



District Councils' Network

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Summer Court Refurbishment Dacorum Borough Council

The local need

Summer Court consists of 34 flats of the timber-framed construction design. Upon investigation we discovered there was no insulation, which meant fuel bills were high and residents were at risk of falling in to Fuel Poverty. Before insulating the properties we consulted with residents who also made us aware of other issues we needed to tackle, such as lack of suitable bins, poor lighting, inadequate drying areas and faulty drains. The planned refurbishment reflected the tenants' needs.

The vision

By taking a holistic approach to Summer Court we want to achieve a coordinated and efficient approach to energy efficiency retrofit and planned asset maintenance. This minimises long-term disruption to residents and enhances our asset value. 'Green' initiatives, such as the Feed in Tariff and Renewable Heat Incentive, will contribute towards the costs of the works, whilst delivering reduced fuel bills to our tenants. We are committed to reducing our carbon emissions and being less reliant on gas - the biomass district heating system will help us achieve this.

The challenge

Large scale retrofits to tenanted properties can be difficult to deliver. Ultimately we wanted to minimise disruption to residents, but a large refurbishment of this nature will have an impact and managing residents concerns and expectations is key. A Resident Liaison Officer proved to be an invaluable asset and the programme was delivered on time and in budget. Planning could have been an issue, but planners were engaged early and all parties bought in to the proposed development and the benefits to the Council and its residents. Synchronising the installation of utilities and working with multi-agencies proved challenging, as did the sometimes adverse weather conditions, but ultimately these had little impact on the project delivery.

The results

The combination of external wall insulation and the biomass district heating system not only reduced our carbon emissions, but also delivered anticipated fuel savings to residents. This has decreased the risk of Fuel Poverty, which could result in more disposable income for tenants. This could contribute towards rent and a more sustainable tenancy.



The appearance of the estate has been improved significantly and this has given residents a home they can be proud of.

Secure and safe drying areas means they can dry their clothes outdoors, which will reduce damp and condensation issues.

New bins with additional recycling facilities have also minimised waste and contributed to an innovative, clean, green, low carbon estate.

Where next?

It has been possible to see the immediate positive impact of this refurbishment scheme. Consequently neighbouring blocks of flats have been identified that would benefit from a similar programme of works. However, as Summer Court was our first biomass district heating system we need to monitor this closely to ensure the benefits to tenants are sustainable. This could be impacted further should the government revise funding schemes and renewable incentives.

For more information >>

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