

HECA FORA Network news

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UK's First City-Wide Heating System
HECA, the Strategic & Business Case

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HECA Newsletter
Issue 4
Autumn / Winter 2003

Current Approaches
on Fuel Poverty,
Creativity or Chaos?

Review of HECA
Reporting

Energy Efficiency Campaign Kicks Off

This year's energy efficiency campaign was kicked off by Leicester City's Ricardo Scimeca, with the help of 500 stress balls.

The aim of the campaign is to get in touch with as many households as possible and to encourage them to complete the home energy check to find out how efficient or inefficient their home is. Information on Government discount schemes and interest free loans is available.

For instance, if you live in your own home or in a privately-rented property with no central heating, are aged over 60 and in receipt of a means-tested benefit, then you may be eligible to have central heating fitted free of charge. Grants are also available for loft and cavity wall insulation, ring to see if you are eligible. If you don't receive any benefits, there are other discount schemes available for some households.

Interest free loans are on offer for the installation of central heating and heat recovery ventilation systems. These are repayable over five years, with only a 10% deposit required.

Staff from the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre were out and about offering advice to shoppers at Fosse Park on October 31st and in The Shires on November 14th. Free low energy bulbs were available at both events.

Householders completing a home energy check were also entered into a prize draw to win an 'A' rated fridge freezer. For the children, there was a chance to attend the Christmas Leicester City Football in the Community football course.

What we want is to get as many households within the city as energy efficient as possible. By completing the home energy check, we will be able to identify what improvements are needed and be able to refer households onto the most appropriate schemes. Any measures installed will therefore cut costs and cut down on harmful emissions into the environment.

For more information or advice, call the centre on **freephone 0800 512012** or call in at **2-4 Market Place South, Leicester**. The opening hours are 10am to 3pm Tuesday to Saturday and 11am to 3pm on Mondays. You can complete a home energy check online at: www.energy-advice.co.uk

**Alison McCafferty, Team Leader
Leicester Energy Advice Centre**



Leicester City's Ricardo Scimeca

Energy Efficiency Commitment Partnerships in Dorset

Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) insulation schemes are a great way of providing discounted insulation to residents of your local authority area. Council endorsement can improve the take up of these schemes, as residents are more likely to 'trust' a scheme supported by their local authority.

However, how can a local authority ensure that they are endorsing a high quality scheme? The eight local authority partners in the Dorset HECA Consortium have answered this by developing a set of criteria laying down standards for EEC scheme endorsement. Schemes signing up to the criteria will be able to use the Council logos, and be supported by the local authorities as necessary.

The endorsement criteria include items on customer care, quality of work, sales activities and complaint procedures.

The initiative currently has two EEC schemes signed up.

For more information please contact:

Erica Pretty
01202 633428,
or email
e.pretty@poole.gov.uk

Local Power in the Severn Vale

Lydney Local Power (LLP) is a community led renewable energy project based around the small town of Lydney in Gloucestershire. The project aims to involve the people of Lydney and the surrounding areas in designing, siteing and owning a range of renewable energy projects specific to the resources available in the local area.

The project originally developed from activities by a number of local organisations supported by the Forest of Dean District Council. The Renewable Energy Development Initiative (REDI), a community renewable energy initiative run by Severn Wye Energy Agency, moved the project forward, with initial feasibility studies taking place in late 2001. The Energy Saving Trust (EST) provided funding to expand the project in early 2002 via an Innovation Programme Grant.

A Community Energy Club has been established to introduce local people to the opportunities for energy efficiency in their own homes and to begin to formulate an energy plan for the area. Club members also have the opportunity to discuss the renewable energy options available in the local area and to influence decisions as to which of the technologies are actually implemented.

A series of Public Consultations culminated with the Energy Club voting to decide on the technologies that were felt to be most suitable for the town. A small,

focused and dedicated Steering Group, was subsequently set up for each of the different projects in order to ensure that members of the local community will make the key decisions on the progress of the projects.

Lydney Local Power is working to bring in more funding to install renewable energy systems in the Lydney area from both public and private sector funding programmes.

**For more information please contact:
Kierison Wise
on 01594 545368,
or email: Kierison@swea.co.uk**

Enact Energy's HEAT Project

Enact Energy are planning to roll out its very successful HEAT Project nationally. Currently there are schemes operating in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, East Sussex and Wales with future schemes being set up. Since April, during a period when the industry slows down we have still managed to administer 3,500 measures on properties with 548 fuel poor households being referred to Warmfront and HEES Wales. Last year alone we were approaching 200 GW/h's of energy being saved and £2.4m worth of works installed over the 5 schemes.

We offer authorities or consortiums of authorities their own insulation grant scheme managed by ourselves, they are targeted at the fuel rich, predominantly in the owner occupier and private rented sector, however, our service is a one-stop-shop and we will also make referrals to Warmfront & HEES Wales and any other scheme where the applicant is eligible such as HRA, DFG's etc.

We are currently able to provide grants for insulating cavity walls and lofts up to a depth of 250mm. We have designed the grant scheme to be simple for householders to understand and therefore offer a discounted price plus a fixed grant depending on the works that are being installed. The grants we are able to offer householders are as follows:

- 150mm loft top-up grant £75
- 200mm loft top-up grant £100
- 250mm full loft insulation grant £125
- Cavity wall insulation grant £150

There is no financial contribution from Local Authorities wishing to become a

partner in a scheme and in return they will receive a yearly detailed energy savings report, monthly progress reports, details of the measures installed and a free copy of Energy profiler software.

