

Home Energy Conservation Act

Progress Report and Action Plan 2019-21

Date: 24 June 2019

1. Introduction

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 requires the council to publish reports demonstrating what energy conservation measures we have adopted to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation within our area, and submit a response to the Secretary of State.

This progress report summarises what Harrogate Borough Council has achieved against our previous action plan for 2017-19 and following government guidance, sets out a fresh list of actions for the period 2019-21. The plan outlines the policy context surrounding our efforts to tackle fuel poverty and address carbon emissions, and uses publicly available data to identify the target areas for improvement within the Harrogate District.

As required under Section 4 of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, we have submitted an online survey to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), signed off by the Chief Executive, outlining our progress and planned activities.

This report is in the following sections:

2. Identifying and addressing Fuel Poverty

- Data analysis of the estimated extent and location of households at risk of fuel poverty

3. Addressing climate change and CO₂ emissions

- Using government data to assess the domestic carbon footprint, and ensure the plan links to the council's carbon reduction strategy

4. Fuel Poverty Projects and Partnerships

- Overview of local projects and partnerships to tackle fuel poverty and domestic carbon reduction locally, as shown below:

5. Delivery of the 2017-19 Home Energy Conservation Action Plan

- Summarises activities carried out in 2017-19 to support home energy efficiency improvements within the district.

6. Action plan 2019-21

- Lists the key actions planned for the coming two year period, as reported to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

2. Identifying and addressing Fuel Poverty

2.1 Areas of fuel poverty

Publicly available data suggests that nearly 6,500 households in the Harrogate District may be experiencing fuel poverty, 9.4% of the district's total housing stock.

A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level), and
- were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line

It is well understood that fuel poverty can be a factor in a wide range of health and social issues. Living in poorly heated accommodation can exacerbate some medical conditions and have a significant impact on mental health.

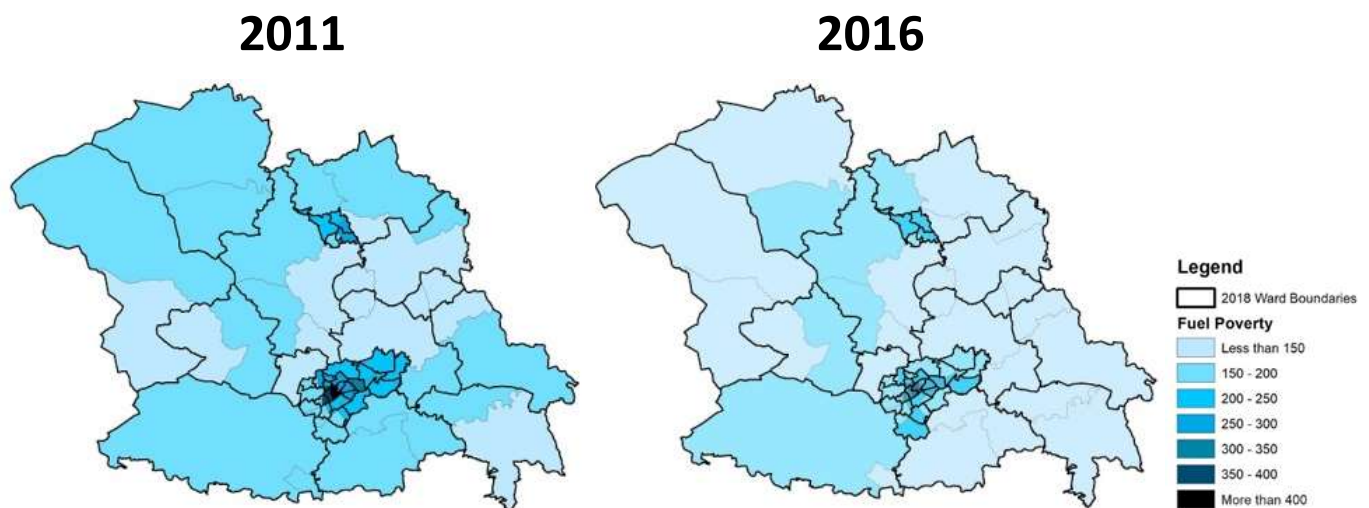
In the Harrogate district in 2016-17 there were 133 excess winter deaths (EWDs). The EWD index for the Harrogate District was 25.9 in 2016-17, which is close to the Yorkshire and Humber average (24.9), defined as similar by Public Health England. (The EWD index shows the percentage more deaths that occurred above the non-winter rate for that area, therefore allowing different areas to be compared).

