HECA REPORTING 2019

Introduction

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 ('HECA') requires all 326 local authorities ('LA's) in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation within that LA's area. This covers measures to improve properties in the owner-occupier, private rented sector, and social rented sector. BEIS uses data submitted through LAs HECA returns to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency, and to build an ongoing picture of local and national energy efficiency policy delivery.

These guidance notes are issued in accordance with the Secretary of State's powers under section 4 of the Act and are to alert LAs of amendments to the HECA reporting framework in advance of May 2019 when the next reports are due. In previous years, reporting rates have been disappointing, with 282 reports submitted in March 2015 out of 326 LAs, and only 151 in March 2017. The refreshed reporting system for 2019 streamlines the process and reduces LA reporting burdens. Newly structured around a series of questions and direct information points, the amended framework aims to support LAs to provide information and updates on the key energy efficiency topics of interest to BEIS Ministers. It will also enable LAs to provide a consistent picture of energy efficiency promotion and delivery across England within a standardized framework. Following the principles of open data, the department may publish the information in an open data format to allow wider access and interpretation of the data, while ensuring that such publication complies with the terms of GDPR.

HECA 2019 Reporting Requirements

The Report is to be divided by sections to capture information on a range of key themes:

Headline & Overview

- What main strategy and schemes LAs currently have to promote carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency, stakeholders involved and impact at a societal and economic level.

Communication

- How LA engage stakeholders (including consumers and businesses) to promote awareness of energy efficiency.

Green Local Supply Chain

- How LAs engage local businesses involved in the promotion of energy savings products and the societal benefits alongside any local economic impact this might have.

Private Rental Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

- How LAs enforce and promote awareness of the PRS Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards that came into force in April 2018.

Financial Support for Energy Efficiency

- Financial programmes used by LAs to promote energy efficiency.

Fuel Poverty

- How LAs identify those in fuel poverty and any initiatives used to address this.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

- How LAs are using the recently introduced ECO 'flexible eligibility' programme to refer certain households in fuel poverty or with occupants on low incomes, who are vulnerable to the effects of cold homes, to ECO obligated suppliers for support.

Smart Metering

- How LAs promote awareness and uptake of smart metering.

All questions are optional, but responses highly encouraged. While reporting is focused on energy savings related to homes, you are welcome to provide additional information on energy efficiency improvements in non-domestic properties, but this is fully optional. There will be a final free response section permitting local authorities to discuss any additional activities which they feel are relevant.

Submission of HECA 2019 Reports

For the 2019 reporting year, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is piloting the submission of reports via a digital platform, and for this year LAs will be asked to populate their HECA Report and submit materials via a SurveyMonkey submission. No other reporting material or submissions will be required. LAs continue to be required to publish their responses, and they can to do this in whichever form they wish, so long as the published report contains relevant information submitted via the digital platform. It is not necessary for LAs to publish all the information submitted via the digital platform. Before the online survey is completed, the chief executive or director of the LA should approve the submitted content. If this approach proves effective and supports the engagement and compliance of a greater number of authorities than in recent previous years, BEIS will consider how this approach can be further improved for the 2021 reporting year.

The questions which LAs are asked to report on in the digital 'Survey' are listed below:

HECA Reporting 2019 Questions

Name of Local Authority: Wirral Council		
Type of Local Authority: Metropolitan Borough		
Name and contact details of official submitting the report: Ed Kingsley, Delivery Services, PO Box 290, Brighton Street, Wallasey, CH27 9FQ. Tel: 0151 691 8243. E-mail: edwardkingsley@wirral.gov.uk		
Job title of official submitting the report: Principal Strategic Housing & Investment Officer.		
Names of teams working on policy areas covered by this reporting tool: Housing Services; Environment.		
Total number of staff working in above policy areas (by FTE) broken down by team if possible: Housing Services – 1.3 FTE; Environment – 0.1 FTE		
Headline and Overview Questions		
1	Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic or non-domestic properties?	Y
2	If yes, please provide a link to your current strategy here: https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/cool-climate-change-strategy	
3	If no, are you planning to develop one?	N/A
4	a. What scheme(s) has your local authority implemented in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation (such as owner-occupied, privately rented and social housing) or non-domestic properties since 2017? (if you have not implemented any scheme, please enter 'N/A')	

