

HECA 2023

The reporting period covers 01/04/2021 - 31/03/2023

[Home Energy Conservation Act 2023 report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Name of Local Authority	Woking Borough Council
Type of Local Authority	Borough Council
Name, job title and email address of official submitting report	Submission completed February 2024 by the Green Infrastructure team, Woking Borough Council Email: green@woking.gov.uk

Headline and Overview

1. Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic properties?

Yes. The Council's Climate Change Strategy – [Woking 2050](#) – incorporates carbon reduction and energy efficiency for domestic (and non-domestic) properties.

2. If yes, please provide a link

- Woking 2050: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-change-strategy-woking-2050>
- The accompanying Climate Emergency Action Plan is available at <https://www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-emergency-action-plan->

3. If no, are you planning to develop one

N/A

4. In the last 2 years, what has been the cost (or estimated cost) of your energy efficiency and/or carbon reduction initiatives, schemes and services? Please consider the total cost of running and administering the scheme(s). Please input 0 if no schemes or initiatives has been implemented.

Each year Woking Borough Council pays a £3,000 annual subscription to [Action Surrey](#)'s home energy efficiency advice service. This enables free impartial energy efficiency advice to Woking borough residents along with eligibility checks for grant funded measures.

Through a consortium of Surrey local authorities, [Action Surrey](#) has and continues to deliver an extensive programme of household energy efficiency retrofits.

Further to the launch of the government's Local Authority Delivery (LAD) funding in July 2020, [ThamesWey](#) in collaboration with Woking Borough Council, secured £6.3m of Phase 1A funding in September 2020 to upgrade 600 low-income, hard-to-heat properties across Surrey. An additional £3.1m was awarded to expand the project to a further 300 households under Phase 1B in February 2021. Surrey County Council also provided £372,000 of 'top up' funding to enable further delivery by easing some of the core project constraints.

ThamesWey delivered both phases via its long-running energy efficiency service Action Surrey. The scheme was marketed locally as “Green Jump Surrey” and ran from October 2020 through to March 2022. Green Jump Surrey was a major success, creating much needed and sustained benefits for low-income households. A total of 775 installations for almost 600 households were delivered and estimated to reduce annual energy bills by an average of £660 (at April 2022 prices). The installations will help protect the fuel-poor grant recipients from rises in energy prices. The lifetime greenhouse gas emission savings were estimated at 26 mega-tonnes of CO₂e. Despite challenges caused by Covid-19 lockdowns, poor weather and the Brexit transition period, the project delivered the third highest number of upgrades out of 90 projects nationally.

Following the success of the Green Jump Surrey project, Action Surrey delivered further fully funded energy efficiency measures under LAD2 for eligible households across the county. The scheme launched mid-February 2022 with measures completed by end of September 2022. Over £1.1m of funding for 202 energy efficiency measures including solar photovoltaics (PV) and loft, cavity wall and floor insulation were delivered to 116 low-income households.

In October 2022, £12 million funding was secured through the government’s Sustainable Warmth fund (LAD3). Managed again by Action Surrey on behalf of the consortium of Surrey local authorities, installations under this on-gas grant funding scheme were delivered by the end of September 2023. People living in hard to heat homes and on lower incomes, received grants between £10,000 and £25,000 to improve insulation and install renewable technology - helping to save energy, reduce emissions and combat rising energy prices. Eligible improvement measures included loft insulation, cavity and external wall insulation, underfloor insulation and renewables, such as solar electricity panels. In the borough of Woking, LAD3 funding delivered 57 measures valued at almost £324,000.

During the financial year 2022/23, the Council ensured that all of its own domestic properties on communal heating systems (approximately 700 properties) had accurate heating and hot water consumption devices installed. This was at a cost close to £325,000.

5. Which, if any, of the following outcomes have been achieved through your energy efficiency and/or carbon initiatives, schemes and services? Please select all that apply.

