



WALES **AUDIT** OFFICE
SWYDDFA **ARCHWILIO** CYMRU

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Delivering the Home Energy Conservation Act in Wales

National Study by the Wales Audit Office 2007

Moving to a low carbon future

Local government responsibility in transforming housing

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff Bay

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Wales Audit Office



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- Delivering the HECA and policy agreement targets requires councils to:
 - have in place **a plan** of measures needed to implement energy efficiency measures in its own housing stock (target 12% reduction);
 - set up **systems** for measuring and monitoring improvement;
 - **work in partnership** with energy providers and others to draw down funding to finance these measures;
 - **raise awareness** of the need for energy efficiency measures in the private and rented sectors; and
 - **encourage the take up of energy saving grants** by private occupiers, registered social landlords and landlords operating in the rented housing sector.



Our approach.....

To answer the question:

In the light of progress made so far, are councils likely to achieve further reductions in energy use and carbon dioxide levels across the housing sector beyond 2007?



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What we found.....



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There is evidence that the energy efficiency of Welsh housing has improved, but weaknesses in performance information make it difficult to assess the extent of progress



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- **All Councils achieved at least 6% improvement**
- **None will achieve the 30% and only a few will achieve the 12% target**
- **Best performance 14.3% (to 2006)**
- **Worst 6.33%**
- **Reliability of data,**
 - **Council owned property best**
 - **Private sector worst**
 - **Underestimates of performance major difficulty**



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- **Inconsistencies in the methods used by councils to collate performance data make it impossible to draw reliable comparisons between the performance of different councils**
- **Reporting requirements do not account for trends in energy use within the home**



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Effective partnership working enables councils to access additional resources to support improvements in home energy efficiency, but taking full advantage of these opportunities requires dedicated staff time



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- **Councils can secure significant amounts of funding from external organisations for the benefit of their local populations**
- **Working with relevant centres of expertise can help councils to raise awareness and deliver advice across the whole housing sector**



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- **Improving home energy efficiency is not solely a housing department issue and councils should do more to develop clear links to the delivery of other council services and priorities**
- **The human resource commitment to support the delivery of improvements in home energy efficiency varied between councils**



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Achieving further improvements in domestic energy efficiency is likely to be more challenging in the future and will require a new and innovative approach



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- **For some councils the ‘quick wins’ of improvements in the energy efficiency of their own housing stock, have already been achieved**
- **Legislation, policy and funding has focused improvements in energy efficiency on fuel poor households and public sector housing, rather than the majority owner occupier sector**
- **The generation of domestic energy from renewable sources remains largely under-developed**
- **Who is best placed to drive energy conservation in housing?**



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- **Owner occupiers need incentives to invest in energy saving measures. What works will depend on a range of factors and any programme should take this into account:**
 - Increasing property values
 - Savings on bills
 - ‘Keeping up with the Jones’s’
 - Fashion
 - Costs of breakdowns growing (boilers)
 - Redecoration/home improvements
- **For some energy saving measures it will not be seen by the public as economic to replace within a certain time span.**



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Questions?