Free text response to question 4a - please outline in no more than 200 words

Wirral Council continues to fund a mixture of advice provision and financial support with heating measures, focussing on owner occupied and private rented properties as these demonstrate the lowest energy efficiency standards. Since 2017, the council has re-tendered and appointed a contractor to provide the Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme, which provides Freephone telephone advice, home visits and targeted mailings to support households in increasing the energy efficiency of their homes. Energy Projects Plus won the tender and is able to combine the council-funded work with their own projects to provide a greater offer for households as well as being able to build-up and maintain the Warmer Wirral fuel poverty referral network.

The Council has also continued to fund interest-free loans for replacement boilers and energy efficiency improvements as well as heating grants for households on welfare benefits but unable to access heating improvements through ECO. It has also continued to fund the Healthy Homes Team which works within the eight designated Selective Licensing areas, assisting vulnerable households across all tenures and referring energy-related issues to Energy Projects Plus.

In 2017, Wirral Council, through the Liverpool City Region ECO suppliers / contractors framework, partnered with ScottishPower to promote ECO measures. The council sent targeted mailings to households on certain welfare benefits, promoting ScottishPower's replacement boiler and insulation offer.

Three schools have taken advantage of the 'Solar for Schools' programme that was enabled by the Council by giving Landlord's consent and supporting their applications for funding. Support was provided to schools through the Schools Energy Support Service in cases where sites were suitable for Solar PV systems.

A programme of installing pool covers at six leisure centres to reduce energy costs is currently in progress.

	b. What scheme(s) is your local authority planning to implement in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation (such as owner-occupied, privately rented and social housing) or non-domestic properties in the next two years? (if you are not planning to implement any scheme, please enter 'N/A')

Free text response to question 4b - please outline in no more than 200 words

Subject to funding and successful delivery, Wirral Council will extend Energy Projects Plus's contract beyond March 2020 annually until March 2022.

From 1st April 2019, the council changed its financial support for heating improvements to target the most vulnerable residents likely to be living in fuel poverty. Eligibility criteria narrowed and instead of offering grants, due to continued pressure on council budgets, the scheme now provides loans attached to the property and are, in most circumstances, only repaid when the property is sold.

The council intends to once again utilise the Liverpool City Region ECO framework to partner with energy or installation companies for ECO3. As well as providing direct promotional opportunities for the assistance available under ECO3, it will allow the council to refer residents for measures with confidence. Two schools have signed agreements with Solar for Schools so may benefit from PV installations in the coming year subject to the individual schemes being financially viable. The installation of heat recovery units at a council office building and at a leisure centre are at the design stage. Ongoing programmes include the boiler replacement programme and the repair/maintenance of the Building Energy Management Systems and Variable Speed drives.	
5	What has been, or will be, the cost(s) of running and administering the scheme(s), including the value of grants and other support, plus any other costs incurred? Please provide figures and a brief narrative account if desired.
Free text response to question 5 - please outline in no more than 100 words 1. Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme council expenditure: a) 2017-2019 = £57,524 b) 2019-20 = £26,324; c) if budget approved for 2020-21 = £36,231; 2. Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme non-council expenditure (additional support from Energy Projects Plus through other related programmes, - LED bulbs, white goods and replacement boilers): a) 2017-2019 = £186,172; b) 2019-20 = £93,000 (est.); c) if budget approved for 2020-21 = £93,000 (est.). 3.Cosy Homes Heating Grants 2017-19 = £511,612; 4. Heating Loans 2019-21 = £500,000 (estimate); 5. Cosy Loans 2017-19 = £216,592; 6. ECO partnerships, staff time only: a) 2017-19 = £5,000 (est.); b) 2019-21 = £5,000 (est.) 7. Healthy Homes Team: a) 2017-19 = £300,000; b) 2019-21 = £150,000 8. Corporate buildings capital costs for energy efficiency programmes: a) 2017-19 = £500,000; b) 2019-21 = £650,000	
6	What businesses, charities, third sector organisations or other stakeholders do you work with to deliver the scheme(s)?
Free text response to question 6 - please outline in no more than 100 words	