- Energy savings,
- Carbon savings,
- Job creation
- Increased business competitiveness
- Alleviation of fuel poverty
- Improved health outcomes
- None of the above
- Other - please specify

Other: Engagement and awareness raising particularly via our climate change communications campaign Planet Woking (see www.planetwoking.gov.uk).

Community Energy South case study example: Together with the Shah Jahan Mosque, Community Energy South, Surrey Faith Links and Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum successfully delivered their Energy Champion project in winter 2022. A specialist energy advisor provided free cost of living advice and support along with practical measures such as draught proofing to help improve energy efficiency. To promote the scheme, leaflets were distributed to the community in Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Arabic and English.

Consumer Advice and Information

Q6. Do you provide or promote any advisory services to consumers on how to save energy?

Yes via [Action Surrey](#). Woking Borough Council pays an annual subscription to Action Surrey for their energy efficiency advice programme for local residents. Trained advisors offer impartial advice and check eligibility for grants that may be available to help fund energy efficiency improvements.

The Council also offers tips and advice via Planet Woking, its climate change and biodiversity communications campaign. Articles and features about energy efficiency are published to the website (www.planetwoking.co.uk) and via the Planet Woking social media accounts. We also feature energy efficiency advice and signposting in the periodic [e-newsletter](#) that has approximately 1,800 subscribers.

Cost of living advice including signposting to energy efficiency advice and energy bill savings is also available via the Council's website at <https://www.woking.gov.uk/costofliving>. The webpage also carries details of Warm Welcome venues around the borough (and more widely in the county). Warm welcome venues are local, safe, accessible, warm and welcoming spaces where local residents are welcome to spend their day, saving money on heating and electricity at home. Via its corporate e-newsletter and the Planet Woking website, Woking Borough Council also signposts to Surrey County Council's energy saving advice available through its [health and welfare webpages](#).

Local volunteer group Woking Environment Action (WEAct) also offer greener living advice via their website <https://wokingenvironmentaction.com/tips-for-taking-action-2/>

Q7. If yes, please select all that apply

- Local Authority website
- Local advisory service
- ~~'Find ways to save energy in your home' (formerly Simple Energy Advice) gov.uk website~~
- ~~'Find ways to save energy in your home' gov.uk phonenumber~~
- ~~Leaflets~~
- Social media
- Local energy hubs
- Other- please specify

For 'other' see response to question 6.

Local Retrofit Supply Chain

Q8. Have you conducted any assessment or analysis to understand the existing capacity in your local supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings by 2050?

No. However, Woking Borough Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and pledged to become zero carbon by 2030 across its own estate and operations by 2030. The associated Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) details priority actions to delivery in furtherance of the pledge. Likewise, ThamesWey (see www.ThamesWeygroup.co.uk), the Council's energy services company, is committed to deliver climate change and sustainability projects as stated in its business plan (see section [3.2 of the 2020 Business Plan](#) covering the period 2020 - 2023), in furtherance of Woking 2050 and the CEAP.

Action Surrey, mentioned in an earlier response, is a part of ThamesWey, and manages a network of trusted installers to deliver energy efficiency installations to residents across Woking borough and more widely across Surrey. Action Surrey has had great business relationships with its installers for many years. It is open to supporting local SMEs and request that its suppliers support the local supply chain but this is just a request, not an obligation at this point.

Q9. If you answered yes to question 8, please summarise any specific bottlenecks (or provide a link if this information has been published).

N/A

Q10. Which, if any, of the following actions are you taking to upskill and/or grow your local retrofit installer supply chain? Please select all that apply

- Supporting training provision at local training providers
- Supporting FE colleges to improve facilities or train trainers or otherwise enable better delivery of retrofit training.
- Providing installer networking opportunities or other business support for growing companies.
- Careers advice or similar involving local businesses doing schools outreach to encourage young people into the sector.
- None of the above

• Other

Action Surrey is looking to factor in 'Social Value' to its work which will include having its installers support local schools/ businesses etc on their upskilling.

