

Sustainable development panel**09:30 to 11:10****13 January 2016**

Present: Councillors Bremner (chair), Herries (vice chair), Bogelein, Grahame, Jackson, Lubbock, Thomas (Va) and Woollard

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2015.

3. Cosy City update

The environmental strategy manager presented the report. Members were advised that further information was provided in the council's Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report 2015-17.

During discussion the environmental strategy manager referred to the report and answered members' questions. The panel commended the environmental strategy manager and officers for the successful outcomes of the Cosy City programme. Members noted that the programme had provided external funding for 40 families to assist the replacement of broken or inefficient boilers. Some of these families now had heating for the first time in several years. Members also noted that solid wall insulation was expensive and that a grant for around half the cost made it more affordable for many householders. The panel also noted that high fuel costs made it more difficult for people to fund energy efficiency measures and therefore reduce their energy consumption. In reply to a question, the environmental strategy manager, confirmed that part of the loft installation service was the offer to clear people's lofts and then return items to the loft on completion of the works.

The panel commented on central government's disconnect with its aspirations to achieve greater energy efficiency savings and its decision to axe funding for home improvements in its Autumn Statement. The panel noted that the Green Deal had offered loans at a 10% interest rate which made it unattractive as extending a mortgage worked out as a cheaper loan. The panel commented on options to fill this funding gap in 2016-17, such as crowd source funding and a member suggested that there was potential to provide loans to residents from the council's reserves. The chair referred members to the concluding paragraphs of the report and advised the panel that the Cosy City project would continue to work with its partners and the End Fuel Poverty Coalition. The chair also suggested that members contacted the

Norwich Members of Parliament to inform them of their concern about the impact of the government's withdrawal of funding and the effect that it had on reducing the cycle of fuel poverty.

Discussion ensued on improving the private housing stock. Members noted that the number of Passivhaus dwellings was too small a percentile of the total housing stock to register as an A category on the list. Private sector housing in the city had a lower standard assessment procedure (SAP) rating than social housing and 90 per cent of the private sector housing was below grade C.

Discussion ensued on how the schemes were promoted. The council had notified the building and construction trades of the schemes available and would continue to target the owners of properties undergoing improvements or renovation when further funding became available.

RESOLVED to note the progress of the Cosy City project.

4. Integrated waste management strategic objectives: Progress report

The chair introduced the report and explained that he had been invited to speak on local radio that morning about the proposed changes to the recycling collection vehicles and service in the city.

The environmental services manager presented the report and answered members' questions. It was noted that the city council had lowest level of residual waste per household. The panel also noted that the county council was currently sending residual waste to The Netherlands for incineration, as an interim measure until a sustainable solution could be identified. The panel noted the progress on the service action plan against the strategic objectives set in 2014.

During discussion members commented on the report. Members considered that there should be greater publicity about the waste management's performance, changes to the service and promote recycling. The panel discussed how recycling could be encouraged and noted that some plastics were currently collected and pulled out because of a collapse in the market. A member suggested that the public should be informed about this so that when shopping they could select goods in packaging that could be recycled. The environmental services manager cautioned about giving the public such advice because of the changeable market and the expectation that these materials would be recycled in the future. The county council had the resources and experience to talk to major retailers about preventing waste through the reduction of packaging.

Discussion ensued in which members considered how recycling could be promoted and food waste champions and recycling champions in a block of flats for instance. The panel commented on how private landlords could encourage their tenants to recycle. In reply to a suggestion that the landlord accreditation scheme should be used to require the provision of recycling facilities, the chair said that the scheme was not yet in operation and the priority was to improve the condition of private rented properties. The environmental services manager said that it was difficult to engage private landlords and pointed out that there was a cost to the landlord to maintain communal bins (cleaning, etc). The panel noted that the use of stickers on bins that were used incorrectly would change environmental behaviour because

people liked to conform to social norms. The environmental services manager explained that it was difficult to ensure that the right amount of information was included on the calendars and that there had been a lot of discussion with other organisations about its design so that it could hang on a bin and its content. The panel then considered the use of red cards when the wrong items had been placed in a bin and were advised that management were aware that some collection teams issued around 400-500 red and yellow cards a week whilst others issued very few and that this would be addressed by educating the teams. Residents who received a red card would be followed up. It was often the case that people did not understand what could be placed in the different bins and just needed to have it explained.

Discussion ensued on the use of compostable bags to encourage food waste collection and reduce residual waste. It was estimated that the provision of compostable bags would be an additional cost to the council of around £100,000 per annum. Members were opposed to the use of ordinary plastic bags, which would be removed during the recycling process, as it would encourage the use of plastic bags and encourage people to purchase them.

The panel discussed kerbside collection of textiles and small items of waste electrical and electrical equipment (WEEE) and the use of new vehicles which made it possible to collect these items. It was pointed out that this could have an impact on charities which relied on the revenue from recycling old clothes and other textiles.

In conclusion, the environmental services manager referred members to the county council's website and its list of items which could be recycled.

RESOLVED to note the report.

CHAIR