



**Sustainable Development Panel**

**09:30 to 09:45**

**20 March 2019**

Present: Councillors Maguire (vice chair, in the chair), Carlo, Fullman, and Stewart

Apologies: Councillors Stonard (chair), Hampton, Maxwell and Lubbock

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2019.

**3. Norwich City Council HECA 2019-2021**

(Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion, attended the meeting for this item.)

The affordable warmth officer presented the report. The last HECA report had been in 2017. During the presentation she referred to the increase of people in fuel poverty due to the current economic climate and said that many people had been prevented from falling into fuel poverty because of the council's work to address it. Appendix 1 set out the proposed response to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Councillor Davis addressed the panel. She said that only around 20 to 30 per cent of councils returned a HECA report and she considered that the city council's report was impressive. She pointed out that fitting solar panels to the 5,000 council dwellings where it was suitable would cost around £20 million and was unaffordable at present. The council had won awards for installing thermodynamic hot water systems, retro fitting older properties, and for the new build Rayne Park, which was an exemplar of energy efficiency. She praised the affordable warmth officer for her work around fuel poverty. Despite the recession, fuel poverty levels had returned to the level of three years ago. This was good, clear report which showed the progress that the council had made to improve energy efficiency within the city's housing stock.

During discussion, the affordable warmth officer answered members' questions. She said that there were no figures available on the number of former council houses,

purchased under right to buy, where the owners had installed solar panels. The member then asked whether existing tenants had the option to install solar panels with the permission of the council, as landlord. Other members said that, whilst this was something that could be looked at, there were practical issues to consider such as what would happen at the end of the tenancy, whether the tenant would recover their investment, and removal of the solar panels for roof maintenance. A member said that he was disappointed that in relation to solar panels the city was lagging behind other authorities. Members noted that the city had a different demographic to its neighbouring authorities. The environmental strategy officer said that houses in the city were small and many were “starter homes” where people would not stay long enough to see a return on their investment. Members also suggested that should the cost of installation of solar panels fall in the future, the council should reconsider installing solar panels to council dwellings.

In reply to a question from a member, the affordable warmth officer said that the data on the properties and condition of the housing stock in Norwich was based on figures from 2014. The member suggested that officers worked with colleagues in planning to incorporate the number of new build dwellings, with higher energy efficiency standards, into the housing stock figures.

Members also noted that the government was introducing legislation to phase out the installation of gas boilers in new builds, in five years’ time.

A member said that the report was accessible and readable. The narrative brought the analysis alive.

**RESOLVED** to endorse the submission of Norwich City Council HECA 2019-2021 to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy by the statutory deadline of 31 May 2019.

CHAIR