If you are interested in receiving further information or if you would like to set up a HEAT project then please e-mail me

**Paul Johnson at
paul@enactenergy.com**

Sunderland's 'Warm Homes' Initiative

Here at the City of Sunderland we are currently pushing ahead with a City wide "Warm Homes" initiative which aims to reduce Fuel Poverty, promote Affordable Warmth, raise awareness of energy efficiency and reduce CO₂ emissions throughout the City

The scheme itself was developed as part of the City Councils Home Energy Conservation Act Strategy and it also forms a part of its Affordable Warmth Strategy. The range of measures on offer through the scheme include cavity wall and loft insulation, draught proofing, central heating upgrades and low energy lightbulbs. The average value of work carried out is around £450 per property, and it should be noted that for every £1 the Council spends, there is an additional £4 committed from other sources.

Any resident of the City who wants to install cavity wall or loft insulation measures can arrange for this to be carried out for at least half the normal cost. Residents aged 60 years or over can expect to pay around a quarter of the normal cost and in some cases some residents will qualify for a 100% grant allowing the work to be carried out at no cost at all to them.

Since the start of the initiative around 2,400 homes in the City have been visited each month by energy efficiency qualified surveyors. Of these, 600 households per month have been made more energy efficient with around 800 cavity wall and/or loft insulation improvements completed. For a typical uninsulated, three bedroom, semi-detached home, built in the 1950's, this could mean a saving of up to £240 each year off their energy bill. This means that people in Sunderland are not only feeling warmer in their own homes, they have more money to spend in the local economy, and are reducing the amount of CO₂ emissions into the environment.

With the City of Sunderland "Warm Homes" initiative areas of well insulated, properly heated homes are being created across Wearside. In addition, almost half of the improvements made so far have been carried out without the householder having to spend any money.

**Alan Hunter
Sunderland**



Wiltshire Wins Funding

The Wiltshire HECA Group in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has won funding of £117,000 to run Switch on! from the Energy Saving Trust's Innovations programme and the New Opportunities Fund SEED programme. Switch on! is a new project which aims to take the energy saving message right into the heart of the community.

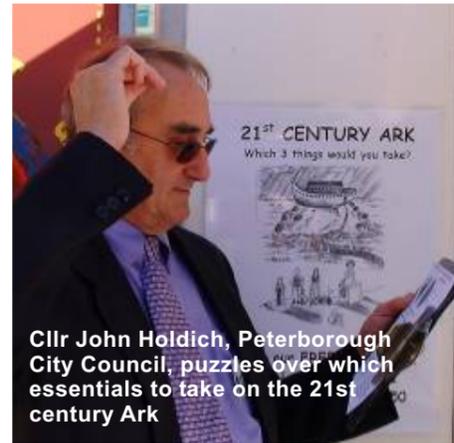
Switch on! was developed following a survey of Wildlife Trust members on their attitudes to sustainable energy issues. The results showed that 75% of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust members regard climate change as a major environmental threat. Switch on! will help householders to make the link between climate sensitive species such as the adonis blue butterfly and the water vole and the need to take practical action on energy efficiency. It will also help to link the traditional work of the Wildlife Trust with that of Warm Hearted Homes and the local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (managed by the Trust).

Volunteers will be encouraged and supported to work in their communities to ensure that the maximum number of householders get involved in energy activities. This could be anything from simply asking friends and neighbours to complete a Home Energy Check to organising a Village Energy Day. In Swindon, a Community Energy Competition will act as a focus for residents.

Taking practical action on energy efficiency often results in needing to spend some money on measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation, low energy light bulbs or solar panels. To ensure that as many people as possible can install measures, an Energy Club will provide access to an exclusive range of discounts on measures and materials.

Finally, to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions even further, a special Wildlife Trust Energy tariff will be set up to enable people to buy green electricity, generated from renewable sources and benefiting the Wildlife Trust at the same time.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Energy Projects Manager 01380 725670



Cllr John Holdich, Peterborough City Council, puzzles over which essentials to take on the 21st century Ark



BBC's Sue Marchant encourages and challenges the "punters".



Hampshire and the Isle of Wight could lead the way in reducing CO₂

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight could lead the way in reducing harmful emissions of CO₂, a research study has found. The Government White Paper 'Our Energy Future' signalled an important shift in energy policy by setting ambitious long-term targets for carbon dioxide emissions for the UK, with reductions of 60% by 2050. The Southern Home Energy Conservation Act Network (SHECANE) commissioned the study last October to find out whether the same target would be achievable for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight alone, over the same time-scale. The research was supported by the Government Office (South East), the Environment Centre (tEC), the Energy Savings Trust and the 14 local authorities which make up SHECANE.

Key findings of the research included: It is technically feasible to achieve these long-term targets using energy efficiency and renewable energy alone, i.e. without resorting to nuclear power or carbon sequestration (storage). Over twice as much CO₂ could be saved through energy efficiency than renewable energy generation. The greatest single contributions could come from energy efficiency, particularly in the transport sector, and offshore wind

energy. The two counties could be particularly well placed to pioneer the development of the hydrogen economy.

"The national and local impacts of reaching these targets would be significant and would require clarity of vision, commitment and innovation," said summit organiser Gary Foster. "The study also points out the benefits of creating a cleaner economy, including more jobs and better air quality. Given the growing impacts of climate change, there is a need for immediate, yet sustained, action."