We have contracted Energy Projects Plus, a local fuel poverty charity, to manage the Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme (2015-18 and 2018-20). As part of this contract, EPP manage and promote the Warmer Wirral referral network, working with many charities, third sector organisations and public bodies including Wirral Advisory Centre, Wirral Connect, Wirral Foodbanks, Age UK Wirral and Christians Against Poverty. 90% of Energy Projects Plus's clients are helped as a result of the Warmer Wirral referral network.

In terms of ECO, ScottishPower have been our partner 2017-19 along with one of their lead contractors for this area, Warmer Energy Services.

Cosy Loans has been managed by Wirral Methodist Housing Association on behalf of the council.

Installations through Cosy Homes Heating Grants are carried out by contractors appointed by the grant recipient with signposting to the use of the Wirral Trades Scheme.

7	What has been the outcome of the scheme(s) (e.g. energy savings, carbon savings, economic impacts such as job creation and/or increased business competitiveness, societal impacts such as alleviation of fuel poverty and/or improved health outcomes etc.)? This does not have to be measured against national data or benchmarks, but rather focuses on the local authority's own monitoring and evaluation.

Free text response to question 7 - please outline in no more than 200 words

1. Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme: 414 home visits were carried out as a result of the Warmer Wirral referral network, either directly funded by the council or by the aligned Local Energy Advice Partnership. The visits provided energy efficiency and fuel poverty-related advice, provided easy-to-install measures and referred clients for grant assistance. Annual energy bill savings as a result of these visits and energy efficiency measures is estimated at £98,875.

2. Cosy Homes Heating Grants 2017-19: £13,507 per year estimated savings on gas bills for all households assisted.

3. Cosy Loans 2017-19: £7,392 per year estimated savings on gas bills for all households assisted.

4. ECO partnerships: 696,569 Lifetime Savings from replacement boilers and loft and cavity wall insulation.

8	What lessons have you learned from delivering this scheme(s)?

Free text response to question 8 - please outline in no more than 100 words

With regards to the Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme, we have found the provision of training sessions for front-line workers to be ineffective in generating referrals from organisations and so no longer fund these. Instead, we have changed the contract to focus resources on more direct contact with householders through an advice line and home visits.

With regards ECO, we found it increasingly difficult to convert leads to installation of measures due to the high number of customer contributions required to fund the works, which low income households cannot fund. We have, though, found the use of address lists from our Benefits Team a successful targeting tool for ECO for direct mailings.

Local Communications Strategy

9	Does your local authority provide any advisory service to consumers (and businesses) on how to save energy?	Y
10	If yes to question 10, please briefly outline how this is undertaken (or enter 'N/A' if appropriate)	

Free text response to question 10 - please outline in no more than 100 words

As part of our Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme contract, we part-fund Energy Projects Plus's Save Energy Advice Line for households. It provides a free and impartial advice line for Merseyside residents, staffed by trained energy advisors. The advisors offer advice on domestic energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as information on grants and discounts available to residents to help make their homes more energy efficient.

We do not provide an advisory service to businesses.