The spread of fuel poverty across the district varies considerably. In particular, we know that some of our more urban wards have relatively high numbers of households experiencing fuel poverty. In these wards, low income is the prevalent factor.

In some rural wards, a higher than average proportion of households may be in fuel poverty. In these areas, high fuel cost is the prevalent factor as most properties are off the gas network.

The estimated spread of fuel poverty has changed over time, showing an overall decrease since 2011. But the concentration remains primarily in the main urban settlements as shown in the maps below.

Number of households in fuel poverty (government estimates) by LSOA: 2011 and 2016



2.2 Priority Areas

We are implementing a targeted approach to ensure that limited resources are directed at the areas which show a combination of risk factors, and where energy efficiency measures can be cost-effectively installed.

We have identified the wards that show a combination of:

- the highest estimated number of households in fuel poverty (based on government estimates),
- the least energy efficient housing (based on EPC certificates), and
- the highest levels of income deprivation (based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015).

The overlap of these issues enables us to identify ten priority wards, shown below. These are now listed in the council's Flexible ECO Statement of Intent so that resources can be targeted appropriately, when funding is available.

Table 1: Priority Wards 2019-21
Bilton Woodfield
Coppice Valley
Fairfax
Harrogate Central
High Harrogate
Kingsley
Masham & Kirkby Malzeard
Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale Moors
Ripon Minster
Valley Gardens

3. Addressing Climate Change and CO₂ emissions

This Home Energy Conservation Act plan is intrinsically linked to our efforts to reduce carbon emissions, as domestic emissions account for 34% of the district's total.

There is also a link between residents who may be at risk of fuel poverty and those who are most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Groups such as older people, those living in low-income households, and social and private rented tenants may be less able to bounce back from flooding or other extreme weather events; and they have less influence in making necessary changes to their homes.

3.1 Carbon Reduction Aims

The Climate Change Act 2008 sets a legally binding national target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 80% by 2050 from 1990 levels. The UK is a signatory to the Paris Agreement, which commits us to reduce emissions such that global warming is limited to no more than 2°C.

The UK's Committee on Climate Change has recently recommended an enhanced national target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and Parliament is currently moving to adopt this as the statutory target under the Climate Change Act.

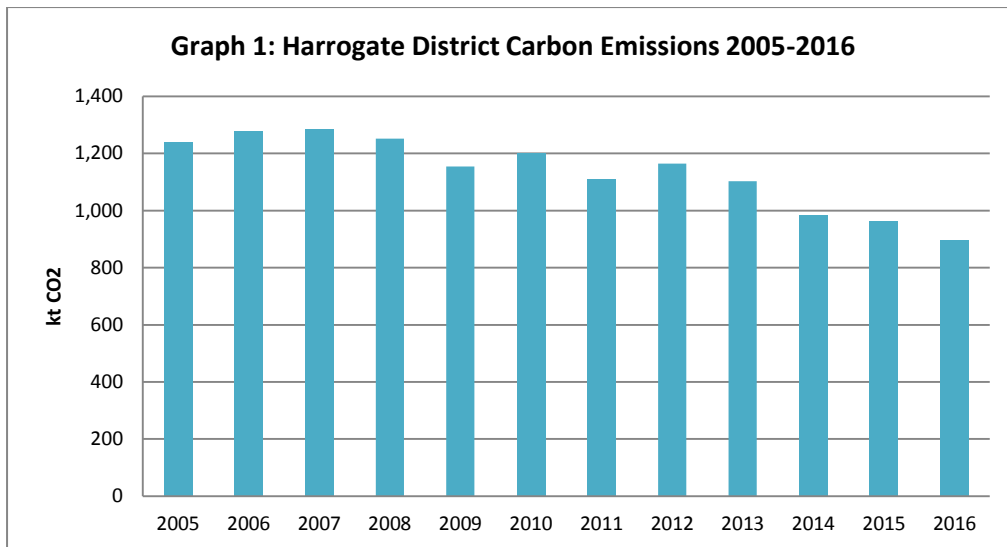
The government has stated that local authorities are expected to play a major role in meeting the national targets through the management of our buildings and vehicle fleets, and in how we influence householders, businesses and transport in the wider community. In its recent report, the Committee of Climate Change reinforced this message, stating that for national targets to be met, every level of government must be involved.

