS uses data submitted through LAs HECA returns to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency, and to build an ongoing picture of local and national energy efficiency policy delivery.**

**The 2013/2017 revised HECA guidance does not prescribe the format of a 'further report', but instead suggests four sections into which it might usefully be structured.**

**Those sections are;**

- 1. Local energy efficiency ambitions and priorities,**
- 2. The measures to take advantage of financial assistance and other benefits offered from central Government initiatives, such as Green Deal, ECO and RHI or any other initiatives, to help result in significant energy improvements of residential accommodation,**
- 3. The measures which an authority has developed to implement energy efficiency improvements cost-effectively in residential accommodation by using area based / street by street roll out involving local communities and partnerships (e.g. social housing partners, voluntary organisations and tow/parish Councils),**
- 4. A timeframe for delivery and national and local partners.**

**The UK Government is committed to local authorities setting their own priorities, ambitions and any related targets as they are best placed to assess their local needs and judge what will achieve significant improvements based on their particular local circumstances.**

**UK Government aims for meeting the UK carbon budgets include:**

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 from the 1990 levels**
- Insulate all cavities and lofts, where practical, by 2020**
- Install between 1 - 3.7m additional solid wall insulation and between 1.9 - 7.2m other energy efficiency installations by 2030**
- Install 1.6 - 8.6m building level low carbon heat systems such as heat pumps by 2030**
- Emissions from UK buildings should be 'close to zero' by 2050.**

**Local authorities are well placed to do this as they:**

- have unique knowledge of their local area's needs and circumstance;**
- are able to link wider strategic priorities and funding streams;**
- are able to draw on established local networks, partnerships, services and delivery partners;**

- can draw on existing links with business and social enterprises and provide pathways via local advice agencies and services; and
- are directly accountable to their local residents

Please note, a report is not a statement of policy or strategy, nor is it a fuel poverty or affordable warmth plan, it is a statement about domestic energy conservation – what the partner Councils have recently achieved and their future intentions, ambitions and priorities.

However, one of the primary objectives of conserving energy in domestic circumstances is to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, in addition to the alleviation of fuel poverty, improved energy security and the reduction in carbon emissions. This is shared by both partner Councils and is the foundation of our continued efforts.

## 2.0 Local Perspective - Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

The Housing Strategy for 2017-2022 builds on the last one for Nuneaton and Bedworth which was written in 2009 and covered the years 2010-2015. This Housing Strategy identifies the key challenges for housing in the Borough over the next five years and sets out pledges on how the Council intend to overcome them in both the Public and Private Sectors to offer more choice in housing by developing new homes and by improving existing homes and neighbourhoods. The overarching aims of the strategy to ensure that the population of Nuneaton & Bedworth have access to a home that is safe, warm and affordable.

- Housing Conditions.
- Energy Efficiency
- Sustainable Neighbourhoods.
- Health Inequalities.
- Economic Wellbeing

## **Borough Plan 2011-2031**

This will play a key role in shaping the future of the Borough up to 2031. It will influence what developments will take place and where they will be located within the Borough. The Plan considers a wide range of economic, social and environmental matters that together will enable the achievement of cohesive and sustainable communities. The Plan outlines a spatial vision and strategic objectives for the area, along with a strategy and policies to enable its delivery.

## **National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance**

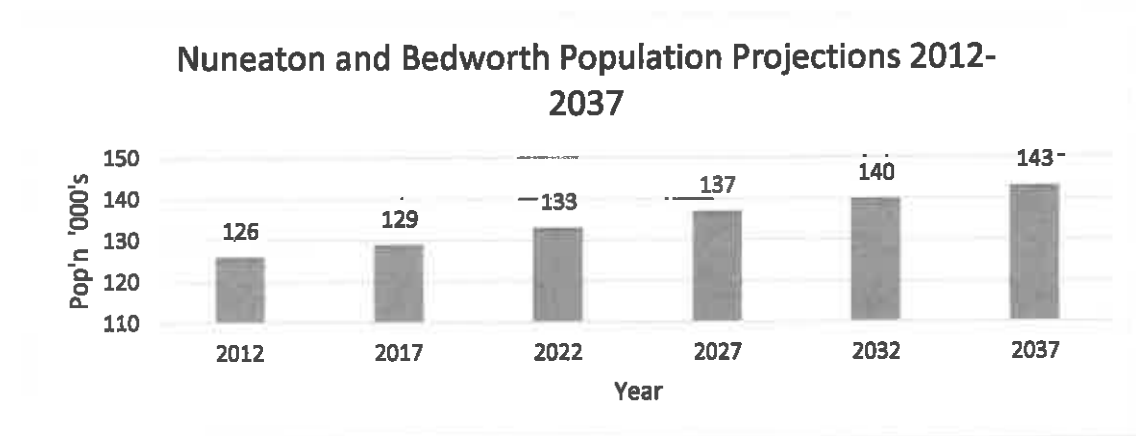
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government policy on planning matters and seeks to create sustainable communities and foster sustainable development.

