

# Bromsgrove District Council HECA Update 2017

## Introduction

Bromsgrove District is in the north of Worcestershire and over 90% of its 217 square kilometres is greenbelt. With 95,768 (ONS 2015 estimate) residents, there are population clusters including Hagley, Rubery and Wythall, with the town of Bromsgrove accounting for just over a third of the total population of the District. Approximately 20% of the population are children and 21% are over 65 years old.

Key issues impacting the District are an ageing population, affordable housing and developing the local economy.

The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change requires local authorities in England to provide an update report every two years setting out 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 the area. This report builds on previous reports setting out how Bromsgrove District Council intends to help householders take advantage of financial incentives such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), Feed in Tariff (FIT) and any other schemes that became available. In addition it will also provide information on funding sourced and provided by the council.

## Summary

Since HECA was first introduced Bromsgrove District Council has submitted annual reports to the Secretary of State from 1997 until 2011 defining any progress made towards the assumed target of a 30% improvement in energy efficiency in domestic property in our district. With the introduction of additional specific targets under Local Area Agreements we delivered programs and works for energy efficiency, fuel poverty and carbon performance.

We are now in our third reporting stage for the revitalised HECA and this report will detail projects and work we have delivered since the last report in 2015 and will also detail our plans for the next two years to address home energy related issues across our district.

With the introduction of Green Deal in the Energy Act 2010 and the further energy supplier obligations under ECO, the council has supported Act on Energy (a local energy efficiency charity) and continues to support them in creating a referral network to local contractors who can access ECO and other funding sources, this included Green Deal Finance until its demise in 2015. This network will continue into the future to make the installation of appropriate improvement measures as seamless and cost effective as possible. The council does not have the resources to employ a full time HECA Officer and the appointed officer shares this duty with other duties. The officer is supported through a service level agreement with Act on Energy to provide information advice and guidance to both our staff and residents, through a combination of telephone support, community events and home visits providing an end to end journey for



residents and ensuring some of our most vulnerable households are supported throughout their energy journey. This present's excellent value for money as it is a service shared with 12 other local authorities and specifically set up to support local authorities to deliver their obligations under HECA.

The Council is also a partner within the wider Warmer Worcestershire network which has been operating in its current form since 2008. This group provides a number of services such as help and advice, practical support such as, boiler/heating replacement, emergency heaters, boiler servicing and additional support for loft and cavity wall insulation, benefit checks to maximise income and practical services from local agencies including home visits, snow clearing, shopping and transport. The group is co-ordinated by the County Council and Act on Energy and utilises the services of agencies across the county. The network has also been successful in bidding for funds through public health, DECC (Green Deal Communities) and most recently NEA Warm and Healthy Homes Fund.

### Strategic Ambitions

Bromsgrove District Council Plan (2017-2020) sets out the strategic purpose for the district over the next three years. Bromsgrove District Council is committed to providing residents with effective and efficient services that not only meet their needs but understand them too. This plan is split into strategic purposes to guide us and includes actions for each of our strategic areas, providing us with a clear focus for addressing issues and allocating funding for the next four years.

During 2017-2020, we intend to focus on the following 6 key priorities:

- Financial stability for the Council
- Economic development within the District
- Balancing urban and rural needs, especially for housing needs
- Delivery through partnerships or joint ventures
- Quality services for residents, with affordable charges where appropriate
- Working with WCC to reduce congestion in Bromsgrove Town Centre and other District Centres



### Strategic Purposes



To assist in the delivery of these priorities we are working with partners to improve the lives of residents and the prospects for the district as a whole through six strategic purposes.

The primary strategic purposes linked to this area are 'Help me to be financially independent', and 'Keep my place safe and looking good'.

