

Sustainability Advisory Group

Minutes - 25 October 2018

Attendance

Members of the Sustainability Advisory Group

Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Christopher Haynes
Cllr John Reynolds (Chair)
Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Stephen Simkins

Employees

Colin Parr	Head of Business Services
Jane Trethewey	Service Manager - Housing Development
Ravi Phull	Service Manager Private Sector Housing
Stuart Hobbs	Sustainability Manager, Wolverhampton Homes
Philippa Salmon	Democratic Services Officer

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Arun Photay.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest submitted.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting**
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 July 2018 be approved as a correct record.
- 4 Matters Arising**
Matters arising – Woodland Trust
Following discussion, it was agreed that a draft Tree Strategy be presented at the next meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Group.
- 5 Housing and Sustainability**
Stuart Hobbs, Sustainability Manager, Wolverhampton Homes, presented an update on the work that Wolverhampton Homes had been undertaking to further the sustainability agenda.

Following discussion on the success of sensor-controlled lights in communal areas in managed estates contributing towards energy savings, it was agreed that the possibility of achieving further savings using intelligent lighting systems in Merridale Court should be explored. The distribution of funding and resources across the properties managed by Wolverhampton Homes was queried. It was confirmed that

investment was focused on a need basis as was illustrated by their five-year asset management plan. Councillors stated that it would be useful for Members to be informed of improvements and regeneration work that would be taking place in their wards in order to be better placed to assist residents.

The installation of smart metres would allow residents to monitor their energy consumption and could be used to tackle fuel poverty. There was a coordinated communications plan in place, but it was agreed that the Council's communications team could support this and target the areas where initiatives were being rolled out. Wolverhampton Homes were available to attend Councillors' surgeries to assist residents with energy queries. The Council's waste team had raised concerns about the management of waste in the short-term during the roll out of the new Waste Strategy. Transition measures were being put in place to aid residents with the move to less frequent waste collections. Councillors requested an update of the programme that Wolverhampton Homes would put in place to improve recycling on an estate by estate basis.

In response to queries about the Wolverhampton Homes Electric Vehicle Trial, it was confirmed that the determining factor to not continue with electric vehicles was the cost of the leasing charge. Whilst the vehicles were cheaper to run, the leasing charge made the scheme unfeasible to continue. It was agreed that electric vehicles would be more suitable for certain areas of work than others. Wolverhampton Homes would look to support the Council if electric vehicles were added to the fleet service as it would be a more viable option. It was agreed that the possibility of a pool of electric vehicles available for Council employees to use should be explored.

Ravi Phull, Service Manager Private Sector Housing, presented the update on Private Sector Housing. It was noted that there would be many residents that would be earning enough money to not be eligible for assistance but would not earn enough to be comfortable. It was agreed that these were residents at risk of fuel poverty and the Council needed to ensure these residents were aware of the help available. Landlords could take advantages of loopholes and exemptions in legislation to declare that it would be too expensive to put measures in place to ensure that properties were more energy efficient. It was agreed that a scrutiny review should be undertaken to explore the issue of fuel poverty across Wolverhampton Homes and Private Sector Housing, involving both the Council and partners. The scrutiny review should also look at the landlords using loopholes to avoid installing energy efficiency initiatives in their properties.

Resolved:

1. That Wolverhampton Homes explore the possibility of achieving further savings using intelligent lighting systems in Merridale Court
2. That Councillors be provided with the Wolverhampton Homes five-year asset management plan.
3. That the Council's communications team support Wolverhampton Homes in publicising fuel poverty initiatives.
4. That an update on the programme to improve recycling on an estate by estate basis be presented at a future meeting.

5. That the possibility of a pool of electric vehicles available for Council employees to use should be explored and a report including costings be presented to a future meeting.
6. That a scrutiny review be set up to explore the issue of fuel poverty across Wolverhampton Homes and Private Sector Housing, involving both the Council and partners. The review should also examine landlords using loopholes to avoid installing energy efficiency initiatives in their properties.