

NEWS RELEASE

Ref: 2009/1803

Date: 23 March 2009

Housing Refurbishment Could Be Key to Meeting CO₂ Targets

According to a new report launched today [Monday 23rd March], the West Midlands will need to spend an additional £189.1 million per year on installing energy efficiency measures into homes, which equates to an additional 68,000 tonnes of CO₂ a year, if it is to meet its CO₂ emissions target.

The Report, called *Low Carbon Housing - developing a baseline for refurbishment in the West Midlands*, was jointly commissioned by the West Midlands Regional Assembly and Advantage West Midlands as part of the West Midlands Regional Climate Change Action Plan.

Households are responsible for a third of the West Midlands' carbon emissions and whilst most new houses do incorporate the latest energy efficient measures, by 2050 they will still only account for 20% of properties. The Report therefore looks at what needs to be done to improve the energy efficiency of the remaining 80%, it sets out the scale of the problem by looking at existing levels of refurbishment and energy supply and what needs to be done to the properties to achieve the Region's CO₂ reduction targets.

For example, according to the Report the installation of energy efficient measures such as cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, double glazing, gas central heating, boilers and central heating controls resulted in a saving of 147,577 tonnes of CO₂ between 2007 and 2008. During this period around £2474 million was spent on refurbishments for 1,005,026 houses in the West Midlands, of this £406.9 million was spent on installing energy efficiency measures (excluding low energy light bulbs) in 554,675 households.

Commenting on the report, Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive of West Midlands Regional Assembly, said: "The trend of rising domestic energy bills, public sector led measures to tackle fuel poverty and home owners staying longer in their properties should all help to significantly increase the amount of retrofitting, alongside regional activity which is already underway for some of the existing housing stock. However, the Region must build on this momentum, as well as meeting the climate change challenge there are other benefits for example around job retention and creation and improvements in health and well being.

"There is a need and an opportunity to develop a low carbon economy in order to ensure that the potential for green collar jobs in the West Midlands is properly realised. The green 'New Deal', recently proposed by Government, has the potential to draw together regional skills, know how and technology to support the retrofitting of existing housing stock. "

This jointly funded report builds on the valuable research and reporting undertaken by the Sustainable Housing Action Programme (SHAP) and forms part of the West Midlands Climate Change Action Plan, for which both the Assembly and Advantage West Midlands are key delivery organisations. This report is one of many initiatives being undertaken to ensure that the scale of the challenge is identified and appropriate action is undertaken.

ENDS

For further information please contact Jo Kite, Head of Communications on 0121 678 1044

Notes to Editors

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands Region.
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 elected members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body
5. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.
6. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk