

Nottingham "Warm Zone" Action Areas - Briefing Document

Proposal:

The establishment of a "Warm Zone" area-based programme to provide free or grant aided energy efficiency measures for **all households** in the City of Nottingham.

The programme will tackle each successive area of Nottingham, Ward by Ward, door-to-door. Each and every household will be offered help with a package of measures.

Key features of the "Warm Zone" approach are:

- The systematic assessment of households in a given geographical area
- Establishment of each householders energy efficiency standards, income levels, 'vulnerability', fuel poverty status and eligibility for a range of grants and other assistance
- Access and co-ordination of different energy efficiency grant programmes brought together in one package for each customer
- Integrated support for income maximisation, social inclusion, health and well-being initiatives within fuel poverty activities
- Achievement of economies of scale by integrating different sources of funding and clustering the delivery of energy efficiency improvements

Aims

The efficient, integrated delivery of services to:

- reduce fuel bills
- alleviate fuel poverty
- assist 'vulnerable' households
- achieve Decent Homes targets
- reduce CO₂ emissions
- improve domestic energy efficiency of all households
- improve well-being, health

Rationale

Decent Homes

As evidenced in the Nottingham Private Sector Stock Conditions Survey 2006, an estimated 27,050 private sector dwellings in Nottingham (32.4% of the stock) are Non Decent. This compares with the national average of 30.2%.

Poor thermal efficiency is cited as the main reason that the majority of dwellings are failing to reach the Decency standard (16,600 dwellings, approximately 60% of the Non Decent private sector stock).

Affordable Warmth/Fuel Poverty

Successes in tackling fuel poverty have been negated by rising fuel prices. The vulnerable fuel poor must be protected from price rise extremes by comprehensive domestic energy efficiency packages.

Table 1: Energy Price Increase

	GAS	ELECTRICITY	TOTAL
2003	£330	£242	£572
2004	£356	£254	£610
2005	£397	£269	£666
2006	£642	£388	£1,030
2007	£557	£367	£924
2008*	£641	£422	£1,063

assuming January average increase in prices of 15%

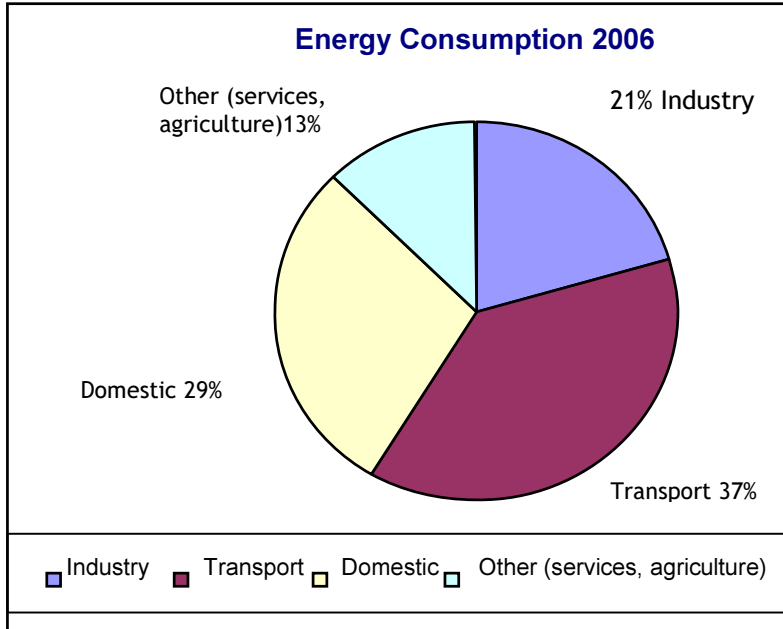
Source: Energywatch

A combined installation of cavity wall insulation plus loft insulation (top-up) will save £220 per year for the average home i.e. a saving of up to 20% on the average 2008 fuel bill. These combined savings in a community will have a positive economic effect on the local economy.

Carbon Dioxide / Climate Change

The domestic energy sector remains a major source of CO₂ emissions. Whilst government legislation on new build properties has a zero Carbon target by 2016, it is estimated that 80% of the properties in 2050 will be comprised of properties that currently exist. It is these properties that must become the focus of a strategic plan to tackle domestic energy CO₂ emissions.

