



# Vibrant, Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel Minutes - 17 July 2014

## Attendance

### Members of the Vibrant, Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair)  
Cllr Andrew Wynne (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Mary Bateman  
Cllr Greg Brackenridge  
Cllr Keith Inston  
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz  
Cllr Tersaim Singh  
Cllr Richard Whitehouse

### Employees

Deborah Breedon	Scrutiny Officer
Ric Bravery	Sustainability Officer
Keren Jones	Assistant Director, Partnerships, Economy and Culture
Kenny Aitchison	Service Manager Housing Strategy/Development

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## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*    *Title*

- 1 Apologies**  
Apologies were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Barry Findlay, Bhupinder Ghakal and Malcolm Gwinnet.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**  
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (10 April 2014)**  
Resolved:  
That the minutes of the previous meeting (10 April 2014) be approved and signed as a correct record.
- 4 Matters arising**  
**Work Programme 2014/15**

Cllr Andrew Wynne referred to item 5 in the minutes relating to neighbourhood wardens and requested an update report to 2 October meeting. Cllr Richard Whitehouse requested that the report should cover issues relating to noise and other

issues raised at the previous meeting. Keren Jones confirmed that an update report would cover all of the issues referred to.

Cllr Stephen Simkins referred to the minute relating to work programme and advised that he had met with Tim Johnson and Nick Edwards to consider a list of work programme items from Scrutiny Board. Panel considered the relevance and timeliness of each item and agreed that the following items

The Chair informed the Panel that, in addition to the work items highlighted by Scrutiny Board, Panel can add pre-decision items (that fall within the panel remit) and raise any other emerging issues, but that these must be passed to Scrutiny Board for approval.

Councillor Wynne asked for confirmation which Panel would consider Regeneration matters.

In response to questions Kenny Aitchison confirmed that Cabinet (Performance Management) Panel considers reports relating to performance of Wolverhampton Homes.

Resolved:

1. That the following items be referred to Scrutiny Board for inclusion in the work programme 2014-15:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Theme for session</b>	<b>Items to be confirmed by Scrutiny Board</b>
17.07.2014	Sustainability Improvement Strategy. (Keren Jones/ Ric Bravery)	
02.10.2014	Anti-Social Behaviour  (Keren Jones / Karen Samuels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anti-social behaviour review update</li><li>• Anti-social, Crime and Policing Act 2014</li><li>• Neighbourhood Wardens update</li></ul>
04.12.2014	Crime reduction and Policing  (Keren Jones / Karen Samuels / Cl Tracey Packham)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Police and Crime Commissioner</li><li>• Update on the Crime Reduction, Community Safety and Drugs Strategy</li><li>• Wolverhampton Local Policing and Crime Plan 2014/15</li></ul>

- 05.02.2015 Sustainable Leisure offer for Wolverhampton (added commercial value) to include the Wolverhampton Fit Card. • Wolverhampton Fit Card

(Chris Huddart / Keith Ireland)

- 23.04.2015 Housing – mortgage default / repossession, housing allocation and other housing matters. • Mortgage default and housing repossession / interest rates

(Nick Edwards / Kenny Aitchison) • Housing policy reviews

2. That Scrutiny Board clarify which Scrutiny Panel hold the remit to consider items relating to regeneration of the City.
3. That Scrutiny Board approve inclusion of an update report relating to neighbourhood wardens in the work programme for the Vibrant Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel meeting 2 October 2014.

## 5 Sustainability Improvement Plan

Cllr John Reynolds introduced the report. Ric Bravery and Keren Jones provided a report to inform the Scrutiny Panel of progress in the first year of the Council's joint Sustainability Implementation Plan and to seek comments on the priority actions to inform the review of the Implementation Plan which is currently being undertaken.

During consideration of the report several points were considered:

- The Sustainability Advisory Group meets three or four times a year to consider and provide guidance on the promotion of sustainability in the City. The group has met for two years and is making good progress.
- The Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan was approved by Cabinet in July 2014 and replaced a number of documents.
- The Strategy remains relevant and the Implementation Plan is being reviewed to make it more focussed on a few key areas and take advantage of opportunities provided by partnerships and funding, in particular through Black Country LEP
- Attention was focussed upon the red and amber indicators outlined in the report.
- Two red indicators relate to the Green Deal. The Green Deal was launched in October 2012 to allow residents to self-fund energy efficiency measures to their own homes supported by the Energy Company Obligation, however has failed to take off. Subsequent changes announced in the Autumn Statement in December 2013 changed the emphasis of ECO away from "hard to treat" properties back to cavities and lofts with ECO funding spread over four years rather than two. This has meant that Council's plans to develop a city-wide coordinated offer has not been possible and the programme to improve the Council's own housing stock has been delayed. The remaining red indicator related to a sustainable procurement policy; this was now being addressed in discussions with the Acting Head of Procurement.