'Help me to be financially independent' includes the following:

*Support residents to reduce levels of individual debt*

- Support residents to understand and manage their debts
- Work with the voluntary sector and other partners to provide debt advice and support
- Promote schemes that encourage savings and financial independence

### *Support reductions in winter deaths and fuel poverty*

- Work with stakeholders to ensure homes are energy efficient
- Provide funding to improve homes to reduce fuel poverty

‘Keep my place safe and looking good’ includes:

### *Work with communities to enhance the environment*

- Monitor air quality and encourage our communities to reduce emissions where possible to limit the effect of climate change
- Endeavour to reduce our emissions

## **Partnerships**

In order to better achieve our strategic purposes, we are working differently with our partners. The Bromsgrove Partnership, the local strategic partnership for Bromsgrove District, is a key stakeholder in developing and supporting these new ways of working. We are also continuing to work in a more local and place driven way, which helps the Council to understand the differing needs of communities within our district and how public services can support them.

The Council Plan is central to the strategic direction of Bromsgrove District Council and links to other corporate documents, including the Local Plan, the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Corporate Performance Strategy.

In addition we are working with countywide partners and have developed a Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan. This document will be the overarching plan for setting strategic direction for housing across Worcestershire. This plan is currently in draft but is going through the council’s approval process. The plan has three jointly identified priorities that will be delivered to provide a cost effective solution which will focus on system change to meet customer need in the best way. These priorities are:

- Drive the growth of the right type of homes (to promote opportunity)
- Improve homes and, "transform places"
- Create a partnership approach to enable people to live as independently as possible (prevention/early intervention)

The following elements of the report detail how we have and how we will address some of our strategic actions in relation to Home Energy.

To ensure that we can reach the wide and varied homes across the district and are able to continue our important progress towards our goal of achieving a significant reduction in energy use in domestic homes across the district. It is important to continue and further develop our work with partners and use a number of different channels to ensure we reach out to all of our residents in a joined up and effective way. Some samples of our partnerships include:

## Green Deal Communities Group

This is a countywide group and builds on a previous work to deliver extensive external wall insulation across both the borough and county from our successful Green Deal Communities bid of £3.6million. This enabled us to install External Wall Insulation in over 120 properties across the district, including 23 park homes across 6 sites.



## Bromsgrove Local Strategic Partnership

Bromsgrove Partnership brings together different organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in its role as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the District of Bromsgrove.

Instead of each organisation working separately in isolation, the Bromsgrove Partnership provides a forum for local organisations to come together and address issues that are important to those living, working and visiting Bromsgrove District in a more effective and cohesive way. The partnership is made up of a number of theme groups with an overarching board to ensure cross working and links to countywide/regional structures. There are two groups that focus on energy related issues they are the Community Well Being Group and the Better Environment Theme Group. It is the Environment Theme Group that along with the board has been instrumental in the setting up of a specific physical intervention fund for fuel poor households. The partnership links with the Redditch Partnership to produce regular newsletters to promote local schemes and opportunities.



**March 2017 Edition**

Some dates for your diary...

- SABN's Funding Fair – Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 10am until 3pm Redditch Town Hall
- Redditch Older People's Services Day – Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> March – 10am until 1:30pm – Redditch Town Hall
- Bromsgrove Ageing Well full group – Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> March 10-12pm, Parkside
- Bromsgrove Community Wellbeing Theme Group – Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> March 10-12pm, Parkside
- Redditch Partnership Executive Group Awayday – Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March all day, Redditch Police Station
- Bromsgrove Partnership Board – Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 1pm – 3pm Bromsgrove Fire Station.

If you would like to put anything in the next edition of the Partnership newsletter please email details to [news@bromsgrovepartnership.co.uk](mailto:news@bromsgrovepartnership.co.uk) by 11th March.

**Bromsgrove Small Grants Scheme**

Bromsgrove District Council, in partnership with the Bromsgrove Engagement and Equality Forum have launched the 2017-18 first round of our Small Grants Scheme.

Grants are available for activities that support community and equality outcomes within Bromsgrove District. Voluntary, charitable and community groups can submit bids for up to £300 to deliver projects which address community issues.

This round will close at 4pm on 31st March 2017. Projects must be delivered by between 1st May 2017 to 31st Oct 2017. For more info and the application form see [here](#).

