What is your approach and what is it intended to achieve?

Our approach is to retrofit our stock to reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions on an ambitious scale, by:

- targeting our capital investment
- pro-actively seeking additional funding opportunities
- getting the best value for money
- encouraging changes in energy behaviour
- constantly evaluating our impact to learn and improve.

As a basis our ‘Secure Warm Modern’ (SWM) programme will deliver ‘100% decency’ by March 2015 to 28,000 council homes. Building on this planned investment programme we have:

- attracted more than £10million of CESP funding to address hard to treat homes in the most deprived areas. More than 2,600 solid wall properties, across both the social and private sector, are being insulated
- worked with Nottingham Energy Partnership and Scottish and Southern to fit internal wall insulation to 650 properties in Aspley
- worked with British Gas to deliver internal wall insulation in another 150 homes
- secured grants from E.ON to fit external wall insulation on 350 homes in Bulwell Hall and another 750 across Nottingham
- worked with tenants to improve understanding about energy usage and how to cut bills
- fitted solar panels to more than 2,300 homes – generating 1.5 gigawatts p/a earning the maximum feed-in-tariff
- designed our procurement system to maximise value for money while encouraging SMEs and local social enterprises to tender
- conducted groundbreaking research to show the economic, social, health and environmental impact.

Together these measures are helping residents in fuel poverty potentially save an average of £300 a year.

What evidence can you provide to demonstrate the environmental impact of approach?

More than 10,000 of our properties are solid walled, hard to heat homes. Insulating these homes is a massive, ambitious task we are committed to achieving. Nottingham’s Sustainable Communities Strategy aims to:
• reduce carbon emissions by 26% from a 2005 baseline level by 2020
• eradicate fuel poverty by 2016, from the 2009 baseline level of 12% of residents.

We are committed to ‘instigate a sustainable change in tenants’ behaviour towards energy usage – complimenting (our) ongoing energy efficiency improvements to properties’. We’ve developed a range of initiatives together with local partners, energy companies and tenants, which help tenants reduce energy use through:

• knowledge and information on how energy is used, wasted and can be saved
• highlighting actions tenants can take to reduce energy and/or fuel costs
• supporting sustainable lifestyle changes to adjust high energy activities without compromising quality of life.

We recycle 98% of waste generated by the SWM programme.

The average SAP rating before Secure Warm Modern investment work was 60/100 – or annual CO₂ emissions of nearly four tonnes per property. Average energy efficiency after improvements rose to 68/100 – an average annual reduction in CO₂ emissions of nearly one tonne per property. This is a total saving of 15,445 tonnes of CO₂ per year (equivalent to 2,700 vehicles removed from the roads each year, or planting 360,000 trees each year and growing them for 10 years). By the completion of the programme in 2015, we will have reduced CO₂ by 43,500 tonnes per year. This is 17% of Nottingham’s 2020 target for reduction of domestic CO₂ emissions.

This investment has had a hugely significant impact on fuel poverty. Fuel poverty across Nottingham as a whole has decreased from 12% in 2008 to 6.8% in 2010/11. Our work has collectively saved residents £3.5m on fuel bills.

We are now running a ‘Short Knowledge Transfer Project’ to monitor the fabric of some hard to heat properties – to help us bid for future funding and assist in putting together bespoke energy saving information. Results from a December 2012 survey with Nottingham University of 60 tenants, repeated before and after CESP improvements show:

• average annual household saving on energy bills is £204
• tenants are taking some of the ‘saving’ in thermal comfort – those who felt able to heat all rooms in the home increased from 20% to 64%
• significant decreases in reported cold, condensation, damp and mould (e.g. damp reduced from 28% of households to just 3%)

Quotes from tenants:

“The insulation has made a huge difference, before I was always cold. I used to have my heating on and gas fire. Now I only need my heating on for shorter
amounts of time."

“My kitchen was so cold before I didn’t like cooking – now I do. My family enjoys the new dinners I’m cooking them!”

“There used to be damp and mould in my kids’ bedroom – now it’s nice and warm they enjoy playing in there. They even do their homework!”

More information:

What wider benefits have also been realised, for residents or for the organisation?

Our unique research project with Nottingham Trent University has measured the wider social and environmental benefits of our investment.

http://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk/improving_your_home/impact_study/default.aspx

The research was cited by the Government when confirming £1bn further investment to decent homes funding (September 2012):


The study provided robust evidence of measurable changes in outcomes for tenants and leaseholders – including:

- Crime: 41% reduction in burglary in properties with new Secure by Design windows fitted (compared to a 21% reduction citywide)
- Health improvements – including:
  - avoiding two excess winter deaths a year
  - improved respiratory health for more than 1,000 children
  - avoided hospital admissions for 156 accidents and falls a year
  - improved mental health of more than 1,000 tenants by relieving excess cold and fuel poverty
  - estimated £700,000 a year saving on NHS treatment costs
- Economic impact:
  - Every £1m spent on our Secure Warm Modern programme has generated 21 jobs.
  - In addition we require contractors take on at least one apprentice for every £1m of contract value. Our ‘1 in a million’ scheme has created 122 apprentices so far – opportunities in areas with some of the country’s highest unemployment rates.
  - In total every £1 invested in Secure Warm Modern creates £4.76 in social value.
- Wider benefit:
  - We’re working with Nottingham Energy Partnership to contact
every private property owner and offer them the same excellent service. In Bulwell 90% of homeowners have accepted our offer of free CESP improvements at the same time we improve council homes.

Why should your organisation win this award?

Our approach to using our size and resources to generate sustainable environmental benefits for the whole of Nottingham is unique. Our partnerships with energy companies, the voluntary sector, social enterprises and tenants means we are making a difference on an unparalleled scale. We are trusted by tenants to manage resident liaison and make sure the work is of top quality. We’re equally trusted by energy companies to deliver maximum value for money – by having excellent partnership and contracting arrangements while being able to evidence the impact.

We’ve made a demonstrable impact in reducing CO₂ and fuel poverty – measured by rigorous academic research, which also clearly evidences the wider impact on crime, health and local economy. A council home fitted with new windows and doors is seven times less likely to be burgled than before they were fitted (figures from the Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership, based on socio-economic, crime and housing data).

That demonstrable impact has been cited by national policy and decision makers. Andrew Sturnell, Minister for CLG (Adjournment Debate, June 2012) said:

"Nottingham City Homes is a strongly performing arm’s length management organisation. … last year, Nottingham City Council extended its agreement for a further 10 years – a very good vote of confidence. The study, by Nottingham City Homes with Nottingham Trent University, of the wider impact of decent homes…. has made a very useful contribution to our knowledge, and ought to be required reading for those who doubt the importance of investing in our social housing stock."

Links to supporting information


http://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk/improving_your_home/impact_study/default.aspx