Q11. Do you provide advice for your residents and small businesses about how to pick an installer business or how to avoid being mis-sold inappropriate improvements?

Yes. Action Surrey works with a [network of trusted, accredited and experienced installers](#), with expertise in a range of energy related improvements including insulation and renewable energy.

Installers selected by Action Surrey are accredited to the latest PAS2035:2019 standards, hold Trustmark registration (and MCS if they install renewables), and the appropriate insurances.

Where residents are determined eligible for a grant, Action Surrey can refer them directly to installers on the network to carry out improvements, streamlining the process from enquiry to installation.

[Consumer advice](#) is available through Surrey County Council, the authority responsible for trading standards.

Q12. Has there been any Trading Standards activity against energy efficiency or home retrofit businesses in your area due to mis-selling or otherwise poorly advising consumers about retrofit measures?

No – we are not aware of any issues. SCC is the local [Trading Standards](#) authority.

Q13. If you received funding under Local Authority Delivery, Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, did availability of PAS 2030:2019 or MCS certified and TrustMark registered supply chain affect your ability to deliver?

No. Installers selected by Action Surrey are accredited to the latest PAS2035:2019 standards, hold Trustmark registration (and MCS if they install renewables), and the appropriate insurances. Installers on the network deliver most of their services in house.

Q14. If you answered yes to question 13 please can you tell us, which parts of the supply chain were particularly affected (please select all that apply)?

N/A

Q15. If you answered yes to question 13 please can you tell us, what actions did you take to overcome those barriers (please select all that apply)?

N/A

Social Housing Decarbonisation

Q16. Did you apply to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1?

No

Q17. Which, if any, of the following motivated you to apply for SHDF Wave 2.1? Please select all that apply.

- Financial support for retrofit
- Technical support for retrofit
- Tenant needs
- Expectations of future energy performance regulations
- Other – please tell us your motivation(s) for applying

N/A did not apply.

Q18. Which, if any, of the following barriers prevented you from applying to SHDF Wave 2.1?

- Application window too short
- Too much information needed at application
- Don't own enough stock
- Not enough capability
- Too Costly
- Retrofit work is not a priority
- Not enough information
- Don't know
- Other – please tell us what prevented you applying

Other – Challenging data collection requirements and lack of in-house resources and technical support.

Q19. Have you carried out/planned to carry out any retrofit work in absence of SHDF funding?

Yes. The Council's planned maintenance programme for its own housing stock covers an extensive list of statutory obligations and strategic priorities that it must fulfil to ensure compliance with the Decent Homes Standard. Some energy efficiency improvements form part of refurbishment and remedial works such as central heating, communal heating and upgrades to doors and windows. However, other energy efficiency measures will be reliant on external funding due to financial constraints in the face of other requirements such as fire safety works and adaptations for those with disabilities. This is a reflection of the many challenges and priorities comprising housing maintenance.

Q20. If yes, how is this funded/how would this be funded?

- Internal funding
- Funding from other Government schemes
- Other – future funding bids?
- Don't know

Q21. If no, what is/are the main reason(s) for not planning to carry out any retrofit work? Please select all that apply.

- Lack of funding
- Lack of internal resource
- Lack of capacity
- Lack of technical support
- Retrofit work is not a priority

- Other
- Don't know

Q22. How many of your social housing partners are you aware applied for the SHDF?

Don't know

Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) Regulations

Q23. Do you enforce the PRS MEES Regulations in domestic tenancies?

Yes. The Housing Standards team ensures all up to date information is accessible on the WBC website on the [Housing Standards](#) page. Advice and resources on [landlord responsibilities](#) are also available online. Additionally, landlords are encouraged to contact the team with their individual questions either via phone or email where they can get tailored support.

The Housing Standards team has communicated with landlords registered on WBC's database to inform them of the need for compliance with prevailing regulations. This includes all landlords known to the Council via Let's Rent (the Councils private rented sector access scheme).