11	How do you communicate or encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers and/or local businesses? (if you do not, please enter 'N/A' and move on to the next section 'Local Green Supply Chains')

Free text response to question 11 - please outline in no more than 100 words

As part of our Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme contract, Energy Projects Plus carry out two mailings a year, to around 13,000 households in total, promoting Warmer Wirral-related messages. They are also tasked with building up and maintaining the Warmer Wirral referral network which they do by meeting with key people within referral or potential referral organisations as well as attending networking-type events. The Programme links in to their other schemes, which include "Sustainable Seacombe" that talks to households on the doorstep as well as through weekly community advice sessions advertised through postcard drops. At a higher level, the council has advice and sign-posting on its website, as well as co-ordinating Cool Wirral, the council's climate change strategy and its associated promotion.

Local Green Supply Chains		
12	Does your Local Authority promote the use of energy efficient products amongst consumers (and businesses)? (if you answer no please move onto the next section 'Private Rented Sector')	Y
13	If yes to question 12, please briefly detail how this promotion work is undertaken.	
Free text response to question 12 - please outline in no more than 100 words The promotion of energy efficient products to consumers takes place within the activity outlined in the response to question 11.		
14	What engagement (formal or informal) does your local authority have with local businesses/supply chains involved in promoting energy efficiency products or carbon reduction?	
Free text response to question 14 - please outline in no more than 100 words Local Authorities in the Liverpool City Region deliver Business Growth Hubs in partnership with the Liverpool City Region LEP. Grant funding programmes that support business growth for all kinds of businesses are available to businesses in the low carbon economy. The Low Carbon Eco Innovatory led by University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University engages with businesses in the energy and environmental services supply chain and can support them to develop new products and services.		
Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards		
The Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations (the Regulations) apply to all privately rented properties in England and Wales. As of April 2018, all such properties are legally required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of at least an E before they can be let on a new tenancy. This requirement will then extend to all such properties by 1 April 2020, even if there has been no change in tenant or tenancy (please see BEIS's published guidance documents for the full details on the standard). The PRS Regulations give enforcement powers to local authorities, and authorities are responsible for ensuring landlord compliance within their area.		
15	Is your authority aware of the PRS Minimum Efficiency Standards which came into force in April 2018? (if you answered no, please move on to the next section 'Financial Support for Energy Efficiency')	Y

16	Which team within your authority is responsible for, or will be responsible for, leading on enforcement of the PRS minimum standard?	
Free text response to question 16 Trading Standards.		
17	Please provide the contact details of the person leading this team.	
Free text response to question 17 Gill Vicary, Operations Manager, Trading Standards Operations. gillvicary@wirral.gov.uk and 0151 691 8377		
18	What method or methods does your authority use to communicate with landlords and tenants about the standards and other related issues?	
Free text response to question 18 - please outline in no more than 100 words The council has a private landlords newsletter which has contained three articles in recent times on the PRS Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. The newsletter is also used to inform landlords of assistance that may be available to help them improve the energy efficiency of their properties and the help available for their tenants. The council also has a Private Landlords Forum; the Forum in June 2019 is to have a speaker on MEES from Energy Projects Plus. The council operates Selective Licensing in eight Lower Super Output Areas and communicates with landlords with properties in these areas through various means (face-to-face, telephone and bespoke newsletters) on the standards.		
19	Do you directly target landlords of EPC F and G rated properties? If yes, how? If no, please explain.	Y
Free text response to question 19 - please outline in no more than 100 words The council doesn't have the staffing resource to actively target all landlords with sub-standard properties. However, through Selective Licensing in areas where the proportion of F and G rated properties is higher, the MEES is listed as a License Condition and EPCs are requested by officers on demand. In cases where the MEES isn't met, informal advice is provided to improve the EPC rating. If the landlord doesn't comply, formal action is taken under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 (enforcement under HHSRS) or under Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 (non-compliance with Selective Licensing Conditions).		

