

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **HOUSING COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2004**

#### **ENERGY ADVICE UNIT: PROGRESS TOWARDS ENERGY CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES**

##### **Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Committee of current progress towards the objectives of the Council in its role as an Energy Conservation Authority and specifically to outline the progress and achievements towards the Council's obligations under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA).

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

The Council is fully committed to implementing the requirements of HECA by securing all available funding and putting in place such measures and initiatives that maximise improvements in the energy efficiency of both its Public and Private housing.

To address the objectives of reducing fuel bills and carbon dioxide emissions, the Council has vested responsibility in the Energy Advice Unit who undertake ongoing energy efficiency audits of the housing stock to identify areas of required improvement and negotiate with external funding sources to set up both financial and practical partnerships to achieve these aims.

This has proved very successful to date and detailed hereafter are the principal partnerships that have been formed and the various initiatives that have been, and are currently, progressing towards our objectives.

#### **3. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING**

##### **3.1 Scottish Executive ' Grants for Central Heating Provision '**

This initiative is now in its third year of operation and has enabled the Council to bid for financial assistance to install heating systems in its homes where no recognised central heating system is installed.

This assistance is set at £2500 per home and allows for the provision of the heating system, insulation measures and smoke detectors.

Currently we have completed 235 homes with funding of £587K and are undertaking a further 203 addresses in this financial year with grant aid of £507K.

### **3.2** Partnership with Scottish Power and Scottish & Southern Energy

We have secured partnerships with the above fuel utility companies and assist them with their 'Energy Efficiency Commitment' (EEC) by providing them with addresses for survey and installation of cavity wall insulation and for which they provide financial assistance.

This is a mutually beneficial partnership that has concluded its second year of a three year rolling programme and through which these companies have provided £65K in the last 2 years and £30K in this financial year.

It should also be noted that, while carrying out surveys to identify suitable homes under this initiative, added benefit has been gained by claiming additional funding for low income households that can be claimed through the Warm Deal.

The Energy Advice Unit has also been successful in trading energy credits with Scottish and Southern Energy by retrospectively claiming for qualifying insulation work already carried out on our housing stock. This has resulted in an initial claim for £14K and a second claim for a similar amount is being prepared to bring the total claim for the year to £28K.

### **3.3** Scottish Executive 'Warm Deal'

Warm Deal funding continues to allow us to build on the success of previous years by supplementing the insulation programmes. This work contributes significantly to reductions in annual fuel bills and carbon dioxide emissions.

The Energy Advice Unit works closely with the various Warm Deal installers appointed to East Ayrshire Council and facilitates work to some 650 homes.

The cumulative expenditure of their installation for year 2002/2003 will be approximately £150,000, thereby making a significant contribution to energy conservation.

Part of the Warm Deal initiative is administered by Local Authorities and East Ayrshire Council was allocated a grant of £90,000 from the Scottish Executive to carry out energy efficiency measures to our own stock. This was used in partnership to carry out loft insulation to approximately 500 council houses whilst employing 9 additional trainees.

### 3.4 The Wise Group East Ayrshire

The Energy Advice Unit continues to manage our ongoing partnership and monitor the workings of The Wise Group which enjoys continued success in our commitment to the Intermediate Labour Market Strategy.

This year to date 79 trainees having secured full time employment or taken up full time education and some £700K in matched funding has also been gained as a result.

This partnership continues to provide energy efficiency improvements to our housing stock such as: -

- loft insulation
- tank & pipe insulation
- draughtproofing
- energy advice
- radiator panels
- energy audits
- home security packages

In the financial year 2002/2003 this resulted in insulation measures to the value of £490,000 being carried out to over 1600 of our housing stock.

### 3.5 Southwest Scotland Energy Efficiency & Advice Centre (EEAC)

This local EEAC is based in Ayr and has responsibility for North, South, East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway Councils.

Their work is directed at the private householder and attracts external funding which is then used to offer various energy efficiency measures at significantly reduced costs.

We work closely and in consultation with this service and their various energy saving initiatives have resulted in the following works being carried out within East Ayrshire: -

- General energy efficiency advice to 1000 residents.
- Grants for energy efficiency schemes to the value of £50K.
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### **3.6** Energy Advice Initiatives

The Energy Advice Unit has been successful in obtaining kettles from Scottish & Southern Energy to be distributed among the over sixties in exchange for their old kettle.

This is part of Scottish & Southern Energy's 'EEC' with the philosophy that providing a package of a new efficient electric kettle and 2 low energy bulbs will encourage the recipients to gradually adopt the concepts of energy conservation.

The Unit has been taking this initiative around the district with 'kettle fests' being held in relevant venues resulting in the distribution of 947 kettles and 2196 low energy bulbs to date. We have also ensured that the residents of Sheltered Housing complexes are offered this arrangement.

At all venues the opportunity was taken to work with the local EEAC to initiate Home Energy Surveys.

In order to commemorate "Warm Homes Week" we involved children in our Primary Schools through a poster competition, the topic was "How to Save Energy in your Home". Cheques were presented to each of the winning schools with windup radios and backpacks to the winning pupils.

A local rural community was targeted at an "Energy Efficient Bingo" where the format allowed us to get the Energy Efficiency message across between games. Prizes were donated by both local and national businesses, with the 'Star Prize' of an A-rated fridge freezer being donated by Scottish & Southern Energy.

The event concluded with a kettle exchange for the over 60's, together with 2 free low energy light bulbs. This event resulted in 400 kettles and 800 light bulbs being distributed through this very successful initiative.

### **3.7** Energy Advice

The Unit's Energy Advisor continues to provide advice to new tenants on the efficient use of their respective heating systems and also responds to referrals received from Housing Offices, Customer Support, Social Work, etc.

Over 500 home visits and 50 referrals from various in-house sources have been made to advise on budgeting for and economically operating heating systems.

### **3.8 Scottish Gas 'Help' Partnership**

East Ayrshire Council has recently entered a new partnership with Scottish Gas known as the 'here to HELP' (HELP) initiative.

The main aims of the scheme are:-

- To provide East Ayrshire Council with a fully integrated approach to the installation of energy efficiency measures within a designated 'HELP Zone' of East Ayrshire Council housing stock.
- To provide a fully integrated delivery between Scottish Gas, East Ayrshire Council and Warm Deal funding.
- To deliver a range of value added services from Scottish Gas and voluntary sector partners

The designated zone is in Cumnock and approximately 900 houses will be targeted.

Surveying work has been completed and work will start in the very near future with £15K financial input from the Council attracting £30K from Scottish Gas and a further £90K from Warm Deal to advance the initiative.

### **3.9 Second HECA Progress Report**

We have recently received copies of this report from the Scottish Parliament, in which East Ayrshire Council compares favourably with other Scottish Local Authorities. We presently occupy third place in the table of "Individual Local Authority's Percentage Improvement" in energy efficiency.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cumulative grants and match funding obtained from the above mentioned partnerships is anticipated to exceed £1.1M

A detailed breakdown of the funding will form part of our next HECA Progress Report, the submission date for which is 31 May 2004.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The actions of the Energy Advice Unit implement the Council's Energy Management Policy.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The Energy Advice Unit continues to examine and pursue all avenues of available assistance and funding and it is anticipated that this will be reflected in an improved performance when the third HECA Progress Report is submitted in a few months time.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that members:

- i) note the content of this report.

James Lavery  
**Director of Homes and Technical Services**  
12 March 2004

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact George Malone, Principal Engineer (01563 555233)

Implementation Officer: George Malone, Principal Engineer