

Introduction

Kirklees Warm Zone is a Kirklees Council initiative which recently won the Ashden Award for the best local authority sustainable energy scheme in the UK. It is the largest local authority home insulation scheme in the UK and offers free loft and cavity wall insulation to every suitable household in Kirklees. It aims to improve the thermal comfort and energy efficiency of every suitable home in Kirklees over a three year period – in order to tackle fuel poverty and reduce district carbon emissions.

The project has reduced around 39,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year (November 2009), and estimates reductions of up to 55,000 tonnes per annum by the end of the project.

Why did the council invest in home insulation?

In 2006 it was estimated that there were around 35-45,000 homes in fuel poverty in Kirklees. The council's Affordable Warmth Strategy was adopted in 2007 to work in partnership with relevant organisations in all sectors, to tackle four main areas of concern – our housing stock, vulnerable residents with health issues, financial inclusion and improving awareness and education.

In setting up the Kirklees Warm Zone, the council aimed to set up a one stop approach to improve the domestic energy efficiency of housing across the local authority

- To tackle fuel poverty
- Deliver a low carbon Kirklees
- Improve the uptake of state benefit support by residents
- And to create jobs

Delivery

All households across the district are visited ward by ward, street by street. Households are initially contacted by direct mail, informing them that the scheme will soon be in their area. This is backed up by district wide marketing which re-enforces brand recognition and the fact that the scheme is backed by the local council. Local community and voluntary groups also help to spread key messages and local events are held to raise awareness.

Trained assessors carry out door-to-door visits to check insulation status. If additional insulation is required a contractor installs mineral-fibre insulation in lofts and cavity walls, at no cost to the home owner.

The area-based approach has increased contractor productivity by 50%, as it produces significant savings on travel time for surveyors and installers.

Financing

Total cost: Circa £20million over the three year programme - £11million Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) funding from Scottish Power and £9million from Kirklees Council from its Capital Plan.

The Capital Plan is funded by a complex mix of grants, revenue contributions, capital receipts and borrowing, but for most projects the type of funding is not hypothecated to the

projects themselves. In other words we fund the plan as a whole rather than its constituent parts. However, Warm Zone was in effect funded by borrowing."

Key Partners

- Scottish Power is the main co-funder.
- National Grid is a co-funder and supplied resources to develop the business case.
- Yorkshire Energy Services (Y.E.S.) is the managing agent. They provided premises and equipment and integrated Warm Zone into their business.
- Warm Zones Ltd provided; consultancy support, methodology, case studies, contact with other Warm Zones and networking opportunities with potential partners.
- Miller Pattison is the insulation contractor.
- The CAB, Kirklees Benefits Advice Service, The Pensions Service and Revenues and Benefits offer benefits and/or debt advice.
- West Yorkshire Fire Service provides fire safety checks and smoke alarms.
- Yorkshire Water provides water conservation advice.
- Carers Gateway offer support to people who care for friends or family.
- Safelincs are the contractor appointed to supply the carbon monoxide detectors
- Energy Saving Trust advice packs.

Progress and Impact

- **Figures as at 30/11/09** - all households in Kirklees have been visited. From Sept 2009 homes who have not signed up to the scheme are being re-visited. 124,039 energy assessments have been carried out. 36,134 properties have had loft insulation and 16,942 have had cavity wall insulation installed.
- Insulation measures will save the average Kirklees household £200 per year on their fuel bills.
- Estimated CO2 saving [in tonnes] – 39,000 per annum with expected savings at the end of the scheme to be 55,000 tonnes per annum.

Economic Benefits

- It is estimated that every £1 invested returns £5 into the local economy. The total economic impact is over £80m from a combination of direct funding, job creation, householder fuel savings and increased benefits uptake.
- More than 15,000 homes requested further benefits/money advice, with 238 receiving additional benefits. Average actual increase in benefits is £2,526 (Nov 09).
- Total householder fuel savings are estimated to be £8.5m per year (Nov 2009), but this should reach £10m per year once the scheme is completed and the accumulate year on year.
- Job creation - Warm Zone has directly created over 100 jobs per year for three years, and indirectly created an additional 29 jobs per year. The indirect jobs are calculated as a result of the extra spending generated and spent in the local economy, thus generating more jobs.

