



HECA reporting 2021 questions

Last Modified May 24, 2021



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Questions have a 4,000-character limit (Approx 500 words)

- Name of Local Authority: Blackpool Council
- Type of Local Authority: Unitary Authority
- Name, job title and email address of official submitting the report: Andrea Howe, Energy Projects Officer, andrea.howe@blackpool.gov.uk

Headline and overview questions

Does your local authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic or non-domestic properties?

Blackpool Council Sustainability, Energy and Water Strategy 2018-2024

Delivering a Low Carbon, Energy Efficient, Economically Resilient Community

If yes, please provide a link to your current strategy here:

<http://democracy.blackpool.gov.uk/documents/s40378/Appendix%203a%20Blackpool%20Council%20Sustainability%20Strategy%202018%20to%202024>

If no, are you planning to develop one?

Climate Change Strategy for Blackpool is under development.

Lancashire's 15 councils are collectively working on the development of the Greater Lancashire Plan. The Plan will set a long-term strategic vision for economy, public services and environment for the Lancashire Authorities and will underpin the development of a climate and decarbonisation strategy for the county.

What scheme(s) is your local authority planning to implement in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation properties in the next two years?

Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL) is a brand established by the 15 Local Authorities in Lancashire under which council backed domestic energy efficiency schemes are delivered. A procured managing agent operates and delivers CHiL schemes on behalf of the local authorities. The following CHiL schemes are being delivered or developed for delivery during the next 2 years:

- Delivery of ECO and ECO-Flex for cavity wall and loft insulation, replacement boilers and first time central heating
- Warm Homes Fund – installation of first time central heating
- Warm Homes Fund – installation of first time central heating in Park Homes
- Community scheme gas connections – Projects have been delivered in Blackpool, Wyre, Fylde and Chorley to date
- Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme. £2 million of funding secured under Phase 1b with Blackpool Council acting as the Lead Authority for the Lancashire Consortium. A further £12million has been allocated to Lancashire from the North West Energy Hub who were successful in securing £50million for the North West

What has been, or will be, the cost(s) of running and administering the scheme(s), including the value of grants and other support made available, plus any other costs incurred (such as administration)

The following grants have been secured for Lancashire :

- £14 million from the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme
- £2.2m from the Warm Homes Fund for the installation of first time central heating.
- £1.8m from the Warm Homes Fund for first time central heating in park homes
- All other schemes are delivered through securing ECO or ECO-Flex for delivery of measures

- £130,000 funding from Electricity NorthWest Ltd to support vulnerable residents with contributions towards heating interventions

The cost of running and administering these schemes is absorbed into the funding secured for delivery.

What businesses, charities, third sector organisations or other stakeholders do you work with to deliver the scheme(s)?

The CHiL admin hub works with local businesses to install ECO measures and engages directly with energy providers to secure funding, engaging with local stakeholders such as home improvement agencies, local authority grant teams, as well as housing standards and environmental health departments. CHiL also works with the following:

- Affordable Warmth Solutions and National Grid to deliver Warm Homes Projects
- National Energy Action (NEA). NEA is supporting the Lancashire GHG LAD application and will be delivering an element of the bid in Preston.
- The Local Energy North West Hub has been supporting the development of the GHG LAD applications. Blackpool Council is working with Blackpool Coastal Housing and My Blackpool Homes to develop and deliver GHG LAD projects.
- We work collaboratively with Electricity NorthWest Ltd to support their vulnerable customers with advice and measures
- Connect4U is the charitable arm of CHiL set up to bring in investment to help vulnerable residents to access funds to help towards the cost of heating interventions
- As a past Ashden Award winner CHiL is a member of the Ashden Alumni network and is currently receiving professional mentoring to support and develop the Connect4U CIC to help raise its profile and bring in additional investments to further help fuel poor residents in Lancashire
- Locally CHiL engages with local third sector organisations such as Citizens Advice and Age UK to link up services and cross-refer as well as with hospitals, drop in centres, parish councils and community groups to raise awareness of CHiL schemes. Referral mechanisms with the Respiratory Team at Blackpool Victoria Hospital are being set up and training will be rolled out this year

What has been, or will be the outcome of the scheme(s)? These outcomes could include energy savings, carbon savings, economic impacts such as job creation and/or increased business competitiveness, or societal impacts such as alleviation of fuel poverty and/or improved health outcomes etc.)?

