

Gloucestershire & South Glos Gloucestershire, England



Organisation description

Seven 'energy conservation authorities' joined forces in October 2001 to develop an Affordable Warmth strategy, and they are - Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucester City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Stroud District Council and Tewksbury Borough Council. They are supported in the process by the Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust and other community organisations and groups. In this region there are over 30,000 local authority and 16,000 registered social landlord owned homes. The strategy covers all housing sectors regardless of tenure.

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Strategy

Original strategy launched in 2001 which takes a 'county-wide' partnership approach with over 40 organisations consulted with nine organisations forming the membership of a dedicated steering group known as the 'Affordable Warmth Partnership' that includes the seven local authorities. Strategy focuses heavily on partnership working and awareness raising other focus includes household detection, strategy integration and access to finance with an overall aim that 'all homes in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire' will be warm homes by 2016'. Strategy is delivered by three-tier time scales and an annual work plan which prioritises

joint strategic activities and is reported upon on an annual basis. Year seven strategy review (2008) acknowledges legislative changes and local priorities including 'Local Area Agreements' focussing on carbon dioxide reduction from local authority operations (185) and tackling fuel poverty (187).

Identifying and reaching energy poor

In 2004, as part of the work plan, the partnership decided to concentrate on social housing and therefore set up the 'SHARE' partnership (part of another IEE funded project) from which service level agreements were signed up with the 5 local social housing providers (Two River Housing Association, Gloucester City Homes, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Brompton Housing Association & Stroud District Council). These early SLA's included home visits, energy awareness presentations for tenants, marketing campaigns, presentations / events for tenants and energy awareness training for staff. The partnership have also taken responsibility of National Indicator 187 (Tackling fuel poverty – percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating) to be embodied into the Affordable Warmth Partnership strategy including actions such as training to frontline social housing staff, collection of social housing 'Energy Performance Certificate' data and identify 'Right to Buy' tenants

Strategic advice via a third party (Severn Wye Energy Agency) for help on energy advice, affordable warmth and renewable energy, for example, consultation of tender documents for planned works to ensure energy efficiency & renewable energy was embedded. Another example where tenants were having new kitchens installed (as part of Decent Homes) included on-site advice about energy efficient appliances including discounts with local suppliers. A 'Show Home' renovated for tenants to visit also included on-site advisors.

Detection focus on 'occupants' situation

- Strategy heavily focuses on strong, multi-agency partnerships and a pro-active steering group including local authorities, social landlords, health authorities and voluntary sector and relevant businesses
- Review existing and establish a referral network to identify gaps and monitor effectiveness
- Establish links with debts advisors and flu inoculation and other health intervention / campaigns
- Identify target groups likely to be in fuel poverty and work with relevant agencies within target groups to ensure training and identification / referral process is in place
- Non-payment of rent leads to visit from a housing officer or partner through their Service Level Agreement

Communications, awareness and advice

The partnership got involved with a Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) led IEE project called SHARE which created the platform for the dissemination of various activities, consortium meetings, various downloads etc., which all feeds back into the annual report and delivery plan.

- SLA with local specialist agency (SWEA) providing home visits / training / talks and presentations marketed through tenant newsletters, website and other mediums and through Housing Officers
- Presentations to tenant forums and mail shots to involve Local Authority Housing Officers, tenants, tenant associations and Registered Social Landlords
- Central point of contact for advice for the whole region, review / rationalise and identify gaps
- Target awareness raising to decision makers as well as tenants including Central and Local Government, key elected Members, and enlist 'champions' at all levels
- Develop educational programmes with links to schools
- Develop effective marketing / publicity by identifying media contacts

- Consult with households in planning energy efficiency measures and advice
- Targeted home visits to sheltered housing schemes to provide advice on open heating
- Worked with tenants to set up 'Tenants Energy Network' to provide energy ad-hock advice and to enable access to energy saving measures such as low-energy lighting

Choice of retrofit technologies

- Ensure only efficient and economical heating systems are installed and adapt heating controls and advice for special needs

Finance

- Secure finance from central government, energy companies and national organisations

Monitoring and evaluation

- Customer feedback questionnaires post installation