Our own carbon reduction strategy currently states that we will promote and support activity within the district as a whole to help achieve district-wide emissions reductions of 57% reduction by 2030, relative to 1990 levels – this is in line with the current national target. We are now reviewing the carbon reduction strategy in light of a notice of motion approved by the council which seeks to strengthen our carbon reduction activities, and it is likely that a higher carbon reduction target will be adopted during this plan period.

3.2 District-wide emissions

3.2.1 Overall emissions reduction 2005-16

Government data on local and regional CO₂ emissions shows a generally decreasing trend from 2005 to 2016 (the most recently available data), with a year-on-year downward trend since 2012: over that period there was a carbon decrease of 23%, as shown in Graph 1 below.



3.2.2 Emissions from domestic electricity consumption – the downward trend

Amongst other reasons, the overall emissions reduction is due to lower emissions from domestic electricity, which itself has a dual cause: **reduced consumption** (3.5% less since 2012 in absolute terms, 4.7% less per installed meter), and the wider **decarbonisation of the electricity supply** (grid electricity was 10.4% less carbon intensive in 2012 than in 2016).

Reduced electricity consumption is particularly significant for our home energy conservation work. We can assume this pattern is the result of consumers adopting more efficient home appliances, alongside a greater awareness of energy saving behaviour; both of which we aim to encourage through this plan.

3.2.3 Emissions in other sectors

These electricity reductions mean that the greatest carbon-emitting sectors are now domestic gas consumption and road transport, both of which increased their share of emissions since 2014. More work is required in these sectors to meet our targets now that the benefits of electricity decarbonisation and efficiency are being realised.

Domestic gas emissions will be tackled via some of the actions outlined in this plan. Transport emissions are outside the scope of this plan, but are being tackled elsewhere for example in the council's Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicle Strategy.

3.2.4 Per capita emissions

As in previous years Harrogate District had higher emissions per capita (5.6 tonnes) than regional and national levels, about average for our CIPFA Near Neighbours¹, but lower than North Yorkshire as a whole.

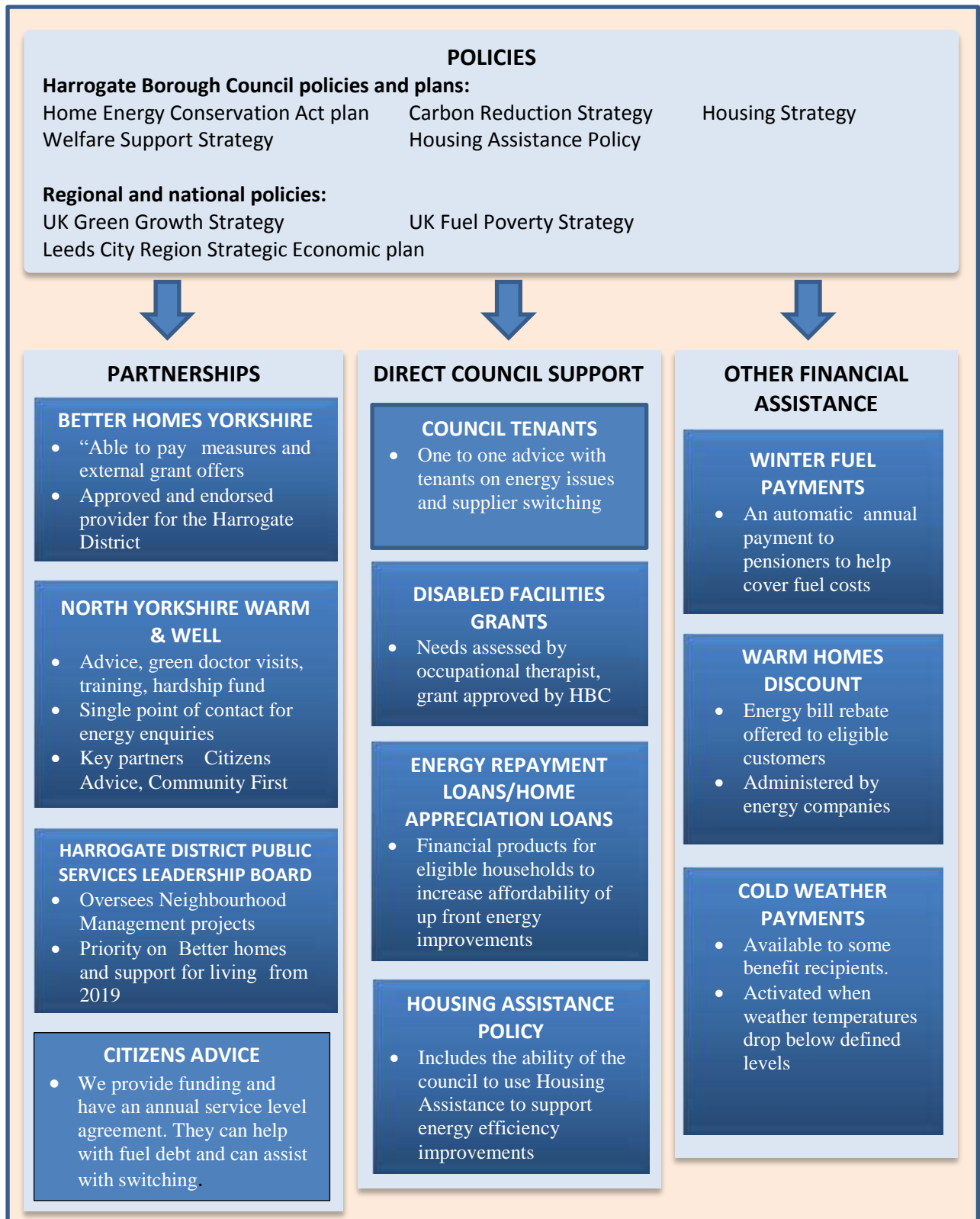
The gap between the Harrogate emission rate and the national rate does not appear to be narrowing. A key reason for this is the rural nature of much of the district: many properties rely on more carbon-intensive fuels off the gas network, and transport emissions per capita are higher.