## Sustainable Community Plan

The Borough Plan is a delivery document for the Nuneaton and Bedworth Sustainable Community Plan (SCP). The policies within the Borough Plan therefore need to enable delivery of the aims of the SCP which are to make the Borough stronger, safer and more sustainable.

The Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth is one of five local authorities in the county of Warwickshire, the others being Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon, Rugby and North Warwickshire. It covers 79 square kilometres and is a completely urban authority having no rural villages within its boundaries. It borders Rugby to the East, and North Warwickshire to the West. To the south it borders the County of the West Midlands, and to the north Leicestershire (Hinckley). It has good transport links to Birmingham, Britain's second city, and Coventry which is the ninth largest city in England. The Borough has a major town centre in Nuneaton and a smaller town centre in Bedworth. In addition, Bulkington, which is situated between Nuneaton and Bedworth, has a village centre.

There are 126,000 people residing in Nuneaton and Bedworth according to the last census in 2011. The graph below shows that this number is expected to rise steadily by 13% to 143,000 by 2031.



An increase in population will also mean a rise in population density. There is already a striking difference between the population density in Nuneaton and Bedworth compared to its neighbouring authorities. In 2013 there were 1,592 people per square kilometre in Nuneaton and Bedworth whereas for Warwick it was just 491 persons and for Stratford-on-Avon only 123 per square km.

The Borough is home to just over 55,240 households, of which 47,100 are private (joint rented and occupied) for (85.2%) and 5,755 are Council properties (10.6%) and 2300 account for other RP (4.1%). It is made up of a series of individual communities separated by rural areas. It is located in the north-west of Warwickshire, adjoining Leicestershire and the West Midlands counties as well as the Borough of Rugby and North Warwickshire Council's. The Borough is divided into 17 wards and the largest (Abbey), contains 3,294 households and the smallest (Arbury) contains 2,120 households.

## **North Warwickshire Borough Council**

North Warwickshire Borough Council is a largely rural area in the Midlands, bounded by parts of the West Midlands conurbation, and bordered by more semi-urban Tamworth and Nuneaton. Having a central location with good road and rail links, it has a diverse and vibrant economy with a significant number of residents commuting outwards, and others inwards to the many employment opportunities. North Warwickshire has a number of small market type towns, the largest and administrative centre being Atherstone (alongside Mancetter), with Coleshill, Polesworth, Dordon, Kingsbury and others making up the main population centres. Main industries used to be agriculture and coal mining, with many small village and hamlet settlements historically for local workers. It also has a number of large private estate holdings. North Warwickshire has a population of circa 62,000 in 27,410 households, and the Council retains its original housing stock of circa 2,690 properties.

Despite areas of apparent affluence, North Warwickshire has, like many communities, a core of households in poor circumstances and sometimes in poor housing. Being rural, it has many off-gas areas, it has numerous larger and older properties with uninsulated solid walls, and proportionately more semi-detached and detached properties with fewer flats and newer developments. Being two-thirds in the Green Belt, development has been restricted for many years. North Warwickshire also has a number of estates of non-traditional construction housing which were at one time designated defective under legislation, not all of which have been upgraded.

Whilst Warwickshire is generally considered to sit in the top third of upper tier Councils for being least deprived, within the County the most significant deprivation is seen primarily in Nuneaton and Bedworth, with North Warwickshire in second place.

In 2017/9 the following works were delivered for Council properties:

- 95 properties fitted with external wall insulation
- 219 traditional roof renewals
- 4 blocks of flats, flat to pitched roof conversions
- 95 properties fitted with new double glazing
- 14 Replacement cold water tanks to 4 blocks of flats
- 1 House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) – fire protection works
- Fire alarm system upgrades to 2 blocks and 1 HMO
- 28 garage roofs renewed or replaced

### 3.0 Fuel Poverty within Warwickshire

A household is considered to be fuel poor if it has higher than typical energy costs *and* would be left with a disposable income below the poverty line, if it spent the required money to meet those costs. Fuel poverty is distinct from general poverty: not all poor households are fuel poor, and some households would not normally be considered poor but could be pushed into fuel poverty if they have high energy costs. Fuel poverty is therefore an overlapping problem of households having a low income and facing high energy costs.