- Yorkshire Energy Services, the managing agent for the scheme, have employed 11 full-time staff; Miller Pattison has taken on 85 new staff and has built a new depot and training centre in Cleckheaton. Over 200 fitters have been trained so far.
- Yorkshire Energy Services have a pool of more than 40 self-employed assessors.
- A further 7 jobs have been generated or are dedicated to the Warm Zone in Kirklees Council, the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Scottish Power and Safelincs the carbon monoxide detector provider.

Other

- Over 55,000 households have been referred for advice on benefits, debt, health and other issues.
- Over 550 households have had central heating installed through local or regional funding.
- Over 2,500 households have been referred to the government's Warm Front Scheme.
- 266,000 low energy light bulbs have been distributed.
- Around 1,000 Kirklees homes have been taken out of fuel poverty.
- Lives have potentially been saved as a result of carbon monoxide detectors being provided.
- 22,500 homes have been referred to the fire service for a fire safety check, resulting in 9,000 smoke alarms being fitted.
- Reduced number of excess winter deaths of people with health conditions living in cold, damp housing.

Customer feedback

- The number of Kirklees households signing up to the Warm Zone scheme provides, in itself, evidence that local people are positive about the scheme.
- Customer satisfaction forms are sent to households receiving measures through the scheme. Key headline findings are that Miller Pattison is achieving 94% of all appointments for surveying and 88% for installation. Overall customers rate the experience they have with Warm Zone as Good.
- Many customers have given additional positive comments about the scheme on the customer satisfaction forms. For example:
 - All in all a very good service from start to finish by all members of the Warm Zone team.
 - This is a great scheme. Many thanks!
 - The whole process ran smoothly from start to finish – a job well done. Thank you to all concerned.
 - Very pleased with the work undertaken by the installation team. Very friendly bunch of lads. Treat people in the manner and they do a good job for you with a smile.
 - Very efficient, polite and workmanlike service by all concerned from first visit to installation.

- Kirklees Warm Zone has a knock-on effect on the behaviour of customers – directly through having a well insulated home, which means they can turn their heating down and indirectly by making them more aware of how they could be more energy efficient in their homes. Some of the comments made by customers include:
- *'The Warm Zone scheme has helped me realise the importance of energy efficiency in my own life. I had always been a bit shy of things like energy saving light bulbs...but since using the ones Warm Zone sent, I now put them up everywhere. Out of it all I feel I have developed an understanding of a carbon footprint. I have grandchildren and it makes you think what it is going to be like for them in the future! The whole thing has raised my awareness which is one thing I thought I would never be bothered about.'* (Mr & Mrs Rowden)
- *'I now turn my boiler down as the house keeps the heat in. The whole place is very warm! Kirklees Warm Zone is extremely good, they are friendly and have excellent customer service. As a parent and a worker I'm very busy, but the whole project worked around me. Kirklees Warm Zone is saving people's money and lives! They have put a lot of thought into it... it really is a good scheme!'* (Mrs Jackie Marshall)
- *'It certainly feels warmer! We now turn our heating down which we never used to do.'* (Mr Zahid Hussain)



Mr & Mrs Rowden



Mrs Jackie Marshall & niece



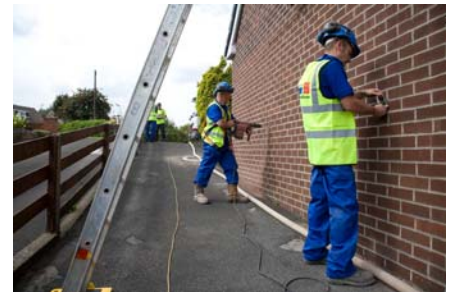
Mr Zahid Hussain and a Warm Zone assessor



HRH Prince Charles presenting the Ashden Award to Dr Phil Webber and Cllr Kath Pinnock



Loft insulation being installed



Cavity wall insulation being installed