**Connecting Families is being rolled out to Bromsgrove...**

Connecting Families is being rolled out to Bromsgrove

The Connecting Families approach focuses on supporting vulnerable people emphasising, highlighting and removing barriers which prevents provision of effective support.

Connecting Families is a Worcestershire-wide initiative BUT will be tailored to the local needs identified in each District. Some of you may have been involved in the work in Redditch however it is anticipated that Connecting Families could look very different in Bromsgrove given its older demographic, rural geography and differing needs.

The Connecting Families approach is about:

- Using data and experience to challenge and permanently remove blockages, not work around them
- Accepting that the shared perspective is that of the customer and not of the service
- Using the right people at the right time through a co-ordinated approach
- Use learning throughout to change the future

The Approach aims to:

- Hold a mirror to the way we all support vulnerable individuals who may live on their own and families.
- Provide challenge and support to the way services are provided and how we can work together more effectively.
- It is NOT an attempt to TEST the Key Worker approach, but an opportunity to enable a shared conversation about what works in helping people to aid consistency and quality of practice across the County.

The Bromsgrove Partnership has organized an event this Friday (3 March). The purpose is to bring together local partners to develop a common understanding of how the Connecting Families approach will look in Bromsgrove.

If you are not involved but would like to be in the future or would simply like further information, you can contact [connectingfamilies@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:connectingfamilies@worcestershire.gov.uk) or Delfa at [d.murray@bromsgrovepartnership.co.uk](mailto:d.murray@bromsgrovepartnership.co.uk)

## Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership

The aims of the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership (WSHP) is to ensure that wide range of high quality housing and related services are available across all sectors of the housing market, which is secure, affordable, of a high standard and meets varying and changing needs and aspirations.

Poor and unsuitable housing circumstances affect our physical health and mental health. Providing the right home environment protects health and wellbeing, reduces hospital admissions, aids rapid recovery from periods of ill health and enables people to live at home longer. Under the Care Act 2012 there is a requirement for closer cooperation of services that support the health and wellbeing of those who may be in need of care and support. Working together we will seek to address housing need and achieve the wider benefits to partner organisations.

The group comprises of a range of strategic partners including: Adult Services & Health, Children's Services, Quality Leads from the Clinical Commissioning Groups, CRC, Homes & Communities Agency, Registered Social Landlords, Local Authorities Strategic Housing Officers, Community Safety Partnership Lead, Chair of the Worcestershire Delivery Group, Third Sector, Department of Works and Pensions.

## Warmer Worcestershire

This group aims to deliver reductions in both fuel poverty and carbon emissions through improved energy efficiency across the housing stock. The membership of the group consists of the six district councils, county council, Act on Energy, Age UK and public health. The group has recently redrafted our Countywide Fuel Poverty Plan which is due to be ratified by the Health and Well Being Board this spring.



## Local Authority Consortium Groups

We are a key member of the Act on Energy, Local Authority Consortium Group and Association of Local Energy Officers which identify and share best practice in energy efficiency with other local authorities on both a regional and sub regional basis. These groups not only allow us to share experiences but enable us to feed into consultations and provide a link through to BEIS through the ALEO Executive.



## Worcestershire Heat Network Group

We worked with a range of partners to commission a heat mapping exercise of Worcestershire to understand where heat is most used by the private and public sector. Heat demand mapping across Worcestershire included the identification of heat demand “hot spots”. These are areas with concentrated heat demand that have the potential for the development of a heat network which were then considered further as part of the energy master planning stage.

## Achievement since last reporting period 2015 – 2017

Over the last two years we have undertaken a number of activities to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. Many of these initiatives provide information, advice and guidance through a variety of sources including attendance at flu jab clinics, advice surgeries to give bespoke advice on managing fuel bills, energy efficiency products, grants available, training, community presentations, connecting with rural communities in partnership with the mobile library service. A summary of some of the more major projects are set out below:

### Boilers on Prescription

Through our Warmer Worcestershire Partnership we have been running a boiler on prescription programme. This combined funding from the Better Care Fund with redress funding through National Energy Action (NEA). The programme offered replacement heating systems for households at risk of fuel poverty where a resident has a long term health condition that could be made worse by living in a cold, damp home. Investment from the Better Care Fund is expected to provide a return on investment of around 5 years for NHS and Social Care service benefits. For our district we have supported 14 residents with new heating systems and have improved their average EPC ratings. This has enabled residents to access over £40,000 in funding. To ensure we are able to continue to support our most vulnerable residents we are delivering our own ongoing programme as detailed below.