In Warwickshire as a whole it is estimated that 26,732 households are fuel poor, which equates to 11.1% of the County. The breakdown of fuel poverty in our Boroughs is summarised in the table below.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Number of Households Estimated to be Fuel Poor</b>	<b>% of Households Estimated to be Fuel Poor</b>
Nuneaton & Bedworth BC	6569	12%
North Warwickshire BC	3023	11.2%
Rugby BC	4864	11.1%
Warwick DC	6598	10.8%
Stratford DC	5678	10.5%
Warwick DC	6598	10.8%

Sources: <https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/apl/documents/WCCC-1014-291>

<https://parallel.co.uk/fuel-poverty/#10/52.4924/-1.9746/0/60>

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough has the highest levels of deprivation in the County, indicated by the highest average LSOA score. The Borough ranks as the 111<sup>th</sup> most deprived Local Authority District (out of the 326 Local Authorities in England).

Whilst Warwickshire is generally considered to sit in the top third of upper tier Councils for being least deprived, within the County the most significant deprivation is seen primarily in Nuneaton and Bedworth, with North Warwickshire in second place.

### 4.0 Council Housing Portfolio

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) has 5755 properties, of which a large proportion, 4678 are traditional construction with the remaining being a mixture of non-traditional construction, including Aluminium, British Steel, Cornish, Lilleshall, Midland Housing Consortium, No Fines, Smiths and Timber. Also 5446 are gas central or communal heated (including warm air), with the remainder being a mixture

of Economy 7 off-peak electricity, solid fuel (tenants choice), and no-gas single point fires or heaters (not gas central heating, at tenants choice).

<b>Construction Type</b>	<b>Construction Numbers</b>
Aluminium	22
Cornish	12
Lilleshall	36
Midlands Housing Consortium	155
Modular Timber	4
No Fines	324
Smiths	124
Steel	106
Timber Framed	86
Traditional	4678
Trusteel	166
Wates	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>5755</b>

As for SAP and planned upgrades, all future works are budget driven so it is estimated the same number of properties will benefit from the same works in the future.

External wall and loft insulation measures to non-traditional properties of a 'Midland Homes Construction' type took place over a two year period for approximately 180 properties, which started in April 2017. Non-traditional properties that currently have had no work to the exterior to improve the insulation values are Smith's and solid wall construction. These properties will be addressed with available budgets after the completion of the MHC properties in 2019/20.

All central heating systems installs/renewals are all 'A' rated condensing boilers where gas can be laid or is available.

Over the past 2 years the Council has undertaken the construction of new build properties, which in 2017/18 saw 4 properties built. A programme for 27 properties is also planned for the period 2020/2021.

There was no external wall insulation (EWI) activity for the 2017/18 period, however, it is proposed that for the current period 2019/20 the Council will be installing EWI to 220 properties.

In 2017/18 265 central heating systems were upgraded and 64 properties were re-roofed.

Next year it will see a similar amount of central heating systems and 60 re-roofs are also planned.



## **Future Investment In the Corporate Property Portfolio**

It is expected that for the 2019/2020 period, 28 properties are planned, which will also be subject to planning conditions.

The Council have submitted planning applications for a total of 28 new dwellings to be built across 4 sites (currently used as garages for local residents). This has been the subject of an internal press release as the Council is embarking on one of the largest modular housing projects in the UK.

The innovative modular dwellings will range from one bedroom apartments through to four bedroom homes and all will be 100% affordable providing much needed homes across the Borough.

The dwellings will be built by one of the UK's leading modular manufacturers, Ashby and Croft Ltd, at their factory in Nuneaton before being transported to the sites. By using this emerging method of construction the speed of delivery can be reduced dramatically and the dwellings will be ready for tenants to move in within this financial year. NBBC have worked extensively over the past 6 months to ensure the new homes will be:

- Built to National Spaces Standards and provide a well-designed and spacious living environment
- Energy efficient to help to reduce fuel poverty
- Designed to address fire safety issues and will not contain any combustible material within the cavity walls
- Built to NBBC's own high quality standard which defines specific products to be used during construction ensuring the homes will last a minimum of 60 years.

