

# The Highland Council

Agenda Item	5
Report No	BIER-23-24

**Committee:** Black Isle & Easter Ross

**Date:** 4 November 2024

**Report Title:** Utilising the Great British Insulation Scheme to tackle fuel poverty in Black Isle & Easter Ross Social Housing

**Report By:** Assistant Chief Executive - Place

## 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides and update as to how the Council can access Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) for Council properties to improve energy efficiency and support the Council's ambition to tackle fuel poverty.
- 1.2 The report outlines potential opportunities for Black Isle & Easter Ross based on desktop analysis and checks. Further checks will be undertaken to validate data and identify properties suitable for cavity wall insulation.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
  - i. **Note** the contents of this report; and
  - ii. **Support** the development of externally funded projects and the opportunity to scale up.

## 3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – There are no direct implications arising from this report .

Climate Change & Energy Team (CCET) have a dedicated team to manage the coordination and delivery of externally funded works. A nominal fee is charged for ECO4 & GBIS projects, this covers costs associated with project management.

- 3.2 **Legal** – There are no direct implications arising from this report .

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 (EESH2) sets a target that all social housing in Scotland would have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of B by the end of 2032 or be as energy efficient as practically possible. EESH2 is currently under review by the Scottish Government and is expected to be replaced by the Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS).

- 3.3 **Risk** – Risk is managed through regular review and reporting to allow corrective action to be taken if necessary.

The below table outlines key risks and mitigation actions identified for this project.

Key Risks	Mitigation
Accuracy of property data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Desktop analysis to review data held, check Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency (CIGA) for any lodged guarantees.</li><li>- Area walk rounds to look for signs of previous cavity wall insulation and external borescope surveys.</li></ul>
Tenant opt-outs/ lack of private householder engagement will impact the delivery of retrofit projects and the Council's ability to secure external funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Robust engagement strategy developed with advice and support throughout.</li><li>- Review of tenant opt-out policy for Council properties.</li></ul>

- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no direct implications arising from this report.

- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising as a direct from this report.

## 4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

## 5 Background

- 5.1 The Energy Company Obligation (ECO), of which the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) forms a part, was first introduced in 2013 and is an energy efficiency scheme for Great Britain. ECO places legal obligations on energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency measures to domestic properties. It focuses on low-income and vulnerable and fuel-poor groups through the installation of insulation and heating measures. ECO aims are as follows:-
- help alleviate fuel poverty and accelerate progress to meet fuel poverty targets
  - contribute to carbon reduction targets in the domestic sector
  - reduce the costs of meeting the UK's renewable energy target through promoting

- more efficient energy use
- encourage innovation in the industry

GBIS broadens the eligibility pool of ECO4, GBIS funding is available for Council properties with an SAP rating E-G (D if innovation measures) and eligible measures includes:-

- Primary measures
  - Cavity wall Insulation;
  - Loft Insulation;
  - Pitched rood insulation;
  - Under floor insulation;
  - Solid floor insulation;
  - Room in roof insulation; and
  - Innovation measures
- Secondary measures
  - Heating controls

5.2 Climate Change & Energy Team (CCET) have undertaken initial desktop analysis, reviewing data from Home Analytics and the Housing Stock Reports to identify potential opportunities to access GBIS funding. Additionally, checks have been undertaken with the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency (CIGA) to check for any lodged guarantees for cavity wall insulation. Following desktop reviews, the team will work with the contractor to undertake area walk rounds to confirm construction types and look for signs that cavity wall insulation may be present. External borescope surveys will be performed by a surveyor, who will drill small pilot holes to scope the cavity to check for any existing insulation. Drill holes will be undertaken in discreet locations and be filled to minimise visibility.

5.3 A Highland-wide project has been initiated for cavity wall insulation which will be 97% externally funded.

Approval was given at the Net Zero Programme Board to progress a cavity wall insulation project for Council properties which will be 97% funded by the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS). Data has been analysed, desktop checks undertaken, and target areas identified. Exploratory works, surveys and installs will commence Q3 24/25.

## **6 Opportunities for Black Isle & Easter Ross Social Housing**

6.1 Black Isle & Easter Ross has been identified by Housing as an area of priority for this project and has been one of the first areas reviewed and targeted.