Keren Jones outlined the proposed outcomes and measures for sustainability:

1. Growth in low carbon economy – increase the number of jobs to grow the sector and the number of low carbon businesses that are created or investing in low carbon products
2. To reduce the city's contribution to climate change - reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and improve the energy efficiency of housing and other property
3. More socially inclusive and resilient City – reduce fuel poverty, increase volunteering and increase domestic recycling rates
4. A more attractive city where people choose to live, work and do business - increasing the green infrastructure, improving air quality, improving the perception of the city by visitors and visitors to a planned Green Summit

The debate that followed raised several points of interest:

- The need to get the sustainability message across to people and businesses
- The need to look at local delivery
- Lessons learnt from Jaguar Land Rover
- Wolverhampton does not generally send waste to landfill but to its incinerator
- Amey will run the waste contract until 2023.
- The recycling rate has reduced; there is a reduction in Government funding to publicise recycling and a need to invest in educating new households.
- The number of visible solar panels is quite low in the City, there is a need to promote solar energy. The feed in rate tariff was reduced by Government and this has set back the take-up.
- The Council would still receive the feed in tariff for Council properties that have been purchased via Right to Buy (RTB), the owner would receive free electricity
- Schools, the University and Wolverhampton Homes should be encouraged to install solar panels. Panel were advised of procurement issues and a delay to installing solar panels due to the property review but that there is a now a programme in place.
- There is potential for jobs to be created in installation and maintenance of solar panels, but the production costs cannot compete against overseas competition.
- Solar Panels cannot be installed on all roofs, only those facing in a certain direction.
- Sustainable properties do not add to the carbon footprint.
- The Travel Plans, which promote sustainable travel, are important but have not been promoted in schools since the decline of the Government school travel initiative
- There is a planning policy to require renewable and low carbon energy in all new buildings.
- Single brick properties and poor insulation contribute to a higher death rate in this country; many countries with colder climate have better insulated houses and fewer winter deaths from the cold than Britain
- Licensed private rented sector landlords are required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which ensures that the property is insulated and that heating appliances are efficient.

- Recycling and re-use of goods such as furniture is another consideration; the Panel found that often good furniture is thrown out and cannot be resold or donated because the fire labels have been removed.
- Road planings are recycled for road construction and repair

The Cabinet Member thanked the Scrutiny Panel for the invitation to consider the Sustainability Improvement Plan and advised that Wolverhampton is leading Authority on green growth and the low carbon agenda for the Black Country LEP.

Resolved:

1. That officers consider the potential in planning policy, such as the Black Country Core Strategy review and Area Action Plans, and in dealing with planning applications, to ensure that new developments maximise the energy efficiency of buildings and the potential to generate renewable and low carbon energy.
2. That officers are requested to consider the case for licensing all private landlords in the city following the pilot in the Blakenhall area
3. That all Councillors are briefed on the Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan and are made aware of the breadth of issues which sustainability covers and of the successes achieved in the city
4. That the forthcoming Active Travel Strategy/ Cycling Strategy review and associated action plans address the barriers which prevent more people cycling and walking in the city, in particular the provision for infrastructure and access for cyclists and pedestrians in the design of new developments.
5. That there should be a programme across the city's schools to educate young people about issues relating to sustainability and recycling.
6. That Cabinet recommend to Government that fire safety labels on furniture should be in the form of secure labels rather than tags to avoid accidental removal.
7. That Scrutiny Board approve an update report to the Vibrant Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel 23 April 2015 to include a presentation from Wolverhampton Homes of the work it is doing to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty in the social housing which it manages.

## 6 **Next Meeting**

Resolved:

Items to the next meeting are as follows:

- ASB Review update
- Anti-social, Crime and Policing Act 2014. This comes into effect from 1 October 2014. There is a need to brief Councillors on local implementation of the new ASB tools and powers and also seek their views on the proposed process for the Community Trigger