[https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/news/article/574/nbbc\\_embark\\_on\\_one\\_of\\_the\\_largest\\_modular\\_housing\\_projects\\_in\\_the\\_uk](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/news/article/574/nbbc_embark_on_one_of_the_largest_modular_housing_projects_in_the_uk)

### **5.0 Private Sector Housing**

As is the trend nationally, the size of the private rented sector has significantly increased in the Borough since the last Housing Strategy to the detriment of the owner-occupied sector. According to the Warwickshire Observatory, the number of people renting privately has seen a dramatic increase from 6,041 in 2011.

The Council is committed to raising standards for both owner occupied and privately owned properties by reducing the number of homes with hazards dangerous to health as well as improving energy efficiency in these properties. This is achieved through the enforcement of relevant legislation and the development of partnerships and policies amongst neighbouring authorities, charities and other statutory organisations.

The Private Sector Housing team undertake inspections across private rented accommodation, which includes Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) to investigate complaints as well carrying out routine programmed inspections to identify any Category 1 hazards, which are potentially harmful to the safety of occupants and any

Category 2 hazards, which are less harmful, under the Housing, Health and Safety, Rating System (HHSRS). We also engage with landlords and agents who own or manage these properties and work with them at the first instance to ensure that standards are being maintained and they are complying with current legislation.

These hazards contribute to the Council's key performance indicators and for the period 2017/18 a total of 70 Category 1 hazards were removed, whilst in 2018/19 a total of 75 Category 1 hazards were removed, which ensure that tenants can remain safe within those properties.

### **Bond Assistance Scheme**

One of the main hurdles for prospective tenants is that they are unable to afford a deposit to secure rented accommodation. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's Bond Assistance Scheme was set up to overcome this problem and to encourage more landlords to take on tenants who are struggling to find affordable rented homes. Instead of a cash deposit, the Council provides a written guarantee to the landlord to cover losses due to damage. If any payments need to be made, then the tenant must reimburse the Council for any money it has to pay the landlord or letting agent.

As part of this process all properties are inspected by the Private Sector Housing team to ensure there are no Category 1 hazards under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and that the property is safe for occupation. In the period 2017/18 a total of 15 properties were inspected and in 2018/19 the team inspected 25 properties.

### **Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)**

From April 2018, private domestic and non-domestic landlords are required to ensure that their properties reach at least an E Energy Performance (EPC) rating, or have installed those improvements through subsidies available to pay for them, before granting a tenancy to new or existing tenants.

Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire Borough Council's will continue to encourage private sector landlords to improve the domestic energy performance of their rental properties. The private rented sector is recognised as having the highest levels of fuel poverty.

The Council will continue to utilise the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to identify and address excess cold in the private rented sector and to request evidence of compliance with Energy Performance Regulations.

### **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)**

Fuel poverty, or 'affordable warmth', is a key health issue with around 30,000 excess winter deaths being attributed to cold related illness annually. Those impacts which are not fatal may nonetheless be debilitating with severe and permanent effects, and all may bear upon stretched medical and social care services. NICE guidelines advocate action to address fuel poverty and excess cold.

Funding for domestic energy efficiency improvements is delivered by national schemes like ECO (Energy Companies Obligation) which is currently in Phase 3 and due to expire in March 2022.

Councils play an important role in delivering schemes and we have produced a Statement of Intent (Sol), which was valid from 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018 with the same criteria for all the Warwickshire authorities, namely, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC), North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC), Rugby Borough Council (RBC), Stratford District Council (SDC) and Warwick District Council (WDC) so there is regional consistency. This revised Sol aims to help more households on a low income out of fuel poverty, including those that may not have previously qualified for help.

The ECO3 Sol targets flexible eligibility provision under 'Affordable Warmth' and declares households as qualifying as either being Fuel Poor (FP) or LIVC (living on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of cold housing). The Sol also includes for any solid wall in-fill insulation schemes, pending DBEIS guidance.

The initiative is also being run in partnership with Act on Energy, an energy conservation charity who provides free advice to householders in Warwickshire, from fuel switching to installing heating and insulation measures.

The funding is already available to households on means tested benefits, signing up to the 'flex' element, will enable us to provide financial assistance to other vulnerable residents not necessarily on benefits such as those on a low income, with a disability or health condition or on a pre-payment meter."

All private tenure households, within the Warwickshire geographical boundary may be eligible for funding via the ECO Flexible Eligibility if the qualification criteria are met. The full Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Statement of Intent, including the qualification criteria for the aforementioned Council areas is published on the Council's website.