Landlords are required to have a valid EPC for Let's Rent services in line with legislation before letting and they are reminded mid-let should their certificate expire. The landlords who previously held Selective Licences with WBC have also been informed about compliance requirements.

WBC's Housing Standards approach is to always work informally with landlords in the first instance with the aim of educating landlords whilst improving property conditions rather than issuing notices immediately. An enforcement procedure has been drafted in case of future need but this would need to be subject to Delegated Authority and approval by the Council. This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Private tenants are able to report housing standards concerns relating to their rental property via telephone or the [Council's website](#).

Action Surrey also provides guidance to landlords and tenants on the PRS Minimum Efficiency Standards. Action Surrey has referred landlords to the installer network to obtain quotes for energy efficiency works to enable the properties to meet the minimum standard. Its energy advice service stays up to date with MEES regulations and this advice is available to both landlords and tenants.

Q24. Do you use the PRS MEES Exemption Register?

Yes – this is used to check when a landlord informs us that they are exempt so that we are able to check the status and validity of the exemption, particularly as exemptions are time limited.

Q25. Are you aware of the PRS MEES draft toolkit for supporting local authorities?

Yes – this was used when carrying out a MEES compliance project.

Q26. In the past 2 years, how many domestic private rented properties have you engaged with in respect to enforcement of the PRS MEES Regulations?

WBC has engaged with 744 properties in respect to MEES regulations.

Q27. In the past 2 years, how many domestic private rented properties have you found to be non-compliant?

179 properties were identified as non-compliant.

Q28. In the last 2 years, how many non-compliant properties have been improved to EPC B and E after you have engaged with them?

At least 89 properties are known to have subsequently become compliant after engagement with 8 properties known to be exempt.

Q29. How many compliance notices have you issued in the past 2 years for non-compliance of the PRS MEES Regulations?

Four compliance notices were issued in the past 2 years.

Green Home Finance

Q30. What programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency improvements for those who are able to pay? Please provide links to any relevant online materials.

The Council provides an advisory service to consumers on how to save energy through [Action Surrey](#). Action Surrey is an impartial energy advice service helping homeowners save money on their energy bills, reducing their environmental impact and assessing eligibility for available grant funding.

Action Surrey also delivers installation schemes for energy efficiency measures for eligible residents such as via the government's Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) and Local Authority Delivery (LAD).

Planet Woking is Woking Borough Council's communications campaign focused on climate change, biodiversity and sustainability. Articles and case studies relating to a number of themes, including energy efficiency, are promoted via the Planet Woking website (www.planetwoking.co.uk), its social media channels and its webinars (see www.planetwoking.co.uk/events).

In May 2023, ThamesWey supported a further successful countywide bid for a two year project funded by central government, led by Surrey County Council (SCC). The partnership project with SCC, Action Surrey, Surrey Climate Commission and Zero Carbon Guildford aims to expand the current market offer to address the 'able and willing to pay' market i.e. householders that do not qualify for any grant assistance and can afford to implement energy efficiency measures. Awarded £745,000 in funding, the project aims to overcome barriers to retrofit

energy efficiency measures as part of the Department for Net Zero and Energy Security's Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) programme. [Further details about this and other successful pilots are available on the Greater South East Net Zero Hub website](#). The project will coordinate numerous trusted voluntary groups working face-to-face in the community including [Woking Environment Action](#). Delivery will be enabled via in-person advice, a one-stop shop and home decarbonisation loans. Home energy audit training for volunteers is being coordinated by Zero Carbon Hub Guildford with the aim to have 70 trained surveyors operating across the county.

Q31. Do you take any steps to raise awareness of the availability of private financing options (such as green mortgages) to fund retrofit works?

No

Q32. Do you refer homeowners interested in energy efficiency to retail lenders offering green finance products?

Yes – Action Surrey has a referral process for the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) and ECO4 that goes over to its installer partners when residents aren't suitable for HUG2 or other Action Surrey projects.