## **Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Fund**

This fund was set up in 2016 to support a whole house approach to energy efficiency, with a focus on households on low incomes and in-efficient systems. The scheme provides replacement and first time heating for owner occupiers along with loft and cavity wall insulation if appropriate. In addition the scheme also helps with servicing and repair costs. The fund is long term to provide continuity of support. By the end of the 2016-17 financial year, 14 households had so far benefitted from the fund with a further 7 householders awaiting support.

## **Delivering EWI through Green Deal Communities**

We have been working with our partners to continue to deliver EWI across both the county and our district. Through close partnerships with Act on Energy and the energy supplier (EON) we engaged with 250 households to encourage improved energy efficiency and to enable 120 residents to have EWI with funding of £644,000 leveraged in, for Bromsgrove residents. This included residents of 23 park homes across 6 residential park homes sites; an achievement because the benefit to park homes sites from government energy efficiency schemes has been limited by a tendency not to account for the special circumstances of these homes.

## **Delivering Energy Efficiency Works in Social Housing**

Bromsgrove District Housing Trust is the largest provider of affordable housing in Bromsgrove. They have undertaken a varied programme of energy efficiency works over the last two years including EWI and the continuation of boiler and traditional loft and cavity wall insulation installs:

- Boilers upgrades 692
- 28 loft installations to 300mm
- 13 External wall insulations

BDHT's average SAP rating is 72.61 with 98.75% achieving band D or above. In addition BDHT have provided advice on energy, switching and smart meters through a combination community events and training sessions.

## **Providing Information, Advice and Guidance**

As a district we feel that advice provision for residents is essential and recent finding within the Bonfield Review has highlighted both the importance and value of energy advice. For us that advice is delivered locally through our energy advice partners Act on Energy, who offer a combination of quality telephone advice through to community based and even in home support so that we can rest assured that our residents have access to the right support to allow them to make ongoing decisions about energy usage, from switching through to physical measures. Since our last report they have provided support and advice to over 2000 residents across our borough.



## Warmer Winter Campaign



To ensure we maximise the support we give to residents we have run a winter warmth campaign with regular advice sessions and briefings to ensure both residents and frontline workers are provided with the most up to date information on all energy matters ranging from Smart Meters through to Switching.. The campaign also included press articles and sharing of information on social media. Our energy partners Act on Energy were also successful in receiving funding from Smart Energy GB and BESN which has enabled an even greater level of engagement with residents.

## Private Landlords

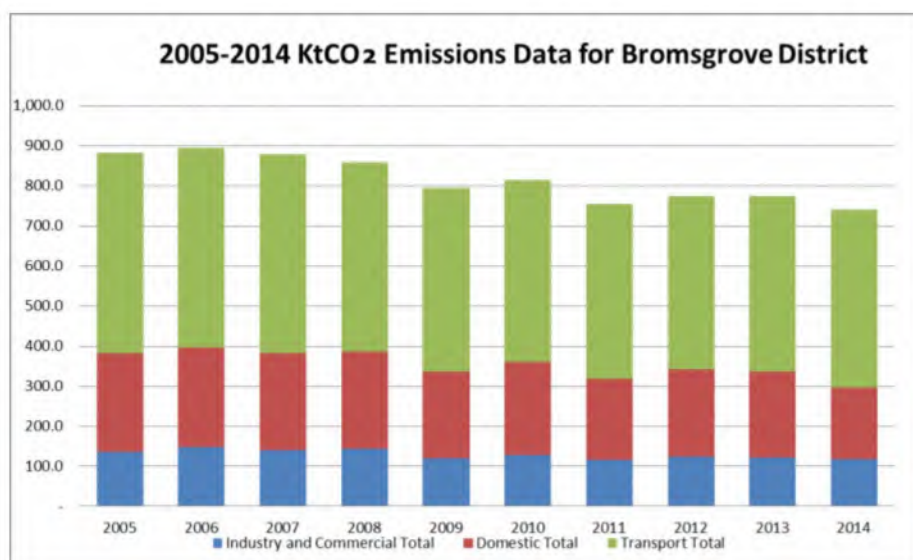
We provide regular updates on energy policy and energy efficiency opportunities through our landlord's forums. We have recently run a session on the forthcoming PRS Energy Efficiency Regulations and our landlords are encouraged to access our local support line run through Act on Energy.