[https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/info/20019/private\\_sector\\_housing/289/energy\\_matters/4](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/info/20019/private_sector_housing/289/energy_matters/4)

### **Free Insulation and Heating Scheme Offer**

The Council has been working in partnership with E.ON to provide free loft and cavity wall insulation as well as limited broken boiler replacements and first time central heating installs for residents to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. The cost of the insulation is funded with Energy Company Obligation (ECO) money from our delivery partner E.ON.

The scheme is available to both home owners and private sector tenants and is targeting people living:

- in fuel poverty, in particular those not in receipt of eligible benefits

- on low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home

The funding is limited and is available on a first come, first served basis. Resident's do not have to be an E.ON customer to apply for this offer, but do need to own their own home, or rent residential premises from a private landlord.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

A household income below £30,419 and;

- have children under the age of 5 years old
- Are pregnant
- Are aged 60 and over
- Have a pre-payment gas/electric meter
- Live in mobile/park home
- Live in the Nuneaton and Bedworth postcode areas – CV7, CV10, CV11 and CV12
- Ex coal housing property
- Have certain specialist health conditions

To date the scheme has generated over 220 enquiries with 54 referrals being signed under the ECOFLEX declaration for boiler replacements, loft and cavity wall insulations.

All other enquiries are in various stages of assessment to determine eligibility /suitability for measures in the Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire Borough Council areas. All declarations for works are collated and signed by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Private Sector Housing Team.

### **Empty Homes**

A long term empty property is defined as those that have been empty for over six months. A long term empty property is defined as those that have been empty for over six months. A range of measures are available to the Council to return empty properties to residential use. The measures are wide ranging from encouragement and assistance (including, in some cases, financial assistance through the award of an interest free loan) to formal action to take permanent or temporary control of the property. Voluntary action by owners is the preferred course of action. In March 2016 there were 1493 empty privately owned homes in Nuneaton & Bedworth and since 2012 there been a significant decrease in the numbers of long term empty homes.

The current Empty Property Strategy to cover the years 2018-2023, has the aims to return empty homes back to residential use for owner-occupiers and tenants and increase the supply of homes via converting suitable buildings into residential use and by splitting into appropriate shared housing. The strategy also seeks to ensure that properties which are brought back into use for occupation, contribute to the Private Sector Housing Teams key performance indicators for the removal of Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

In the 2017/18 period, 21 empty properties were brought back into use and in 2018/19 this increased to 24 properties. This is a combination of dialogue with owners of properties and the use of the Council's empty property loans, whilst also contributing to the removal of Category 1 hazards to provide a safe living environment for future occupants.

### **Landlord Forum**

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council has a Landlord's Forum which is open to all private sector landlords and letting agents working within the Nuneaton and Bedworth area. It is held up to four times a year and arranged by the Council's Landlord Liaison Office, working in partnership with the National Landlord's Association and regularly has 40 to 60 local landlords and agents attending. Its main objective is to help landlords provide good quality accommodation in the Borough by increasing awareness of changes in legislation, procedures and policies, and providing a platform on which they can share their experiences of letting accommodation.

The Private Sector Housing team regularly attend the forums and also contribute by giving presentations on legislation changes, notably Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards and more recently, The Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2019, which was presented in May 2019. This event was also attended by our ECOFLEX delivery partner E.ON who presented on the Energy Company Obligation (ECO3) and the free insulation and heating offer as already mentioned above. The link to our landlord forum site is below.

[https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/info/21011/private\\_landlords/285/landlord\\_forum\\_newsletter\\_and\\_news\\_updates](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/info/21011/private_landlords/285/landlord_forum_newsletter_and_news_updates)

### **Warwickshire Switch and Save Scheme**

Warwickshire residents have been benefitting from Warwickshire County Council's collective energy switching scheme, 'Warwickshire Switch and Save'. Following a successful reverse auction between competing gas and electricity providers, in February 2019, it has been revealed that residents who signed up to the scheme are set to save an average of £132.62 on their utility bills.

In Warwickshire, about 3, 515 households have registered an interest to switch with the scheme and the county's Switch and Savers have been combined with 37 other similar initiatives from all around the UK to create a consumer collective of over 25,000 registered households.

The winners of the auction, E.ON and Octopus Energy, will supply a range of tariffs to residents. Tariffs are not available direct from the supplier or through price comparison services. The E.ON paper billing dual fuel fixed tariff is market leading and is £270 below the new price cap\*. Octopus Energy provides 100% renewable electricity and using Ofgem average consumptions this tariff can save residents on a standard tariff up to £282, so residents can fix their energy costs for the year ahead in knowledge they're helping the planet as well as their pocket.

