



**Review of the Council's Energy Policy
for Local Housing
July 2023 – July 2024
CLIMATE CHANGE & COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Chair's Foreword

As Chair of Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny, I present this report as a summary of our research and recommendations for improvement.

This review was taken forward due to the District's requirement of improved energy resilience within the local housing stock as well as concerns over residents being under pressure due to the rising costs of energy adding to the current cost of living crisis. This review will assist in determining the Council's response to the national changes to EPC requirements.

We believe there should be an assessment of the Council's energy policies and minimum energy efficiency standards. There should also be an evaluation of the Council's approach to improving energy ratings of private rented sector stock and installing EV charging points. This review assesses the Council's current approach to public information and education on grants and energy efficiency and ensures that the Council has clear data analysis of current housing stock. Furthermore, an enquiry has been made with Dragonfly Development Ltd (DDL) to clarify opportunities in which DDL can work with the Council on projects to offer energy improvements to private rented stock.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director of Property & Construction for DDL and the Director of Strategic Services for their guidance and expertise; the Scrutiny Committee for their excellent contribution and our Scrutiny Officer and Governance Officers who have consistently worked effectively throughout the process of this review.

Cllr Rob Hiney-Saunders
Chair of the Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is needed whenever a property is built, sold, or rented. Before a property is marketed to sell or rent, an EPC for potential buyers and tenants must be provided. It contains information about the energy use and typical energy costs of the property and recommendations about how to reduce energy use and save money. An EPC gives a property an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to a G (least efficient).

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) were introduced by the government to improve the quality, and increase the energy efficiency, of the worst performing privately rented houses and buildings. In 2018, the Government required domestic properties rented out in the private rented sector to have a minimum EPC rating of E or above.

The regulations came into force for new lets and renewals of tenancies with effect from 1st April 2018 and for all existing tenancies on 1st April 2020. It is now unlawful for a landlord or agent to rent out a domestic property with an EPC rating of F or G unless there is a valid exemption in place. The MEES for rented homes will potentially be raised further to a D rating by 2025 and a C rating by 2030. The government is currently consulting on bringing these dates forward so landlords need to be thinking ahead and considering how they can meet a higher standard rather than just the current minimum standard.

In 2021, Parliament set out Britain's plan to reduce Carbon emissions to as close to zero as possible in the *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener*, this strategy sets out clear policies and proposals for a decarbonised society by 2050. This target can only be reached with the cooperation of local authorities to support the national government in making net zero a net win for everyone. Bolsover District Council has set out a priority to reduce the District's carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents to do the same; the current target is to reduce Bolsover District Council's carbon emissions by 300 tonnes by 2023/24.

A major contributor to carbon emissions being released into the atmosphere is through the built environment. This poses a threat to the UK meeting its carbon reduction targets for 2050. The Government estimated that 18% of commercial properties hold the lowest EPC ratings of F or G. While building regulations ensure that new properties meet current energy efficiency standards, MEES will tackle the UK's older buildings. It is crucial that the Council has clear policies on energy efficiency and data of current housing stock to support these policies so that the Scrutiny Committee can find areas for improvement.

The Scrutiny Committee believe it is important to examine the Council's current energy policies to assess whether they support the Council's net zero target. As part of Bolsover District Council's Carbon Reduction Plan (2019 – 2030), the Council is aiming to achieve a "reduction in fuel poverty and improved energy affordability through energy efficiency improvements in the residential sector", as well as "cost savings and environmental improvement through energy efficient and sustainable buildings and workplaces". By guaranteeing homes meet the energy standards,

landlords can also help to tackle fuel poverty, as well as reducing the amount of energy needed to heat and power a home, which will also reduce Carbon emissions in Bolsover.

This review considers ways that the Council can ensure that residents of the District live in decent homes and pay fair energy bills, whilst reducing the District's net impact on the environment by making certain the Council's approach to energy for local housing is up to date, effective and clear, through thorough research and analysis of data and policies.

2. Recommendations

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CSSC23-24 1.1	That the Council establish a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for all new build property within 3 months. Upon completion of the Housing Stock Condition Survey (estimated April 2025) the Council must establish a strategy for improving energy efficiency within Council Housing Stock.	To improve energy efficiency within Council Housing Stock.	June 2025	Housing Strategy and Development Officer in consultation with: Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement	Officer time	The Head of Service has confirmed that the housing department will be able to achieve the desired outcome within the given time frame.
CSSC23-24 1.2	That the Council publishes information regarding grants and energy efficiency on the Council website.	Provide access for residents to find information to improve their homes.	January 2025	Climate Change Officer in consultation with: Communications Marketing and Design Manager	Officer time	The Communications, Marketing and Design Manager has confirmed this recommendation is realistic and achievable.

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CSSC23-24 1.3	That the Council continues to feature educational articles in Intouch magazine and Bolsover TV on energy efficiency grants for homes.	Provide simple access for residents to easily find information	January 2025	Climate Change Officer in consultation with: Communications Marketing and Design Manager	Officer time	The Communications, Marketing and Design Manager has confirmed this recommendation is realistic and achievable.
CSSC23-24 1.4	That following the Council's appointment of the new Climate Change Officer, opportunities be investigated for realistic ways that the Council and Dragonfly Development Ltd can work together to offer energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector and to assess whether a pragmatic package can be put together to achieve this.	To ensure that all potential opportunities for DDL to provide energy improvements are considered to improve the EPC ratings in the owner-occupier sector	June 2025	Climate Change Officer in consultation with: Director of Property & Construction, Dragonfly Development Ltd.	Officer time	The Director of Property & Construction, Dragonfly Development Ltd. has confirmed this recommendation is realistic and achievable.
CSSC23-24 1.5	That the Council consolidates all existing policies, strategies and plans regarding EV charging	Provide simple access for residents to	June 2025	Climate Change Officer in	Officer time	The Communications, Marketing and Design Manager

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
	stations for Bolsover District into one clear document/ web page article dedicated to the topic of the Council's approach to EV charging points.	easily find information		consultation with: Communications Marketing and Design Manager		has confirmed this recommendation is realistic and achievable.

3. Scope of the review

The Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of the Council's energy policy for local housing, as part of the 2023-24 Work Programme.