Although we do not have a dedicated resource to enforce the minimum energy efficiency standards we aim to work with known landlords to ensure they are aware of requirements and encourage and support compliance rather than looking to limit the availability of an already stretched private sector housing team.

## Where are we now?

This section gives details of energy related data and how we are working to address the issues raised by these statistics.

## Carbon emissions

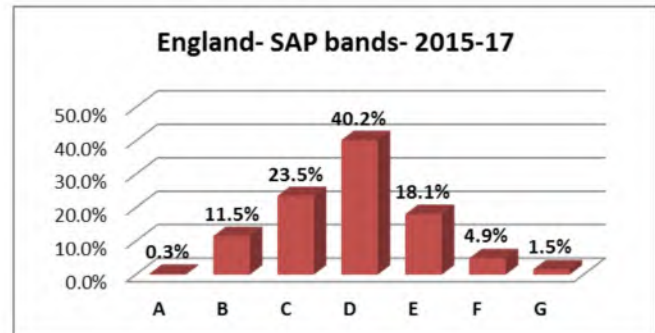
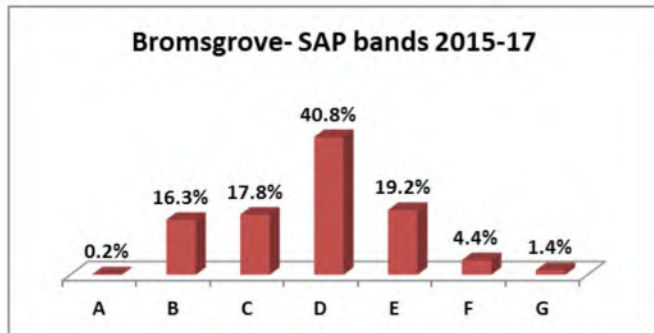


In 2014, 7.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) was emitted per person. This is a 16.5% reduction compared to 2005. When looking at the carbon emissions they are higher than the county average, this may be due to the fact a number of properties are off the mains gas network and solid wall properties that are harder to heat in addition. The district also has significant transport emissions possibly due to its rural nature

requiring greater use of private cars to access services and employment. We are working with partners to deliver carbon emission targets that are within the Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy where the countywide 2020 target is to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30% from 2005 levels. The overall county reduction as of 2014 is 23%.

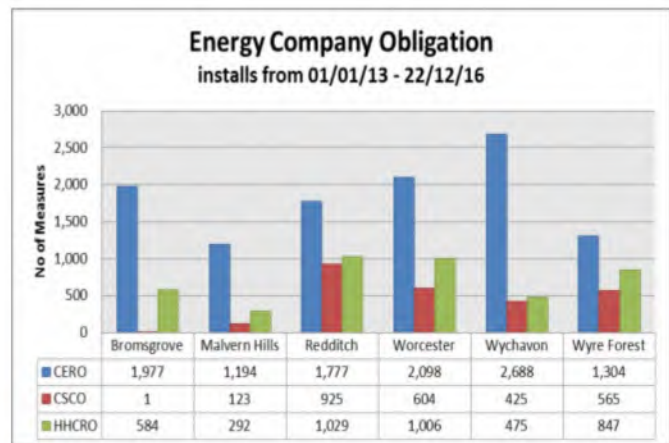
## Energy Performance Certificates

Unfortunately due to data not being available we were unable to complete a full analysis of EPC data but based on available ratings data we do have SAP figures very similar to national averages. We want to be able to analyse the data further when this becomes available so we can start to target schemes appropriately.