Since the May & October 2018 and February 2019 switching registration dates, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council has seen 143 residents switch from an initial registration of 647, resulting in an overall saving to date of £34,696.70.

For North Warwickshire Borough Council 39 residents switched suppliers from an initial registration of 158, resulting in an overall saving to date of £7,095.63.

### **Warm & Well Group**

This fund supports those households who have diagnosed long term health conditions that are exacerbated by cold homes, such as cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, cancer, diabetes and mental health issues. The services and support available include energy saving advice, fuel bill advice, how to switch supplier/tariff and referrals for energy saving measures such as insulation.

There is also support for owner/occupied and rented households with diagnosed long term health conditions who are in receipt of certain benefits/low income. These include grants for boiler replacements and new first time central heating upgrades and new gas connections. The warm and well fund also compliments the already available ECO funding and is administered by Act on Energy.

Eligible residents of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council are also signposted via our Sol for eligible works. To date there have been declarations signed for over 80 energy efficiency measures, including loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and boiler replacements.

### **6.0 Home Environment Assessment & Response Team (HEART)**

This is an innovative partnership established between the Warwickshire Councils called the HEART partnership. This provides advice and assistance to deliver disabled adaptations and home improvements for tenants (both public and private sector) and owner occupiers to keep their home safe, secure and warm. In some cases this is done via grants or loans for essential building works or disabled facility adaptations but even if residents do not apply for financial assistance then support and advice can be provided. The current Warwickshire budget is administered by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and supports Council's within the HEART partnership to deliver their services.

Caseworkers assess homes to identify required safety improvements and can help residents in relation to the following housing related conditions as well as advice, support and signposting to other agencies:

- Cold and damp homes
- Safety and hygiene facilities
- Fire and security
- Slips, trips and falls
- Repairs
- Providing grants and loans
- Finding suitable contractors to carry out works

- Supporting you to access other agencies who can help

The HEART enquiries are shown below in terms of number of enquiries taken for each Borough/District Council since the last HECA report.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2017/18 Enquiries</b>	<b>2018/19 Enquiries</b>
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council	772	1086
North Warwickshire Borough Council	303	469

### **Warm and Safer Homes Assistance (WASH)**

The Warm and Safer Homes grant is to assist eligible residents with help to carry out essential repairs that remove Category 1 hazards in their homes. The maximum grant available is £10,000. The types of works that can be addressed are, boiler replacements, replacement doors/windows, electrical works, serious fall hazards, penetrating damp and structural collapse. This scheme is for owner occupiers who must be in receipt of relevant benefits.

In the period 2017/2019, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council provided £88,280.54 and in North Warwickshire Borough Council £29,713.39 was given to residents to remove Category 1 hazards in their properties.

### **Home Safety Grant**

Advice and assistance is also given to private and social housing residents, who are over 55 to help them live safely in their homes by preventing the risk of accidents by the Home Safety grant assistance. This includes up to four hours of free labour to help reduce any potential risks, e.g. modifying steps or replacing an electric socket, easing doors or windows, fixing loose floorboards or removing minor slip, trip and fall hazards both inside and outside the home. There is a maximum of £500 for any hazard related accident prevention works and in the period June 2017 to June to May 2019 a total of 342 jobs were completed.

### **Housing Assessment Capital Expenditure Programme (HACEP)**

The Council is also working in partnership with E.ON to promote external wall insulation for owner occupied vulnerable residents in the Borough who have a health related condition and are on low income. The scheme was promoted in the local press in 2018 and generated considerable interest and the outcome from this was 73 households will benefit from the external wall insulation works to their properties.

This scheme has also generated interest County wide and those customers who have expressed an interest for external wall insulation works are being recorded by our delivery partner to determine what further support/funding incentives could be made available to make this measure more affordable.

## **Gas Safe Funding – Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT)**

The HEART partnership receives funding on a yearly basis from FILT who administer a central pot of Gas Safe Charity Hardship Funds that case workers from agencies providing home improvement services can access to support their clients.

Awards of up to £500 are available for gas safety interventions, which are repairs, servicing or testing for gas safety checks, gas servicing, gas cooker, gas fire, gas boiler, gas meter, gas pipework, flue, gas boiler combustion analysis. Replacement gas boiler, gas cooker, gas fire, gas pipework and gas flue work is also included. There is an application process and the eligibility criteria for the scheme is that all clients must live in privately owned accommodation and be one of the following:

- 60 years old or over and have low household income and/or a disability
- Under 60 and have a low household income and/or a disability, or
- Considered exceptionally vulnerable by the HIA

In the period 2018/19 we utilised £8500 of FILT funding for 105 gas checks/servicing and boiler repairs for low income vulnerable owner occupied households in the Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council area.