The issue was initially raised due to the District's requirement of improved energy resilience within the local housing stock as well as concerns over residents being under pressure due to the rising costs of energy adding to the current cost of living crisis. This review will assist in determining the Council's response to the national changes to EPC requirements.

The scrutiny review supports the Corporate Ambition of 'Environment' and the Priority of 'Reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same'. The review indirectly supports the Corporate Target ENV02. 'Reduce the District Council's carbon emissions by - 100 tonnes per annum'.

The aim of the review was:

- To ensure that the Council has a clear policy on energy efficiency standards across Council stock and long-term energy resilience across all housing stock within the District.

The objectives agreed were:

- Clarify the Council's energy policy and minimum energy efficiency standard for:
 - Council housing
 - New build properties
 - Private rented sector
 - Owner-occupiers (existing private stock)
- Ensure the Council has clear data analysis of its current housing stock to establish current EPC ratings and areas for improvement.
- Analyse existing Local Plan policies in relation to energy efficiency and requirements for new build housing and assess if they support the Council's net zero target.
- Improve public information/education on grants and energy efficiency.
- Ensure there is a clear Council approach to improving energy ratings of private rented sector stock.
- Clarify opportunities for DDL to become a lead local exemplar offering energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector.
- Clarify position/policy in relation to installation of EV charging points for Council housing (inc. Motability vehicles).

The key issues identified for investigation included:

- Restrictions placed on energy related grants – impacts ability to upgrade different housing tenures.

- Current impact of energy costs on the cost-of-living crisis and long-term health impact of cold homes/impact on mental health of potential energy bill debts.
- National changes in expected EPC ratings. EPCs are valid for 10 years. Expected changes will impact the private rented sector but place no demands on the Council or homeowners.
- Potential to generate income via DDL offering energy improvements to private sector.

The Committee comprised the following Members:

Councillor R. Hiney-Saunders (Chair)
Councillor C. Tite
Councillor C. Wood
Councillor R. Walker
Councillor M. Hinman

Councillor A. Taylor (Vice-Chair)
Councillor C. Jeffery
Councillor J. Tate
Councillor E. Stevenson

Support to the Committee was provided by the Scrutiny Officer, Thomas Dunne-Wragg

4. Methodology

The Committee approving the review met on eight occasions to consider the scope of the review, discuss key issues and potential recommendations, and review the evidence gathered.

The Committee sought evidence by way of:

- Internal enquiries to assess the Council's existing policies and approach towards minimum energy efficiency standards and improving energy ratings.
- An analysis of the current public information/education on grants and energy efficiency.
- An evaluation of the current existing council policies in relation to energy efficiency and requirements for new build housing.
- An analysis of current housing stock data.
- Internal enquiries to assess how DDL and the Council can work together on local projects in the owner-occupier sector.
- An investigation and evaluation of the Council's position/policy in relation to installation of EV charging points.
- Presentation by Derbyshire Building Control Partnership.

A document review was completed of the following as part of the evidence gathering process:

- Local Plan for Bolsover District Council (2020)
- Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015
- Housing Strategy 2021-24
- Private Sector Housing Strategy (2024)
- Local EPC data
- Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021)
- Carbon Reduction Plan (2019-2030)
- Local Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (January 2024)
- A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation June 2006

5. Analysis of evidence and key findings

5.1 Clarify the Council's energy policy and minimum energy efficiency standard for: Council housing, private rented sector, new build properties, and owner-occupiers (existing private stock).

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

The minimum energy efficiency standard (MEES) was developed to improve the energy efficiency of the UK's older building stock, helping deliver carbon reduction targets for 2020 and 2050. MEES was introduced in the *Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015*. At the time, the government estimated that 18% of commercial properties held the lowest EPC ratings of F or G.

The regulations stipulated that from April 2018, existing tenancies cannot be renewed, or new tenancies granted if a building has less than the minimum EPC rating of E. Since April 2023, an extension of the MEES regulation prohibited landlords from leasing out commercial buildings with an EPC rating of F or lower. This made it unlawful for a landlord to continue to let commercial premises with an EPC rating of F or G (unless it has registered a valid exemption). Any "sub-standard" must either have made sufficient energy efficiency improvements to bring the EPC rating to E or above or register for an exemption.

The requirement applies to non-domestic private rented property situated in England and Wales, which is let under a qualifying tenancy and is required to have an EPC. Buildings that are not required to have an EPC, may be exempt, these are likely to be those with no air conditioning or heating, as well as religious, temporary, or very small buildings.

The Private Rented Sector and Owner-Occupiers

It is not under the Council's remit to set standards for privately owned properties, however, many homes in the private sector in Bolsover District are in poor condition. 45.8% of homes do not meet EPC C, and 16.3% of owner-occupied homes and 18.6% of private rented homes fail the *Decent Homes Standard* for having a category 1 hazard. Owner-occupied and privately rented properties make up over 83.3% of homes in Bolsover District, however MEES do not apply to owner-occupiers, therefore the primary obligations under MEES fall on landlords.

The Council's new *Private Sector Housing Strategy (2024)* sets out the Council's plans for achieving good quality housing across the existing private sector stock. The Council believes that all residents should have the opportunity to live in a decent home. As part of this strategy the Council is committing to increasing the awareness of landlords of the *Decent Homes Standard* as well as more information on potential funding. The strategy includes thorough data and statistics on the District's current situation regarding energy ratings of private rented sector stock, detailed plans for

improvement, and ambitions and aims for the Council's future vision of private sector housing.

Improving EPC ratings are better for the environment and better for all residents, in terms of the cost of heating and warmer homes. Currently, the Council acknowledges that 65.7% of private rented homes and 53% of owner-occupied homes do not currently meet EPC C. The Council has been undertaking research to better understand the plans of landlords and owners to improve the EPC rating of their properties and the support that may be required; the Council will soon be developing an Intervention Strategy on the support that can be provided.

New Build properties

The 2020 *Local Plan for Bolsover District Council* aims to:

Reduce the need for energy in new development and ensure that it can use energy efficiently through the lifetime of the development, promoting high standards of low carbon and energy efficient design and renewable energy production where possible and appropriate.