Since the last HECA in 2019 CHiL has delivered the following measures across Lancashire:

- 497 first time central heating (WHF)
- 110 park homes first time central heating (WHF)
- 27 Loft insulation
- 22 Cavity Wall Insulation
- 725 Energy Advice Calls - ENWL customers
- 208 Energy Advice Visits - Park Homes Customers
- 1905 Energy Advice visits/calls - Cat 3 Warm Homes Fund Project

Energy and carbon savings achieved varies depending on the property type and the measure installed. Using average estimates from the Energy Saving Trust, loft insulation (0-270mm) can save an average of £161 / year on energy bills and 707 kg carbon dioxide / year (<https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-insulation/roof-and-loft>) and Cavity wall insulation can save an estimated average of £130 / year on energy bills and 570 kg carbon dioxide / year. (<https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-insulation/cavity-wall>) Replacement boiler savings - [Installing an energy efficient boiler - Energy Saving Trust](#)

The GHG LAD phase 1b and 2 funding is anticipated to deliver renewable heating and insulation measures to approximately 1500 energy inefficient homes with a low Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating. The funding will target low income residents across Lancashire.

The CHiL scheme works with local installers and suppliers in the delivery of energy efficiency schemes supporting local businesses where possible. The delivery of GHG LAD projects will bring more local suppliers onboard, supporting them to up skill and supporting the local economy.

It can be difficult to track direct health impacts and savings from affordable warmth measures, however some of the personal stories and feedback received provides a narrative around the impact it can have on someone's life and wellbeing. – G & J of Blackpool wrote

‘ A really big big thankyou to the entire team for sorting all this out for us. We are now warm and have hot water which is just wonderful. We appreciate that this was a team effort which during these very strange times that Covid 19 has imposed upon us has involved extra work for you, so we are grateful for what you have done for us. We are not healthy people and at every stage of the installation the installers put our Welfare first even though this must have delayed the installation. Thankyou for making a difference to our lives.

Communications

Does your local authority provide any advisory service to consumers (and businesses) on how to save energy?

If yes, please briefly outline how this is undertaken

As part of the delivery of CHiL schemes, advice is provided to residents on energy efficiency, behaviour change and advice on energy bills, tariff switching, securing warm homes discount and signing up for priority services registers.

The Lancashire authorities have designed and printed an energy advice booklet ‘Little Book of Warm’ which is made available to residents seeking advice including all referrals from Electricity North West. The booklet is available to organisations to distribute to their service users and has been popular with many Food Banks. The booklet is updated regularly to ensure it remains fresh and up to date.

Council officers offer advice, signpost to support services and refer to CHiL.

Blackpool Care and Repair is a home improvement agency based at Blackpool Coastal Housing. They provide advice and information on a range of matters, including energy efficiency, to households aged 55+. They make referrals to CHiL as necessary.

How do you communicate or encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers and/or local businesses?

Residents are offered support and advice when measures are being installed and left with a CHiL pack which contains the Little Book of Warm. General information on energy saving and the schemes available are communicated to residents through leaflets distributed via local charities, community events, health care providers and local authority service providers and the CHiL website and Facebook page. CHiL carries out targeted mailouts to advertise any specific schemes to residents.

CHiL engages with large organisations such as Electricity North West, United Utilities, Age Concern, Age UK and third sector organisations to promote the service provided by CHiL and the Connect4U CIC.

Blackpool promotes schemes through the Council's internal and external websites and to residents via 'Your Blackpool' magazine.

Local green supply chains

Have you made any assessment, or undertaken any analysis of the existing capacity in your local energy efficiency retrofit supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings by 2050? If Yes, please summarise the outcomes.

The local supply chain is currently being assessed to identify a supplier framework for GHG LAD delivery and framework.

What actions are you taking, if any, to up skill and/or grow the local energy efficiency installer supply chain? This could include the facilitation of training, and local installer networking opportunities.

