

Spy plane maps to shame energy wasting families

By Ben Quinn

A SPY PLANE carrying thermal imaging equipment is being used to pinpoint householders in a London borough who waste the most energy.

Colour coded maps are created from the information and placed on the internet to shame owners into turning down their central heating.

The initiative has been taken by Haringey council, the first local authority in the UK to go to such lengths. Other local authorities are considering similar plans.

The mapping took place at night in winter when buildings were heated and the cold air allowed high quality data to be obtained from an altitude of 1,500 to 2,000 feet. The plane made 17 runs across the borough.

The results show levels of heat loss from almost every building in Haringey's 30 square kilometres.

Labour councillor Isidoros

Diakides said: "This single study will play a key role in helping us address three of the biggest issues currently facing Haringey - climate change, fuel poverty and housing waiting lists."

But Justin Hinchcliffe, of Haringey Conservatives, said: "Given that the council cannot even keep the streets clean, we're amazed that they've launched this project."

"Haringey should get its own house in order before it attacks residents and businesses."

"The council's record on recycling, for example, is poor and patchy and lights burn throughout the night in its Wood Green offices."

Robert Wilkes, 39, boss of the map suppliers hotmapping.co.uk, rejected any suggestion that it was an intrusion into people's privacy like the satellite imaging service Google Earth.

He said: "I think it is less intrusive than Google Earth. The fact that you can go on the

internet and zoom right in and see what colour car they're driving. I don't really see this as particularly intrusive."

"It's not a photograph; it's merely a measure of heat loss. I think everybody should find it very useful - particularly businesses, schools and hospitals."

Feedback from residents had been "nothing but positive".

The mapping took place seven years ago but Haringey, which has spent £21,000 on the study, is understood to have commissioned a 2007 update.

Mr Wilkes said the 2000 data was still valid.

"It will be useful to compare and contrast the old with the new, but I also believe that this data would stand on its own," he said.

The council believes the map will encourage residents to better insulate their homes.

The study is available online at <http://www.seeit.co.uk/haringey/Map.cfm>