There are currently no MEESs for new build properties, however new builds routinely outperform existing homes in energy efficiency and EPC ratings. According to the Mortgage Advice Bureau, between October and December 2021, nearly 84% of new build houses delivered an EPC rating of A or B, (the top classifications in energy efficiency standards). It is important that new build properties in Bolsover, especially projects build by DDL, maintain this high-quality standard. It is not under the Council's remit to set standards for new build properties.

Bolsover District's Housing Stock,

The condition of Bolsover District Council's housing stock varies between tenures, however, according to the *Local Plan for Bolsover District Council (2020)*, "the highest level of hazards, disrepair and poor energy efficiency are in private rented stock and pre 1919 stock". The Council does not currently have a clear MEES for its housing stock; the council must set an energy standard for all Council owned properties to meet.

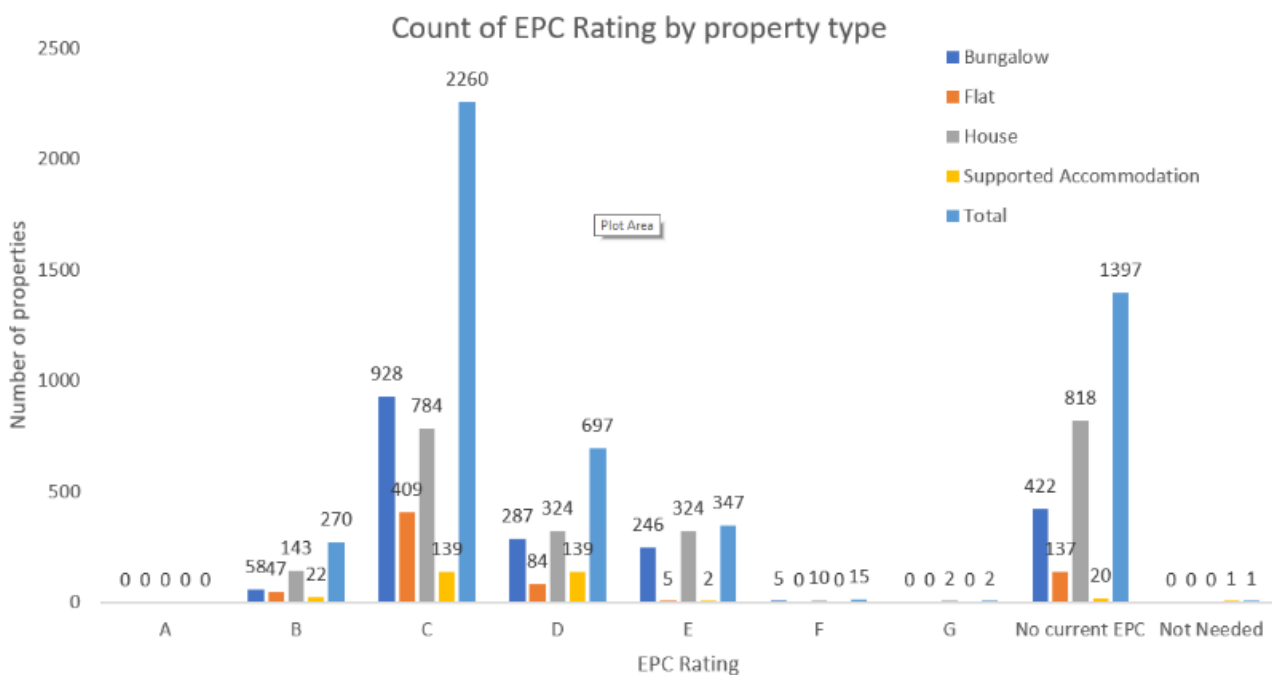
Recommendation:

That the Council establish a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for all new build property within 3 months. Upon completion of the Housing Stock Condition Survey (estimated April 2025) the Council must establish a strategy for improving energy efficiency within Council Housing Stock.

5.2 Ensure the Council has clear data analysis of its current housing stock to establish current EPC ratings and areas for improvement.

Data analysis of current housing stock

In December 2023 the Council collected data on its current housing stock. The data below is extracted from this research.



This graph visually represents the data provided for EPC ratings across different property types. To summarise: EPC Rating C has the highest count overall, with 2260 properties. This includes 928 bungalows, 409 flats, 784 houses, and 139 supported accommodations. EPC Rating B has a total of 270 properties, distributed as 58 bungalows, 47 flats, 143 houses, and 22 supported accommodations. EPC Rating D has 697 properties, with 287 bungalows, 84 flats, 324 houses, and 139 supported accommodations. EPC Rating E has 347 properties, distributed as 246 bungalows, 5 flats, 324 houses, and 2 supported accommodations. EPC Rating F includes 15 properties (5 bungalows, 10 houses). EPC Rating G has 2 properties, all houses. 'No current EPC' means that either the property has had an EPC previously and it has gone past its 10-year lifespan and the property has not been relet, so no new EPC has been required; or the property has never had an EPC. This made up a significant number of properties, totalling 1397, with 422 bungalows, 137 flats, 818 houses, and 20 supported accommodations. The 'Not Needed' category has only 1 property, a supported accommodation.

The chart demonstrates that most properties are rated C, and a substantial number of properties do not have a current EPC. There are no properties with an EPC rating of A, highlighting that very few properties achieve the highest energy performance standards.

Below is the breakdown of the EPC ratings for different types of properties, along with the total count for each category:

EPC Rating	Bungalow	Flat	House	Supported Accommodation	Total
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	58	47	143	22	270
C	928	409	784	139	2260
D	287	84	324	139	697
E	246	5	324	2	347
F	5	0	10	0	15
G	0	0	2	0	2
No current EPC	422	137	818	20	1397
Not Needed	0	0	0	1	1
					4989

The totals for each category add up to 4989 properties. The highest number of properties falls under EPC rating C, with a total of 2260 properties. There are no properties with an EPC rating of A. A significant number of properties do not have a current EPC, totalling 1397. This table gives a clear overview of the distribution of EPC ratings across different types of properties within Bolsover District.

In June 2024, the Executive and Full Council agreed a budget to undertake a 100% housing stock condition survey. It is proposed the survey produce EPCs for all properties as well as provide information with regards to improvements required to improve this rating.

At the end of the survey programme, together with the full dataset and photographs, the service provider will provide a report setting out the key information from the surveys and an updated 30-year outline asset investment. This will enable the Council to produce a strategy for improving energy efficiency within Council Housing Stock.