Financial Support for Energy Efficiency		
20	What financial programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic and non-domestic energy efficiency or energy saving? If applicable, please outline the sums, where such funding is sourced, and where it is targeted. (If you do not have any financial assistance programmes, please enter 'N/A' and move onto the next section 'Fuel Poverty')	

Free text response to question 20 - please outline in no more than 200 words

Cosy Homes Heating Grants 2017-19 provided financial assistance to low income private households that don't qualify for ECO Affordable Warmth so they can access funds to improve the efficiency of their heating system. Due to continued pressure on local authority budgets, from 1st April 2019 the council has changed the financial support from grants to loans that are eventually paid back to the council when property ownership changes. The loans cover works up to £4,000.

The council provided financial assistance worth £511,612 through Cosy Homes Heating Grants in 2017-19.

Cosy Loans 2017-19 was available for private households to access interest-free finance of up to £2,000 repayable for up to three years to improve the energy efficiency of their home. Of the 106 loans issued in 2017-19, 105 were for replacement boilers. The value of the loans issued was £216,592. At the start of the scheme in 1999, loans were used to replace inefficient, non-condensing boilers with condensing models. Since 2005 however, it has been a requirement of Building Regulations that new boilers must be condensing boilers. We have now reached the point where the majority of boilers being replaced are already condensing and the marginal energy savings don't warrant a financial incentive through Cosy Loans. In addition, the loans are little used for other energy efficiency improvements. The council has therefore decided to end Cosy Loans as the original aim of the scheme to significantly improve the energy efficiency of homes is no longer being met.

Fuel Poverty		
21	Does your local authority have a fuel poverty strategy? If yes, please describe the scope of the strategy, and the support that is available for low income and vulnerable households to help tackle fuel poverty in your local area. Please also provide a link to your strategy if published.	N

Free text response to question 21 - please outline in no more than 300 words

Although Wirral does not have a standalone fuel poverty strategy, fuel poverty reduction is integrated into the Housing Strategy and Climate Change Strategy.

22	What steps have you taken to identify residents/properties in fuel poverty? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)

Free text response to question 22 - please outline in no more than 200 words

Each programme or activity the council operates to reduce fuel poverty uses different methods of identification.

Warm Home Discount and ECO promotional campaigns – use of council benefit data to identify those households most likely to qualify and the use of BEIS fuel poverty estimates at LSOA level to target LSOAs highest for fuel poverty.

Cosy Homes Heating Grants – the eligibility criteria was based upon that used for ECO1, targeting those most likely to be fuel poverty but not being able to utilise the ECO funding due to technical issues, measures required or contribution required. Moving forward, the new loans are only available to those in receipt of Council Tax Support, which the Council has deemed to be on the lowest incomes.

Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme – the use of the referral network is the prime method for identifying households in fuel poverty. The additional programmes operated by Energy Projects Plus target households in deprived areas, on low incomes or having health / age vulnerability.

ECO LA Flexible Eligibility – the council has a published Statement of Intent which includes the method by which households in fuel poverty are identified through a maximum income threshold and high energy costs.

23	How does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall carbon reduction strategy? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)

Free text response to question 23 - please outline in no more than 200 words

Wirral's Climate Change Strategy contains actions that ensure the majority of energy efficiency activity in the domestic sector is targeted towards households in fuel poverty. One of its objectives is "Identify and refer vulnerable and 'fuel poor' households to available support via social, health, housing and education services and community and faith groups." A further objective is "Improve a minimum of 200 properties each year mainly in the east of Wirral using a range of funding streams including ECO investment" (east Wirral has the highest concentrations of households in fuel poverty).

24	a. What measures or initiatives have you taken to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)

Free text response to question 24a - please outline in no more than 200 words

The council sends 6,500 letters to promote the Warm Home Discount each year to those households who are unlikely to be part of the "Core Group" but likely to be in the "Broader Group". Households are prompted to telephone Energy Projects Plus where the advisors apply on their behalf. In 2018 this led to 814 successful applications. However, it generated 1,588 telephone calls from households, all of which were offered advice wider than just the Warm Home Discount, including on

energy efficiency, grants and energy switching.