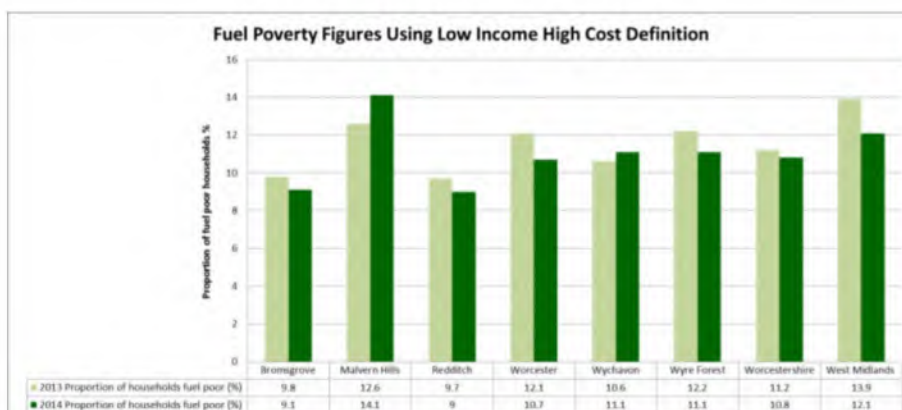
## Energy Company Obligation

We have worked with partners to help deliver the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) across the district and we have promoted the importance of energy saving measures to residents with a specific focus on the fuel poor. Although we have had a reasonable take up of HHCRO measures we want to ensure that we work with partners on the new ECO obligations including Help to Heat Flexible Eligibility to ensure we can continue support those whose health might be at risk from living in a cold home.



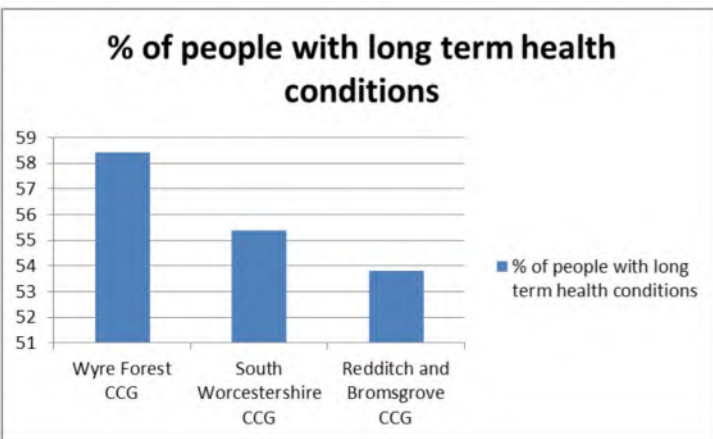
## Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty increases the likelihood of cold homes and occurs when low income households face high costs of keeping warm. As well as health impacts due to cold, other effects can include anxiety about financial issues, using less rooms in order to reduce heating costs (with potential for overcrowding and psychological effects) and educational underperformance of children. It is driven by three main factors: income, current cost of energy and energy efficiency of the home (Public Health England, 2014).





In 2014, 3,507 households (9.1%) in Bromsgrove were fuel poor; this is a decrease from 9.8% in 2013. This is below the Worcestershire (10.8%) and national (10.6%) averages. Even though our overall figures are lower than some of our neighbours there are areas who are experiencing higher levels of fuel poverty than the national average. Fuel poverty at a local level uses lower super output areas (LSOAs) which are small areas covering around 1500 residents. We currently have 13 LSOA with fuel poverty levels over the national average of 10.6. Within these LSOA's there is an estimated 1021 households who are fuel poor. The LSOA with the highest estimated levels of fuel poverty is shown opposite and it is estimated to have 18.5% of households who are fuel poor. This LSOA which falls into the Tardebigge ward is also amongst the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country when looking at the Index of Multiple Deprivation.