The estimated savings for Nottingham, based on Newcastle Warm Zone (equivalent private sector totals and profile) is in excess of 20,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum (equivalent to 3,333 carbon neutral homes).



The Approach

Nottingham Energy Partnership hosts the Nottingham Warm Front grant 'portal' and delivers energy efficiency measures through the Healthy Housing Service and the NDC Affordable Warmth project. NEP also delivers the 'Decent Homes through Warm Front' project and the Community Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) programme.

The "Warm Zone" concept is being developed through the CEEF initiative to provide a range of interventions ("something for everyone") to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty in the City of Nottingham irrespective of status or location.

The "Warm Zone" will tackle the areas of greatest need first on a systematic ward by ward basis, starting with the most deprived wards as identified in the Nottingham City Private Sector House Condition Survey 2006. The work will be carried out in a structured and co-ordinated way from the initial assessment of the household to the delivery of measures.

Nottingham Energy Partnership will work with EAGA and a utility partner to combine the Warm Front and Carbon Energy Reduction Target (CERT) grant

schemes into a single service. Local Authority backing will be essential to make to the project a success.

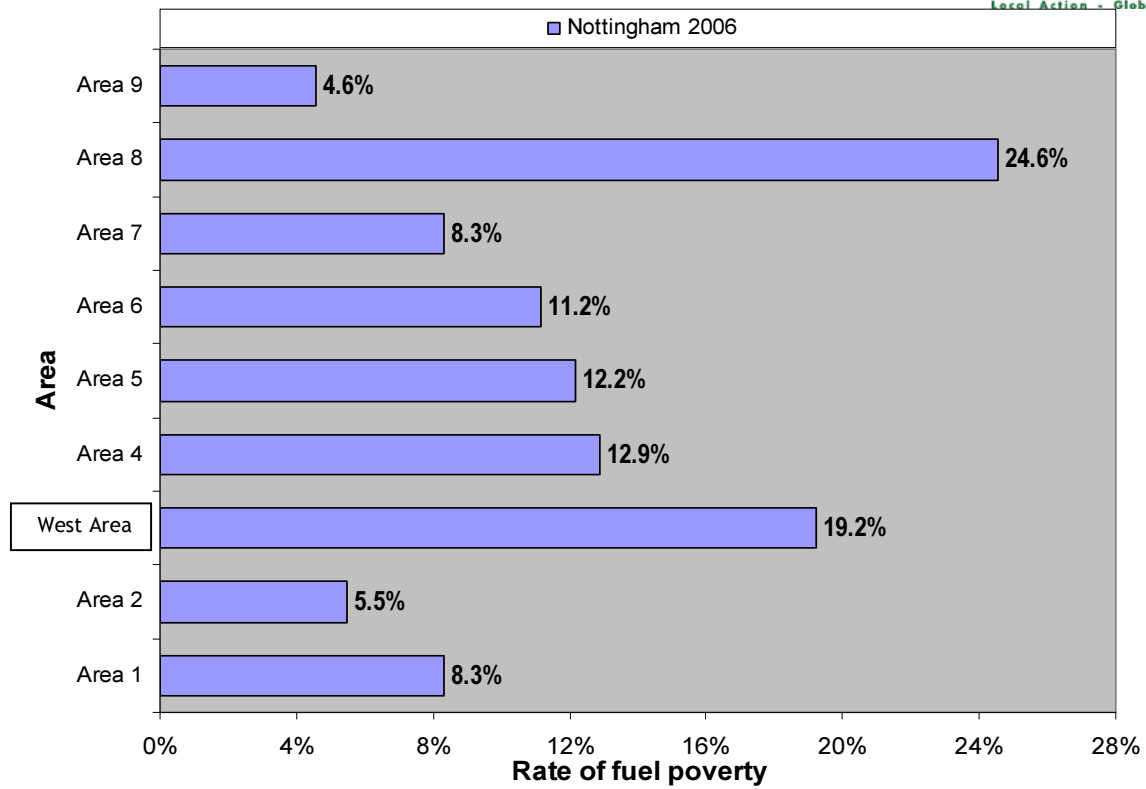
The work will be carried out through:

- marketing;
- assessment;
- delivery of physical and soft measures;
- recording data following each visit (assessment, survey, installation);
- monitoring and reporting;
- additional visits to potential vulnerable households where a more intensive service is required e.g. benefits 'health' check
- ongoing review, and improvement.