Private Sector Housing Strategy Consultation

The Council has recently conducted a private housing strategy consultation to ask residents their views on the proposed objectives by completing a survey. The aim of this survey was to gather feedback and stock condition information from stakeholders.

The questionnaire considered the four objectives and 11 desired outcomes of the strategy, and asked residents whether they agree or disagree with them as well as asking residents to rank the priority order for proposed actions under each objective.

As a result of the work with the consultants, Bolsover District Council has recently introduced a *Private Sector Housing Strategy*. The strategy sets out four objectives which the Council believes “will improve property conditions and provide access to well managed private sector housing” (for further details see page 21-22).

The Council has clear data analysis of current housing stock to establish current EPC ratings and areas for improvement, therefore a scrutiny recommendation is not required.

5.3 Analyse existing Local Plan policies in relation to energy efficiency and requirements for new build housing and assess if they support the Council's net zero target.

Bolsover Council's net zero target

In 2021, Parliament set out Britain's plan to reduce Carbon emissions to as close to zero as possible in the *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener*, this strategy sets out clear policies and proposals for a decarbonised society by 2050. This target can only be reached with the cooperation of local authorities to support the national government in making net zero a net win for people, for industry, for the UK and for the planet.

Bolsover District Council has set out a priority to reduce the District's carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same; the current target is to reduce Bolsover District Council's carbon emissions by 300 tonnes by 2023/24.

Local Plan for Bolsover District Council (2020)

The 2020 *Local Plan for Bolsover District* was adopted by the Council on 4th March 2020. Following its adoption, the *Local Plan* forms the key part of the *Development Plan for Bolsover District* and supersedes the *Bolsover District Local Plan* (February 2000) and all of the policies within that document. This plan features key policies in relation to energy efficiency and requirements for new build housing

In policy SS1 regarding sustainable development, the Council recognises that in order to contribute to sustainable development in Bolsover District, development proposals should reduce the need for energy in new development and ensure that it can use energy efficiently through the lifetime of the development, promoting high standards of low carbon and energy efficient design and renewable energy production where possible and appropriate. This strategy directly supports the council's net zero target of "reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same".

Housing Strategy 2021-24

The Council's *Housing Strategy 2021-2024* sets out the strategic framework for meeting housing priorities and linking with wider national initiatives by ensuring that resources are targeted effectively. As part of Key Priority 1 regarding providing good quality housing, Action 2 aims to see a reduction in carbon through property services and housing repairs. The expected outcomes were to deliver homes that seek to reduce the District's carbon footprint by using sustainable materials to install carbon reducing retrofits to new build housing, for example by installing air source heat pumps and car charging points. By the March 2022 update the Bolsover Homes 'Woodlands' development at Langwith would be built to the Platinum level of the Sustainable Homes standard, and the properties under B@Home were built to bronze level. By the March 2023 update, the Council had installed air source heat pumps and car charging points at the Woodlands A19-unit which is due to complete in 2024. These properties have been constructed using Modern Methods of Construction.

Finally, by the most recent March 2024 update a further site of 11 properties in Pinxton has received approval to be built to lifetime homes/places for people principles and using a superstructure constructed off site which will achieve better than net zero carbon emissions over the lifetime of the development. All properties being built under the Bolsover Homes programme either meets or exceeds current building regulations at the time of construction. Woburn House redevelopments will be built at silver level. Furthermore, all new properties built will now incorporate an EV charging point due to changes in building regulations (see objective 7, pages 26-29 for further details on EVs). This strategy directly supports the council's net zero target of "reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same".

Action 3 of the of Key Priority 1 regarding providing good quality housing aims to tackle refurbishment and a regeneration to existing Council housing stock. This service is covered by Property Services & Housing Repairs. The expected outcomes of this action are to continue with refurbishment and regeneration schemes to Council owned stock including:

- Electrical works – April 2020 to March 2024 – upgrades to approximately 900 properties.
- Efficiency East Midlands (EEM) Framework – New windows and doors
- Replacement Kitchens
- Bolsover Safe and Warm Scheme
- Re-roofing programme
- External Wall Installation (EWI) scheme

By the March 2022 update funding had been secured for external wall insulation linked to improving EPC ratings. Furthermore, a lengthy study had taken place on the Council's commercial properties and a bid for funding was planned for carbon reduction works. By the March 2023 update the Safe & Warm upgrade scheme was complete at Ashbourne Court and Parkfields. This project saw the modernisation and upgrade of all flats and communal areas at Ashbourne Court Shirebrook & Parkfields Clowne which were previously dependent upon ageing and dilapidated communal heating services and had non-standardised shower and bathroom facilities.

Finally, by the most recent March 2024 update the electrical works programme has met its target to complete works on 900-1000 properties per year with the exception of less than 1% of tenants who refused access; a contract is due for re-tender this spring. Ninety properties have been re-roofed during 2023-24 (which will spend the £750k budget allocated), additional properties have been identified for works to be carried forward to the 2024-25 budgets, and contracts have been extended for a further year along with the 2024-25 list of properties.

Safe & Warm Works at Valley View Hillstown are to be completed prior to April/May 2024. Works at Jubilee Court Pinxton are to be completed by end of August 2024. There have been no EWI Schemes during 2023/24, however, grant funding has been secured for 2024/25. Furthermore, a full council stock condition survey is planned which will ensure an up-to-date EPC for all properties. A key piece of work likely to come forward as a result, is a revised programme for loft insulation improvements.

The Council's *Local Plan* and *Housing Strategy* support the council's net zero targets; the Council has policies and strategies in place in relation to energy efficiency and requirements for new build housing, therefore there is no need for a Scrutiny recommendation for this objective at this time.

The Council's existing Local Plan policies in relation to energy efficiency and requirements for new build housing support the Council's net zero target, therefore a scrutiny recommendation is not required.