As an initial step, the study recommends that the two counties initiate a comprehensive strategy to minimise climate change, through reducing CO₂ emissions, to complement regional and national targets. This should be backed by a detailed action plan, which engages all relevant sectors and levels of local government, business and the community.

"An opportunity waits for local ownership and focused leadership that could place the two counties at the forefront, nationally and internationally, of a sustainable energy future and the creation of the low carbon economy," said Pete Griffiths, Chair of SHECANE.

To download the report, visit: www.shecane.org/publicdownloads.php or contact

Annabel Preston on 023 8063 2729

HECA East Network

Anglia West EEAC and partner Local Authorities were out on the Road in Energy Efficiency Week. Six local authorities joined in the Roadshow fun during energy efficiency week bringing mobile advice to Newmarket, Peterborough, Swaffham, Huntingdon and Wisbech. Huntingdonshire District Council again provided their environment trailer to act as home to the intrepid nomadic energy advisers for the week and BBC regional host Sue Marchant teamed up to provide a constant commentary. Jazz bands, face painters, balloon modelers, hair platters all added to the fun and games.

- John Davis, Anglia West EEAC

Jack Straw Visits Lancashire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre

Jack Straw, Labour MP for Blackburn, and Foreign Secretary, called into the recently re-opened Lancashire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, based in Blackburn on Friday, 10th October 2003.

He was greeted by Councillor Khan of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Centre Manager- Gareth Mayoh.

Mr Straw toured the centre and spoke to the energy advice team about the services offered by the centre, which include a free home energy report for customers completing a home energy questionnaire, free home energy grants information and advice, and presentations to schools, community groups and local businesses.

The Advice Centre is part of a network of 52 local energy advice centres throughout the UK, and are funded through the Energy Saving Trust which is a non-profit organisation funded by the government and the private sector.



Pictured are (left to right): Gareth Mayoh - Centre Manager, Natasha Edwards - Energy Advice Officer, Jack Straw - Labour MP for Blackburn, and Foreign Secretary Councillor Khan - Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Lancashire Energy Facts

£1.8 million worth of energy will be wasted in Lancashire next week if the community does not take immediate action.

Lancashire has:

- 474,000 households
- x £200 annual saving
- 52 weeks
- = £1.8 million of wasted energy.

• Did you know that making energy

efficiency improvements to your home could save you up to £200 on your annual bills and help make your home warmer this winter?

• If all homes in Lancashire that had cavity walls, installed insulation to help prevent heat loss then:

They would save 748 GWh/year, which is enough energy to meet the average needs of 33,411 households for a year and would save £13 million per year,

Enough energy would be saved to make more than 24 BILLION cups of coffee.

• If every household installed a high efficiency condensing boiler then they would save 1,753 GW/h a year, which is enough energy to meet the average needs

of 78,294 households for a year and would save £25 million per year.

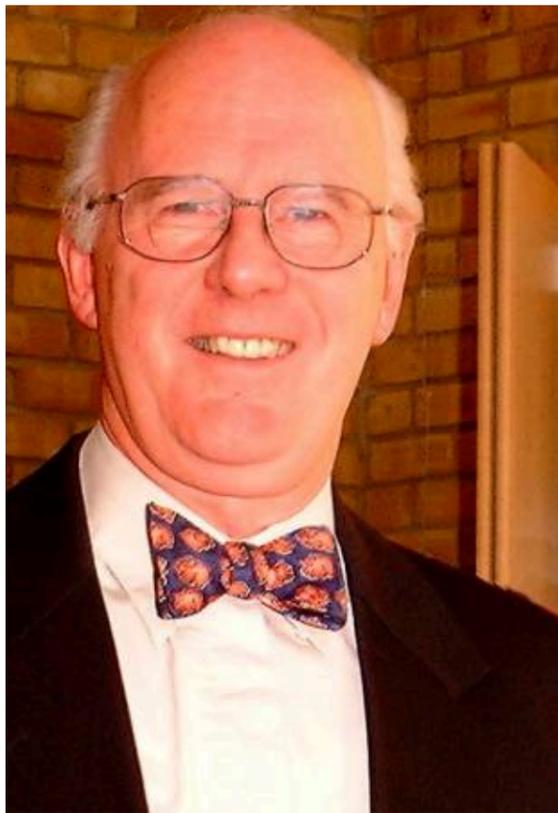
• The Energy Saving Trust (EST) was set up by the UK Government after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and is one of the UK's leading organisations addressing the damaging affects of climate change. The EST's goal is to achieve the sustainable and efficient use of energy, and to cut carbon dioxide emissions, which are the key contributors to global warming. The EST is a non-profit organisation, funded by Government and the private sector.

For further information please contact: **The Lancashire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512 012**



The jazz band playing with gusto!





John Davis
Anglia West EEAC Manager

Current Approaches on Fuel Poverty, Creativity or Chaos?

Q Peter, you discussed tackling fuel poverty in a recent lecture and expressed the view that the current relationships which have developed between the energy suppliers and government have led to complexity and confusion for companies and customers alike. Could you expand on this and explain who you think are the main losers and why? Should anything be done to simplify the situation?

