

ENERGY

Introduction

Climate change is one of the greatest environmental threats facing the world. The devastating floods, droughts and storms we have seen in recent years show all too clearly how vulnerable we are to climate extremes. The main greenhouse gas responsible for climate change is carbon dioxide, which is released when fossil fuels are burnt. To combat climate change we need large improvements in the energy efficiency of homes and appliances, and changes in behaviour to promote the more efficient use of energy.

Indicator EN1: Energy Efficiency in Homes

INSERT ENERGY GRAPH A

The Home Energy Conservation Act (1995) required district and unitary councils to draw up a plan for reducing energy consumption in and carbon dioxide emissions from dwellings. It set a target of substantial progress towards a 30% reduction in CO₂ emissions from dwellings over the following 10 years.

All residents in Hertfordshire now have access to advice from dedicated energy advice centres. These advice centres can provide a home energy survey as well as specific advice on grants, insulation, appliances and renewable energy. All the councils in Hertfordshire are involved in bulk discount schemes, which provide insulation measures to residents at reduced costs.

Councils are also encouraging the use of renewable energy where appropriate. For instance, a solar club is being set up in Hertfordshire to enable people to claim discounts on the installation of solar panels. More and more planning authorities across Hertfordshire are adopting policies which will require developers to carry out an energy audit of proposed development and to consider what improvements could be achieved using renewable energy.

Indicator EN2: Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings

This indicator is based on an authority's approach to energy conservation. Does it have:

- A conservation strategy approved by a committee of members?
- A dedicated budget for conservation works and associated expenses?
- A working group of officers to action, monitor and report on progress?
- Monitoring of its larger energy accounts?
- Instrumentation of sub-metering to analyse consumption within a building?
- A programme of works to achieve savings?

INSERT ENERGY GRAPH B

Hertfordshire County Council achieved the highest rating out of the authorities in the county for the management of energy in the buildings it is responsible for. The County Council had a dedicated budget that was used for a range of works including upgrading of the Building Energy Management System at County Hall and a rolling programme of improvements to heating systems and lighting in schools. Local councils are active in the pursuit of energy savings in their buildings. Hertsmere came a close second at 63%, and Broxbourne and Watford scored over 50%.

Watford Council's two largest buildings are now supplied with 'green' electricity, which is generated from clean and renewable sources. CO₂ emissions are also being reduced through the use of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) units around the country. These make use of the waste heat from electricity generation to help meet a building's demand for hot water or space heating. So far there are 6 CHP units in 3 districts/boroughs and 2 more are planned.

**For Further Information on Energy Contact: Jean Roberts, Watford Council,
(01923) 226400**