The GHG LAD scheme makes provision for up skilling and supporting local installers. The policy for delivery is to use Lancashire installers (or ones bordering Lancashire). We are using the Enabling Fund to help installers gain the necessary qualifications to be able to deliver measures using the LAD funding stream. Products, wherever possible, will be manufactured in UK.

What actions are you taking, if any, to promote energy efficiency and the installer supply chain to consumers, and encourage households to consider energy retrofit?

Please see answer above about communication to residents. Specific promotional material including leaflets, referral forms, web content, social media and press releases has been developed as part of the comms plan for delivery of the GHG LAD scheme.

If no action is taking place in either of these two areas, please let us know of any barriers you have encountered.

For most of the districts in Lancashire the impact of austerity over many years has reduced capacity to engage in schemes such as LAD to almost zero. Were it not for the CHiL collaborative and the willingness of all districts to work in partnership to deliver these schemes, it is unlikely that most districts would be bidding for and delivering schemes on their own at all.

How effectively is your LA able to engage (Trustmark/PAS2035/PAS2030 certified) installers?

See answers above.

Do you have any plans to develop policies or initiatives in this space over the next five years as part of supporting your local decarbonisation efforts?

The Blackpool Climate Change Strategy is under development.

New initiatives such as the GHG LAD schemes will support decarbonisation of the domestic housing sector.

With regards to New Build Developments the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) cannot require developers to install renewable technologies and energy reduction measures as in most instances costs far outweighing savings.

Social housing

What action, if any, has your LA taken to install energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures in social housing? Have these been installed to a satisfactory quality? What actions (if any) have your social housing partners taken?

Blackpool Coastal Housing have a programme of installing energy saving measures into their homes and will be involved in the GHG LAD scheme.

There is a ERDF project at Grange Park where a Ground Source Heat Pump has been installed at the Community Centre, ECO coaches to give advice to residents and a tree-planting programme

Do you have easy access to the information/knowledge within your organisation that you would expect to need for social housing retrofit projects? (e.g. stock condition; property data; approach to procurement; alignment with existing internal maintenance/upgrade plans; tenant engagement and management plans; costings)

Yes - Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

If no, would it be easy/difficult to obtain this information?

Have you experienced any challenges to retrofit, including during any previous government schemes you have taken part in (e.g. supply chain,

funding, tenant cooperation, mixed tenure, split incentive, policy clarity, etc)? Please provide some detail. Have social housing partners reported any challenges to retrofit?

Blackpool has many very Hard To Treat properties which are expensive to retrofit.

Quality of work can be a barrier

How does your LA currently/how will your LA in future plan to go about identifying suitable housing stock and measures for retrofit? How do social housing partners identify suitable stock? By the same measures or via a different method?

EPC Data is available for BCH properties and private properties.

Cosy Homes in Lancashire are working with Parity Projects Ltd, in partnership with the North West Energy Hub, for the LAD2 scheme and will have access to their Housing Stock Assessment toolkit.

What considerations would make you more or less likely to apply for government funding? If known, what is the opinion of your social housing partners?

See answer above regarding barriers to taking action. The requirement for a contribution can also be a barrier to applying for funding.

To what extent are social housing tenants willing or unwilling to undergo retrofit, and what are the barriers and facilitators to their participation? If known, is this the same opinion across all social housing tenants or is it different with HA and ALMO tenants?

This would be a question for RPs to answer.

Does the approach to retrofit change for leaseholders in mixed tenure blocks? What encourages them to co-operate?

Domestic private rented sector (PRS) minimum energy efficiency standards

Is your authority aware of the PRS Minimum Efficiency Standards regulations requiring private rentals in England and Wales to meet a minimum energy performance rating of EPC Band E as of April 2020, unless a valid exemption applies?

Yes

Which team within your authority is responsible for, leading on enforcement of the PRS minimum standard? Please provide the contact details of the person leading this team.

Blackpool Trading Standards has responsibility for enforcement of PRS MES April 2018. There is no active targeting of dwellings due to a lack of resources which would enable proactive interventions.

Tim Coglan - tim.coglan@blackpool.gov.uk

What method or methods does your authority use to communicate with landlords and tenants about the standards and other related issues?