The plan will ensure that a co-ordinated approach to delivery of measures is achieved. Marketing and operation will be flexible for different areas, according to:

- the estimated levels of fuel poverty;
- analysis of property stock;
- deprivation indexes;
- the timing of other work already scheduled to take place in the area e.g. existing regeneration and capital schemes; and
- any other relevant factor (e.g. language provision for BME communities).

The order of areas will follow the evidence base as identified in the Nottingham City Council Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Report 2006. However the programme will be flexible to respond to local needs, priorities and other City Council activity.



In Year 1 the Warm Zone will cover Area 8 and West Area, Year 2 will cover Areas 4, 5 and 6, and Year 3 will cover Areas 7, 1, 2 and 9.

The Warm Zone service – vulnerable households

The "Warm Zone" project will combine funding streams and use innovative solutions to maximize grant support for both fuel poor vulnerable and 'able-to-pay' households.

A range of measures will be provided free of charge for vulnerable households (qualifying private sector households that are in the CERT 'priority group', other private sector households that qualify under the Warm Front scheme, and all over 70's):

'Hard' measures

- Insulation measures (loft & cavity wall):
- Heating measures (central heating, boiler replacement & repairs):
- Energy efficient light bulbs (CFLs):

'Soft' measures

In addition to hard measures, the "Warm Zone" project will provide the following soft measures to householders:

- Benefits / Welfare Rights Advice: the delivery of effective benefits advice to those requesting it or who are in particular need is a key element of the "Warm Zone" approach. In the majority of cases, an increase in income results in a significant reduction in fuel poverty, as it reduces the percentage of household income spent on fuel. Also, by accessing passport benefits Warm Front grants of up to £2,700 (in some cases £4,000) can be accessed. The experience of the Newcastle Warm Zone indicates that the demand for benefits 'health' checks is high
- Further advice will be given to vulnerable customers. NEP already refers householders to Age Concern, PAD, and the Fire Service.
- Those households who indicate that they have debt related problems during the assessment will be referred to the local Credit Union and CAB.

Energy Efficiency Advice

This will be provided from the following options:

- energy advice leaflet with specific advice on how to save fuel left with householders following an assessment visit
- direct face-to-face discussions with householders by trained surveyors carrying out survey work in properties
- web site based advice

The Warm Zone service – ‘able-to pay’

‘Able-to-pay’ is the label given to households who do not qualify for benefits. However an inability to claim benefits does not necessarily indicate that these households are wealthy.

- The “Warm Zone” project will negotiate the best possible CERT grants for ‘hard’ measures for households that are not eligible for free insulation services in support of the “something for everyone” principle.
- All able-to-pay customers will be given the same energy efficiency advice service as vulnerable households.
- In addition they will be given continuously updated accurate and independent advice on renewable energy drawing on the experience of Nottingham Energy Partnership.

Overview

The Warm Zone project will target some 83,600 homes in the City of Nottingham for the next three years from 2008 to 2011.

The Warm Zone project approach will:

- § reduce excess cold-related deaths in City of Nottingham;
- § create or sustain up to 20 local jobs for the duration of the programme;
- § increase average SAP ratings and contribute to LAA National Indicator 187 Tackling fuel poverty ;
- § offer free or discounted energy efficiency measures to all households;
- § increase energy efficiency and fuel poverty awareness by offering high quality and accessible advice;
- § provide a comprehensive benefits advice service to maximise income;
- § reduce carbon dioxide emissions making a major contribution to LAA National indicator 186 “CO₂ per capita” monitoring;
- § provide useful and accurate baseline data to assist future policy development on stock condition, energy ratings, Decent Homes, fuel poverty, CO₂ emissions and vulnerable households (contribute to Nomad and HI4EM).

The Warm Zone project will contribute to the wider aims and targets:

- § the Housing Acts (1994 & 2004);
- § the Energy White Paper (2003/7) – Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy;
- § Regional Affordable Warmth Strategy;
- § the Decent Homes Standard (July 2000);
- § Local Agenda 21 strategy;
- § Health Improvement Plans; and
- § Nottingham Health Strategy.