A When the appliances of every gas using household had to be converted to natural gas about 30 years ago, British Gas split their customers into sectors and went systematically into every house doing the necessary work - a focused operation organised from the centre. The equivalent today would be a systematic sweep through our cities and villages to remove households from fuel poverty, and also to offer energy efficiency measures to those who are not on low income, with the funds for these activities coming from a single pot. This could be run by Local Authorities or in a more centralised way. Warm Zones are a step in this direction, although, as is well known, the Warm Zones draw money from a variety of sources and this affects their operations.

There are advantages and disadvantages of both approaches. The two key advantages of the gas conversion approach are firstly, that transaction costs are low. You do not have to spend so much time bringing together various parties and funds and trying to marry different schemes. Secondly, the customer experience is better. Under the current system, if a household is having work done both under Warm Front and EEC, it will have at least two surveys with some work done quickly and some of it perhaps months later. This is not acceptable.

The disadvantages are the usual drawbacks of centralised unified approaches. Costs may be higher, as there may be less pressure for

efficiency and there is likely to be less scope for experiment and creativity. Currently, for example, companies are trying different approaches for fulfilling their EEC Priority Group obligations and this is healthy.

A pure 'gas conversion' approach is unlikely in today's circumstances. However, I would like to see, as a minimum, these changes:

When EEC and Warm Front are changed in 2005, we need to ensure that all the work needed in one house can be done under one scheme. Some are proposing that Warm Front should do heating and EEC should do insulation. This is disintegration, not integration, and is bad for the customer. I am opposed to it. Arrangements should be such that both Warm Front managers and energy suppliers can do all the work needed.

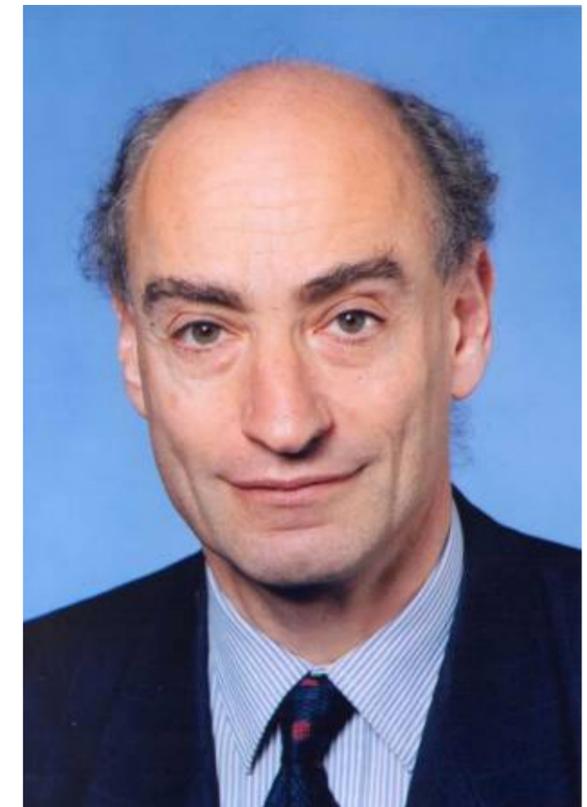
Similarly, the Warm Front and EEC arrangements need to be changed so as to enable unified schemes like Warm Zones, Here to Help and HeatStreet to work seamlessly.

There should be a fairly small 'emergency pot' of funds, to deal with cases which are not covered under the rules of current schemes.

It would be good to see an experiment in an area under which both energy efficiency and the removal of fuel poverty are promoted and it is possible that some of the National Grid Transco / DTI schemes for bringing gas or other heating to rural communities could be developed along these lines.

Do you have a burning question that you haven't had the opportunity to ask? Then send it to ukheca@leicester.gov.uk, or UK HECA Secretariat, 2-4 Market Place South, Leicester, LE1 5HB letting us know to whom it's directed and we'll do our best to get you an answer.

Peter Lehman
Chairman of the Energy Saving Trust



Leicester City Responds to Climate Change

Leicester's role in responding to the challenges of global warming came into the spotlight with the launch of the City of Leicester Climate Change Strategy.

The report commissioned by the council for the Leicester Partnership and Leicester Environment Partnership sets out the predicted impact of climate change on the city.

The new strategy also outlines key recommendations to cut the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by our transport as well as residential, commercial and industrial sectors.

Highlighting the timely nature of the report, Don Lack, head of the council's energy management service, said: "Global warming is already happening, we can see its effects now this long summer is not a freak occurrence and the situation won't get any better until we all do our bit."

Cllr Roger Blackmore, city council leader, said:

"We need to ensure that everyone who lives or works in Leicester is aware of the implications of climate change for the city and of how our daily lives contribute to the problem."

Only by acting on the issues outlined in the city of Leicester Climate Change Strategy can we truly consider ourselves worthy of the title of Environment City."

Copies of the summary document can be requested from the UK HECA Fora Secretariat, with a full technical version available to download from:

www.leicester.gov.uk/climatechange
The changes to Leicester's climate, by the year 2080, are predicted to be:

- An annual average temperature increase of about 3.2 °C,
- An average winter temperature increase of about 3.6 °C,
- An average summer temperature increase of about 2.6 °C,
- An average increase in rainfall of about 11% in winter and a decrease of about 4% in summer.

John Evans

Welcome, Jo Lacey!

On behalf of the HECA Fora Network, we would like to warmly welcome Jo Lacey who has recently been appointed Programme Manager, Local Authority Support at the EST. Jo will be introducing herself with an article in the next edition of HECA Fora Network News.