In addition to looking at fuel poverty it is also important to consider households where the residents may be vulnerable to cold, for example, households with long term health conditions. When looking at current data for the Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group over 50% of its patients had long term health conditions. Living in a cold home brings increased risk of cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness and stroke (King's Fund, 2013). Cold homes also

increase the likelihood of falls (Department of Health Factsheet on Health and Winter Warmth, 2007). Both strokes and falls are areas of concern for Bromsgrove in the March 2016 Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) profile for Bromsgrove.

Excess winter deaths are the number of additional deaths occurring in winter above the number of deaths in the non-winter period. The Worcestershire JSNA Briefing on Fuel Poverty states that there is strong evidence that a large number of these deaths are preventable and that elderly people are vulnerable. The excess winter death index for Bromsgrove is 26.5%, higher than the Worcestershire average at 25.6%. It is not adjusted for age, so the older age profile in Bromsgrove is likely to be a strong factor in this. Although people over the age of 60 are significantly less likely to be fuel poor than the national average, those who are fuel poor within this group may be particularly at risk of severe morbidity and mortality compared to other groups.

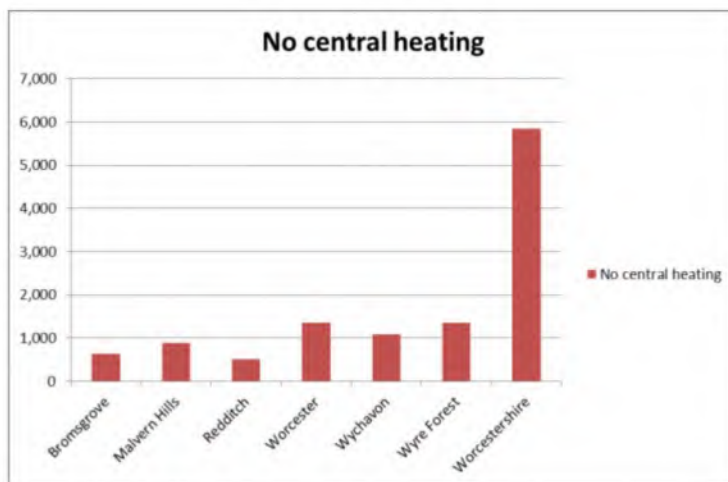
The JSNA profile for Bromsgrove adds that 'for younger age groups, cold housing can have significant negative effects for: • childrens' health in terms of infant weight gain, hospital admission rates, developmental status, and asthma. • adolescent mental health • adult physical health, wellbeing and self-assessed general health particularly for vulnerable adults and those with existing health conditions'.

## Our Future plan for 2017 – 2019 and beyond

To contribute towards our long term strategic ambitions, we are planning a number of actions and initiatives going forward, to improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and improve health, housing and lifestyle choices. A selection of our key actions are detailed below.

### Delivering the Energy Company Obligation

We are aiming to work as a partnership with the other six councils and county council to deliver energy efficiency measure and advice through the Energy Company obligation (ECO) with a specific focus of working in partnership with a supplier to deliver the 'flexible' element to allow us to support fuel poor households who are not in receipt of benefits and low income households whose health could be adversely effected from living in a cold home. From census data we are aware that Bromsgrove has a