The ECO promotional campaign in partnership with ScottishPower targeted households in areas of high fuel poverty through mailshots, resulting in the installation of 74 replacement boilers six lofts insulated and 21 cavities insulated.

The council funds a Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programmes, as described in the answer to previous questions. The main aim of the programme is to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty.

	b. If you have taken measures or initiatives to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty, what partnership with business or energy providers have you undertaken? (enter 'N/A' if not appropriate)

Free text response to question 24b - please outline in no more than 200 words

Through the Liverpool City Region ECO Framework, Wirral ran a mini-competition to select an ECO partner and ScottishPower was selected. This allowed the council and Energy Projects Plus to refer with confidence potential ECO Help to Heat beneficiaries. It also allowed the council to promote the ECO offer to households through targeted mailshots, as described in 24a above, with the mailshots being funded by ScottishPower but handled by the council. As a result of the partnership, the council worked closely with ScottishPower's contractor Warmer Energy Services on a day-to-day basis to ensure a smooth process for households.

Wirral Council fully supports the Merseyside Collective Switch and "Switch Now" campaigns, co-ordinated locally by Energy Projects Plus but managed nationally by Energy Helpline. These campaigns are promoted through the Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency programme and by the council's front-line officers including the Healthy Homes Team. Since the beginning of the partnership with Energy Projects Plus and Energy Helpline in 2013, there have been 1,649 energy switches. Around a quarter of these have been by those aged over 65 and around 7% have been by those in receipt of Working Tax Credits.

The Energy Company Obligation

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by installing energy saving measures. Following the Spring 2018 consultation, the Government set out in its response that ECO3 will fully focus on Affordable Warmth – low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households.

The recently introduced ECO "flexible eligibility" (ECO Flex) programme allows LAs to make declarations determining that certain households in fuel poverty or with occupants on low incomes and vulnerable to the effects of cold homes, are referred to ECO obligated suppliers for support under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO. LAs involved are required to issue a Statement of Intent that they are going to identify households as eligible, and the criteria they are going to use; and a declaration that the LA has been consulted on the installation of measures in a home.

25	Has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (SoI) for ECO flexibility eligibility? If yes, please include a link to your SoI below.	Y
Link to SoI: https://www.wirral.gov.uk/housing/help-your-home/energy-efficiency/energy-company-obligation-flexible-eligibility		
26	Please use the following space to provide any further information you feel might be of benefit to BEIS, in helping us to understand ECO Flex delivery in more detail. For example, the number of declarations signed versus the number of households helped.	
Free text response to question 26 - please outline in no more than 200 words Wirral Council published its Statement of Intent in March 2018 and has completed a relatively small number of declarations for ECO (10), mainly due to clients not being able to contribute financially to works required. The council is about to run a mini competition through the Liverpool City Region ECO Framework to select an ECO partner or partners. It is envisaged that through this new arrangement there will be a greater opportunity to "shop around" for the best deal financially for households thereby leading to a greater number of LA Flex declarations under ECO3. Wirral Council has also utilised its Statement of Intent and declarations (identified by separate URNs) to allow eligible households to receive free replacement boilers under the ECHO scheme which is part of the Local Energy Advice Partnership. 59 declarations have been issued for an equal number of replacement boiler installations. Through our partnership with ScottishPower, we have signed 11 declarations; once job has completed, nine are in progress and one was found to already have the energy efficiency measures once surveyed.		
Smart Metering		
27	Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to: Engage and support your residents (including those in vulnerable circumstances or with pre-payment metering) to promote take up of smart meters and achieve associated benefits (e.g. ability to control energy use, identify best value tariffs)? Please detail any work undertaken or planned with local/community groups, housing associations, micro businesses, Smart Energy GB under their Partnership Programme and energy suppliers.	
Free text response to question 27 – please outline in no more than 150 words. Wirral Council does not directly engage with residents on Smart Meters. It does however support Energy Projects Plus in its applications and delivery of promotional activity through Smart Energy GB in Communities funding which allows their activity to seamlessly link to the council funded Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme. Energy Projects Plus has been successful in both of its		

