

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
CABINET MEMBER**

TO REPORT THE ANNUAL HECAMON SURVEY RESULTS

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To report the results of the most recent Hecamon survey which provides an annual assessment of energy efficiency improvements in all residential accommodation within North Lincolnshire over the last 12 months by extrapolating the results from a random sample of 400 householders.
- 1.2 The results have indicated an improvement in total energy consumption of 3.44% overall during the last 12 months for those households sampled.
- 1.3 Carbon emissions also improved by 3.01% and the overall notional heating costs by 3.21%.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995 came into force on 1 April 1996. It required local authorities to prepare, publish and submit an Energy Conservation Report outlining measures to achieve a 30% improvement in the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation within their areas.
- 2.2 HECA was an early step in energy efficiency policies that placed on Local Authorities guidelines for achieving a 30% reduction in carbon emissions from the domestic housing stock over ten to fifteen years, against a 1996 baseline.
- 2.3 The energy efficiency improvements were to be monitored annually for each local authority using the Hecamon (Home Energy Conservation Act monitoring) survey.
- 2.4 The survey collects data from a random sample of households and then software calculates the change in circumstances over the preceding 12 months in relation to the energy efficiency improvements for the respondent households. The results are then extrapolated across North Lincolnshire as a whole.

- 2.5 The survey involves a telephone interview which lasts about 15 to 20 minutes and a minimum of 400 completed responses are required. Of those interviewed, 82.15% were owner/occupiers, 13.69% Registered Providers (Housing Associations, including North Lincolnshire Homes) tenants and 3.18% private rented tenants.
- 2.6 HECA and the statutory requirements regarding monitoring and reporting have now been repealed. However, for the last 2 years we have continued to undertake the independent survey as a means of monitoring improvements. The survey results also provide data on a number of other characteristics of the housing stock and householders attitudes.
- 2.7 The results from the latest survey, received in October, show an improvement over the last 12 months in energy consumption, in those households that took part in the survey, of 3.44% and an average reduction of 3.21% in notional heating costs.
- 2.8 The survey data shows an improvement in annual carbon emissions over the 12 months of 3.01%, an increase in the number of homes fitted with cavity wall insulation, loft insulation of 150mm or more and full double glazing over the last 12 months. From those surveyed, there was also a significant reduction in the number of households with central heating 12 years or older.
- 2.9 The respondents were also asked several questions related to attitude. One such question was "If you needed advice on energy efficiency where are you most likely to go?" 30.62% said the local council. A further question asked "If your home requires additional insulation and heating what would encourage you to install it?" 32.59% said free insulation, 12.84% discount schemes and 10.37% incentives.
- 2.10 13.58% of respondents indicate that they had been prompted to make improvements at their properties as a consequence of either national or local media or press coverage and 6.18% said they had made improvements following contact with the local authority.
- 2.11 The success in achieving improvements year on year in energy efficiency in domestic housing is in part due to the advice, assistance and promotional work of the Affordable Warmth Officer and the different schemes, both local and national, that are available to help householders improve their properties. In addition to that, all the Registered Providers have had to improve their properties to the decent homes standard which includes a requirement to ensure that a property is thermally comfortable. North Lincolnshire Homes are on course to finish their housing stock by the end of 2011.
- 2.12 One local scheme in particular has proved to be particularly successful. SHEEP (South Humber Energy Efficiency Project) is a partnership arrangement between North and North East Lincolnshire Council to

provide discounted loft and cavity insulation. The scheme offers free loft and cavity insulation for the vulnerable, including those over 70 and for those on means tested benefits whilst others can have the measures installed for £99 and £89 respectively. In addition to the normal qualifying criteria, the scheme is also currently offering free insulation for home owners and private renting tenants aged between 60 and 69 in the rural area of Barton and District with Crowle and North and South Axholme to be included shortly. It is hoped that it will also be possible to roll it out to Brigg and District in the early New Year.

- 2.13 This area based targeting of measures has proved to be more effective in producing an overall improvement and uptake of loft and cavity insulation which are the measures that provide the best return for the money spent against improvements in carbon emissions and energy efficiency.
- 2.14 In addition to the above, the Affordable Warmth Officer works on a proactive basis, giving advice through outreach surgeries, attending community events and training. Crowle and Epworth local links are scheduled to be visited on the 9th December to publicise SHEEP and the Government's Warm Front scheme.
- 2.15 Finally, the recently introduced Hotspots scheme is proving to be very successful with a significant number of referrals being made to the Housing Service by front line staff, including the Police and District Nurses, where there are concerns that householders may be in fuel poverty or vulnerable to cold conditions in their home. The IT software and database used to collect householder information allows the property to be assessed to indicate how energy efficient it is and how much it costs to heat, thus allowing the household to be assessed for fuel poverty.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 To note the results of the survey and the further improvement recorded in energy consumption and efficiency over the past 12 months for those households surveyed.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 4.1 Financial Implications – capital money is spent, often to match fund or top up funding from elsewhere, to assist vulnerable householders to improve their properties with the aim of reducing heating costs and fuel poverty. Due to national policy and obligations on energy companies, it is often possible to significantly increase the money available for area action with very little input of either time or resources from the council. The annual cost of undertaking the survey is £2500.

4.2 Staffing Implications – the Affordable Warmth Officer works 4 days a week and is the only officer role across the council with specific responsibility for working with domestic householders to give them help and advice to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. To extend the volume and reach of this important area of work further work is planned to establish if additional support can be commissioned from the private or third sector to increase our capacity in the near future. There are no staffing implications in relation to the survey as this is completed by an external marketing and research organisation.

4.3 IT Implications – there are no additional IT implications.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

5.1 Environmental implications – the Council is committed to reducing Carbon emissions across North Lincolnshire and domestic homes contribute a significant amount to the current levels. The survey results have shown a further improvement in carbon emissions across this sector.

5.3 Diversity implications – the SHEEP scheme is available across North Lincolnshire as a whole although the additional free insulation scheme for the over 60s has been targeted on an area basis and based on data that shows a significant number of hard to heat properties occupied by the vulnerable and the elderly are located in the rural areas. It is the over 60s that are most at risk from cold homes.

6. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

6.1 The report has been circulated to internal and external partners with an interest in energy efficiency and health but no comments have been received back.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the results of the latest Hecamon survey and the positive improvements that it shows in relation to total energy consumption over the last 12 months and carbon emissions.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report - None