5.4 Improve public information/education on grants and energy efficiency.

Energy efficient grants that have been promoted by the Council

Bolsover District Council have posted news articles in InTouch magazine in the past to promote various grants and government schemes to improve energy efficiency, and to keep residents informed on the Council's success in securing such subsidies. For example, in issue 54 of InTouch (September 2021), the Council advertised a £900k grant for External Wall Insulation to make Council properties energy efficient, for nearly 100 properties. The article stated that Bolsover District Council is committed to providing energy efficient homes and have started fitting external wall insulation to housing stock to make local residents more comfortable whilst also reducing CO2 emissions at the same time. As part of the Council's commitment to provide a good quality, energy efficient housing stock, Bolsover District Council bid for and received £420,000 from the Green Homes Grant scheme and have match funded this. The Council manages more than 5,000 properties and the contract to undertake this additional set of works was awarded to Sustainable Building Services Ltd who have since completed EWI works in Whitwell and Pinxton. Furthermore, the article mentions that the Local Authority Delivery scheme aimed to raise the energy efficiency of low-income and low Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rated homes and it is estimated that around 1.2 Tonne of CO2 will be saved per property, equating to approx. 99.6 Tonne a year.

In Issue 57 of InTouch (July 2022), an advert was published on page 12 promoting an Energy Improvement Grant, with 3 criteria boxes to be ticked. These were:

1. Do you own your own home?
2. Does your home have an EPC rating of D or lower?
3. Do you have a combined household income of less than £30k? If the answer to all three of the above is yes, you may be eligible for a grant towards energy efficiency improvements (Proof of the above will be required)

Unfortunately, however there were only around 20 households that came forward met these criteria.

Private Sector Housing Strategy (2024): Energy Efficiency Grants

The new *Private Sector Housing Strategy (2024)* considers grants that residents may be eligible for. Section 6 regarding the Council's approach to ensuring that housing standards and living conditions contribute towards better health outcomes for all, includes the issue of affordable warmth and fuel poverty. It states that the Council recognises "the need to improve thermal comfort and reduce energy costs through a range of initiatives and will assist vulnerable residents to do so". Bolsover District Council intends to "continue to seek external funding opportunities to provide energy efficiency measures for both privately owned and rented homes", as well as to "continue to use our affordable warmth coordinator post, to offer advice support and guidance for people to access financial incentives/grants and help with energy saving" (for further details see page 21-22).

Housing Strategy 2021 - 2024: Energy Efficiency Grants

The Council's *Housing Strategy 2021-2024* is set within a legislative framework and must reflect National, Regional and Local Policy. The key government agendas which impact local residents and communities, have been incorporated into the strategy. The key strategic housing priorities are driven by Bolsover District Council's overarching ambitions. In section 8.6 regarding home improvements and energy efficiency, it is highlighted that the Derbyshire Observatory indicates 10.8% of households in Bolsover District were in fuel poverty in 2018, this is slightly higher than Derbyshire and England (10.6% and 10.3% respectively). Local authorities are required under the Home Energy Conservation Act (2013) to report on work to address fuel poverty and create affordable warmth initiatives. The Council carries out work through a coordinated and targeted approach to increase the number of hard to reach and vulnerable households who need support to access affordable warmth/energy efficiency interventions.

Across Derbyshire there are a number of local and government initiatives to help tackle fuel poverty and enable more energy efficient homes. According to the 2021-2024 *Housing Strategy*, the Council is committed to tackling fuel poverty to help reduce fuel bills and increase energy efficient homes. Bolsover District Council's outreach service has provided over 500 households with free, impartial advice to inform residents of the schemes and funding available.

Furthermore, it is key to note that under the Derbyshire County Council's Warm Homes Scheme 205 households received boiler advice, 59 households were referred to the Occupational Therapist (OT) for adaptations, and 61 households were enabled to receive heating systems worth £210,959. The Council continues to seek funding opportunities to help households access affordable warmth/energy efficiency interventions.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Scheme

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. Under the ECO scheme, obligated energy suppliers must mainly promote measures which improve the ability of low income, fuel poor and vulnerable households to heat their homes. This includes actions that result in heating savings, such as the replacement of a broken heating system or the upgrade of an inefficient heating system

Green Grants Scheme

The Green Grants Scheme is a government initiative to help reduce the carbon footprint. The grants are awarded to individual households to improve homes in the private sector, for works such as external wall, cavity wall, and underfloor insulation along with double glazed windows. The grant can also be used for the installation of low carbon heat measures such as air or ground source heat pump, solar thermal or biomass boilers. These measures will not only reduce carbon, which is a big damaging factor to the planet, but could also save residents hundreds of pounds a year on utility bills.

Energy education and public information: Bolsover District Council website

The Council's website features some basic information on energy efficiency under 'Energy Advice'. This web page window briefly details how in recent months Bolsover District Council have installed new boilers, solar panels, and insulation, and have switched council properties from electric to gas. This has allowed tenants to save money on their fuel bills as well as helped to protect the environment.

Furthermore, this page provides three links to different websites for tips on how to reduce energy bills further. These are under:

- Top tips for saving energy
- Advice on heating your home
- Switch energy suppliers

However, this information lacks any substantial detail such as statistics or contextual facts and figures. Unfortunately, there is no information or educational advice on energy efficient grants for homes directly on the Bolsover District Council website published by the Council such as the schemes mentioned above (i.e., the ECO scheme and the Green Grants Scheme). Information such as this may not be well known to Bolsover District residents and could be beneficial to many households across the District. It would be useful for information regarding grants and energy efficiency to be published on the Bolsover District website to improve education on the subject.

Recommendation:

That the Council publishes information regarding grants and energy efficiency on the Council website

That the Council continues to feature educational articles in Intouch magazine and Bolsover TV on energy efficiency grants for homes

5.5 Ensure there is a clear Council approach to improving energy ratings of private rented sector stock.

The Council's approach to improving private rented sector stock

In November 2022, Bolsover (and North-East Derbyshire DC) was successful in securing £20,000 from the LGA Housing Advisors Programme to develop a *Private Sector Housing Strategy* for each district. Bolsover appointed Arc4 Housing consultants and work began in April 2023.