bids for funding to publicise Smart Meters to Wirral households, the first targeting those aged 65+ and those aged 60+ and without internet access and the second targeting those aged 65+. They have submitted a third (regional) bid targeting those aged 65+; they are awaiting the outcome of the bid submission. Wirral Council indirectly promotes the Smart Meter programme through a council webpage: https://www.wirral.gov.uk/housing/help-your-home/energy-efficiency/smart-meters	
28	Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to: Integrate your approaches to delivering energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation with the opportunities presented by the installation of smart meters, drawing upon materials from the Smart Meter Energy Efficiency Materials Project or other sources of independent information.
Free text response to question 28 – please outline in no more than 150 words. As the council is not aware of when a smart meter installation is occurring, it is difficult to envisage how it can be integrated with any energy efficiency programmes. It would be very helpful to us when a smart meter was being installed if the installer had localised information, such as key contacts within the council or Energy Projects Plus so that any requirements for energy efficiency measures or fuel poverty assistance could be dealt with by the local programmes.	
29	Please detail any: Resources/ support (e.g. services, funding) available to residents who have had an appliance(s) condemned for safety reasons and cannot afford to replace it (e.g. during visual safety checks conducted during their smart meter installation or otherwise).
Free text response to question 29 – please outline in no more than 150 words. The council, as previously detailed, has financial assistance available for low income residents for replacement boilers and can link into local and national welfare assistance schemes to assist with the replacement of other appliances such as gas cookers. Should a resident have an appliance condemned and they contact the council or any organisation linked into the Warmer Wirral referral network, they will be assisted in finding the best solution for their circumstances. No household has required a replacement boiler funded by the council as a result of a boiler being condemned through the smart meter installation process.	
30	Please detail any: Existing relationships with energy suppliers to help ensure that the opportunities presented by vacant properties under your control are effectively utilised (i.e. gaining access to install a smart meter).

Free text response to question 30 – please outline in no more than 150 words. The council owns only 30 domestic properties which are never left vacant between tenancies for more than a few weeks.	
Future Schemes or Wider Initiatives	
31	Please outline any future schemes or wider initiatives not covered above that your local authority has carried out or is planning to undertake to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation or businesses in your area, for example, within your Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Energy Strategy (if you do not plan any future schemes currently, please enter 'N/A').
Free text response to question 31 - please outline in no more than 500 words The LEP Energy Strategy (currently in draft) highlights the importance of tackling housing as significant contributor to carbon emissions that must be addressed if local ambitions to decarbonise in the next two decades are to be realised. It recommends that retrofit of housing for energy should be prioritised as part of a wider drive for quality housing and recognises the recommendations of each home counts. The need to tackle the reduction of fossil fuel sources of heat in homes with both options of electrification and hydrogen having major infrastructure implications that must be addressed at the strategic level with coordinated action across agencies delivering infrastructure. ERDF funding has been awarded to social landlords in the Liverpool City Region to implement home energy retrofit, though this will make only a small contribution to the scale of the challenge. The council is currently working in a collaboration of organisations to showcase and move forward the transition to a low-carbon community focussed around the regeneration activity in Wirral Waters. Partners include Peel & Land Property Ltd, Wirral Met College, Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority, Energy Projects Plus and Wirral Environment Network. Partners are currently working on a prospectus setting out what is planned for the area in terms of low carbon living and working which it is hoped will act as a catalyst for further projects and funding. Cool Wirral – a climate change strategy for Wirral – is being re-written as the current strategy covers the period 2014-19. The strategy has previously aligned its actions and carbon reduction target to that of government and it is intended the new strategy will do the same as a minimum. The new strategy is due to be published in June 2019.	

Signed off by.....

Name: Eric Robinson

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 29th May, 2019