Fuel Poverty

Q33. Does your Local Authority have a Fuel Poverty Strategy?

No. Actions to address fuel poverty and affordable warmth are incorporated in the Council's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy – [Woking 2050](#), through the [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) and through the [Housing Strategy 2021 - 2026](#). This is actioned through the Council's partnership work with Action Surrey and with the health sector through [GP referrals](#) helping to identify those eligible for support and assistance to tackle fuel poverty and to keep warm.

Q34 How do you identify fuel poor households? Please select all that apply and provide additional information if possible.

- Used local data sets on energy efficiency/housing
- Used local data sets on household income
- Campaigns to encourage potential households to reach out
- Other
- All of the above

[Action Surrey](#) use targeted communications within data protection guidelines to households that fit the eligibility criteria to promote funding availability. Enquiries received are assessed and if eligible are progressed as appropriate. WBC Customer Services colleagues also signpost residents to the support available via Action Surrey and information is promoted via WBC and Planet Woking communications channels (see earlier response to Q6).

Q35. What actions are you taking to reduce fuel poverty in your area? Please select all that apply and provide additional information if possible.

- Delivery of government wide schemes such as the Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Actions to increase financial support to low income or vulnerable households.
- Other – all of the above.

Action Surrey takes every opportunity to reduce fuel poverty using funded and localised grants to deliver energy efficiency measures.

Awareness raising and signposting through WBC communication channels (e.g. corporate weekly e-newsletter and Planet Woking website and social media posts) about available grants and energy saving advice. [Cost of living](#) advice is available on the Council's website including details of [Warm Welcome venues](#). These are local, safe, accessible, warm and welcoming spaces where people are welcome to spend the day.

Q36. Does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall Carbon Reduction Strategy?

Yes. Actions to address fuel poverty and affordable warmth are incorporated in the Council's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy – [Woking 2050](#) and through its [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#). This is actioned through the Council's partnership work with Action Surrey and with the health sector through GP referrals helping to identify those eligible for support and assistance to tackle fuel poverty and to keep warm. The Council's [Housing Strategy 2021 – 2026](#) also addresses energy efficiency in council-owned stock through routine maintenance programmes.

Local Authority Delivery

Q37. If your local authority did not apply for funding from the Local Authority Delivery scheme, please indicate which barrier(s) prevented you from applying.

- lack of capacity
- lack of capability
- lack of awareness
- other – please specify

N/A – An application was made through a Surrey consortium of local authorities – see response to question 4.

Following the success of the Green Jump Surrey project (reported in the previous HECA report 2021), Action Surrey delivered further fully funded energy efficiency measures under LAD2 for eligible households across the county. The scheme launched mid-February 2022 with measures completed by end of September 2022. Over £1.1m of funding for 202 energy efficiency measures

including solar photovoltaics (PV) and loft, cavity wall and floor insulation were delivered to 116 low-income households.

Q38. Does your local authority have access to good quality housing data for on-gas properties?

Yes

Q39. If no, please specify what is lacking.

N/A

Home Upgrade Grant

Q40. If your local authority did not apply for funding from the Home Upgrade Grant, please indicate which barrier(s) prevented you from applying.

- lack of capacity
- lack of capability
- lack of awareness
- other – please specify

N/A – An application was made through a Surrey consortium of local authorities.

In October 2022, Action Surrey was successful in its bid to become the delivery agent for SCC's Sustainable Warmth contract. The contract served the consortium of Surrey districts and boroughs in delivering £12 million funding for household energy efficiency improvements under the third wave of the government's Sustainable Warmth funding (also known as LAD3 and HUG).

