

Update for Tenant Services Management Board on 1st June 2015

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Photovoltaic installation to approx. 350 existing council homes

An investment of £1.5m will see the installation of 350 photovoltaic (PV) systems to TDBC housing stock. A desktop study was carried out in 2012 to find suitable properties. Roofs were chosen based on their age, construction and orientation. This resulted in 724 properties that might be suitable to install PV to.

This list was given to Western Power Distribution (WPD) so they may choose the best properties to connect. WPD tell us which houses can be connected to the National Grid without the need for strengthening the infrastructure of the grid. Therefore tenants are finding some houses near them are installed whilst some are not, this is to prevent an overloading of the grid.

Some houses fall slightly outside the optimum orientation, even though their neighbours appear to be the same. This has meant some disappointed tenants as they are not having PV.

I have had numerous telephone calls and emails requesting occupiers have PV, so have had to explain the involvement of WPD and the fact we are choosing homes with a 45 degree or less orientation from South.

There have also been a considerable number of phone calls from tenants asking various questions and wanting to discuss the system. I inform them as much as I can and confirm that the installation surveyor will answer any further questions about the installation specific to their home.

Many roofs were originally deemed suitable for PV but upon survey it was been found the roofs cannot accommodate the target amount of 8-10 panels. If we fit less it will generate less electricity, which will result in a lesser income from the Feed In Tariff, which means the panels will take longer to pay for themselves, if at all. Therefore it is imperative TDBC target the optimum properties first if we are to pay off the panels and create a positive cash flow for the HRA.

We have two separate firms fitting PV; Glevum and Prolectric. For one firm we have had to remind them of customer service standards and provided a written procedure for informing tenants of their surveys.

The most common complaints I have received for the one firm are that scaffolding has been up 3 days too long, tv channel reception has been disturbed while scaffolding has been in place (this is unavoidable), surveyors not immediately informing tenants their home isn't suitable for PV and a general lack of immediate response to questions over installation dates. These are all issues that have been addressed and will continue to be monitored.

The firms are each fitting approximately 7-10 houses a week. We aim to have the majority of the systems installed by early August.

External Wall Insulation to 41 Cornish type houses and flats

Works are due to start in June on 41 Cornish non-traditional properties to remove old cladding and replace it with solid wall insulation. This will save the tenants money on their heating bills and reduce carbon emissions.

The Low Carbon Exchange have been appointed to supply and fit the external wall insulation (EWI). Each property will take approximately 2 weeks to install.

Cladding will be removed, a specialist surveyor will check the structural integrity of the concrete and if all is well the new EWI is fitted. Tenants will not need to move house, no works will be carried out inside the home and the “easi deck” scaffolding system will be used, this is a smaller and easier way of using scaffolding.

Asbestos surveys need to be carried out to a number of properties that don't already have asbestos reports. The installers will start work on properties where data is available while the external asbestos firm will survey the properties and provide their findings.

Tenants will be advised they are not to drill into the EWI as it will lessen the thermal insulation properties.

Tenants have been advised to move plants that are close to the property elevations as they may be damaged by the easi deck and the EWI will be thicker than the original cladding.

As the installation takes 2 weeks per house this scheme may continue until the early August.