¹ Near Neighbours are a list of 15 other local authorities which are regarded as being the most similar to Harrogate District on a number of measures, drawn up by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

4. Fuel Poverty Projects and Partnerships

4.1 Overview of projects and partnerships

The council has developed and participates in a range projects and partnerships to tackle fuel poverty and domestic carbon reduction locally, as shown below:



4.2 Better Homes Yorkshire

Better Homes Yorkshire is the council's recommended scheme for energy efficiency measures in private sector housing and is an essential part of delivering home energy efficiency improvements within the district, and delivering ECO-funded measures and other grant funding where available.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority procured the Better Homes scheme on behalf of the Leeds City Region authorities in December 2014 to deliver a range of "Green Deal" measures in private sector housing. The main contractor on the scheme is Engie Ltd. They deliver these measures across the region with selected sub-contractors, with the council's exclusive endorsement.

The council works particularly closely on the Better Homes scheme with the other North Yorkshire participants (Craven and Selby district councils) and City of York council. Together, we jointly fund a project manager, hosted by City of York Council, to coordinate activities across the four authorities.

Since 2017, Better Homes has delivered £65,000 worth of home energy improvements in the Harrogate District, a mixture of loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, solid wall insulation and new gas heating systems. Over their lifetime, these improvements will deliver 2,000 tonnes of CO₂ saving, and £594,000 worth of energy savings.

4.3 Harrogate District Public Services Leadership Board (HDPSLB) and Neighbourhood Management

The HDPSLB is the overarching partnership responsible for neighbourhood management in the district. In 2010, this multi-agency partnership came together to support a neighbourhood management framework known as My Neighbourhood.

The aim of the My Neighbourhood framework is to target resources and action within specific priority areas to raise the economic, social and environmental well-being within the district.

Fuel poverty has been highlighted as a priority in recent years as part of a wider drive to reduce financial and social exclusion and improve health and wellbeing.

The My Neighbourhood priority areas are: Bilton Woodfield ward, Harrogate East area (incorporating Fairfax ward), Ripon Minster Ward and Nidderdale area. There is a strong overlap between these areas and the priority wards identified in Section 2.2.

4.4 Warm and Well in North Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Strategic Winter Health Partnership

The council participates in the county-wide project Warm and Well in North Yorkshire, which is funded by North Yorkshire County Council and managed by Citizens Advice mid-North Yorkshire. The aim of the project is to reach vulnerable households and people, raise awareness of the impact of cold homes on health, refer to the right service or support respond to the needs of households and individuals.

