



Vale of White Horse

District Council

**Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities
(Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England)
Regulations 2000**

RECORD OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER OR KEY DECISION OF OFFICER			
1	Name of Decision maker	Councillor Matthew Barber	
2	Type of Decision (Please <input type="checkbox"/> as appropriate)	Key	Other ✓
3	Date of Decision (This should be the same as the date form signed)		
4	The Decision	<p>The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) has been in place since 1995. The government issued new statutory guidance under the Act in July 2012 which requires councils to prepare HECA Further Reports including an action plan (see table one below). These must set 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 its area.</p> <p>HECA Further Reports are expected to have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measures that take advantage of financial assistance offered from central Government, including the Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), and • adopting an area based or street by street approach involving local communities and partner organisations. <p>Given the similarities between the districts and that much of the work already being undertaken is carried out jointly, it was considered to be more effective to produce a joint report and action plan.</p> <p>Local authorities were required to publish reports on their websites by 31 March. Given the tight timescale to produce reports the Government acknowledged that the reports may be a work in progress. In light of this, our draft report has been published on both councils' websites with this caveat.</p>	

The final version of the report will be published once the action plan has been agreed by the Cabinet member. Progress reports will have to be provided every two years; the first by 31 March 2015, and up to and including 31 March 2027.

The Act does not stipulate a target; instead local authorities are expected to set themselves targets, priorities and/or ambitions.

Results of the analysis of demographic, energy consumption and energy efficiency data, combined with the findings of a review of relevant council policies and plans, were presented at a workshop attended by staff from Corporate Strategy, Environmental Protection and Planning as well as partners from Sovereign Housing Association and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Those who attended the workshop put forward the following ambitions for Cabinet member consideration.

CO₂ Emissions

The Government expects councils to recognise that domestic CO₂ emissions will need to fall significantly in the coming years. Most of the factors governing household energy use and emissions are outside the councils' control. The councils' ambition therefore is to ensure that:

- Via the Green Deal Together CIC, residents have access to advice on the most effective actions required to save energy and how to finance those actions.
- Council policies and messages relevant to home energy use are consistent and capitalise on the work both councils have done to put its own house in order in terms of energy reduction.
- Where external funds/resources are available, both councils will work with partners to help develop and promote specific initiatives that will enable local residents to save energy, reduce fuel bills and associated emissions.

Fuel Poverty

Although both districts are relatively affluent, data suggests that there are pockets of fuel poverty. Fuel poverty is a serious issue and is likely to get worse as fuel prices rise and the districts' population ages. Most of the factors influencing fuel poverty are outside the councils' control. The councils' ambition therefore is to ensure that:

- Residents have access to affordable warmth advice and assistance through the councils' continued support of the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network and its cross-agency collaboration already in place to reach those most in need.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where external funds/resources are available, both councils will work with partners to help develop and promote specific initiatives targeted to help <p>The attached action plan (see table one) sets out the measures that the council will seek to undertake to bring about a significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area. The table also shows the teams responsible and whether or not the action is ongoing work.</p> <p>This individual Cabinet member decision is required to agree the action plan (see table one) following endorsement by Cabinet at the briefing held on 24 April 2013.</p>
5	Reasons for Decision	To enable the council to implement the requirements of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.
6	Alternative Options Rejected	Not to adopt a HECA action plan – this would mean that we are not complying with the requirements of the new statutory guidance issued under the Home Energy Conservation Act.
7	Resource Implications	Implementing the action plan can be achieved within existing resources.
8	Legal implications	<p>THE HECA 1995 places a duty on local authorities to submit reports to the Secretary of State. The current requirements to submit a report by 31st March 2013 was set out in the DECC Guidance which was issued in July 2012.</p> <p>Although the council is encouraged by Government to set targets and indicators, there is no statutory requirement to do so.</p>
9	Financial implications	None – the action plan can be implemented within existing resources.
10	List of Consultees (See guidance below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal: Sarah Sundhu agreed on 6 June 2013 Finance: Bob Watson agreed on 5 June 2013 Press officer: Andy Roberts agreed on 30 May 2013 Equality and diversity: Cheryl Reeves - Ensuring residents have access to information about energy saving, reducing fuel bills and affordable warmth advice will help to advance equal opportunities for those most in need. The action plan will have a positive equality impact. Climate change: Heather Saunders agreed 3 July 2013
11	Reports and Background Papers Considered	Joint South and Vale Home Energy Conservation Act Further Report and Action Plan
12	Date of receipt of Reports	N/A
13	Declarations of Interests	None

Table One: Home Energy Conservation Act Action Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Area	Action	Team	Notes
Green Deal	Through the Green Deal CIC the councils will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that residents have access to advice on energy saving actions and finance explore options regarding Green Deal partnerships/collaborations. 	Corporate Strategy	Through the Green Deal CIC – growth bid approved for South and Vale to become shareholders
	Raise awareness of the Green Deal, engage and enable the community by providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support to community groups and community led initiatives support to parish/town councils and neighbourhood plans information, resources and a means to network 	Corporate Strategy	As above and alongside existing work on these
	The councils will ensure relevant staff are properly informed/trained about the Green Deal.	Corporate Strategy	Ongoing
Fuel Poverty	Through the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the councils will ensure that residents have access to affordable warmth advice the councils and their partners will continue to collectively and individually seek external funds to support affordable warmth work/to target areas with the highest incidence of fuel poverty/deprivation the councils and their partners will develop a joint fuel poverty strategy. 	Corporate Strategy	Ongoing
	South and Vale council representatives on the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board will work to ensure affordable warmth activity is duly recognised for its role in improving health outcomes in the county.	Health and Housing	Ongoing
	Both councils will develop grant scheme (£15k for each council) aimed at assisting households in fuel poverty.	Corporate Strategy	This will focus the agreed budget to support those in fuel poverty rather than insulation grants for all
ECO	Investigate ECO funding options including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Saving Communities Obligation (Rural) Area based initiative targeting fuel poverty Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation initiative targeting park homes Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation initiative in conjunction with the Green Deal CIC 	Corporate Strategy	
	The councils will aim to establish a working partnership with an accredited ECO provider in conjunction with Green Deal CIC to target appropriate assistance to eligible residents in the area.	Corporate Strategy	Through Green Deal CIC
Housing	Review of both South and Vale Housing Renewal policies currently underway.	Housing	Ongoing
	The Vale has an on-going relationship with Flexible Home Improvement Loan Limited and South is investigating this option.	Housing	Ongoing
Climate Local	Continue membership and support of county-wide Climate Local project.	Corporate Strategy	Ongoing
Policies & plans	Explore how income from development can be used to drive forward energy efficiency initiatives.	Planning	

	Where possible and appropriate the councils will seek that service level agreements reflect the importance of providing affordable warmth advice to clients.	All relevant teams	Mainly applies to revenue/partnership grants
	Ensure both councils' policies and messages relevant to home energy use are consistent and capitalise on the work both councils have done to put their own houses in order.	All relevant teams	Include in reviews of existing policies where relevant
Renewable Energy Funds	The councils will build upon the high take up of renewables and maximise uptake of financial support by promoting the FiTs ¹ and RHI ² , particularly in off-gas areas.	Corporate Strategy	Ongoing

¹ FiTs – Feed in Tariffs. A financial incentive for the installation of renewable technologies producing electricity.

² RHI – Renewable Heat Incentive. A financial incentive for the installation of heat producing renewable technologies.