On 10 May 2023, Action Surrey launched a further government funding stream via the Surrey consortium (Home Upgrade Grant 2 - HUG2). HUG2 was the second phase of funding designed to provide energy efficiency improvements for low-income households impacted by fuel poverty and follows on from the first phase – HUG1 – that closed in March 2023. HUG2 is only applicable to properties that are not connected to the mains-gas network and rely on alternative forms of energy for heating; including electric, oil and biomass heating. The following measures are available through the scheme: loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, external solid wall insulation, underfloor insulation (for suspended floors), air source heat pumps, solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, solar thermal water panels and park home insulation.

Q41. Does your local authority have access to good quality housing data for off-gas properties?

Yes

Q42. If no, please specify what is lacking.

N/A

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

Q43. Did your local authority have a published Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility under ECO3, during 2022?

No

The last published SOI was dated 2019 -

https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/153563/Local-Authority-Flexible-Eligibility-Statement-of-Intent-v3.1-Redacted-for-DPH-signature.pdf

Do not believe there was a Flex route available in Surrey during 2022.

Please answer the following questions to help us to understand LA Flex delivery in more detail during the course of 2022:

Q44. How many declarations were issued for low-income vulnerable households during ECO3?

Do not believe any declarations were issues during 2022.

Q45. How many declarations were issued for Fuel Poor households under ECO3?

Do not believe any declarations were issues during 2022.

Q46. How many declarations were issued for in-fill under ECO3?

Do not believe any declarations were issues during 2022.

Q47. What was the highest income cap published in your Sol?

N/A. Do not believe there was a SOI at the time. Last published SOI was in 2019.

Q48. If you have used an income over £30k gross, what reason did you give?

N/A.

Q49. Did you charge for declarations to be signed?

N/A.

Q 50. If so, please state how much and how you decided on this figure.

N/A.

Q51. ECO4 commenced in July 2022, has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility under ECO4?

No - There is no Flex route currently available in Surrey.

Q52. If 'No' are there any specific barriers preventing you, from publishing and participating in the scheme?

N/A – Flex route being developed.

Q53a. Do you directly engage with energy suppliers either for ECO Flex (or other domestic energy efficiency schemes?)

No - Action Surrey uses its own network of installers.

54b. If yes, please provide the name of the scheme and indicate whether this is an LA, Supplier, DESNZ or other organisational run scheme (please specify)

N/A

Q55. Which route(s) do you envisage submitting referrals through under ECO4 Flex? Select all that apply.

- All four routes available
- Route 1
- Route 2
- Route 3
- Route 4

TBC

Smart Metering

The following questions refer to smart metering advice. Please provide any additional details where possible.

Q56a. Do you provide smart metering advice when implementing energy efficiency improvements (including through grant schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation and the Home Upgrade Grant) in residential accommodation?

No. However, Action Surrey's installing partners are expected to. Action Surrey undertakes spot checks to ensure the information passed onto customers is thorough and considered.

Information on smart metering is available on the [Action Surrey website](#).

Q57b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this.

Action Surrey's installing partners provide advice. Action Surrey undertakes spot checks to ensure the information passed onto customers is thorough and considered.

Q58a. Do you encourage landlords to promote smart meter uptake, e.g., landlord licensing schemes.

No - We do not currently advise landlords to use smart meters although several already do.

Q59b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this.

There is court precedence which prevents us from imposing clauses in licensing policies which require landlords to upgrade or improve their properties and/or to provide completely new equipment and facilities (Brown v Hyndburn Borough Council). The Court made it quite clear that a requirement to install any new equipment was unlawful (unless of course Parliament, or the national authority, had imposed such a requirement). Currently the national authority has not imposed such a requirement.

Q60a. Do you arrange for smart meters to be installed by energy suppliers in vacant social housing premises?

No. The Council does not install smart meters in its own properties as it is incredibly difficult to get the consumption accounts closed and opened during a change of tenancy. Utility suppliers really struggle to close down accounts and the delay in doing this has cost the Council thousands of pounds in unnecessary void property costs.

Q61b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this.

As above. There are no plans to change this position.

Contact Details

Submission completed February 2024 by the Green Infrastructure team, Woking Borough Council

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