Warm and Well also offers a home visit Green Doctor service (delivered by Groundwork) to provide advice on energy issues and supplier switching, and small home improvements such as draught-proofing and hot water tank jackets.

Warm and Well is overseen by the North Yorkshire Strategic Winter Health Partnership, which the council is a member of.

5. Delivery of the 2017-19 Home Energy Conservation Action Plan

Our previous action plan for 2017-19 set out our planned activities to deliver and support home energy efficiency improvements within the district.

The council carried out a wide range of activities to tackle fuel poverty and home energy efficiency standards over that period. Highlights included:

- 104 home improvements installed via Better Homes, worth £65,000, which will deliver 2,000 tonnes of lifetime CO₂ savings, and £594,000 lifetime energy savings.
- Delivery of external grant support for insulation and central heating through the Better Homes framework
- Air source heat pumps installed in 16 council homes.
- Approved and published a flexible eligibility Statement of Intent for ECO funding resulting in 48 properties improved.
- Promotion of the North Yorkshire Warm and Well helpline via social media and other channels.
- Support for Groundwork Green Doctors scheme (delivered as part of Warm & Well), including provision of hot water tank jackets and other materials.
- Engagement private sector tenants with website and social media, landlord events and other channels where appropriate.
- Private sector landlord and letting agents' engaged via two newsletters per year alongside two dedicated events held in 2017 and 2018, engaging 120 attendees, providing information on energy efficiency regulations
- Provided one to one advice to council tenants on energy issues, including efficiency, tariffs and information about smart meters.
- Agreement with partners on Energy Repayment Loans. (One ERL was completed in 2017).
- Smart meter information published online to promote take up to general public.
- 98.6% of council houses are now EPC D rated or above. The remaining 51 properties are hard to treat.

6. Action Plan 2019-21

6.1 Resources

Unless otherwise stated, the listed actions will be carried out using existing budgets, working with our external partners where required. The council jointly funds a Project Manager with City of York Council, Selby District Council and Craven District Council, who coordinates the Better Homes scheme across the four authorities.

6.2 Action Plan 2019-21

Home Energy Conservation Actions 2019 21	
Communication	Engaging stakeholders (including consumers and businesses) to promote awareness of energy efficiency.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement social media campaign to promote home energy conservation messages • Participate in and promoting the Better Homes Yorkshire project • Participate in and promoting the North Yorkshire Warm and Well campaign • Engage council tenants via Energy Advice Officer and tenants' newsletter • Engage private sector landlords via landlords' forum and newsletter • Engage private sector tenants via awareness-raising events • Instigate a local climate change coalition of businesses and other interest groups, to look at carbon reduction activities • Hold a climate change conference for local organisations, including promotion of domestic energy saving
Green Local Supply Chain	Engaging local businesses involved in the promotion of energy savings products and the societal benefits alongside any local economic impact this might have.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor local green business awards • Engage Bracewell Homes to promote high energy efficiency standards • Continue business engagement via economic development team e.g. resource efficiency fund
Private Rental Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards	Enforcing and promoting awareness of the PRS Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards that came into force in April 2018.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with landlords by providing advice and information on current regulations and energy efficiency schemes • Publish landlord information newsletters (approx. 2 per year) • Enforce the Household Health and Safety Rating System where category one hazards are identified relating to excess cold, as part of overall enforcement activities. • Hold four private sector tenants awareness-raising events funded by rogue landlord grant
Financial Support for Energy Efficiency	Financial programmes we will use to promote energy efficiency.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Energy Repayment Loans and Home Appreciation Loans where residents are eligible • Maximise availability of ECO-funded measures

Fuel Poverty

How we will identify those in fuel poverty and any initiatives used to address this.

- Identify priority wards using EPC data, and government fuel poverty and income statistics
- Include priority wards in flexible ECO statement of intent
- Continue implementation of My Neighbourhood projects under the Harrogate District Public Services Leadership Board.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

How we will use the ECO 'flexible eligibility' programme to refer households in fuel poverty to ECO obligated suppliers for support.

- Review ECO Flex Statement of Intent and keep it up to date
- Access flexible ECO funding using the Better Homes Yorkshire framework for delivery

Smart Metering

How we will promote awareness and uptake of smart metering.

- Provide smart metering information online
- Provide one to one advice to council tenants, where requested
- Apply for Smart Energy GB grant for promotional project to over 60s