### **7.0 Partnership Working**

Act on Energy (AoE)

E.ON and Other Installers

Home Environment Assessment & Response Team (HEART)

Community Associations

Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advisory Service (WWRAS)

Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT)

### **Our Contribution to Other Groups/Organisations**

Association of Local Energy Officers Group (ALEO)

Warm & Well in Warwickshire Group

West Midlands Enforcement Officers Group

West Midlands Empty Property Officers Group

Warwickshire Financial Inclusion Partnership

National Energy Action Meetings



## **Part 4 – HECA Requirements**

### **Section 1: Local energy efficiency ambitions and priorities**

Allowing and providing for slight differences in terminology and layout in each different Council's Housing Strategy and 'corporate plans', our local energy efficiency ambitions and priorities include;

- Providing safe, secure, healthy and affordable housing to our communities,
- Reducing fossil fuel use and reliance, and harmful greenhouse gas emissions, towards better environmental sustainability,
- Improving equality of opportunity and life outcomes for our residents.

In practice, our Councils will continue to work together on joint energy projects – currently with Eon but eventually with others as appropriate – to secure improvements to home insulation and heating systems, and householders understanding of how to use them economically and effectively.

Specifically, our Councils will seek to maximise the uptake of ECO3 (2018-2022) insulation and heating measures in line with the Council's Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent and successor or similar offers from the energy market in our local areas, in particular to target the most vulnerable households and the least energy efficient homes, to alleviate fuel poverty. Councils will also use our own funds and resources to add to ECO3 and national offers, as both gap funding and stand-alone funding to delivery greater benefits. Currently, all five District and Borough Councils of Warwickshire are working together on a project to harmonise their private sector housing financial assistance policies to achieve efficient and consistent unified delivery through the *HEART* project.

We will fulfil our enforcement obligations under current and any new or revised legislation and guidance to require owners of rented property to achieve at least legal minimum standards, and higher standards if possible in accordance with the national trajectory. Both Councils use the Nuneaton landlord's forum and other information networks through which property agents and owners can be informed and encouraged to engage with offers.

NBBC will continue to promote voluntary accreditation of landlords and properties in the private rented sector to raise standards, and NWBC are examining options in that regard.

We will continue to invest in our own housing stock to meet and exceed the national minimum renting standard and the Decent Homes Standard (heating element).

We will engage directly and via third parties with consumer households to develop their understanding and capacity to consider switching energy providers and tariffs to

achieve their most affordable solutions, alongside current income maximisation work through benefits checks, budgeting advice, skills development and employment support.

We will continue to rigorously enforce current Building Regulations, and any revisions.

Recognising the significant health and wellbeing impacts of cold homes, and the excess winter deaths phenomenon, we will seek to identify and support the most vulnerable, elderly and frail households at risk of cardio-respiratory threats (including strokes, heart attacks, flu etc.), falls and poor mental health, working together with the health community to reduce those risks. This will reduce unnecessary GP visits and hospital admissions, reducing medical and social care costs from the impacts of (for example) fractures and other long term supportive care and treatments.

We will continue to promote the requirement for tenanted properties (with certain exemptions) to have an EPC, though this is enforced by others – we can refer for intervention but often resolve by advice alone.

We will continue to seek updated bulk EPC data from Landmark and via the County Council and regional bodies, to enable better offer targeting and to increase intelligence on local circumstances.

We will continue to contribute to the seasonal and periodic energy saving campaigns, and will promote the uptake of the Warm Home Discount, Priority Services Register, Winter Fuel Allowance, Cold Weather Payments and winter flu vaccine with Health partners.

**Section 2: The measures to take advantage of financial assistance and other benefits offered from central Government initiatives, such as Green Deal, ECO, FIT and RHI or any other initiatives, to help result in significant energy improvements of residential accommodation**

The updated HECA Action Plan for 2019-2021 is provided in the appended table.

**Section 3: The measures which an authority has developed to implement energy efficiency improvements cost-effectively in residential accommodation by using area based / street by street roll out involving local communities and partnerships (e.g. social housing partners, voluntary organisations and tow/parish Councils)**

Where viable and in conjunction with energy company partners, Registered Providers, and the Council's own in-house housing teams, we will endeavour to concentrate offers and projects in small defined areas where our Statement of Intent

and eligibility criteria aims to help more households on a low income out of fuel poverty, including those that may not have been helped before. Where Council housing teams are delivering planned energy improvements to a small defined area, amongst which there are private owners who may have exercised their right to buy (or successors of), then where viable we may be able to offer discounted or better rates to nearby properties who may wish to take advantage of them. We will encourage Registered Providers and other major private estate type landlords to do the same if it provides them with some pricing or operational advantage also.

