

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhood & Community Services Scrutiny Panel **Date:** 28th October 2015

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

LOFT INSULATION

1. **Purpose of Report**

This report is brought to Panel to provide and update on the position associated with the installation of loft insulation to the Council Housing stock

2. **Recommendation**

The Committee is requested to note the report.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities –**

One of the key priorities for the Council is to improve the overall energy efficiency associated with the housing stock by utilising the resources available. This will meet the strategic priorities by:

Priorities:

Health: Improvement of the energy efficiency within houses / blocks of flats by the installation of external and internal insulation can result in warmer houses that can contribute to a decline in cold related deaths and illnesses as well as an improvement of well being.

Housing: The improved energy efficiency of the houses / blocks of flats through insulation can assist in reducing the overall energy usage of the building and be a contributor to a reduction in individual fuel poverty as well as a reduction in landlord charges for energy.

Cross-Cutting themes:

The energy efficacy measures through insulation and in particular loft insulation supports the following cross cutting themes

Fuel Poverty Target 2016

Climate Change Target 2020 and 2050

Sustainable Economic Growth – Create a low carbon Economy

Capital strategy: 2015-20

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The outcomes associated with the proposals are that:

- The homes in the borough will benefit through quality improvements across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough
- Residents in Council accommodation in Slough will be healthier, resilient and have positive life chances
- The Council's income and the value of its assets will be maximised

4. **Other Implications**

Financial

The programme associated with insulation is entirely supported from HRA funds allocated through the Capital strategy process.

There are no further financial implications.

Risk Management

As an information report there are no risks associated with this issue.

Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no Equalities Impact Assessment associated with insulation

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Slough has benefitted from grant funding over a number of years that allowed for cavity wall and loft insulation to be installed free of charge for council tenants as part of the Government's initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint and contribute to a reduction in fuel poverty
- 5.2 The grant funding previously available ceased in 2013 and was replaced by The Energy Company Obligations (ECO) which came into force on 1 January 2013 to replace the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target and the Community Energy Saving Programme and its first phase will run until 31 March 2015. It consists of 3 main parts.
- 5.3 Part 1 is the Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (CERO) which is the largest part of ECO and open to everyone. There is no means testing and is targeted at hard-to-treat households. SBC have focussed on securing funding for the hard to treat properties through external wall insulation and have obtained in excess of £400,000 in funding over the last 18 months and currently have approximately £200,000 of funding earmarked for the next phase of external wall insulation.
- 5.4 Part 2 (Carbon Saving Communities' Obligation (CSCO)) is aimed at helping the lowest 15% income areas in England, Wales and Scotland. However funding is only available to those in receipt of qualifying benefit such as Income support,

State Pension Credit, working tax credit and child tax credit with households' incomes below £15,860.

- 5.5 Part 3 (Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO)) has been created to provide support on reducing energy bills to the most vulnerable private households within England, Wales and Scotland.
- 5.6 Under Part 2 (CSCO) loft insulation is no longer being offered free by Government Schemes though British Gas have continued to offer this free through their own schemes. As part of this change our procedure has been to work with British Gas and identify areas that could benefit from the new processes.
- 5.7 British Gas identified multiple areas that could benefit from loft insulation and advertised the service through newsletters and direct mail to residents. SBC could not make applications on behalf of tenants and if tenants wanted the service they had to submit a request for a letter of authorisation to the Council for this to be done.
- 5.8 Properties that took up the offer were surveyed and if insulation had 150mm or more in the existing loft insulation the insulator would consider this an adequate amount and would not top up. Residents who call in who may have missed previous insulation schemes are directed to the most suitable solution depending on their needs.
- 5.9 To ensure all properties have the adequate levels of insulation they are included in the forthcoming stock condition survey (SCS) that will identify the level of thickness and provide information to be included into future programmes from 2017 onwards.
- 5.10 For the financial years 2015 – 2017 an allocation of £50,000 has been made from the existing Housing Revenue Account funding to allow for insulation to be installed when requested.
- 5.11 To date over 80% of properties have adequate insulation installed with thickness ranging from 150 to 300mm. Loft insulation is surveyed and upgraded as part of existing heating and roof programmes.
- 5.12 As part of the current SERS external wall insulation programme we have insulated and upgraded 329 non-traditional constructed properties. In addition, work to insulate a further 4 blocks at Eyre Green is currently in progress.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7. **Conclusion**

Members are requested to note the processes involved and the progress made in installing loft insulation to tenanted properties.

Members are to note the commitments already made as well as future commitments including budget allocations to insulate lofts and recognise that the procedures adopted support SBC's targets for energy efficiency and its contribution to a reduction in fuel poverty.

8. **Appendices**

None.

9. **Background Papers**

None