Information is on the council website, occasional landlord forum meetings and occasional mailshot/emails to landlords.

The private sector housing team when they encounter excess cold under HHSRS, they have details of the legislation on their repair schedules, along with directing the landlord to those schemes which will help them bring their property up to the correct EPC rating. Rented properties within the selective licensing Areas are required to conform to the minimum rating although the same obstacles to EPC conformity apply as stated above.

In all cases Landlords are given details of the CHIL scheme.

What barriers, if any, does your local authority face enforcing these regulations (e.g. identifying non-compliant properties/landlords, budgeting/resourcing, any legal issues)?

Enforcement activity around these regulations is currently limited and differs between local authorities. There are practical challenges in identifying non-compliant properties, contacting landlords and resourcing the activities. The complicated system of exemptions discourages use of these regulations and there is other legislation available to make energy improvements that local authority officers are more familiar with in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Over the last year, staff and resources have been redirected towards urgent work and responding to the pandemic.

Do you directly target landlords of EPC F and G rated properties? If yes, how? If no, please explain.

A joint presentation was undertaken at the landlord forum on March 2019 with our delivery partner for the Affordable Warmth Solutions First Time Central Heating scheme which was well attended. The scheme has resulted in joint working between public health, private sector housing, and Affordable Warmth Solutions which has identified non-gas areas by postcode, and areas with the highest numbers of dwellings with EPC ratings of F & G. This has resulted in an area based mail-out to occupiers, encompassing all tenures, along with an offer to pay for those who do not qualify for the assisted schemes.

In delivering GHG LAD schemes the landlords of lowest EPC properties will be targeted.

Financial support for energy efficiency

Where possible, please set out your answers to the following questions by tenure (owner occupied, privately rented, or social housing).

What financial programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency or energy saving? If applicable please outline the budget (and % of the budget that is used), where such funding is sourced and where it is targeted.

Please see earlier answer on funding secured to promote and deliver energy schemes

What future investment for energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures do you have planned, and when are these investments planned for?

See previous answers on GHG LAD schemes in development

Fuel poverty

Does your local authority have a fuel poverty strategy?

The council does not have a fuel poverty strategy, however addressing fuel poverty is a priority outlined in key Health and Wellbeing reports.

The current Report of the Blackpool Director of Public Health and Wellbeing identifies fuel poverty as a measure of inequality where Lancashire is significantly worse than the national average. The report sets out a commitment to tackle health inequalities in Lancashire.

What steps have you taken to identify residents/properties in fuel poverty? What blockers, if any, have there been in identifying households in fuel poverty?

ChiL works with local stakeholders such as Home Improvement Agencies, Citizens Advice and Age UK to identify vulnerable residents, link up services and cross-refer.

We promote schemes and the measures available to frontline health and social care staff, ensuring the most vulnerable are targeted, and link up with other council support services such as Disabled Facilities Grants. We work with Electricity NorthWest to support their customers that are identified as vulnerable and listed on the Priority Services Register.

ChiL targets areas of high fuel poverty by holding community events, such as the 'heat and eat' events held during 2018. Properties that are known to require measures that we have funding for are targeted with mailouts and leaflet drops.

Properties with low EPC's and in areas of deprivation and fuel poverty are being targeted for measures, including those off-gas communities.

Local authorities work continuously to identify and support vulnerable residents and this is an ongoing process. The work over the last year to respond to the impact of the covid pandemic on our residents, particularly those vulnerable, has helped identified those that need additional support, this work is ongoing through the district community hubs and support networks established.

How does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall carbon reduction strategy?

Our key actions to address fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of properties through the installation of energy saving and renewable heating solutions together with advice on reducing energy usage are key actions to reduce carbon emissions from the domestic sector.

Blackpools Sustainability Energy and Water Policy identifies links to renewable energy technologies which offer the possibility of cheaper fuel prices for residents and businesses alike.

Please highlight any fuel poverty issues specific to your area.

The latest Fuel Poverty Statistics show that Blackpool has the largest number of households in Lancashire who are fuel poor (10,280) which is 15.2% compared with the National Average of 10.3%.

