

## Boston Mayflower

Boston, Lincolnshire, England



### Organisation description

Boston Mayflower Limited is a Registered Social Landlord in the Borough of Boston, Lincolnshire, England with approximately 4,700 dwellings with a mixture of dwelling types dating from 1900 to present day

### Contact details

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[www.bostonmayflower.org.uk](http://www.bostonmayflower.org.uk)

### Strategy

Boston's Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy Policy is the overarching strategy document which brings together its corporate, legislative and social responsibilities. All these are clearly defined within the document and are monitored using specific specialist computer software (NHER and Environmental Matrix for Housing). Financially these strategy outputs are embedded within their 30-year Asset Management Plan (with specific emphasis on the first 5-years) so that capital for measures are ensured long term. It is their aspiration that any instances of fuel poverty would be eliminated from their housing stock by 2015

The strategy sets out step by step what their responsibilities are, what they need to do, how they are going to finance it, how it is monitored and when they hope to achieve them by. The Environmental Matrix for Housing software is used to help them achieve this

This holistic strategic approach would seemingly cover the majority of actions needed to alleviate fuel poverty from their housing stock

### *Future Perspective*

The organisation has an aspiration to include other 'Energy Services' (beyond energy advice and access to EEC/CERT funding) including bulk discount on energy efficiency appliances with major retailers, and bulk oil purchasing to include oil 'top up' rather than waiting for a tank to be empty, and promoting other schemes such as 'Age Concern Energy Services'

Consideration is given to the setting of service charges for heating and hot water in sheltered accommodation

## Identifying and reaching energy poor

### *Detection focussed on 'building' features*

- A desk top study has been conducted for building types, fuel type, running cost and usage, as well as benefit receipt levels
- Included in 'exit' reports on Voids as to why tenants choose to leave, and whether this includes thermal discomfort, high heating costs etc.

### *Detection focussed on 'occupants' situation*

- Investigate where tenants are living in under-occupied dwellings
- Investigate individual properties where a tenant has questioned why their fuel bills are so high
- Monitor fuel bills for group systems such as supported housing and identify a member of staff specifically responsible for minimising fuel bills in such situations

### *Detection which includes both 'buildings' and 'occupants'*

- Aspiration to implement a full affordable warmth and environmental management system using the software 'Environmental Matrix for Housing' which measures existing levels of performance and then constructs a plan to deliver higher levels of performance against 12 areas under 4 key themes – 'Tenants', 'Housing Stock', 'External Relations' and 'Management'

## Communications, awareness and advice

### *Awareness focussed on 'building' features*

- Corporate policy to encourage (not-force) tenants to move away from solid fuel heating systems to meet Decent Homes Standards; this includes home visits to discuss the benefits of fuel switching

### *Awareness focussed on 'occupants' situation*

- Tenant consultation on pre-retro-fit equipment
- An in-house members of staff specifically trained in providing energy advice and other relevant information services to tenants
- A future aspiration to include fuel poverty / affordable warmth with the existing tenant forum as a platform with additional focus groups, regular surveys and tenant newsletters
- Encourage tenants in under-occupied dwellings to move into smaller properties

## Choice of retrofit technologies

### *Choice focussed on 'building' features*

- A survey initiated the creation of a stock database which is annually updated alongside NHER software.
- The Asset Management Plan (2013) focuses on prioritising programmable heating systems
- Use future heating costs as a key priority in improvement programmes
- Investigate 'Best Practice' case studies for renovation of similar properties by similar landlords – for example, comparing ground source heat pumps with oil-fired systems where gas is not available and look at what grants are available
- A 5-year gas maintenance partnership arrangement includes a joint database maintaining a detailed asset register on behalf of the Landlord

### *Choice focussed on 'occupant' situation*

- Target households in receipt of benefits in partnership with an energy provider to install energy efficient measures

## Finance

- The majority of funding used for planned maintenance programmes is through the National Affordable Housing Programme (Social Housing Grant) and Rent Revenue which are the 'normal' routes to funding for Registered Social Landlords however, Boston Mayflower also has a 4-year relationship with an energy provider to fund measures through EEC/CERT and they maintain an awareness of new-grant funded initiatives and introduce these as appropriate to upgrade dwellings
- Any organisation under-spend is directed straight into their fuel-switching programme

## Skills and training

- Works are undertaken by selected specialist contractors through their 'Responsive Repairs, Planned Maintenance and Development contracts' managed through their Property Services Department
- Works undertaken in partnership with an energy provider (for example, CERT) would use pre tendered specialist (insulation / heating) contractors, helping to maintain quality control

## Monitoring and evaluation

- One of the organisations 12 key aims within their Affordable Warmth Strategy is to undertake tenant surveys to establish customer satisfaction levels in delivering affordable warmth
- Another key aim is to make this information public, in plain language, and available using the website
- Where available, tenants are encouraged to use the internet to report maintenance issues and this platform is seen as a facility to provide feedback either way and to consult further with interested tenants
- General 'good news stories' through tenant newsletters
- Statutory quarterly reports to their Management Board includes position against statutory / internal targets