According to the *Local Plan for Bolsover District Council (2020)*: “The condition of the District’s housing stock varies between tenures, but generally the highest level of hazards, disrepair and poor energy efficiency are in private rented stock and pre 1919 stock”. As mentioned on page 10-11, many homes in the private sector in Bolsover District are in poor condition and 45.8% do not meet EPC C standard. As previously stated, 16.3% of owner-occupied homes and 18.6% of private rented homes fail the Decent Homes Standard for having a category 1 hazard. Bolsover District Council recognises that the private sector performs a vital role in meeting the need for housing across the District, in both private rented and home ownership. Housing is a key determinant of health, and the Council want to ensure homes are safe, warm, and sustainable and for private rented, and are well managed. Living in a home which is in good condition, that the household can afford to heat, and is in an area in which they feel safe and well supported by the local community underpins the wellbeing of individuals and families. The impact of poor housing in childhood can affect an individual for a lifetime and can affect physical, social, and psychological development. Damp, mould, cold, and overcrowded conditions can lead directly to physical illness and there is also increasing evidence that poor housing conditions can seriously affect people’s mental health and sense of wellbeing.

Private Sector Housing Strategy Consultation

During the period of this review the Council has conducted a private housing strategy consultation to ask residents their views on the proposed objectives by completing a survey. The aim of this survey was to gather feedback and stock condition information from stakeholders. The questionnaire considered the four objectives and 11 desired outcomes of the strategy, and asked residents whether they agree or disagree with them as well as asking residents to rank the priority order for proposed actions under each objective. As a result of the work with the consultants, Bolsover District Council has introduced a *Private Sector Housing Strategy*. The strategy sets out four objectives which the Council believes “will improve property conditions and provide access to well managed private sector housing”.

The Strategy

The *Private Sector Housing Strategy* is the first such strategy that the Council have published and supports the Council’s over-arching *Housing Strategy* by setting out the detailed plans for both home ownership and private rented housing. Owner-occupied and privately rented properties make up over 83.3% of homes in Bolsover District. This strategy sets out the Council’s plans for achieving good quality housing across the

existing private sector stock. The Council believes that all residents should have the opportunity to live in a decent home. As part of this strategy the Council is committing to increasing the awareness of landlords of the Decent Homes Standard as well as more information on potential funding. The strategy includes thorough data and statistics on the District's current situation regarding energy ratings of private rented sector stock, detailed plans for improvement, and ambitions and aims for the Council's future vision of private sector housing. The strategy ambition is as follows:

Our ambition for Bolsover District residents living in the private sector is that homes are safe, warm, and sustainable, and people feel invested in and connected to their home and local community. This strategy reflects our strong commitment to realising this vision.

The strategy objectives are:

- Objective 1: Improve property and management standards
- Objective 2: Maintain and improve the supply of good quality, well-managed homes in the private rented sector
- Objective 3: Ensuring that housing standards and living conditions in Bolsover District contribute towards better health outcomes for all
- Objective 4: Ensuring all areas, neighbourhoods, and streets in Bolsover District, irrespective of housing tenure or type, are places where people want to live and are proud to live

The intended outcomes of the strategy are:

- Improved property condition across the private sector.
- Improved management standards across the private rented sector.
- Improved energy efficiency of homes in the private sector.
- Reduced number of properties with a category 1 hazard.
- Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour across our neighbourhoods.
- Reduced number of people presenting as homeless from the private rented sector.
- Increased access to the private rented sector to offer accommodation to homeless households.
- Increased supply of high-quality affordable housing for the private rented market.
- Residents living independently for longer.
- Improved targeting of resources to maximise our impact in the private sector.
- Reduced numbers of empty homes across the District.

The Council has a clear approach to improving energy ratings of private rented sector stock, demonstrated clearly in the *Private Sector Housing Strategy*, therefore a scrutiny recommendation is not required.

5.6 Clarify opportunities for DDL to become a lead local exemplar offering energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector.

To clarify whether it would be possible for Dragonfly Development Ltd (DDL) to become a lead local exemplar offering energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector, a meeting took place between the Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Director of Property & Construction for DDL. Following this meeting, it was concluded that though there are opportunities for DDL to become a lead local exemplar offering energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector, it is not currently within their budget or resources.

Theoretically it is possible for DDL to run energy improvement programmes in properties across the District such as:

- EWI (external wall installation)
- PV (solar panels)
- Air Source and Ground Source
- Top up measures e.g., loft installation

However, though it is possible for every household in the country to install energy improvements such as PVs, it is an unrealistic and unlikely to achieve target.

Budget for projects of this level only become a reality when there is opportunity for whole scale change of every household, and funding criteria is very difficult to achieve. For example, in Issue 57 of InTouch (July 2022), an advert was published on page 12 promoting an Energy Improvement Grant, with three criteria boxes to be ticked, these were:

1. Do you own your own home?
2. Does your home have an EPC rating of D or lower?
3. Do you have a combined household income of less than £30k? If the answer to all three of the above is yes, you may be eligible for a grant towards energy efficiency improvements (Proof of the above will be required)

Unfortunately, however there were only around 20 households that met these criteria.

Conclusively, it would be very difficult for DDL to become a lead local exemplar offering energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector due to current budget and resource limitations. Furthermore, DDL typically manage and oversee projects such as retrofitting, rather than actually completing the project themselves. However, to ensure this objective is thoroughly investigated and that all future opportunities are considered, the Director of Property & Construction for DDL has suggested that this issue could be investigated further and more thoroughly by the new Climate Change Officer (this position was approved in December 2023). The Climate Change Officer will be able to assess whether pragmatic packages can be put together with the available resources and in coordination with government schemes.

Recommendation:

That following the Council's appointment of the new Climate Change Officer, opportunities be investigated for realistic ways that the Council and Dragonfly Development Ltd can work together to offer energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector and to assess whether a pragmatic package can be put together to achieve this.

5.7 Clarify position/policy in relation to installation of EV charging points for Council housing (inc. Motability vehicles)

EVs and charging points: The Council's approach so far

Carbon Reduction Plan (2019-2030)

The council has previously considered several approaches to EV charging stations in the last several years. The consideration of EV charging stations is briefly included in the Council's *Carbon Reduction Plan*. As part of the Action Plan for Theme 1 of the *Carbon Reduction Plan* regarding *Sustainable Buildings and Workplaces*, the Council installed electrical vehicle charging points for staff and visitors throughout buildings and workplaces in 2020 (Ref S8). The purpose of these charging stations was to reduce diesel and petrol fuel consumption by staff and visitors. The introduction to Theme 4 of the *Carbon Reduction Plan* acknowledges that local authorities can encourage and support staff to travel to work "in a more sustainable manner" by influencing the development of better public transport. The Council recognises that an important way to promote low carbon vehicles is by installing electric charging points on the Council's own premises as well as through "sustainable development through the development planning process". Furthermore, in Theme 3 of the *Carbon Reduction Plan* regarding the Low Carbon Fleet, the Action Plan includes the consideration of introducing an electric vehicle or ULEV leasing scheme for staff (Ref F3) which could be in conjunction with Ref S8, providing free charging for staff on the Council's premises.