Letters were sent to Council tenants requesting them to contact the Council's appointed contractor to arrange a property survey.

Figure 1 outlines potential energy efficiency measures for Local Authority properties located in Black Isle and Easter Ross, this is based on data from Home Analytics and the Housing stock report.

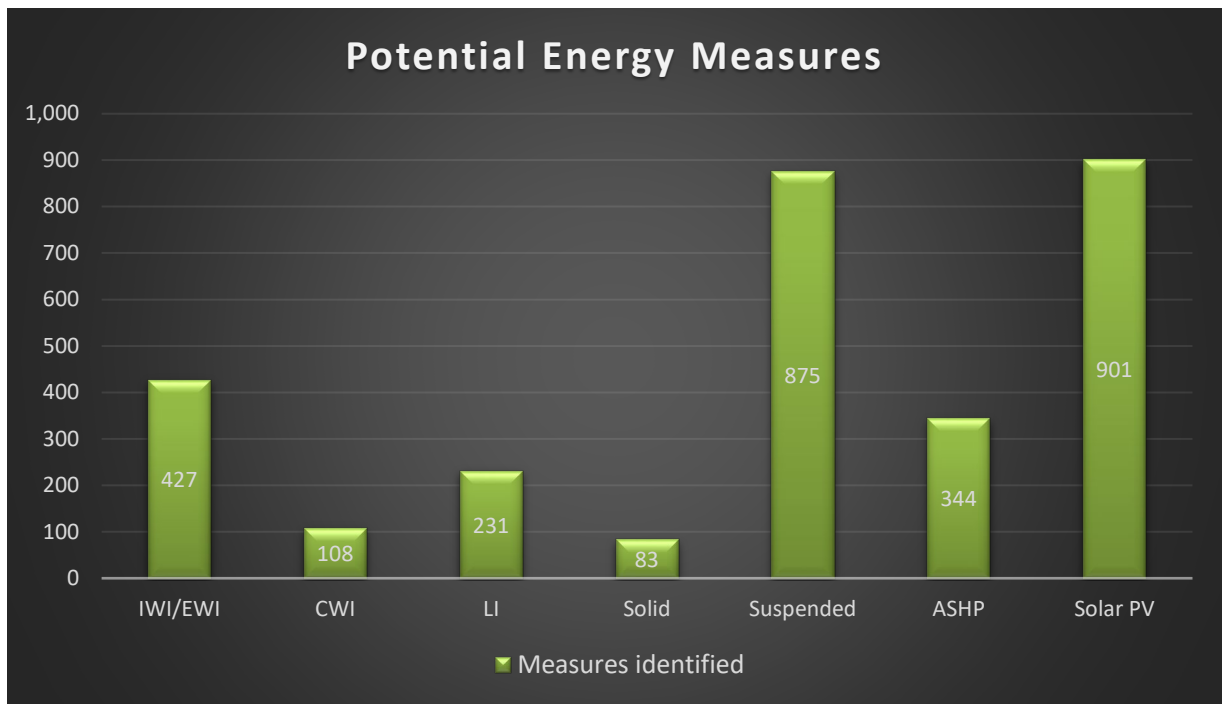


Figure 1: Potential energy efficiency measures for Local Authority properties.

GBIS funding is currently available to fund cavity wall insulation for Council properties, initial desktop data analysis has identified a potential 108 Council properties which could be eligible and a further 551 properties which includes privately owned and privately rented properties which could also benefit.

