



### **Warm Homes, Greener Homes: A Strategy for Household Energy Management**

The Northern Housing Consortium welcomes the Government's new strategy for Household Energy Management "Warmer Homes, Greener Homes".

The strategy sets out key actions that should result in achieving a reduction of 29% in carbon emissions by 2020. The strategy sets out ambitions including:

- Every home (where it is practicable) will have loft and cavity wall insulation by 2015
- Every home in Britain will have a smart meter and display to help them better manage their use of energy
- Up to 7 million households will have had an eco- upgrade (could include solid wall insulation, heat pumps)
- Introduction of a Warm Standard for social housing
- Wider take up of district heating in urban areas
- Boost to employment as up to 65,000 jobs created in the new industry of energy efficiency.
- Invest to save approach funded by energy companies – under new obligations to work with Local Authorities
- Universal advice and support for consumers.

### ***Northern Housing Consortium Viewpoint***

We welcome the thrust of the new Energy Management strategy and feel it is a step in the right direction.

Social rented tenants have faced significant household expenditure in meeting rising fuel costs and the impact of fuel poverty on health and well being is significant. Over 36,7000 "excess winter deaths" were recorded during 2008/09 – a shocking rise of over 49% on the previous year.

### ***Warm Standard***

The development of a Warm Standard to complement the Decent Homes Standard is to be welcomed as a step along the way of tenants moving out of fuel poverty. The Warm Standard (to cover all rented stock) will focus on

- The building fabric (including standard insulation measures and harder fabric measures) and
- Heating systems, particularly in connection to low carbon district heating or renewable heat.

We welcome the indication from Government that social housing tenants will be a priority group for particular support from energy companies – at least until 2015. The exact timeframe for achieving the Warm Standard will not be set until the energy company obligations are further developed – but we would be keen to hear from members as to how this is progressing, and we'll maintain a dialogue with key partners including the TSA and HCA on this agenda.

Working with Local Authorities to support private landlords in meeting these ambitions will be key - the private rented sector still has the largest proportion of lowest (G) rated properties of all tenures and a high proportion of non decent housing. For the north, it is imperative that the measures put in place do actively support Local Authorities in supporting private sector improvements.

### ***Supply Chain***

With our experience in the field of collaborative procurement we are already exploring how best we can meet members energy efficiency requirements. We are particularly focused on energy efficiency and retrofit.

### ***Role of Local Authorities and Energy Company Obligations***

Similarly the new role for Local Authorities as strategic and enabling leaders in this field is valuable – ensuring the action at a local level reflects the specific needs of their area.

We envisage Local Authorities working in strong partnership with other housing providers – many of whom have taken innovative steps to improve energy efficiency through a host of technological means from solar panels, to Passivhaus initiatives, from whole house retrofits to underground heat pumps. Our recent publication “Accommodating a Greener Future II” detailed many of these case study approaches and provides a useful starting point for members exploring options available to them.

The creation of an obligation for energy companies to co-operate with Local Authorities, agreeing their plans through the Local Carbon Framework if appropriate will support Authorities ambitions to set strategic leadership ensuring appropriate delivery vehicles are in place.

### ***Universal Support and Advice***

The Durham Total Place pilot which looked at housing and regeneration explored how energy efficiency could be delivered more effectively to households – feedback from consumers advised that the sheer number of different companies, initiatives, options – often targeting the same individuals or households, led to confusion and suspicion. We

welcome the acknowledgement of a need for a universal support structure and hope that this will reduce consumer concerns.

The concept of retrofit demonstrator homes that are periodically open for public viewing is interesting as we understand that ease of use of new technology is a key concern for consumers – as is the impact or disruption of having work done.

**Next Steps**

We will be publishing a more detailed briefing on the this Household Energy Management Strategy by early next week which will set out some practical steps that the NHC is taking to support you in preparing for this strategy.

If you have any comments on the strategy or would like to engage with the Consortium in shaping our procurement framework please do not hesitate to contact us.

Charlotte Harrison  
Director of Policy and Strategy  
Northern Housing Consortium  
0191 566 1000  
07843 356 443

[Charlotte.harrison@northern-consortium.org.uk](mailto:Charlotte.harrison@northern-consortium.org.uk)