

Appendix A – Climate Change and Delivering Warmer Homes Strategy – Officers response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Queries of 18th March 2014

Issues raised and officer response

Item	Issue raised	Update Response since the meeting
1	It appeared that there had been a reduction in the Affordable Homes Programme. The officer confirmed that whilst the programme had overrun he expected it to be completed by the end of April.	This appears to be referring to the Affordable Warmth Programme which has been completed.
2	A Member questioned how many properties would be affected by the changes in the ECO (Energy Company Obligation) scheme. The officer advised that under the previous ECO arrangements, the support of the energy companies was £120 per tonne and this had now reduced to £40 per tonne which meant that support to residents would be substantially less. In addition, the officer advised that the Council had submitted a bid to Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) under Green Deal Communities Fund which (if granted) would mean that the subsidy previously supplied by the energy companies would be provided directly by the government. The Council was awaiting a decision.	The Council was advised by DECC on 28th March that its Green Deal Communities bid has been successful and the borough has been awarded £1.4m. Discussions with DECC are underway as to the criteria of funding to confirm the expected outcomes before the project can progress further.
3	Clarification was sought on the number of houses in Harrow that had solid walls, when the last survey had been done and how the Council could tackle this issue. The officer advised that a survey had not been carried out recently and the data had been taken from the Energy Saving Trust. They estimated that 58% of homes in the borough (approximately 49,000 properties) had solid walls. The vast majority of these had not been insulated. If the bid for funding to the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) was successful he estimated that approximately 300 homes would be completed by April 2015 on a street by street basis.	See response to item 2.
4	In response to a question about the amount of energy used by academies, the officer advised that the figure was distorted because of the ongoing transfer of schools to academy status. However, it was clear that the combined increase of emissions from schools and academies was significant. One of the reasons for this may be due to the increase in the number of pupils.	No further updates

5	The officer confirmed that the use of LEDs for street- lighting would reduce the carbon footprint as well as energy bills, as long as the unit price of energy did not increase.	No further updates
6	A Member questioned whether residents were required to ensure that any replacement driveway that was installed was third water porous in order to aid the prevention of flooding. The officer undertook to look into this.	<p>Any driveway installed needs to be able to drain away water naturally within the boundaries of the property. The extract below is from the Vehicle Crossing leaflet updated recently.</p> <p><i><u>Requirements for hard standing:</u></i> <i>Changes in government planning legislation came into effect in October 2008. The changes affect hard surfacing works within front gardens. The Town & Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended in 2008) requires all surfacing installed to the front of a property (over 5 square metres) to be of porous material or provisions made to direct any run off to an area that allows the water to drain away naturally within the boundaries of the property, for example a garden border. This applies both to new surfaces and to the repair and replacement of an existing surface. Proposals for hard standings which are not porous or do not drain surface water naturally within the property boundary will require planning permission</i></p>
7	In terms of the capital programme, a Member questioned the extent to which the effects of carbon emissions had been embedded and was advised that there was still work to be done. The officer cited the example of the school expansion and carbon reduction programmes working together. A suggestion was that Cabinet / Committee reports should state what the carbon impact of proposals were.	No further updates
8	The officer confirmed that the individual projects that were funded under the carbon reduction programme were determined on the basis of a business case with a maximum pay-back period of	No further updates

	eight to ten years.	
9	In terms of communication, a Member asked how residents would know that they may be entitled to support from the carbon reduction budget. The officer advised that if the Council received DECC funding, a number of areas would be targeted and, in particular, those areas with levels of fuel poverty.	No further updates
10	A Member commented that from the report it appeared that the number of schools with travel plans had halved and he questioned whether schools had provided reasons for this. The officer stated that he understood that the criteria for accreditation were now more strict so this reduction might be due to a technical change. He would seek clarification.	In addition to this, Harrow has adopted stricter criteria for assessing travel plans in line with Transport for London's STAR accreditation scheme, which allows for the quality of travel plans achieving sign off to be of a higher quality and have more ownership by the school. In addition to this, it should be noted that Harrow had a School Travel Advisor in post for 4 years between 2008 and 2012 and a variation in staffing levels since 2012. A School Travel Advisor has recently been appointed and will work to re-engage schools in developing School Travel Plans and increasing the number of schools with accreditation. The above factors have led to a reduction in the quantity of approved travel plans but an increase in the quality of them.
11	In response to a Member's question as to the purpose of the essential car users' allowance and the number of officers in receipt, the officer advised that those officers that were required to use their personal vehicle in order to perform their duties received an allowance. In terms of the current position in relation to the green travel plan, he would seek clarification.	The council travel plan states that "A designated area needs to be allocated for essential users who need to access and use the car as part of their work". The green travel plan does not mention essential car users' allowance or number of officers in receipt.
12	A Member raised the issue of flooding and noted that there had been some good work in the past which had alleviated some of the boroughs worst flooding areas. The officer agreed and pointed out that this work continued with more schemes coming forward in the capital programme.	No further updates.
13	A Member suggested that it may be possible, as a Council, to reduce fuel costs by using wood waste	No further updates.

