energy

Climate change is one of the greatest environmental threats facing the world. The devastating floods, droughts and storms we have seen in the UK and across the world 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 (CO_2), which is released when fossil fuels are burnt. Wind, wave, tidal and solar power are clean, renewable forms of energy capable of replacing fossil fuels, but in 2002 only 3% of electricity was produced using renewable energy[1]. Under the Kyoto Protocol, the UK has a legal obligation to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 12.5% below 1990 levels by 2012.

Energy in the home

The Home Energy Conservation Act (1995) required district and unitary councils to draw up a plan for reducing energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions in dwellings. It set a target of a 30% reduction in CO_2 emissions from dwellings over the following ten years. The strategy to achieve this target is to reduce energy use by improving the energy efficiency of dwellings, this will be achieved through advice, education and raising the public s awareness of what can be done to reduce consumption. Also, residents are informed about the benefits of renewable energy and advised on grant funding that is available.

Indicator EN1 - Energy Efficiency in Homes

Overall Reduction %	
Dacorum BC	15.7%
East Herts DC	11.6%
North Herts DC	14%
St Albans CD	13.2%
Stevenage DC	13.6%
Three Rivers DC	8.2%
Watford BC	16%
Welwyn Hatfield DC	12.16

Reduction in Carbon Dioxide from Domestic Premises

Ways to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions:

- Install loft and cavity wall insulation in your home.
- If you are too warm, turn your thermostat down by 1°C.
- Buy long lasting energy saving bulbs, turn off lights when not in use.
- Buy A rated electrical goods - fridges, freezers, washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers - use them efficiently according to instructions.
- Turn electrical equipment (TV, Hi-fi equipment, computers, etc.) off at the mains rather than use the standby mode - 10% of household energy is used by appliances on standby (Green Futures. Sept/Oct 2003).

For more ideas and information, see **www.energy-efficiency.org.uk**

All Hertfordshire residents can receive free energy advice from their local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, which can help by providing a home energy check and specific advice on grants, insulation, appliances and renewable energy.

Contact your local EEAC by calling freephone 0800 512 012

Additionally a consortium of Hertfordshire councils have set up the Warmer Homes Greener Herts bulk discount insulation scheme, which provides loft and cavity wall insulation to residents at a greatly reduced cost. The scheme receives funding from London Electricity under their Energy Efficiency Commitment and this is passed on to the consumer through lower prices
Contact the Warmer Homes Greener Herts hotline 0800 783 2503

The HEF energy group has set up the Less is More condensing boiler scheme to provide discounted condensing boilers to households.

[1] Our energy future — creating a low carbon economy. Dti Energy White Paper. February 2003

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Replacing a fifteen-year-old central heating boiler with a new high efficiency one can save up to 32% on your fuel bills. For more information contact the helpline on 0845 609 0809.

The Herts Solar Club, operated with the support of Herts Environmental Forum, provides advice to householders on installing solar hot water heating systems. The Club also provides details of available grants as well as information on other forms of alternative energy.

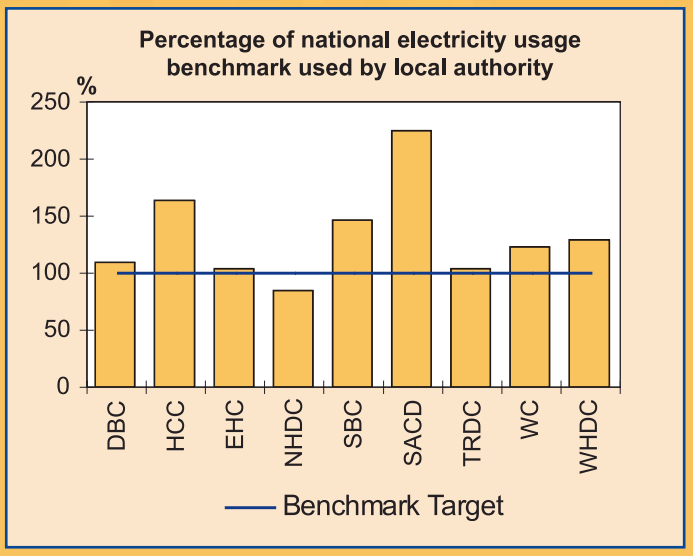
For more information contact:
Herts Solar Club 01279 655261(ext 1621)
or email: solar@hef.org.uk
New schemes such as these will contribute to meeting the Home Energy Conservation Act target of at least 30% reduction in CO2 emissions from domestic premises.

Economic instruments to improve Household Energy - Efficiency consultation document on specific measures **www.hm-treasury.gov.uk**

Indicator EN2 - Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings

Hertfordshire County Council and several local authorities now purchase green electricity for some of their buildings, generated from clean and renewable sources such as wind power. CO2 emissions are also being reduced through the use of Combined Heat and Power units around the county. These make use of the waste heat from electricity generation to help meet demand for hot water and space heating. All councils are actively pursuing energy efficiency savings in their buildings.

A new performance indicator (BV180) now requires local authorities to address energy consumption in their operational property and to report to Government each year. BV180 asks local authorities to undertake an initial survey and to report the energy consumption/m2 of local authority operational property, compared with equivalent buildings in the UK as a whole. The first submissions by Hertfordshire authorities are given opposite.



Increasingly, planning authorities across Hertfordshire are adopting policies that will require developers to carry out an energy audit of proposed development and to consider what improvements could be achieved using renewable energy and incorporating energy efficiency measures at the design stage.