



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF
RIPON & LEEDS

Our Ref: 006082/KH

Diocesan Surveyor

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To All Diocesan Clergy

Dear Colleague

Housing & Estates Committee and the Diocesan Environment Policy

You will all be aware of the Diocesan Environment Policy approved at Synod in 2008 since when the Housing & Estates Committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance have been considering how to respond to this, and I have been asked to update you with information of where we are to date and what our future plans and aspirations are.

Actions to date

The Committee met with Revd Dr Ian White, the then Diocesan Environment Officer, and discussed a number of issues, and have undertaken a number of actions to date, which include the following:

1. Water meters installed in 75% of housing where possible. Although this has no direct benefit to the Housing & Estates Committee who meet the cost of water rates, it does provide a facility for occupiers to monitor their water consumption. This has a two-fold impact in that there is a potential saving on waste of water, and the less water being used, the less electricity is needed for pumping water around in the water distribution network.
2. Over the past 2 to 3 years we have been able to take advantage, via occupiers, of the grants which have been directed through utility companies by the Government, for cavity wall and loft insulation, with the balance being met by the housing budget where possible.
3. Over the past ten years improvements have been made to the existing housing stock by undertaking other improvement works where money has been available. These have included; replacement PVCu windows, new condensing boilers, upgrading heating system controls including fitting thermostatic radiator valves and topping up loft insulation.

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4. Housing – there are currently 3 vicarage new build schemes at very early stages, and the aspiration is to incorporate some renewable technology and recycling where feasible and practical and try to meet, and if possible exceed, the national benchmarks for the design of new housing in accordance with the Code for Sustainable Homes.
5. Within the Property Team itself, more extensive use has been made of email communications as well as the use of electronic document management software enabling us to electronically store incoming and outgoing correspondence, thereby cutting down on paper usage in sending out mail and allowing for more recycling of paper correspondence.

Pilot study

The Diocese has also been involved in a pilot study on possible improvements to Vicarages as part of the *Shrinking the Footprint* campaign. The Housing & Estates Committee have part funded the installation of a new condensing boiler heating system, together with a solar thermal hot water installation at Garforth Rectory during recent refurbishment work.

Energy Performance Certificates

As part of the housing valuation exercise undertaken in 2008, Energy Performance Certificates have been obtained on all our houses and as promised a copy of the relevant Energy Performance Certificate relating to the property occupied by you is attached (where applicable). This certificate measures the overall energy efficiency of a property and places it in a banding system: A-G, with A being the best and G being the worst. There are certain assumptions made as part of this exercise but it does highlight where possible improvements can be found. However, as with all these things they come with a health warning and the following points need to be taken into consideration when looking at the certificates:

1. Cavity wall insulation may be recommended, however in some properties this is not always feasible due to the external wall construction.
2. Some existing boilers are recommended for replacement with A Rated boilers. In most instances these are on systems which are possibly only 5 or 6 years old. These existing boilers will generally be B or C rated fan flued condensing boilers and are still functioning correctly and being fuel efficient. Where these are recommended on the certificates for replacement with A rated boilers it effectively skews the overall energy performance scenario.

The certificate also mentions possible actions that occupiers can undertake, such as installing low energy light bulbs, turning thermostats down, leaving equipment off standby, choosing green energy supplier utility companies as a matter of course, and also using A rated white goods.

Finally, the report also mentions other possible measures to achieve even higher standards, in many cases this recommends using photovoltaic panels to generate electricity. Unfortunately, these panels have a significant capital cost and a very, very long payback period.

Utility costs

The Housing & Estates Committee have been conscious over recent years of rising utility bills and have tried to make improvements to the thermal efficiency of heating systems as

well as undertaking other improvement works all within its budgetary regime. However, if clergy are experiencing particular problems with meeting utility costs they should direct these enquiries towards their relevant Archdeacon in the first instance.

Further Information

As mentioned above, the Diocese was involved in a pilot study as part of the *Shrinking the Footprint* campaign which has put forward various suggestions for works to vicarages which involves a combination of work that the Housing and Estates Committee can undertake, and also work that an individual occupier can do.

Their website includes some relevant resources which you may find useful: www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org. In addition, more practical information can be found at the Energy Saving Trust who can be contacted on 0800 512 01012 or at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk.

Future Improvements

The Housing & Estates Committee are currently considering what other improvements could be made to the existing stock and it is possible these measures will involve continuing with the programme of improved thermal insulation, improvements on new boilers and heating controls etc, supplemented by the potential for installing solar thermal hot water installations. Some of this work is already funded through our normal revenue budget but the committee is conscious of minimising the impact on Diocesan share and one option is for proceeds from sales of surplus vicarages to be used to fund some of this work, thus continuing the policy of re-investing capital receipts into the existing housing stock.

It is likely that the Housing and Estates Committee will wish to consider this matter further at its meeting in October, and may also wish to discuss it further as an agenda item at the forthcoming Housing Forum meetings which will take place in November. In this regard, it would be useful to have some feedback on the proposed action which has taken place to date, and also possible suggestions for areas of further work.

I look forward to hearing from you further on this matter, and would appreciate that if, where possible, communications could be sent electronically.

Yours sincerely



Michael E Lindley
Diocesan Surveyor