	<p>from the tree maintenance service as a biomass fuel. The officer advised that he had spoken to the Leisure Centre contractor about the installation of biomass boilers and there were also opportunities at Harrow Museum. He thought it more likely that wood pellets would be used as these had a lower moisture content than wood chip from the Council's tree maintenance service.</p>	
14	<p>The officer's view was sought on the use of more gas efficient boilers by the Council. The officer advised that there had been discussions with Harrow Museum on the use of biomass waste and he suggested that, going forward, the carbon reduction programme would wish to consider the installation of biomass boilers wherever possible to ensure that the large reductions in carbon emissions were achieved.</p>	<p>No further updates.</p>
15	<p>A Member suggested that the water usage at the depot could be reduced through the use of water meters. The officer confirmed that the water was metered. The high demand may be due to the vehicle washing facility and dust suppression at the civic amenity site. All the water currently used at the depot was drinking water quality and therefore had a high carbon footprint. It may be possible to use rainwater for washing vehicles – thereby reducing use of high quality water.</p>	<p>Facilities Management has been asked to look into this.</p>
16	<p>A Member expressed concern that the 2 electric charging points outside the Civic Centre were no longer publicly accessible due to the change in car park layout. The officer undertook to seek clarification.</p>	<p>Due to the expense to move the electric charging point, it has a 3 phase power supply, Facilities Management have arranged with security to allow access to any members of the public or staff that wish to use the charger. The charging point is accessible on request. Security staff will monitor how the charger is being used.</p>
17	<p>A Member expressed concern in relation to the implementation of a Local Freight Operational Strategy and was advised that a response would be circulated to Members of the Committee.</p>	<p>Last year improved directional signing was implemented to advise HGV drivers which routes to use in order to access industrial and retail areas within the borough. These new signs replaced many of the existing older directional signs and incorporate a black and white lorry sign within the sign face</p>

		<p>where deviations from main routes are necessary. HGV surveys were undertaken along unsigned routes to identify existing HGV movements and patterns.</p> <p>The next phase of the project is to position “lorry enforcement points or plugs” using weight limit restrictions over short sections of road at strategic locations on the highway network where it is not desirable for HGV traffic to use through routes off the designated freight route network.</p> <p>The “lorry enforcement points” will consist of regulatory signs at either end of the restricted section of road and warning signs placed in advance. Enforcement options are being considered but is likely to be via our CCTV camera van which could be located at the plugs where lorries are banned from entering.</p>
18	The lack of an Affordable Warmth Budget needed to be addressed as approximately 100 residents were affected by this annually.	As part of the Green Deal Communities tender we will also request the same partner to deliver an ECO (Energy Company Obligation) funded programme in the borough that will support low income households with heating, loft and cavity wall insulation measures.
19	A Member suggested that an annual walk to school and work day would be an effective way of publicising the issues of climate change and travel impacts.	This has been passed to the travel plan officers to consider.

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8th April 2014 the minutes of the 18th March meeting were considered. The following was resolved:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014, be taken as read and signed as a correct record subject to noting that in terms of minute 493 – Climate Change Strategy and Delivering Warmer Homes strategies - the Committee wished to place additional emphasis to Cabinet on the importance of the following issues:

- the Climate change agenda required ownership across the corporate management team; Noted
- carbon impact should be included as standard in all committee reports; Noted
- the changes to the energy company obligations; Noted
- school travel plans and that schools should be working to a higher standard; Noted. See item 10 above.
- solid wall insulation Noted. See items 3 and 18 above.