Local Plan for Bolsover District (March 2020)

The Council's *Carbon Reduction Plan* does not mention installation of EV charging points for Council housing. However, the *Local Plan for Bolsover District* considers that in the future it is likely EV charging facilities will need to be installed and therefore it is important that proposals consider this. It is necessary for all new homes to (as a minimum) have a suitable electricity circuit that allows for the future fitment of charging facilities with minimum work and disruption. This policy is detailed below, taken from Appendix 8.2 regarding Parking Standards and Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles.

At this stage, there is no specific requirement for electric vehicle charging facilities to be installed. However, as it is recognised that this will become more important in the coming years, it is necessary for proposals to consider the future. Therefore, it is necessary for all new homes to, as a minimum, have a suitable electricity circuit that allows for the future fitment of charging facilities with minimum work and disruption.

As it is impossible to predict future innovations and technology is ever improving, planning applications should demonstrate the ability to retrofit a charging facility to the exterior wall of a dwelling or safe, suitable, and convenient place within its parking area. This may include design features such as landscaped areas adjacent to parking spaces where the necessary cabling can easily be installed and hidden with minimal work and visual impact. Such features may be particularly useful where parking is provided off-street or in communal parking areas. We cannot determine

exactly what infrastructure will be needed in the future but it seems prudent to not create unnecessary barriers that may make future adaption more difficult than it needs to be.

For non-residential uses, particularly those generating high volumes of visitors such as supermarkets and other shopping complexes, similar regard should be had to 'future proofing' parking areas by a design that facilitates future adaption to accommodate growing demand. Where it is anticipated that non-residential development would benefit now from the provision of charging facilities, such as uses attracting large numbers of visitors, the provision of charging facilities is encouraged.

Regarding Mobility vehicles, the *Local Plan for Bolsover District* briefly mentions the need to consider the provision of charging facilities. In Appendix 8.2 regarding parking standards and accessible (disabled) parking, the plan states: "Consideration also needs to be given to the provision of storage and charging facilities of mobility equipment".

Local Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (January 2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance advises that Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. In accordance with this guidance, the Council is preparing a number of SPDs as outlined in its Local Development Scheme to provide guidance to developers, architects, agents, and landowners considering submitting planning applications. At the beginning of 2024, the Council adopted the *Local Parking Standards SPD*. This SPD includes the consideration of the development of EV charging points. In Chapter 4, Section B regarding on street parking and road safety the SPD states: "Consideration should be given to how electric vehicle charging points can be fitted into the street scene without causing an obstruction". The plan also mentions the potential of residents utilising drives and garages to house electric vehicles and charging equipment.

The *Local Plan for Bolsover District* does not currently specify how many electric vehicle charging facilities should be installed, only that new residential development could allow them to be fitted in the future, and that planning applications should demonstrate the ability to retrofit charging facilities to an exterior wall or another safe, convenient place within the parking area.

According to Chapter 12, Section J of the SPD regarding electric vehicle charging, a report published by the RAC titled *Standing Still* (June 2021) stated that Bolsover District was one of the highest performers in the country with 80% of dwellings either with or with the potential for off-street (on-plot) parking for at least 1 vehicle. This should make the installation of at-home charging more achievable, and overall, the District should be in a good position when compared with the UK average of 65%. Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, whereby a new residential building with associated parking must have access to electric vehicle charge points. Therefore, the Council will expect developers to provide at least one electric vehicle charging point as standard on new build houses in accordance with building regulations and the design guidance provided below.

Bolsover District Council's standards advise that regard should be had for non-residential developments for future proofing through design that can facilitate future adaptation. The Council encourages the specification/charge time to be reflective of dwell time. For example, rapid charging would be required for a short visit to the supermarket, but a longer 8-hour charge would be needed for a typical shift pattern at a place of employment.

Part 12.5, Section J states that provision of charge points should be a combination of both active and passive charge points depending on the type of development. Active charge points are fully wired and connected, ready to use, charge points at parking spaces whereas passive spaces only require the necessary underlying infrastructure (wiring/cabling). In residential areas passive provision should be achieved by ensuring fuse boxes are properly located and include a wired circuit in a garage or at a location which is near to the driveway. The Council will seek to condition this as part of the planning approval. For non-residential areas routing an empty cable conduit under the parking bays, ensuring this conduit connects to the mains supply so that at a future date above ground charging points can be installed with minimal disruption.

Electric Vehicle parking bays have different requirements to standard parking bays. The various design considerations that must be reviewed include:

- Ensure that EVCPs are protected from collision.
- To be positioned so to avoid becoming an obstruction or trip hazard
- EVCPs and cable enabled points must be shown on the layout plan and/or relevant floor plans while a separate condition may be attached to secure delivery.
- They should be signed and marked for 'Electric Vehicle Only' including painting the bay. It is an advantage that in ensuring that the 'Electric Vehicle Only' marking is visible in the space even when parked in.
- They should be kept out of the corners of car parks and close to pedestrian entrances which makes them more accessible and closer to electrical supply.
- Within residential developments any standalone charging points need to be positioned in a location where they do not create an obstacle and are visually discreet without adding clutter to the overall street scene.

Motability vehicles

Some residents who receive a benefit due to a disability or illness that makes it hard to get around, they may get a vehicle from a charity called Motability. The charity offers lots of different vehicles, including the option of EVs. When residents get an EV car with Motability, the charity offer two charging solutions. The first charging solution is a home charge point, where Motability will cover the cost for a standard installation, however it is required that the resident has off street parking like a driveway or garage, or if the property is rented to have permission from the landlord. The second charging solution is a subscription cover of BP Pulse on the go for three years which allows users to get discounted rates of charging at BP Pulse stations. Residents with Motability vehicles can either charge their EV at home or on the go, which is all supported by the Motability charity, depending on the service users' circumstances

and lifestyle. Motability also give service users a *Motability Go Charge* card, which lets users charge simply, at over 45,000 charge points.