What measures or initiatives have you taken to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty? Include information on partnerships with local businesses or energy providers you have.

Please see previous answers on schemes and partnerships in place to promote energy saving measures and advice to those in fuel poverty

Green Homes Grant

Of the £2bn Green Homes Grant scheme introduced in summer 2020, £500m was assigned for Local Authority Delivery (LAD). LAD enables local authorities to bid for grant funding to support low income households in their area with energy efficiency and low carbon heating upgrades. £200m was made available through local authority grant competitions in 2020, known as phases 1A and 1B and £300m was allocated under Phase 2 between the five regional local energy hubs.

Has your Local Authority Participated in GHG: LAD?

If yes, please indicate which phase you participated in and briefly outline the project.

Yes – Participated in a collaborative Lancashire bid in phase 1b. Funding secured for specific projects in 5 districts together with support for eligible residents and properties across Lancashire. Up to £10,000 is available per property for eligible measures:

- Insulation (solid wall insulation, loft/cavity, room in roof and underfloor)
- Renewable heating technologies
- Energy efficient external doors and window upgrades (single glazed to double glazed)

The North West Energy Hub secured £50million and have allocated £12million to Lancashire to provide Green Home Grants to approximately 1200 households.

If no, please indicate what barriers prevented you from participation in the scheme

Would your local authority be in a position to manage the delivery of upgrades through a scheme such as LAD in 2022?

If yes, please indicate the anticipated number of homes that could be upgraded per year.

The LAD 2 bid includes proposal to deliver improvements to 1,000 properties across Lancashire. This could potentially be repeated but dependant on collaborative ventures and the specific requirements of the funding to be able to find and deliver to eligible properties.

If no, please indicate what barriers would prevent you from delivering upgrades in your area.

For most of the districts in Lancashire, the impact of austerity over many years has reduced capacity to engage in schemes such as LAD to almost zero. Were it not for the CHiL collaborative and the willingness of all districts to work in partnership to deliver these schemes, it is unlikely that most districts would be bidding for and delivering schemes on their own at all.

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 ECO “Local Authority flexible eligibility” (LA 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 in the LA Flex programme 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.

Has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility? (Y/N)

[Yes. ECO and ECO Flex funding \(chil.uk.com\)](http://chil.uk.com) -

Please answer the following questions to help us to understand LA Flex delivery in more detail:

- How many declarations were issued for low income vulnerable households? 103
- How many declarations were issued for Fuel Poor households? 41
- How many declarations were issued for in-fill? 0
- What is the highest income cap published in your Sol? £30,000
- If you have used an income over £30k gross, what reason have you given? N/A
- Do you charge for declarations to be signed? If so, please state how much?

No

Smart metering

Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to promote smart meter take up and supporting residents to achieve benefits.

CHiL has previously linked up with Smart Energy GB to support the smart meter roll out, leaflets were produced with the Lancashire 'Cosy Homes' branding and some local energy officers attended training provided. However, we have experienced issues with the roll out with residents being left with obsolete meters after switching energy providers, as well as connectivity issues in rural areas so currently no further work is planned.

Please provide further information on activities relating to smart metering, including but not limited to:

- a. Integrating approaches to delivering energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation
- b. Arranging for smart meters to be installed by energy suppliers in vacant social housing premises
- c. Using social landlords to promote smart meter uptake
- d. Including smart meters in landlord licensing schemes
- e. Supporting residents who have had appliances condemned for safety reasons
- f. Other supporting activities

Nothing to report

Future schemes or wider initiatives

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 in residential accommodation.

The Lancashire Consortium, currently with Blackpool Council acting as Lead Authority, have for many years been proactive in their approach to attract funding to run energy saving schemes under the 'Cosy Homes in Lancashire' initiative. The stop/start nature of funding over recent years and the changes to the levels of ECO funding and the complexities of the submissions process has made it difficult to run the CHiL initiative. The awarding of LAD1b and

LAD2 and the recent announcement of LAD3 and HUG funding offers a level of long term consistency which is well overdue and for that reason is of great interest to the Consortium.

Blackpool ERDF initiatives as mentioned previously

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