Royal Assent

The Sustainable Energy Act received Royal Assent on Thursday the 30th of October and is now officially an Act of Parliament. Ron Bailey of Association for the Conservation of Energy (ACE) will also be writing for the next edition of the newsletter with an update.

HECA Officer Accreditation

The National HECA Fora Secretariat, under the instruction of the HECA Chairs, are currently developing ideas to produce a minimum standard of professional accreditation for HECA Officers. This may eventually lead to a short training programme, which would result in professional certification. If you have any comments or suggestions please email: ukheca@leicester.gov.uk

HECA, the Strategic & Business Case

Winchester City Council (WCC) has recently commissioned an investigation into Home Energy Conservation in the district. Consultants completed a full report, establishing whether or not WCC would be able to meet the 30% saving in domestic energy by 2010.

With funding from the Energy Saving Trust, Winchester City Council recently commissioned a report that would investigate HECA activity within WCC, and establish whether or not, with current input levels, the 30% reduction in domestic energy usage in the district would be achieved by 2010.

The Officer responsible for HECA, Andrew Nairn, worked with consultants from Energy for Sustainable Development (ESD) to produce a comprehensive report. ESD also consulted the Sustainability Officer at Winchester, Peter Griffiths (Chair of SHECANE), the Environment Centre, and Solent Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. The consultants also used Winchester's recent Private

Sector House Condition Survey and a detailed Housing Needs Survey, to get data for their report, and also contacted the Energy Savings Trust and the Eaga Partnership for further information.

The report suggests that at current activity levels in Winchester City Council, a 30% reduction in domestic energy usage by 2010 over the base line established in 1996, is not possible. In order to meet this target, the report recommends an annual budget provision of £200,000 for increased HECA activities that includes additional full time staff and an intensive/dedicated marketing strategy. The report also includes a wealth of useful information on how the consultants arrived at this conclusion, and also lists other things that could happen that would make a meaningful contribution to energy savings.

The report also emphasises the importance of the funding that could be accessed through the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), which is available from large fuel suppliers. This money can help to pay for a large volume of insulation measures, the most signifi-

cant being loft and cavity wall insulation. High efficiency condensing boilers are seen as a third leading measure for saving energy.

HECA Officer at Winchester City Council, Andrew Nairn, was pleased with the objectivity of the report: "It's very helpful to have an independent study which makes a strong case for increasing HECA activity and thereby raising the profile and awareness of home energy saving issues. We will look closely at the detail and take the recommendations forward at the most opportune time. It's fair to say that the outcomes and recommendations might equally apply to many local authorities who are experiencing similar problems in achieving the governments targets."

For more information about the report, you can contact:
**Andrew Nairn, HECA Officer,
Winchester City Council,
on 01962 848485 or email
anairn@winchester.gov.uk**

To download and read the report, visit: www.shecane.org/publicdownloads.php

UK's First City-Wide Heating System

The UK's first city-wide community heating scheme was announced recently. Based in Leicester, it is part of a £6 million package of grants awarded through the Community Energy programme, managed by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and Carbon Trust.

Leicester City Council received £5.1 million for its pioneering scheme, which is the largest renewables project in the centre of any city in the UK. It will use a heat network to link four housing estates, the University of Leicester and 16 council-owned buildings and will have sufficient biomass input to heat almost a thousand homes. Further phases, already in the planning stage, could take the scheme value to more than £70 million.

Secretary of State of the Department for Trade and Industry, Rt. Hon. Patricia Hewitt MP, said:

"Leicester is fast becoming a champion of sustainable development. This £5.1million grant will help to provide affordable warmth, cut harmful carbon dioxide emissions and ensure the future well-being of our environment. It is a shining example to other UK local authorities of how they can really benefit their local communities."

In total, eight thousand households, including 2,328 low incomes homes, will benefit from the latest Community Energy funding round. It will see more than 6,000 tonnes of carbon emissions per year saved and residents are expected to enjoy annual fuel bill reductions of £193 per household.

Local authorities, housing associations and other public sector organisations should act now and apply for available funding. Community heating substantially reduces carbon dioxide emissions by using a heat network supplying more than one building or customer. Designed to combat greenhouse gases and reduce fuel bills, the Government's £50 million programme supports the refurbishment and installation of community heating schemes across the UK.

Don Lack, Head of Service Energy at Leicester City Council, said:

"Leicester launched its Climate Change Strategy to deal with the effects of global warming and to take decisive action at the local level. The Leicester scheme will provide affordable and attainable energy from clean technologies developed specifically for the city. The support from the Government and the EST through the Community Energy programme enables us to kick-start the first phase of the project."

Other grants announced today include

£318,000 to Shetland Charitable Trust, £113,488 to Kilburn Square Housing Cooperative and £536,000 to Barking, Havering and Redbridge NHS Trust. These four schemes combined will cost more than £24 million and cut carbon emissions by 6,000 tonnes a year.

EST Chief Executive, Philip Sellwood, said:

"This fifth round of capital funding has produced a landmark project. Leicester Council's scheme proves to all, that large scale, efficient community heating schemes are not only a reality but are economically viable with many benefits for communities. Since its inception, the Community Energy programme has made almost £22 million of grants available and we continue to urge more local authorities and housing associations to embrace community heating for the benefit of their communities and the environment."

Lord Whitty, Minister for Sustainable Energy, said:

"The Leicester City Council scheme is particularly exciting for its scope. The Community Energy programme is well placed to help deliver projects of this scale. The example set by Leicester can serve to act as a catalyst to inspire other cities to develop large schemes. I have seen for myself how community heating can benefit both people and the environment."