The Council do not have any direct policies relating to charging points for Motability vehicles as this is an organised charity with its own policies and infrastructure. However, the public charging points that Bolsover District Council currently have available across the District such as in The Arc car park in Clowne are available for users of Motability vehicles to use with the *Motability Go Charge* card payment scheme.

Bolsover District Council policies for EV charging points

These policies provide a starting framework for the installation of EV charging facilities across Bolsover District. Steps have already been taken to consider how future planning applications should give thought towards the potential of installing charging facilities for EVs regarding logistical issues such as suitable electricity circuits, landscaping areas where the necessary cabling can easily be installed, and avoiding creating unnecessary barriers that may make future adaptations more difficult than they need to be.

These policies do not specifically focus on Council housing or Motability vehicles, however, outline a more general approach to the logistics and steps that need to be considered and taken when installing EV charging points. It would be useful for all the policies that focus on EVs, particularly EV charging points that exist across the various documents that have been discussed were consolidated in one place, such as a web page on the Bolsover District Council website.

Recommendation:

That the Council consolidates all existing policies, strategies and plans regarding EV charging stations for Bolsover District into one clear document/web page article dedicated to the topic of the Council's approach to EV charging points.

6. Conclusions

The Committee have put together five recommendations which will assist the Council in improving the Council's energy policy for local housing.

The key findings arising from the review are:

- That the Council has clear data analysis of current housing stock.
- That the Council's *Local Plan* policies relating to energy efficiency and requirements support the Council's net zero target.
- That the Council's recent 2024 *Private Sector Housing Strategy* provides a clear approach to improving energy ratings of private rented sector stock.
- That it is currently not in the budget or remit to become a lead local exemplar offering energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector, however, research would still be useful to investigate potential opportunities in the future.
- That it is important that the Council continues to utilise its current methods of communication such as Intouch and Bolsover TV to improve public information/education on grants and energy efficiency.
- That the Council's website lacks easily accessible detailed information regarding several key areas of energy saving for local housing. These areas include:
 - The Council's energy policy and minimum energy efficiency standard for Council housing, new build properties, and the private rented sector.
 - Public information regarding energy saving grants.
 - The Council's existing policies, strategies and plans regarding EV charging stations for Bolsover District as well as any basic information on EV's for residents in general.

This review has examined the ways that Bolsover District Council can ensure that residents of the District live in decent homes and pay fair energy bills, whilst reducing the District's net impact on the environment by making certain the Council's approach to energy for local housing is up to date, effective and clear.

Appendix 1: Stakeholders

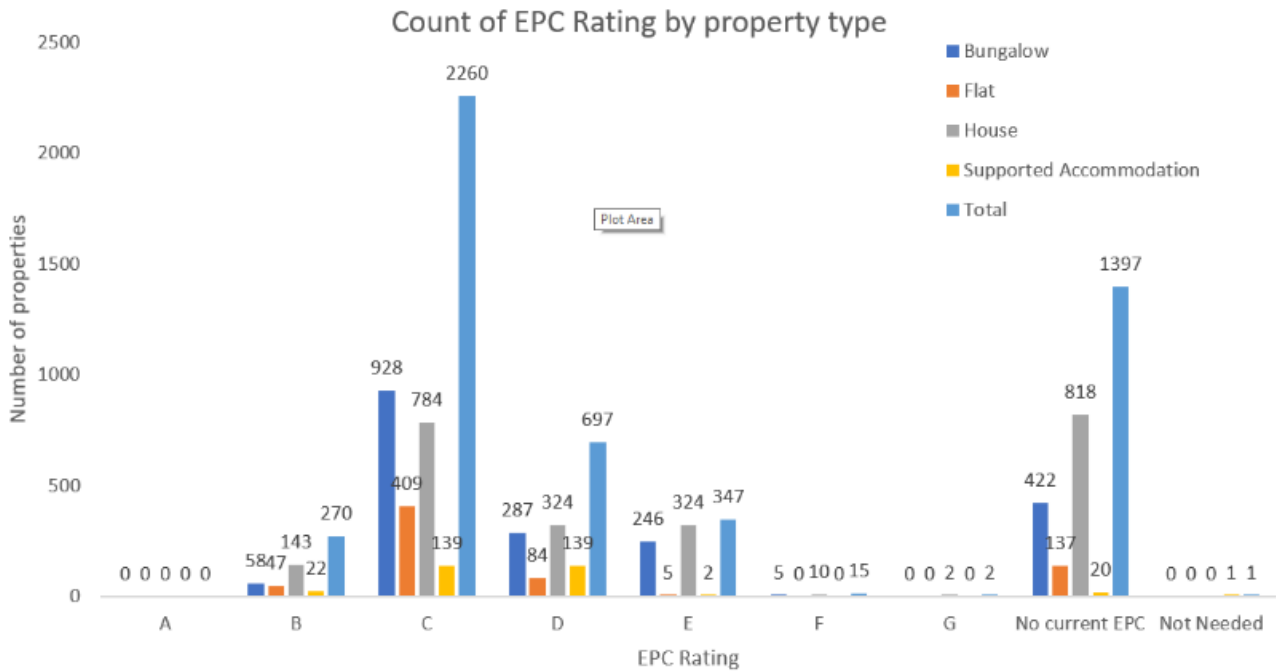
Stakeholders engaged during the Review:

- Cllr Anne Clarke – Environment
- Chief Executive Officer
- Director of Governance and Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)
- Director of Property & Construction for DDL
- Director of Strategic Services

Stakeholders impacted by the Review:

- Bolsover DC residents
- Director of Property & Construction for DDL
- Climate Change Officer
- Communications, Marketing and Design Manager

Appendix 2: Local EPC data: current housing stock (December 2023)



EPC Rating	Bungalow	Flat	House	Supported Accommodation	Total
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	58	47	143	22	270
C	928	409	784	139	2260
D	287	84	324	139	697
E	246	5	324	2	347
F	5	0	10	0	15
G	0	0	2	0	2
No current EPC	422	137	818	20	1397
Not Needed	0	0	0	1	1
					4989

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