

'Hot Lofts' energy efficiency case study: Leicester City Council

Overview of energy efficiency

An aerial photograph of Leicester, taken in March 2005, used thermal imaging technology to show which buildings in the city were poorly insulated, and to identify priority areas for a new loft insulation programme.

The 'Hot Lofts' scheme offers free loft and cavity wall insulation for all households in the designated priority areas, regardless of household income. These measures could save householders up to £178 a year (based on a three-bedroom semi-detached house having cavity wall and loft insulation installed).

A quarter of the money that householders spend heating their homes could be escaping through the loft if it is not properly insulated.

'Hot Lofts' is a partnership between Leicester City Council (LCC), British Gas and Mark Insulations.

Objectives

The prime objective is to improve insulation levels in all homes throughout the city to ensure that they have a minimum of 250 mm (10 inches) of loft insulation and that all cavity walls are filled (where appropriate).

Householders will recognise that insulation work has a short payback period and can continue to save them money every year, however, with many competing priorities they do not invest in the recommended measures. With this scheme there is no excuse – it is absolutely free.

These measures will improve energy efficiency and help to reduce carbon dioxide emissions across the city. The measures will also contribute towards Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) targets, Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and Leicester's Climate Change Strategy target.

Methodology

- identification of priority areas in conjunction with thermal image
- target mailshot to promote the scheme to private households in the priority areas (public sector and registered social landlords (RSLs) are referred to other programmes)
- letter explains the scheme and invites householders to contact Mark Insulations directly
- survey appointment arranged to determine the extent of work required
- Home Energy Check form completed and sent to Leicester Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (LEEAC) (will identify whether further funding opportunities available for heating etc)
- work carried out by trained installers
- measures paid for by LCC and funding claimed from British Gas

Outcomes

1. Promotional activity:

- initial mailshot to 3,000 homes as identified from the aerial photograph (July 2005)
- second mailshot to another 3,000 homes as identified from the aerial photograph (September 2005)
- final mailshot to 9,000 further homes to tie in with Energy Efficiency Week
- 20,000 leaflets printed and distributed
- 'Hot lofts' branded decals placed on Mark Insulation (partner organisation) vans
- large banner with thermal image printed placed prominently in Leicester city centre

2. Events

- Project Launch on 4 June 2005, presence in Leicester city centre with a demonstration of the thermal imaging software (developed by Blue Skies) with giveaways and information available
- 9 July 2005, presence in Leicester city centre with a demonstration of the thermal imaging software with giveaways and information available
- 24-25 October 2005, 'Hot Lofts' branded van to have presence in two city wards identified as target areas (during Energy Efficiency Week)
- editorial coverage in 'Leicester Mercury'
- interest from 'Local Government News' to cover 'Hot Lofts' scheme

Positive learning points

'Hot Lofts' is still in its early stages and so feedback and learning points will be available in the December quarterly report.

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