Community Energy development grants are available from a dedicated £2 million fund for option appraisal, feasibility studies, business planning and tendering work.

The successful fifth round capital grant bids are:

Leicester City Council £5,100,000: New primary heat main, linking the University, four housing estates and 16 council-owned buildings.

Shetland Charitable Trust £318,000: Extension to Shetland's Energy from Waste scheme to supply the largest school on the island and existing dwellings en route.

Kilburn Square Housing Cooperative £113,488: Refurbishment of an existing network serving 80 flats by converting from oil-fired boilers to a gas-fired operation.

Barking, Havering and Redbridge NHS Trust £536,000: Conversion of an existing energy centre from heavy oil (with its sulphur emissions) to gas, serving St George's and Goodmayes hospitals.

The schemes are expected to:

- save over six thousand tonnes of carbon a year,
- help reduce the fuel bills of more than 2,300 people on low incomes,
- add 727 MWe of Good Quality CHP capacity.

Heat networks like Leicester's provide the key to making many renewable technologies useable in cities and will be important in delivering on the UK renewables potential. Local authorities, housing associations and other public sector organisations are aware of the benefits community heating schemes deliver. They must now take action to implement such projects.

To help identify opportunities for community heating in your area please visit: <http://www.est.org.uk/communityenergy/information/heatmaps.cfm>

The Community Energy Heat Maps represent the "heat demand density", that is the demand for heat from homes, public sector and commercial buildings, for every postcode area in the UK.

For more information on Leicester's Community Heating Scheme email: info@energyagency.co.uk



Practical help Keeping You Up-to-Date

With Government proposals underway for 200,000 new homes to be built in the South East alone, the Energy Saving Trust's Practical help service provides information resources focusing on the issues surrounding sustainable construction. The Practical help advisory service provides a wealth of practical information on sustainable energy and road transport. While the Practical help website now offers several new resources that HECA officers can take advantage of.

The Briefing Notes and Case Studies section of the website offers a new Briefing Note and three Case Studies showcasing BedZED, the Hockerton Housing Project and Greenwich Millennium Village. Other recent additions to the website include guidance on Comprehensive Performance Assessment for each of the UK nations, as well as a Briefing Note and accompanying Case Studies that focus on climate change strategies.

The January 2004 edition of Practical help News will also focus on sustainable communities and housing. More than 9,000 local authority officers and members currently receive Practical help News each quarter. If you are not currently subscribed and would like to join the mailing list, please contact the Practical help team to ensure you receive a copy of the next edition.

The Practical help website highlights a number of key programmes and

initiatives in housing and transport that are facilitated by the Energy Saving Trust. One such initiative is the Community Energy programme, which provides support for new and upgraded community heating schemes. The programme provides funding, grants and expert guidance to assist officers throughout the development and implementation of community heating projects.

Specifically, Community Energy offers:

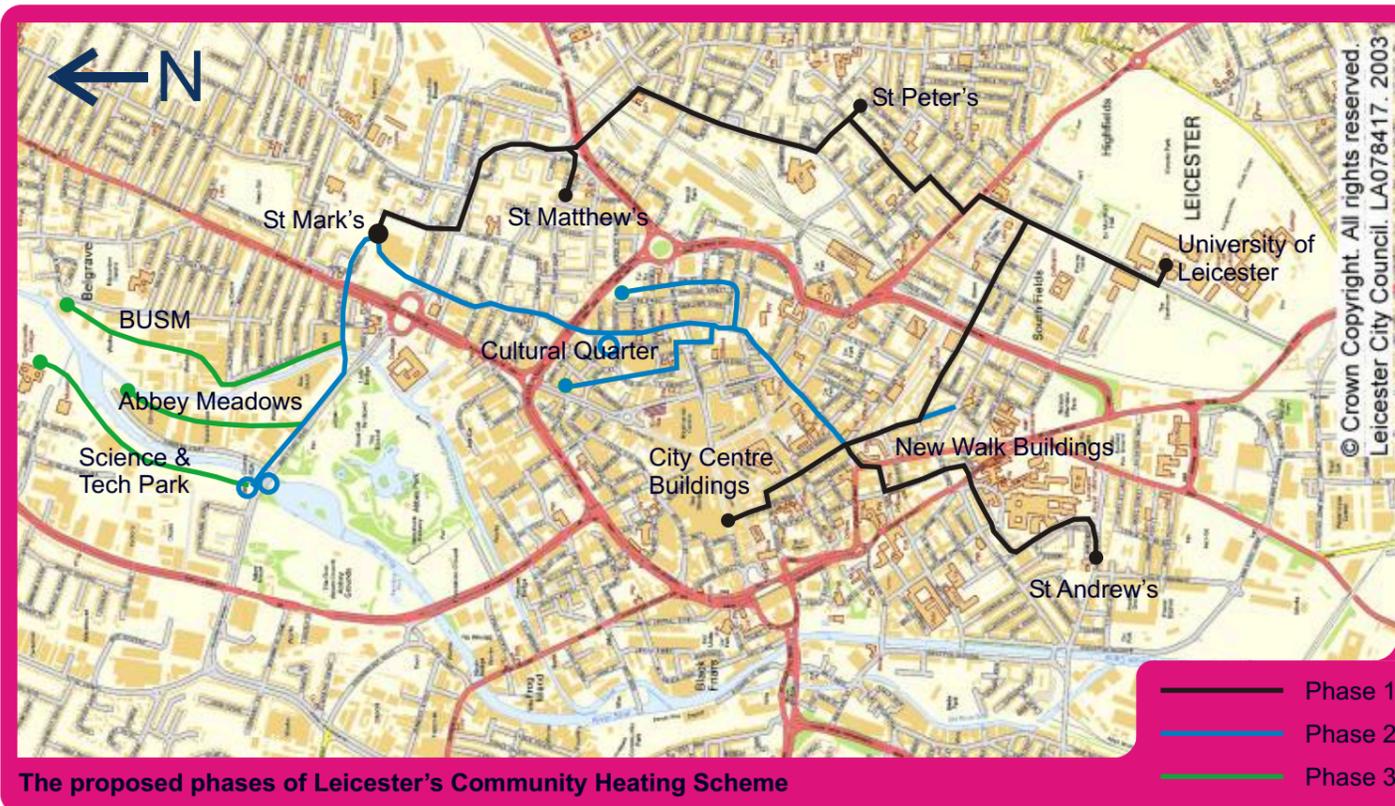
- 50% funding support for feasibility studies, with rolling application decisions on grants of less than £25,000 and quarterly decisions on grants between £25,000 and £100,000;
- 40% funding support for capital projects with quarterly deadlines and no upper limit on the amount available; and
- Expert support and guidance throughout the development and implementation process.

The next deadline for grant applications is 31 January 2004, with bidding rounds every quarter after that, and the final round of applications closing in January 2005.

For further information relating to the Briefing Notes and Case Studies, Community Energy programme or any other issues pertaining to sustainable energy or road transport, please contact the Practical help Advisory Service. The Practical help team will endeavour to answer your enquiry within three working days and provide you with the relevant information you require.

Tel: 0870 241 2089
Fax: 0870 130 8831

Email: info@practicalhelp.org.uk
Web: www.practicalhelp.org.uk



The proposed phases of Leicester's Community Heating Scheme

HECA Fora Website

The HECA Fora Website is now fully functional and can be accessed at www.hecafora.com. There are a number of sections available:

Conference - contains photographs of the 2003 conference, downloads of most of the speaker and workshop presentations, the final report, exhibitor and sponsor details, delegate list and speaker biographies.

News - All past issues of the HECA newsletters can be downloaded in PDF format.

Events - events and training days are posted that are relevant to Local Authority officers. If you are holding an event that you feel would benefit others and want to post it on the website send details to the National Secretariat at ukheca@leicester.gov.uk or telephone 0116 2995133.

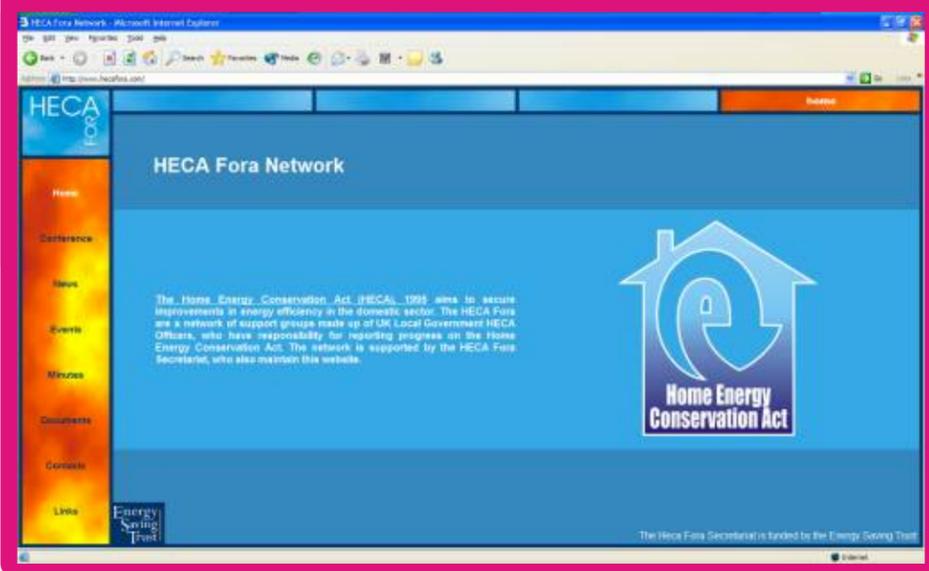
Minutes - Minutes from the National, regional, conference and progress meetings are available to read. All minutes will be posted on the site, so that Local Authorities can find out what is happening in different regions.

Documents - relevant documents that have been disseminated to the HECA Fora can be downloaded. If there are any interesting and relevant documents, you wish to see posted, please contact the secretariat.

Contacts - A list of full contact details for all regional and national Secretariats and Chairs.

Links - A few links to other websites that may be useful to HECA Officers.

- Helen Atkins, UK HECA Secretariat



Review of HECA Reporting

Since 1996, Energy Conservation Authorities (ECAs) have been required to report on their progress towards delivering domestic energy efficiency targets. These reports have been duly submitted annually by the vast majority of authorities. The Regional Government Offices and the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs evaluate the reports and return comments to the reporting authorities. Each year progress made by ECAs is published.