#### **Section 4: A timeframe for delivery and national and local partners**

The updated HECA Action Plan for 2019-2021 is provided in the appended table.

**Delivery Timeframe 2019-2021**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Partner(s)</b>	<b>2019-2021</b>
<p><b>HEART Services</b></p> <p><b>Warm and Safer Homes (WASH)</b> Continue to screen clients in the HEART service via both telephone and home visit based safety scripts to identify vulnerable and fuel poor households to signpost them to available energy efficiency offers</p> <p><b>Housing Assessment Capital Expenditure Programme (HACEP)</b> Project based interventions to assist owner-occupied low income/vulnerable household's access heating and insulation works with our delivery partner</p>	<p>District &amp; Borough Councils and County, with referrals in from health practitioners/ professionals and other delivery partners</p>	<p>North and South HEART team referrals ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing and based on resource/funding allocation</p>
<p><b>Gas Safe Funding</b> For a range of gas safety interventions for eligible owner occupied residents</p>	<p>Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT)</p>	<p>Ongoing based on continued funding</p>
<p><b>Fuel Poverty</b></p>	<p>County and District Councils and Delivery Partners</p>	<p>The Council do not have a dedicated Fuel Poverty Strategy, however, this is one of our strategic priorities and will continue to be delivered through our combination of resources in Private Sector Housing, HEART and Capital Projects teams as well as our established external delivery partners. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with the County Council Observatory department and other District Councils, to explore means of obtaining current housing data to allow us to concentrate our efforts more effectively.</li> <li>• The Councils will continue to respond to complaints from tenants in the private rented sector and enforce the requirements of the Housing, Health</li> </ul>



<p>To focus on targeted/LSOA post codes to maximise uptake of current schemes and to ensure we target low income, vulnerable, owner-occupied, private rented and social housing households</p>		
<p>Continue to promote project schemes and offers to Council staff via the corporate email system and Energy Matters website to keep staff engaged on energy efficiency, carbon reduction and fuel poverty issues.</p>	<p>Projects Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing during ECO3</p>
<p><b>Landlord Forum</b></p>		
<p>Promote accreditation of landlords and their properties (NBBC)</p>	<p>Internal Council teams and landlords</p>	<p>As resources permit</p>
<p>Promote the development of landlords skills and standards by supporting the landlord forum and wider engagement options</p>	<p>Internal Council teams and landlords</p>	<p>Quarterly, and as above</p>
<p><b>NBBC/NWBC Social Stock</b></p>		
<p>As a landlord to continue to look at other innovative, energy saving and affordable housing projects to add to the property portfolio.</p>	<p>Internal - Direct Works</p>	<p>As per capital programme.</p>
<p>As a landlord and housing stock owner, undertake energy related and other capital investment programmes to further improve the energy efficiency of its own stock and undertake responsive repairs on own stock to meet and maintain the Decent Homes Standard – including meeting annual gas servicing obligations</p>	<p>Internal - Direct Works</p>	<p>As per capital programme and response repairs target times</p>

<p>As a landlord to provide tenants with sufficient advice, information and support to use their heating systems effectively and economically, and to report disrepair</p> <p><b>Warwickshire Warm &amp; Well</b></p>	<p>Internal - Tenancy management teams, voids and maintenance</p>	<p>Ongoing obligation, focused and improved by feedback</p>
<p>Promote better understanding of domestic fuel bills and encourage and support supplier and tariff switching and 'collective switching' where appropriate</p>	<p>CAB, Act on Energy (AoE) and other sector partners as opportunities present</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Promote the Warm Homes Discount, Priority Services Register, Winter Fuel Allowance, Cold Weather Payments and winter flu vaccine uptake to target vulnerable households and communities as appropriate</p>	<p>Website, standard correspondence</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

## Signatures

Name: Paul Coopey

Signature:



Position: Head of Home Environment Services

Organisation: Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Date: 3rd June 2019.

Name: Angela Coates

Signature:



Position: Assistant Director (Housing)

Organisation: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Date: 31 May 2019



North Warwickshire  
Borough Council

**Nuneaton  
Bedworth**  
United to Achieve

Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire  
Joint Private Sector Housing Service