



SE² Case Study:

Identifying opportunities to bring together water and energy efficiency retrofit in housing

What was the problem?

Energy use in homes accounts for more than a quarter of the UK's carbon emissions. Although the Government has ambitious plans for reducing the energy consumption of new and existing housing, current proposals do not specifically tackle the 23% of an average home's carbon footprint that comes from heating water. The Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes (EEPH) and Environment Agency commissioned SE² to identify opportunities for integrating energy efficiency and water programmes and initiatives within the household sector, including a review of existing policy, strategies, programmes and funding streams for retrofitting.

Why did it matter?

Retrofitting and refurbishing existing housing stock will play an essential part in meeting Government emissions reductions targets. Research published in July 2009 by the Environment Agency in conjunction with the Energy Saving Trust has shown the clear benefits of saving water, which leads to reduced energy use and lower carbon emissions. The aim of this project was to investigate the policy and practical steps that need to be taken to take advantage of the win-wins of combining water and energy efficiency.

What did we do?

SE² produced a report for EEPH and EA which set out the existing policy landscape for both domestic water and energy efficiency retrofitting, as well as retrofitting for flood resistance and resilience. Existing projects were presented, both for water and energy individually and those that had made the link between the two areas. The report then identified the synergies between water and energy efficiency activity and the actions that could be taken to promote these in order to take full advantage of these opportunities. As well as completing desk research, SE² also organised a stakeholder event to inform the report. This brought together key representatives of the water and energy efficiency sectors to discuss barriers and opportunities for linking the two areas.

What difference did it make?

Although the carbon savings from reducing water consumption are well documented, water efficiency both as a standalone activity and in combination with reducing energy consumption is lagging behind the level of awareness and activity surrounding energy efficiency. The opportunities for combining these two areas and thereby taking advantage of the increased opportunities for reducing domestic carbon emissions are set out clearly in the final project report, 'Maximising the potential for combining domestic water and energy retrofitting'. This provides EEPH, EA and the Energy Saving Trust with the evidence base as well as key actions to be taken to promote the agenda and raise the profile of the opportunities for combining domestic water and energy retrofit projects.

For further information about SE²'s work on this project, please contact Liz Warren on 020 8469 1333 or email liz.warren@se-2.co.uk.