HECA Officers have consistently expressed concerns with the present reporting arrangements. Common concerns are as follows:

1. The lack of a uniform, easily prepared, meaningful and affordable data gathering method across all local authorities has resulted in a plethora of different data gathering mechanisms being used. This has resulted in data that is not comparable across the whole country.
2. There is a perception that some authorities have made quite an effort to gather accurate baseline information and accurate data on progress whereas others report estimated improvements.
3. Although there is a legal obligation to report, this information is not utilised to provide positive information, there are no procedures to enforce reporting nor are there any penalties for not reporting.
4. This leads to a situation where reporting is considered a burden rather than a planning tool for delivery of domestic energy efficiency.

DEFRA will soon be embarking on consultation over wider changes in HECA reporting. Their review is based upon the previous unfinished LA Energy Efficiency Activity Review but is also being informed

by the Energy White Paper. The UK HECA Forum proposes to submit the views of its members in advance of the release of this consultation paper, in order to contribute to the shape of it from the outset. The UK HECA Forum is therefore submitting this proposal for EST funds to pay for the research of member views and the preparation and submission of a report to DEFRA, which will be ratified by each regional forum. This will feed into DEFRA's new proposals, which will then be issued for formal consultation over a three month period. DEFRA plans to issue the new guidance by December 2004, to take effect from 2005.

DEFRA endorsed this proposal at the UK HECA Forum Chairs Meeting on 15 September 2003. They welcome UK HECA Forum input into their review as an effective way of both transferring the knowledge and views of practitioners and developing consensus over desirable changes to the data and data collection methods used in future reports.

A steering group consisting of UK HECA Fora Chairs will shortly commission a consultant to carry the review. The consultant will commence with a desktop review of relevant previous research and data, this will be followed by a questionnaire, distributed to HECA officers via the network to establish views on reporting. The data gathered will be analysed, recommendations and a summary in the form of a final report will be produced for DEFRA's consideration prior to their release for the formal consultation paper. A workshop will also be held at the National HECA Conference 2004 on DEFRA's HECA proposals.

Aims of the research:

- Establish HECA Officers' views on the current HECA reporting arrangements, with regard to its aims, requirements, format and content;
- Establish HECA Officers' views on the usefulness of HECA reporting arrangements in carrying out their role;
- Establish HECA Officers' views on any changes they would like made to future HECA reporting arrangements, including the possibility of broadening reporting to reflect the Energy White Paper's agenda;
- Establish HECA Officers' views on the data collection methodologies they use and value;
- Identify opportunities for improving the current HECA data collection and reporting process;
- Report the findings to DEFRA (and other key partners devolved administrations, EST etc) for inclusion in considerations on the future of HECA, the Energy White Paper Energy Efficiency Implementation Plan and relevant guidance.

Towards a West Midlands Energy Strategy

'Towards a West Midlands Energy Strategy', was the theme of the eighth conference hosted by the West Midlands HECA Forum, on 8th October. It saw local councils from the West Midlands conurbation, industry representatives and other key regional and local partners coming together to discuss local and regional energy issues.

Paul Cobbing from the Government Office for the West Midlands provided a background to the Regional Energy Strategy Development Process, with Dr Lynne Jones, MP for Birmingham Selly Oak setting the work of the Forum in context. Speakers from Birmingham City Council, IT Power and Gfleet Services provided an overview of strategic work in the West Midlands in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy and transport. British Gas also gave a presentation on their 'here to HELP' initiative, which is meeting the challenge of fuel poverty in the region.

The Energy White Paper recognises that local authorities have an important role to play in decisions on energy policy, and the conference provided a platform from which delegates could voice their views and concerns in four key energy areas: fuel poverty eradication, renewable energy, transport and rural issues. The comments made are being fed back to partners involved in producing the West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy, ensuring that the important local and regional issues identified by delegates are properly considered. Graham Jones, Chair of the West Midlands HECA Forum said, "The conference provided a key opportunity for West Midlands local authorities to fully engage in developments of the energy strategy."

The West Midlands HECA Forum conference was organised by the Central Midlands/Black Country Local Authority Support Programme and sponsored by the British Gas 'here to HELP' scheme and Birmingham City Council.

For further information, please contact:
Ellie Cooper
Tel: 0121 262 6402



Environmentally conscious delegates were given the opportunity to catch the 'Eco Coach', a service provided by the event organisers, which ran from Birmingham New Street to the venue. It was estimated that 70kg of carbon dioxide emissions alone was saved by people using the service for the short 10 mile round trip! Much more was likely to have been saved by people using public transport to catch the coach.

150 School Children Attend the West Dorset Annual Flagship Energy Awareness Day

The annual West Dorset Flagship Energy Awareness Day took place on 10th October 2003 at Bridport Arts Centre.

As in previous years, pupils of local primary schools were invited to the event where they met fun character Jimmy Jacket who explained the importance of energy efficiency and protecting the environment. All the children were given questionnaires which they completed as they visited each display.

Exhibitors felt that it was a great success, largely thanks to the involvement of the children who gave the event a real buzz with their enthusiasm and searching questions.

The event was also attended by local people; with over 200 visitors.

Further details are available from:
M Selley or M Chamberlain
01305 252288

Dates for your Diary!

National HECA Conference 2004

Tue 11th & Wed 12th May 2004
Cardiff

Further Details will be issued during January 2004. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please contact the HECA Fora Secretariat: 0116 299 5133 ukheca@leicester.gov.uk

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS! If you have any news items please send them to the HECA Fora Secretariat: ukheca@leicester.gov.uk Fax: 0116 299 5143



The HECA Fora Secretariat is funded by the Energy Saving Trust