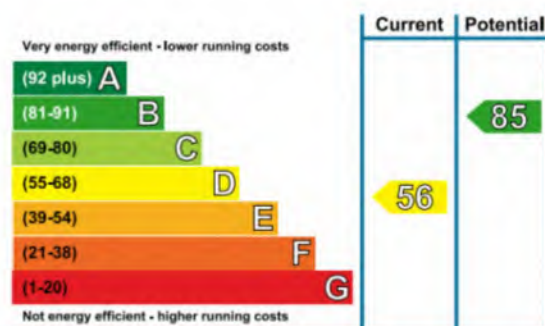
substantial number of homes with no central heating and as part of our ECO work going forward we would like to address this. We have already as part of our Warmer Worcestershire partnership undertaken market engagement and are looking to procure a delivery partner. We intend to make a formal declaration of our Statement of Intent (SOI) so that we can support households who are not in receipt of benefits but who may be on a low income and vulnerable to cold. This SOI will be a joint statement between all six district councils and the county council. The SOI will include our methodology for the identification of eligible households who may be able to receive energy efficiency measures (subject to funding and technical survey). We are also aware of a significant number of uninsulated solid wall properties often associated with areas of fuel poverty but we are also acutely aware that ECO funding is unlikely to address this in the short-term; however should this change we are well placed and would be keen to take a scheme forward which is long-term in its approach and offers quality insulation at affordable prices. We are also interested in schemes which focus on park homes.

### Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Fund

As part of our commitment to support some of our most vulnerable residents we will continue to offer whole house support for residents living in our district to ensure that residents who are on low incomes can get physical interventions such as heating and insulation alongside information and support.

### Warmer Worcestershire

We will continue our successful partnership to ensure we are delivering a cohesive approach to tackling fuel poverty for some of most vulnerable residents. The group is often used a conduit for both funding and delivering of works. This group will be key in our delivery of ECO and its flexible element.



## Private Rented Sector Energy Efficiency Regulations

We will continue to work with partners through a combination of landlords' forums and direct communication to highlight the changes in regulations and detail how we as a council will approach this legislation alongside other district and county partners.

## Heat Networks

We have recently been involved with a countywide heat map study. The study concluded that there is potential for viable urban district heat networks. The study was able to identify 4 network opportunities of varying size and heat connection composition:

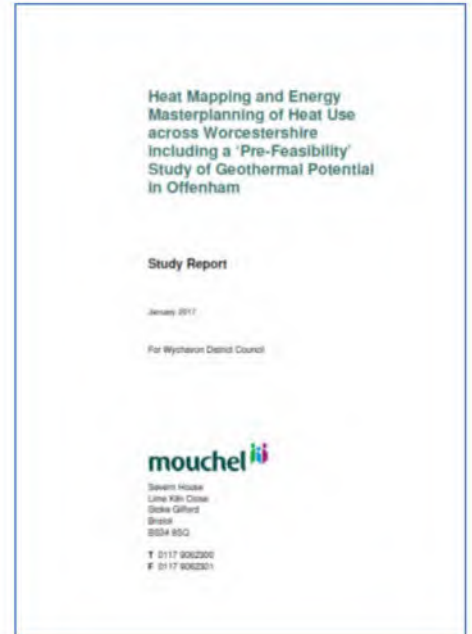
### a. Bromsgrove Town Centre & NHS Main

b. Worcester Road Main

c. Aston Fields Industrial / Commercial Main

d. Buntsford Industrial / Retail Main

We have secured funding from the government Heat Networks Development Unit (HNDU), Worcestershire LEP, North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) to conduct a further feasibility study to explore the first (highlighted) of these opportunities, as consultation with stakeholders has suggested that this has the best chance of being achievable and beneficial. If this proposal is found to be feasible we will develop a clear long term strategy for moving this forward.



## Information, Advice and Guidance

This is a critical aspect of the energy journey for many households and without it, residents may find making the appropriate energy decisions more of a challenge especially as some of our most vulnerable residents maybe digitally excluded or socially isolated. We will continue to offer the following support services through our energy advice partners Act on Energy:

- Freephone energy advice line offering up to date local support and guidance
- Community based support ensuring we reach our most rural communities
- Energy clinics offering switch advice
- Smart metering – offer advice and support on the roll out of smart meters through dedicated community events
- Warm Homes Discount – promotion of the scheme to householders
- Home visits for the most vulnerable in our community
- Working with partners to ensure we provide a one stop advice provision and onward referrals. This will build on our already excellent relationships with the Fire Service, GP's and third sector.
- Continue to link to other support services provided by the council including Connecting Families.