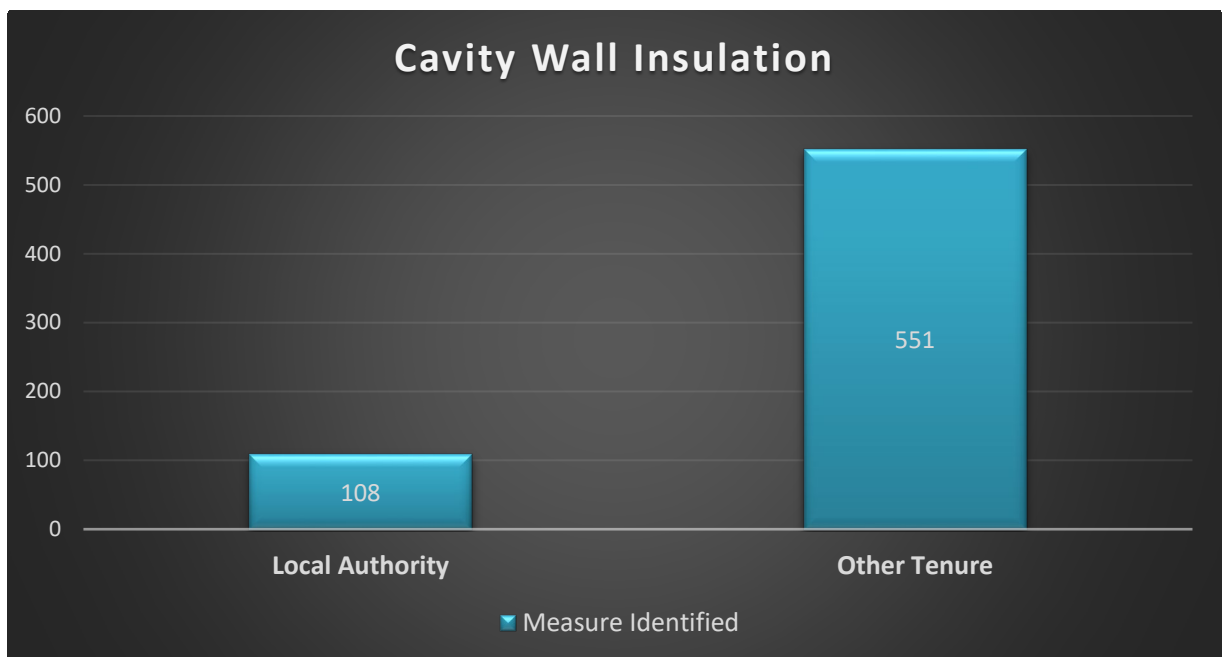


Figure 2: Potential cavity wall insulation for Local Authority and all other tenure.

Local Authority EPC bands are outlined in figure 3 which highlights 674 Council properties are currently rated D and will not meet energy efficiency standards.

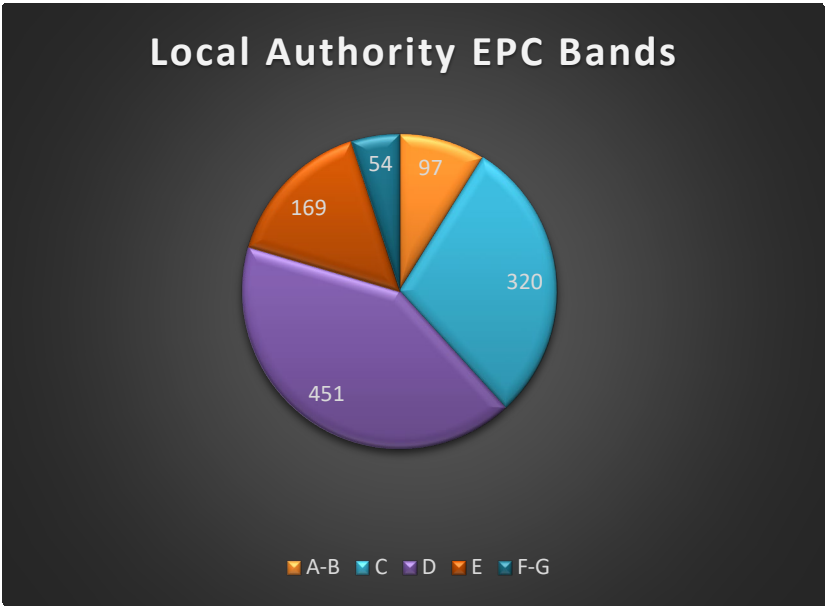


Figure 3: Local Authority Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) bands

**7 Next Steps**

7.1 The external borescope checks will confirm the number of cavity properties which are uninsulated and could benefit from cavity wall insulation and CCET will work with Housing colleagues to engage tenants to sign them up for the project.

Work is ongoing to review Home Analytics and Housing Stock report data, findings from the desktop checks and borescope surveys to verify data held which will support the planning of future programmes of work.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 14 October 2024

Author: Isla MacMillan, Project Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None